



# BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF AMERICA

**Mission:** *To inspire and promote an inclusive global community committed to advancing fundamental knowledge and innovation in the botanical sciences for the benefit of people and the environment.*

## I. 2023-2024 BSA Business Report – Introduction

The following report provides an overview of the activities of the Botanical Society of America's business office over the past twelve months. Despite a less lucrative publishing agreement for 2023-2027, the Society continues to thrive and meaningfully drive several initiatives in the third year of our strategic plan. We are finding efficiencies in collaboration, our bank accounts are in good shape, and conference attendance for Botany 2024 is strong, despite the competition with the International Botanical Congress this year. I would like to thank the Board, section leadership, and committee chairs for their support, understanding and guidance. On behalf of the Board and Society, I also would like to thank our nine staff members. They work hard to deliver on the Society's mission, serve our members and are very invested in our strategic plan.

## II. Financial Update

Overall, BSA finances remain strong. We ended FY2023 with a net operating loss of \$42,136, which is much better than our budgeted loss for FY2023 of \$292,948. This difference comes from having a very conservative budget that overestimated expenses and underestimated income. Thankfully, we are seeing a significant rebound in our investment account of \$503,758 since last summer. Our financial situation remains unchanged. Due to trends in the publishing industry and our latest publishing agreement, publishing revenues are now much less than they were in previous years. We will need to draw on the BSA investment portfolio to help support operations for the foreseeable future. The Board, Council, Investment and Finance committees are all in agreement that a 4% draw on the unallocated portion of the investment portfolio is appropriate. In FY2023 we drew down 3%, which was \$175,000. It will be important for the Society to continue to grow our endowment and overall investment account to sustain Society activities and impact.

FY2024 income is on track and a good portion of our expenses are happening this month with award checks and meeting expenditures. (Please see FY2024 Budget to Actual report).

### Key things to note about our FY2024 fiscal year performance:

- 1) Our overall income from membership dues is down X% from last year for the same period; however, total membership numbers are running ahead of the same period over the previous year
- 2) Publication income is on target and we received a healthy 2023 royalty from our journals, which was a bit more than the royalty we had budgeted
- 3) BSA took a significant loss on the 2023 conference so the loss of \$16K is reflected in the FY2024 finances. Significant steps have been taken to avoid a loss going forward.
- 4) Grant income and expenses are down from last year. Activity for our largest grant, F2/PlantingScience, is slowing slightly from the peak of in-person workshops last year.
- 5) At the end of this fiscal year (August/Sept), we will pull down up to 4% (\$225K) from the investment portfolio's unallocated funds to support BSA activities as previously approved by the BSA Board, Council, Members' Meeting and Investment Committee.

**As of May 31, 2024**

BSA Conference Account: \$252,913  
BSA Checking Account: \$234,607  
BSA Money Market Account: \$412,426

NOTE: The conference account is yet to pay out most of the expenses for Botany 2024.

**BSA Investment Portfolio**

We extend a special thank you to the members who donated to our endowment, the Past Presidents’ Fund, the Grad Student Research Awards and to the various BSA section and award funds. Total giving so far this fiscal year (Oct 1 - May 31) includes 424 donations totaling \$62,390 in all categories. This is 43 fewer donors compared to last year (424 vs. 467) and the total amount is \$4,800 less than this same period last year. Total BSA endowment giving so far is \$21,197, which came from 81 donors (an increase of \$6,242 over the same period last year).

As of May 31, 2024 our BSA investment portfolio (BIP) stood at **\$8,131,319** which is a significant (7%) increase since last summer’s conference.

**Society and Sectional Funds as part of Total Portfolio as of Sept 30, 2023\*:**

<b>MS Investment Portfolio:</b>	<b>\$7,130,941</b>
Designated Funds (BSA/Sections)	\$2,198,038
Undesignated Funds	\$4,932,903
<b>BSA Funds</b>	<b>\$1,713,704</b>
BSA Designated Funds	\$160,322
BSA Awards (Bessey will be used in 2024)	\$1,598
BSA Endowment	\$601,494
BSA Restricted Funds	\$950,290
<b>Sectional Funds</b>	<b>\$484,334</b>
Sectional Accounts	\$128,110
Sectional Awards	\$176,056
Sectional Endowments/Restricted	\$180,167

*\*these figures will be updated again at the end of the fiscal year on September 30, 2024*

**III. Governance**

This past year has been an important one for our organization for fiscal oversight and management. Since our Botany conference meetings, I have been working on six main issues related to overall governance for the Society. First, I have been engaged in discussions with our staff, president and several organizations regarding sponsorships and new funding options to diversify BSA revenue streams. Some of these discussions involve the US Forest Service, Longwood Gardens, the Bureau of Land Management, Danforth Plant Science Center and several potential conference exhibitor sponsor companies. Staff prepared some proposals based on needs of the different organizations. I’m pleased to say that we secured our first sponsorship from Longwood Gardens of \$4500 to help advertise their Fellows Program. Unfortunately, due to federal budget cuts and delays, the government agencies were unable to proceed with any new partnerships during their current fiscal year. I believe several of these potential partnerships will

bear fruit in the coming year, along with a handful of new exhibitors and sponsors who are interested in coming to Botany 2025 in Tucson.

Second, I have spent a good deal of time in the fall dealing with the leadership and management issues that surrounded the Botany & Beyond grant. After several months of mediation, the mediation process stalled due to lack of responsiveness from the mediator. At the same time, Pitzer College decided it was unwilling to take on a subaward for the grant. Moving toward a subaward setup was part of our planned restructure. The PIs were unable to find a suitable subawardee for the Inclusive Teaching and Science Identity Workshop portions of the program. After we completed writing the annual report for year two of the grant, I held discussions with the PIs at which time they suggested it was time to terminate. BSA officers and I also had a conversation with the NSF Program Officer. At the suggestion of NSF, BSA continues to manage the grant and expanded and enhanced the PLANTS portion of the programming while ending the involvement of Monfils and Poston. The changes to the grant were submitted and approved by NSF. This grant, which expanded the PLANTS program, is now under the leadership of the BSA Executive Director as PI with contracted coordinator Maria Morrow (PLANTS alum from 2012) and Senior Advisor Ann Sakai. The expanded version of the grant allows us to fund 25% more undergraduates in the program, as well as provide peer mentors some financial support to attend the conference. This means that in Grand Rapids we are bringing 20 undergrads from underrepresented backgrounds to the meeting where they will each have a mentored experience with one peer and one more established mentor.

A good portion of time this past year was spent dealing with financial reconciliation. Due to BSA's success with grant funding, we exceeded the \$750K threshold in federal spending which required an audit of our FY2023 books. We prepared a list of potential audit firms with nonprofit and association experience and issued an RFP for a financial and single audit of our federal spending. The audit field work was conducted in January and February, and I am pleased to say that the BSA received a clean audit report. No findings, which is virtually unheard of for an audit. In fact, the auditors mentioned that it was one of the smoothest audit experiences they have had, and they enjoyed working with our staff, especially our Finance Manager Tricia Jackson, CPA who we owe deep gratitude for thoroughly preparing and guiding us through to the close of the audit. It is likely that we will need to have another audit on our FY2024 books due to federal spending levels. There is good news for BSA regarding our federal grants going forward. First, the single audit threshold has increased from \$750k to \$1M and the de minimis rate for indirect costs increased from 10% to 15%. This means that in the future, BSA will most likely not need to pay for a costly audit, and that we can charge a bit more for overhead.

Due to the unexpected significant loss on the Botany 2023 conference in Boise, ID your staff made extra efforts this past year to ensure that Botany 2024 would break even or make a very small profit. The program committee also decided that hybrid meetings are too expensive to continue to pursue at this time. Increasing costs for everything from AV, posterboards, food and beverage, and hotel costs make scientific conferences challenging for smaller societies to keep out of the red. Many thanks to Johanne Stogran and Tricia Jackson for working closely with me to create a new conference budget and projections document that is regularly updated and allows us to see where we are in our financial planning throughout the year. We worked hard to cut expenses and bring in new sponsor and exhibitor income. Melanie Link-Perez has ensured that the Program Planning committee received more frequent communication and sought their input and feedback throughout this past year. Thanks to all the groundwork, we expect to break even or make a small profit on the conference and the conference attracted 100 more registered attendees this year than we did in 2017 when Botany conference last had to compete with the International Botanical Congress.

Kudos to Melanie, Johanne, Brenda and Amelia for all the ways in which they spread the word on social media, via emails and other marketing efforts.

I want to mention the work of our Ad Hoc Committee on Climate Change. As part of that committee, I worked closely with Vivian Negron-Ortiz, the committee's chair, as the group considered different avenues to pursue on this topic. We are excited to share that we have set the dates for a free virtual 2 half-day symposium for Nov 14-15, 2024. A logo and web site for the symposium is in the works and we have secured four invited speakers already. More news will be shared after Botany 2024 and BSA will seek a mix of invited speakers as well as abstract submissions. The Symposia will be widely advertised, and we envision a mix of academics, policy makers and government agency employees coming together, sharing the latest research, and making connections. Jeremy Rentsch, one of our committee members, is working with our Publications team to spearhead an upcoming special issue of the *American Journal of Botany* on a topic related to climate change as part of the committee's efforts.

Finally, I was intimately involved in the implementation of adjustments to the BSA Nominations and Election process. Descriptions of Board positions were prepared, reviewed by current and past Board members, approved and shared with our membership. A two-step nominations process that had been recommended by an Ad Hoc Committee was implemented and helped to encourage self-nominations, more nominations in general, and an easy collection tool to allow the Election Committee to review all those who are interested in serving the Society in a Board position. These have been positive changes and I look forward to working with the next Chair of the Election Committee to implement Part II of the recommendations from the Ad Hoc Committee on Nominations and Elections, which involves completion of all the remaining position descriptions, creating a rubric for reviewing nominees and conducting an analysis of gaps on the Board.

Other items I have been working on are this year include:

- Overseeing the work of our F2 (\$3.8 million) five-year grant that supports PlantingScience, our educational outreach program
- Working with staff on future potential grant proposals and collaborations with other scientific societies for grants in 2025 and 2026
- Working with the President-Elect and Committee on Committees to assist with committee appointments
- Completing the performance review process for all staff members
- Participating in the Root & Shoot LEAPS grant through their diversity training sessions and in dialogue about the direction of activities for the remainder of that grant period
- Working with the AISES staff and other partners (ESA, Ent Society) on the Indigenous Voices LEAPS grant, drafting an action plan based on survey results, preparing for and soliciting individuals for an IV Convening of stakeholders this Fall at HHMI, and administering the indigenous scholars travel award applications to Botany 2024
- Conference planning and oversight for Botany 2024
- Assisting in the onboarding of new Ombuds for Botany 2024 and discussions of future adjustments to the conference Code of Conduct

- Working with sectional and committee leadership to set up all the BSA and sectional awards for 2024 and run the application and evaluation processes
- Planning and work with SEB leadership throughout the year, especially on new policy documents, their budget preparation and conference planning for 2024 and 2025
- Preparation for and attendance at two SSE Council meetings and providing advice on budget and financial policies

#### IV. Membership

As of May 31, 2024, membership totals are strong with almost 100 more members than this time last year (a 3.3% increase). Looking at end-of-May numbers since 2021, we have about 120 more members than 2022 and about 20 more than 2021. You may recall that in 2021 we had our highest number of members since 2015 due to the very successful virtual conference during the pandemic, so the fact that we are slightly ahead of that year is promising. As you will see in the data, student membership totals were unaffected by the \$5 increase to student membership dues. Please see the Membership and Communications Report for more information.

#### Membership Overview

	2024 through May 31		2023 through May 31		All of 2023		All of 2022		All of 2021		All of 2020	
	2024	% of Total	2023	% of Total	2023	% of Total	2022	% of Total	2021	% of Total	2020	% of Total
Corresponding	73	2.5%	72	2.6%	73	2.4%	72	2.3%	72	2.2%	69	2.2%
Life	125	4.4%	117	4.2%	122	3.9%	112	3.6%	102	3.2%	94	3.0%
Emeritus	351	12.2%	340	12.3%	349	11.3%	335	10.9%	310	9.6%	299	9.5%
E Family	42	1.5%	46	1.7%	42	1.4%	47	1.5%	42	1.3%	43	1.4%
Retired	70	2.4%	70	2.5%	80	2.6%	72	2.3%	75	2.3%	73	2.3%
R Family	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	2	0.1%	4	0.1%	2	0.1%	3	0.1%
3 Yr Professional	233	8.1%	222	8.0%	238	7.7%	251	8.1%	286	8.9%	289	9.2%
3 Yr Prof Family	20	0.7%	19	0.7%	20	0.6%	19	0.6%	20	0.6%	22	0.7%
Professional	640	22.3%	633	22.8%	701	22.6%	751	24.4%	809	25.2%	857	27.3%
P Family	89	3.1%	81	2.9%	89	2.9%	88	2.9%	100	3.1%	103	3.3%
CC Professional	24	0.8%	26	0.9%	28	0.9%	37	1.2%	36	1.1%	41	1.3%
CC Family	5	0.2%	4	0.1%	4	0.1%	4	0.1%	2	0.1%	3	0.1%
3 Yr Postdoc*	56	2.0%	72	2.6%	70	2.3%	61	2.0%	35	1.1%	15	0.5%
PostDoc	94	3.3%	80	2.9%	103	3.3%	113	3.7%	140	4.4%	158	5.0%
PD Family	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	3	0.1%
3 Yr Student	328	11.4%	268	9.7%	322	10.4%	311	10.1%	219	6.8%	144	4.6%
Student	484	16.9%	521	18.8%	598	19.3%	610	19.8%	753	23.4%	713	22.7%
S Family	0	0.0%	2	0.1%	3	0.1%	3	0.1%	2	0.1%	0	0.0%
S Chapter	42	1.5%	40	1.4%	49	1.6%	24	0.8%	15	0.5%	21	0.7%
K-12 Teachers	5	0.2%	5	0.2%	7	0.2%	7	0.2%	9	0.3%	14	0.4%
Affiliate	11	0.4%	20	0.7%	23	0.7%	23	0.7%	23	0.7%	30	1.0%
Associate	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Amateur	43	1.5%	37	1.3%	50	1.6%	39	1.3%	54	1.7%	59	1.9%
3 Yr Dev Nations	59	2.1%	39	1.4%	46	1.5%	26	0.8%	12	0.4%		
Developing Nations	73	2.5%	61	2.2%	81	2.6%	73	2.4%	96	3.0%	89	2.8%
	<b>2867</b>		<b>2775</b>		<b>3100</b>		<b>3082</b>		<b>3214</b>		<b>3142</b>	
	<b>2023</b>		<b>2023</b>		<b>2023</b>		<b>2022</b>		<b>2021</b>		<b>2020</b>	% of Total
Professional	1954	68.2%	1882	67.8%	2048	66.1%	2065	67.0%	2139	66.6%	2161	68.8%
Student	854	29.8%	831	29.9%	972	31.4%	948	30.8%	989	30.8%	878	27.9%
Other	59	2.1%	62	2.2%	80	2.6%	69	2.2%	86	2.7%	103	3.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2867</b>		<b>2775</b>		<b>3100</b>		<b>3082</b>		<b>3214</b>		<b>3142</b>	

## **V. IT Support**

Our IT Manager spreads his time throughout the year on providing updates to the CiviCRM membership database, which is used for by BSA, ASPT, SEB and SSE for member data. He also assists with questions and revisions to our awards management system, which is now used by BSA, SSE, SSB, and ASPT. Very recently, he has been analyzing and consolidating BSA's use of servers for financial savings. Rob is also assisting with planning needs for the registration, abstract submission and online needs of the upcoming virtual Symposium on Climate Change issues. He also works with me to manage our outsourced IT contract with Gadellnet to support our staff computers, troubleshoots and assists with set up of our awards management system for various awards and committee applications, and spends a good deal of time responding to threats/needed changes and ongoing server updates to our IT systems. See the IT Report for more details.

## **VI. BSA Management Support Services**

Working with their officer teams, four BSA staff members provide a range of support services to SEB and SSE. We write and deploy communications and membership campaigns and manage their membership databases, assist with their IT needs, and I attend their Board meetings and provide governance and management advice. These two societies will bring in \$76,500 to BSA during this calendar year. We have assisted SEB with numerous online events and in their partnership with BSA at the Botany 2024 conference as well as in the creation of new administrative and governance policies.

This past year, we have assisted SSE leadership with advice and adjustments to their budgetary process and help their Treasurer with oversight of their finances and international payments. At least one BSA staffer attends the two main SSE Council meetings during the year (January and June/July).

Individual reports for Publications, Membership, IT, Conference, and Education have been submitted as well.

Respectfully submitted,  
Heather Cacanindin  
Executive Director  
6/7/2024