

Public Policy Committee Annual Report, 2020-2021

BSA Public Policy Committee

Krissa Skogen (2023), Co-Chair

Tanisha Williams (2023), Co-Chair

Ingrid Jordon-Thaden (2021)

Mary Sagatelova, *Student Rep* (2021)

Norm Ellstrand (2022)

Scott Gevaert (2023)

Kal Tuominen (2023)

Heather Cacanindin, Executive Director, ex officio

The joint committee of the BSA Public Policy Committee and ASPT Environmental and Public Policy Committee held meetings in August and October 2020. Committee members communicated via email on grant evaluation and selection processes. Annotated agendas from each meeting are available on request.

The Joint Committee's work focused on four main areas in 2020-2021:

- I. Awards/Grants – Public Policy Award and Botanical Advocacy and Service Grant
- II. *Plant Science Bulletin* content on public policy issues
- III. Tracking the status of legislation and policy activities of interest to BSA

I. Awards/Grants

Public Policy Award

The BSA Public Policy Award provides 2 recipients with funding to participate in the Biological Sciences Congressional Visits Day (CVD), which typically takes place in March or April annually in Washington, DC. CVD is a two-day event hosted by the Biological and Ecological Sciences Coalition. The first day includes training provided by AIBS on science funding and how to effectively communicate with policy makers. Participants meet with their Congressional policy makers on the second day to advocate for federal support of scientific research.

While we received no applications for the 2021 Public Policy award, the 2020 recipients, Taylor AuBuchon of the Danforth Plant Science Center and Mary Sagatelova of the Ohio State University, participated in the 2021 Virtual Congressional Visits Day and AIBS Boot Camp training.

Future Work for 2021 - 2022

- Increase the number of applications received
- Coordinate application due date with ASPT

Botanical Advocacy and Service Grant

The Botanical Advocacy Leadership Grant is co-sponsored by both BSA and ASPT. The aim of the grant is to support local efforts that contribute to shaping public policy on issues relevant to plant sciences. In 2021, due to the number of excellent proposals submitted (eight total), both societies agreed to fund additional recipients.

The 2021 recipients of the BAL Grant were:

Karolina Heduck. Assistant Professor at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa and the Director of the Joseph F. Rock Herbarium. Hawaiian Culture and the Herbarium.

Argentinian Plant Women Network, coordinated by Rocío Deanna, Pamela A. Ribone, Sonia Oliferuk, María J. de Leone, Elina Welchen, Gabriela Auge.

Carolyn Mills, M.S. student at California Botanic Garden/Claremont Graduate University. Promoting Indigenous Co-Management of Federal Lands in the Nopah Range, Inyo County, CA.

Future Work for 2021 - 2022

- Increase the number of applications received

II. *Plant Science Bulletin* content on public policy issues

The Public Policy Committee contributed two pieces to the *Plant Science Bulletin* Fall 2020 issue on the activities of the PPC, with the goals of increasing visibility of the Committee's activities and engaging the BSA membership policy items that are relevant to them.

PSB Fall 2020 (66-3, p. 185 - 189): Advocate for Botany and Science!

- Join #TeamBuckwheat! By Noami Fraga.
- Assessing grazing impacts on remote montane meadows in the southern Sierra Nevada, Tulare County, California. By Nina House, 2020 recipient of the Botanical Advocacy and Service Award.

III. Tracking the status of legislation and policy activities of interest to BSA.

- BSA endorsement of a letter asking NSF to not rollback funding on field stations and field courses. (BioScience Letter: <https://academic.oup.com/bioscience/article/71/3/213/6117971>)

IV. Committee Organization & Goals

The Committee worked on formalizing our mission and structure to provide the framework for current work and the long-term sustainability of the committee.

Future Work for 2021 - 2022

- Coordinate with the presidents and boards of both BSA and ASPT to better align the work of the Committees with the goals and vision from both societies.
 - Coordination with BSA and ASPT leadership will provide better understanding of scope and expectations for performance going forward.

- Do we expand into other areas or focus our efforts on awards, PSB, and communicating w/ leadership on legislation and policy activities that are relevant to both societies?
- Key challenge remains a combination of undefined scope and limited capacity to effectively advance many goals in concert, including how to act on rapid-response issues.
- Coordinate with BSA and current committee members to establish a new committee member model, similar to ASPT's. This model would allow for a strategic plan to recruit new members and more senior members would train new members to allow for the smooth transition of members on and off leadership positions within the committee.