

## **2017-2018 Annual report of the BSA Committee on Human Diversity**

### **Current Members of the Committee on Human Diversity**

- Ann Sakai (2020) Co-Chair
- James Cohen, (2018) Co-Chair
- Tia-Lynn Ashman (2018)
- Teena Shen Michael (2018)
- Uromi Goodale (2018)
- Eric Wada (2019)
- Vivian Negron-Ortiz (2020)
- Michelle Garcia, Student Representative (2019)
- Amy Litt (2020), Program Director, ex officio
- Loren Rieseberg (2018), President, ex officio
- Heather Cacanindin, Executive Director, ex officio

### **1. Committee meetings**

In June 2017, the BSA Committee on Human Diversity met at the BOTANY 2017 meetings in Fort Worth, Texas. Below is a list of committee members. Italicized names denote members that attended the meeting.

- *Ann Sakai (2020) Co-Chair*
- *James Cohen, (2018) Co-Chair*
- Stacey Smith (2017)
- Tia-Lynn Ashman (2018)
- Teena Shen Michael (2018)
- Uromi Goodale (2018)
- Eric Wada (2019)
- Vivian Negron-Ortiz (2020)
- Michelle Garcia, Student Representative (2019)
- Amy Litt (2017), Program Director, ex officio
- Gordon Uno (2017), President, ex officio
- Bill Dahl, Executive Director, ex officio
- *Heather Cacanindin*

In addition to the regular committee members, Anna Monfils, a professor at Central Michigan University also joined the conversation.

During this meeting, which was led by the two Co-Chairs of the committee, there was discussion regarding the 2016-2017 Committee on Human Diversity report and current and future activities of the committee, including possible speakers for the 2017 Enhancing Scientist Diversity in Plant Biology Luncheon.

## **2. Other Activities conducted by the Committee:**

- a) Updated the committee members regarding the status of the speaker for *Enhancing Scientist Diversity in Plant Biology Luncheon*. There were a number of excellent suggestions, and we decided to invite Bryan Dewsbury.
- b) We reviewed PLANTS Grant applications (see below for additional information)
- c) We worked with Heather Cacanindin to organize and advertise the Enhancing Scientist Diversity in Plant Biology Luncheon.
- d) In July 2017, committee members received and reviewed the annual report.

## **3) Appointment of new committee members**

This year, four members of the committee will be rotating off, including Cohen as Co-Chair, and we currently have one vacancy on the committee. Therefore, we have five potential openings on the committee for the upcoming year. We will be soliciting names of possible members from the committee via email and at BOTANY 2018, and if new members are needed, these names will be available to be provided to the incoming President of BSA.

## **5. PLANTS Program**

A total of 50 students applied for the PLANTS Program this year, and seven BSA members participated in the evaluation process, including the Co-Chairs of the Committee on Human Diversity. There were many highly qualified applicants, and fourteen students were awarded PLANTS Program grants to attend BOTANY 2018 and participate in the various activities associated with the program. The students are:

Liliana Benitez, New College of Florida, Advisor: Dr. Emily Saarinen  
John Christman III, Christopher Newport University, Advisor: Dr. Janet Steven  
Inesha Ellis, Widener University, Advisor: Dr. Katherine Goodrich  
David Flanery, South Dakota State University, Advisor: Dr. Maribeth Latvis  
Andrew Gonzalez, California State University - Sacramento, Advisor: Dr. Thomas Peavy  
Alexis Kantor, University of Colorado-Boulder, Advisor: Dr. Stacey Smith  
Carina Motta, University of California-Santa Barbara, Advisor: Dr. Susan Mazar  
Simone Oliphant, Florida International University, Advisor: Dr. Suzanne Koptur  
Asa Peters, Connecticut College, Advisor: Dr. Chad Jones  
Megan Rasmussen, SUNY-Farmingdale, Advisor: Dr. Eric Morgan  
Keana Tang, California State University - Long Beach, Advisor: Dr. Amanda Fisher  
Nicole Tineo, The College of New Jersey, Advisor: Dr. Wendy Clement  
Matthew Treanor, Plymouth State University, Advisor: Dr. Diana Jolles  
Delecia Utley, Howard University, Advisor: Dr. Janelle Burke

## **6. Enhancing Scientist Diversity in Plant Biology Luncheon.**

For the 2017 Diversity Lunch, a panel of speakers talked about their various experiences with mentorship. The panel included two students (James McDaniel and Dori Contreras), one post-

doctoral researcher (Jason Cantley), and two faculty members (Anna Monfils, and Janelle Burke). The panel discussion, while lively and informative to many, received a mixed reception from attendees. Therefore, in 2018, we decided to return to inviting only one speaker to attend.

*Title:* Mentorship in Scientific Training: A Panel Discussion Spanning a Diversity of Backgrounds

*Abstract:* Mentorship is an important component of scientific training, and it serves a crucial role from undergraduates to graduates to faculty members. Good mentors can provide helpful guidance on many different aspects of professional and personal life, but unfortunately sometimes mentoring does not result in the best outcomes. In order to promote discussion on effectively mentoring students, the Diversity Luncheon will host a panel discussion, of students, post-doctoral researchers, and faculty at different stages of their academic careers and from a variety of backgrounds, to examine multiple components of mentorship, including the influence of mentoring at the various career stages, why one seeks or does not seek mentoring, improving mentoring, and questions that mentors and mentees should address. While the panel will introduce the topics and discuss their experiences related to mentorship, attendees will have the opportunity to share their experiences with mentorship and ask questions of the panelists (and others). The luncheon will help to encourage discussion on mentorship at all career stages, across diverse backgrounds, and among people from different institutions.

For the 2018 Diversity Lunch, Bryan Dewsbury, a professor from the University of Rhode Island, will be giving the talk.

*Title:* Pedagogy for a Life of Meaning and Purpose

*Abstract:* Narratives concerning the need for inclusive practices typically center on righting statistical wrongs. Inequitable academic outcomes between dominant culture students and the historically minoritized have somewhat rightly fueled transformation efforts in higher education. I argue here that truly inclusive pedagogy transcends deficit alleviation, and re-engages the Freirean concept of teaching for purposeful living. We will discuss why this revisit is necessary in our current sociopolitical contexts, and address specific strategies for self-transformation, and the transformation of our praxis.

Finally, we would like to thank the BSA staff for their assistance with the arrangements for the Diversity Luncheon and other events and activities throughout the year.

Prepared by James Cohen (Committee on Human Diversity Co-Chair).