

BSA Genetics Section Annual Report July 2019

Prepared by Ingrid Jordon-Thaden, Chair and Clayton Visger, Secretary/Treasurer

Contents:

1. BSA Genetics Section Meeting Minutes, Botany 2018, Rochester, MN
 2. Financial report and suggested changes to awards for 2019 and beyond
 3. Agenda for Genetics Section Business meeting in Tucson, AZ, July 30th at 7am
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1. BSA Genetics Section Business meeting Botany2018
Rochester, MN

In Attendance:

Ingrid Jordon-Thaden
Brianna Gross
Theresa Culley
Donovan Bailey
Clayton Visger
Kal Tuominen

Topics of Discussion:

Introductions

Committee structure:

Current positions – sec/tres, awards chair, chair/program chair
Decided to add a position: separate program chair and chair

2 years of each appointment, moving up into the one above after two years. Adding a new person every two years to the secretary/treasurer position.

Additional problem – awards chair stepped down
Agreed to add a 4th member – unanimous

Current Officers:

Chair: Ingrid Jordon-Thaden jordonthaden@wisc.edu (2018-2020)
Program Chair: Jeremy Coate jcoate@reed.edu (2018-2020)
Awards Chair: Donovan Bailey dbailey@nmsu.edu (2018-2020) (will not continue after two)
Secretary/Treasurer: Clayton Visger clayton.visger@csus.edu (2018-2020)

Ingrid gives overview of sections duties

~170 members

Responsible for Population Genetics/Genomics, Functional Genetics, Hybrids & Hybridization, Comparative Transcriptomics & Genomics, both posters and talks for each.

Hybrids & Hybridization – full afternoon

Functional genetics – full morning (compared to last year “classical gen” – 1 submission)

Comparative – 2 full day

Pop gen – full day

We award graduate student travel awards, graduate student research awards, Menzel award for best genetics talk and best student poster award.

Ingrid – due to privacy rules, we have to email thru the BSA office (Heather). Harder to communicate with members. Cannot email international members directly.

Margret Menzel Award Discussion

Opened Menzel to postdocs, early career recently – now getting too many applications (~60 this year)

Restrict again? Clarify that should be for “finished” projects

Need to fix how people sign up – online – computer tells you what you are eligible for

Decided to restrict to grad student/postdoc

Needs to be novel, contributing advancement to plant genetics

Needs to be a “complete” project

Also looking for leadership qualities – assessed subjectively (speaking ability, likely to stay in science?)

Winners will be asked to judge subsequent years

Agreed to restrict to upper level grad students/postdocs – unanimous

(WE DID NOT MAKE THE CHANGE ON THE BSA WEBSITE SO IT DID NOT GET CHANGED FOR THE 2019 COMPETITORS. WILL IMPLEMENT THIS IN 2020)

Should we make Menzel a special session?

Con:

- 1) Would require 2 concurrent genetics sessions
- 2) might isolate talks that would be better grouped with other similar talks
- 3) Brianna – never looks at Cooley award session – too random, also isolates grad students

Pro:

- 1) would elevate the Menzel award, increase awareness

Alternative: print list of Menzel talks on board in front of session door

Ingrid – we should revise the judging sheets

Also, can check “not competitive” talks

Budget

We did not get an itemized budget due to BSA reorganization of finances, but Ingrid says we are doing fine **(NOT SURE WHY I SAID THIS...)**

Last year we were overspending – cut out the annual breakfast, and went from 2 to 1 research award (\$500 for research + \$500 for travel to next year), travel award cut from \$500 to \$250
Used to pay \$500 towards colloquia, but not anymore, so BSA reduced amount given to section
Strangely, BSA no longer supports colloquia equally with ASPT (was 50/50 now 20/80).

Officer Duties:

Awards chair duties

Mostly in march

Applicants for travel and research awards – distribute applications, determine winners, organize judges, distributing judging sheets

Organizes judges for talks and posters at the meetings and helps collate to judging sheets.

Posters:

Posters – not high qual this year – should give some advance guidelines to competitors

Theresa suggested putting these in Plant Science Bulletin (general guidelines for good posters)

Donovan – add some description of qualified posters – examples of previous winners

Make competitors submit PDF 1 week in advance

(WE DID NOT DO ANY OF THESE SUGGESTIONS)

Membership:

Ideas for increasing membership

Mixer in Tucson? Need to check budget (CANNOT AFFORD IT in 2019)

Cost? \$1000?

Make it open to all – push signing up while there

Member list is student heavy – need to get more professional members (full members)

Botany2018 Winners:

Student Travel Awards: (Serena Macias, *Phylogenomics of Passiflora sect. Decaloba reveals strong biographic structuring of clades*)

Graduate Student Research Award1: (Danielle Black, UC Santa Barbara, *Identifying the genetic basis of serpentine adaptation in Aquilegia eximia*)

Graduate Student Research Award2: (Sarah Carey, University of Florida, *Developing near-universal sex-linked markers for mosses*)

Menzel Award: (Alex Harkness, Danforth Center, *Testing a “two-gene” model for sex chromosomes evolution in asparagus*)

Best Student Poster: (Robert Auber, Purdue University, *Identifying gene candidates of the shikonin biosynthesis pathway in the Chinese medicinal plant Lothospermum erythrorhizon*)

2. Financial Report

Over this academic year we discovered we were even lower in our financial standing than had previously thought. Decided to cut down the number of awards, and not to donate any extra money to colloquia and symposia at all.

Letter from BSA Executive Director

Dear Ingrid, Clayton and Jeremy,

Prior to the meeting in Tucson, I wanted to provide you with an update on your sectional account finances.

At the end of FY2017 the section had: \$3986.22

At the end of FY2018 the section had: \$3694.30

Currently, before paying out any travel awards or expenses for the 2019 symposia/colloquia, the section had \$3454.30. I believe a few expenses from a 2018 sponsored symposia/colloquia have been paid out recently.

The Margaret Menzel account stands at \$2313.45 so it too is getting somewhat low in balance. Please recall that these funds are part of the overall BSA Investment portfolio at Morgan Stanley and the amount fluctuates with overall portfolio performance.

I believe that what was recommended in the past was a conservative 5% use of the fund, which is basically a plan to touch only the earnings on the account.

If you have detailed questions about income and expenses for the section, Wanda Lovan in our office should be able to assist you. wlovan@botany.org

I will be putting out a call for sectional reports for the BSA Council meeting soon. The BSA Council meeting will be at 3:15pm on Sunday, July 28.

Best,

Heather

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Heather Cacanindin | Executive Director

Botanical Society of America | Society for Economic Botany | Society for the Study of Evolution

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3. Agenda for Botany2019 in Tucson, AZ

1. Finances:

- a. (1) raising dues; (2) having an auction at your business meeting with items donated by people. Depending on what people donate you can raise \$1000 anyway. Ask the section for donations (section and Menzel)?

- b. We did not do a mixer this year, but should we plan one for next year?
Ticketed entrance for fundraising?
- c. Discuss poster award future. Small amount of money for lots of person hour overhead.

2. Awards

- a. Discuss how proposals were reviewed, scored, and awarded this year. What worked and what didn't? How to improve for next year.
- b. Re-write the description of the Menzel award to limit it to graduate students and post docs within 5 years (??) Up for debate
- c. Discuss future of travel funds attached to section research award

3. BSA-wide

- a. Discuss the following points recommended by BSA:

“One important item that I’d like to discuss with you all is the topic of how (or if) BSA should fund sections for activities at the meeting. We discussed this at the board meeting in March and felt like a broader discussion with the sections was needed. Historically, BSA gave a small fixed amount to each section (\$250-\$500) that could be used to help sponsor symposia, provide refreshments at the sectional meeting, etc etc. We no longer do this, in part because we now provide \$6K toward funding each symposium. I think this has resulted in a confusing situation, and so we want to create a policy that is clear to everyone going forward. We came up with 4 possible options (but of course there could be more):

- 1. Do not fund sections (current de facto policy)
- 2. Automatically provide a small amount of funds every year, proportional to section activity (old policy, I believe)
- 3. Automatically provide a small fixed amount of funds every year – the same amount to each section
- 4. Allow ad hoc requests to the Board for funding particular projects/needs
- 5. Other idea?

4. Misc

- a. Who is going to Alaska in 2020