

BSA DEI 2023-2024 committee report

We had a busy but productive year! First, a thank you to those who are rotating off the committee this year:

- R. Shawn Abrahams
- Ana Almeida
- Rocio Deanna
- Gretchen North
- Adam Ramsey

Thank you for all your hardwork and time, it was a delight getting to work with you for the past year.

Impact Award

The DEI committee was responsible for nominating folks for the Impact Award, which seeks to recognize work in the space of DEIJA in the plant and botanical sciences. We had a subcommittee (R. Shawn Abrahams and Rocio Deanna - thank you!) take the lead, in addition to re-evaluating the nomination and application process. As a result of the subcommittee's hard work, we had three applicants for the award (an increase from zero applicants last year — a huge improvement!). Goals for next year should include perhaps an earlier start to the nomination process; Rocio made a great point that for folks in the southern hemisphere, the application timeframe overlapped with their break/fieldwork. We also discussed the need for an evaluation rubric for the applications themselves.

Belonging in Botany

Each year the Botany meetings have a "Belonging in Botany" speaker who is invited to talk about science and their experiences in the botanical sciences as a member of an underrepresented group (broadly defined). It is one of the required events for PLANTS scholars and their mentors, and in the past has brought in a superb and inspiring slate of speakers. This year, we chose to go with a PLANTS alumni panel, which we believe will 1) help strengthen the PLANTS network and 2) provide scholars as well as the broader BSA community an opportunity to think about the importance of effective and inclusive mentoring.

As soon as the meetings are over this year, the DEI committee should immediately convene the subcommittee for next year's Belonging in Botany. While we got it done on time this year, getting a speaker to commit has proven challenging in the past, and we want to make sure we have a broad list of potential speakers to choose from with enough lead time to get them confirmed for the conference.

Affinity Groups at Botany 2024

Affinity groups are community-driven casual meet-ups at the Botany conference. We had a number of applications submitted, but we accepted six mostly due to financial reasons (and some replicated effort - e.g., multiple submissions for an international scientists affinity group). It

might be worth some discussion about ways to make some of these meet ups permanent fixtures (like the LGBTQ+ group) - for example, I think international scientists group would get a lot of sign ups each year.

Botany 360

The DEI subcommittee for Botany360 spearheaded two events through the platform: applying to graduate school (took this over from ECPDC) and a primer and panel on conducting fieldwork ethically and responsibly, with some discussion of safety measures from a DEI perspective. The events had good turnout (~30 attendees) and the discussions were engaging. DEI committee should strive to hold additional events in the coming year (including the applying to graduate school panel again and, perhaps, a more focused discussion about the new NSF SAIF documents and similar requirements from other funding agencies).

Goals for 2024-2025

- Additional Botany360 programming
- Headstart on Impact Award
- Community survey? Would be nice to know what the BSA community would like in terms of programming and effort from DEI Committee, but survey fatigue is real.
- We need a new committee on committees representative from DEI