

## **BSA Section report, 2020**

### **Primarily Undergraduate Institution (PUI) Plant Network**

#### **Steering committee:**

Chair: Rachel Jabaily (serving one year, to rotate off 2020)

Program Coordinator/ Vice-Chairperson: Jennifer Ison (serving one year, to rotate to chair in 2020- this differs from our timeline given in the Bylaws below by one year just this once, to stagger the first three officers)

Secretary/Treasurer: Stephanie Lyon (serving three years, to rotate off 2022)

Student/Postdoc: Rachel McCoy (serving one year, with the potential to continue on)

#### **Botany 2019 meeting activities:**

We held a successful workshop on Sunday entitled “[Strategies for successful faculty/undergraduate student collaborative research at PUIs](#)”. Around 30 people attended and we had great small-group discussions on a number of topics. We continued to build community through the PUI sectional meeting that was held immediately afterwards. Elections were held and topics for future workshops were also discussed.

#### **Activities during the year:**

The PUI Steering Committee formalized our **Section Bylaws** (appended to end of this document), which were implemented into BSA governing documents after a few minor modifications by BSA leadership.

Most of our activities this year involved discussions about formation of a **mentorship program**, an idea that arose during our summer 2019 workshop. One of the major themes of these conversations was that faculty members at PUIs often feel disconnected from the broader botanical research community due to higher teaching loads, less experienced research assistants, less access to research funds, and smaller academic departments. In addition, because PhDs usually receive their graduate training at larger research institutions, early career researchers--and their previous academic mentors to whom they might otherwise turn for advice--are often unfamiliar with the PUI career track and the different challenges it presents. To help mitigate these issues, we aim to connect people at different career stages within the PUI community and provide the support, structure, and guidance necessary to promote effective mentorship.

Initial discussions took place within the PUI steering committee last fall via email and a virtual meeting held on October 10, 2019. These discussions then expanded to include BSA leadership (Heather Cananindin and Catrina Adams) who had been having similar thoughts and conversations about a broader mentoring network for several years. The steering committee had two virtual meetings with Heather and Catrina, on December 5, 2019 and February 10, 2020, to discuss best practices of mentorship networks and potential pitfalls, particularly for early career and student participants and people from minority and marginalized groups. We also discussed potential online platforms for

mentor/mentee pairs and broader cohort groups to meet. We were interested in the platform and approach taken by ASPB, but were unclear of the benefits of expensive new digital platforms which might be excessive in the case of our proposed smaller, PUI mentorship network.

We started amassing key literature about mentorship, and began investigating possible speakers for a workshop. We ultimately decided to try a pilot version of mentorships within the PUI section, which might inform a broader program across the BSA. The pilot program would have been launched through the workshop we had proposed for Botany 2020 Anchorage (description below). Unfortunately, due to the chaos of COVID, our steering committee decided not to offer our workshop this year. We plan to run the proposed workshop in summer 2021, and will continue to develop our plans for the pilot program.

Appendix 1: PUI section Bylaws (2019)

## **Primarily Undergraduate Institution (PUI) Plant Network BSA Section Bylaws 8.2019**

### *ARTICLE I. Purpose*

1. Share resources and best practices for teaching, research, and service at PUIs. (PUIs are defined by the NSF PUI designation, which include accredited colleges and universities, including two year community colleges, that award Associate's degrees, Bachelor's degrees, and/or Master's degrees in NSF supported fields, but have awarded 20 or fewer PhDs in all NSF supported fields during the combined previous two academic years.)
2. Build a supportive community for faculty and future faculty at PUIs.
3. Advocate for the importance of PUI members in the botanical sciences, and advocate for the importance of the botanical sciences within PUIs.
4. Arrange a suitable program for members and others interested in connection with the annual meetings of the Botanical Society of America, Inc.
5. Coordinate efforts and ideas with other affiliate Sections when relevant.

### *ARTICLE II. Membership*

Any member in good standing in the Botanical Society of America, Inc., may become an active member of the Section upon notice during the process of joining the BSA or renewing their BSA membership .

### *ARTICLE III. Officers*

1. Nominations of candidates for officer roles will be received prior to or during the annual business meeting and decided by a vote of all present members at the business meeting. Efforts will be made to ensure participation by officers from a diversity of PUI types. They will assume office at the close of the annual meeting.
2. In the event that any officer cannot perform his/her duties or vacates his/her office before the expiration of his/her term, the following procedures apply. If the Chair

vacates, the Vice-Chair will act as Chair *pro tem* until the next regularly scheduled election. If the Vice-Chair, Secretary-Treasurer, or Student/Postdoc vacates, the Chair may appoint a replacement from the *ad hoc* committee until the next regularly scheduled election for that office.

3. The officers shall be a Chair, Program Coordinator/Vice-Chairperson, Secretary-Treasurer, and Student/Postdoc Officer. An ad-hoc committee of past officers and other interested people will be maintained to discuss broader issues throughout the year.

I. The Chair shall: preside at all meetings of the Section, appoint necessary committees, serve as representative of the PUI Plant Network Section on the Council of the Botanical Society of America, Inc., and perform all other functions customary and prescribed for that office. The Chairperson shall submit an annual report of the activities of the Section to the Advisory Council of the Botanical Society of America, Inc. The term of office is three years.

II. The Program Coordinator/ Vice-Chairperson shall: be responsible for organizing the Sectional program at the annual meeting including the Sectional meeting and workshop; preside in the absence of the Chairperson; assist the Chairperson when called upon. The term of office is three years.

III. The Secretary-Treasurer shall: maintain the active membership roll of the Section by requesting, from the Business Office of the Botanical Society of America, Inc., a list of those members in good standing of the Society who have indicated their affiliation with the PUI Section, as well as interested persons who attend the annual workshop or other meeting events. They keep the records of the Section; carry on all necessary correspondence; be responsible for the collection of the Section's dues and handling of funds for the Section. The term of office is three years.

IV. The Student/Postdoc shall: assist with planning the programming at the meeting; promote the Section on social media and other relevant forms of communication; enhance student/postdoctoral involvement. The Student/Postdoc shall serve for one year with the possibility to extend their involvement for a maximum of two additional years as long as they remain in these academic roles.

#### ARTICLE IV. *Meetings*

1. The regular business meetings of the Section will be held in conjunction with the annual meeting of the Botanical Society of America, Inc. The Section will also hold an annual workshop during the meeting.
2. The Section may arrange special meetings whenever desirable.

#### ARTICLE V. *Amendments*

These Bylaws may be amended by a three-quarters vote of those voting members present at a scheduled business meeting, and will be submitted to the Council for approval as per Article VIII, section 4, of the Bylaws of the Botanical Society of America, Inc.

## **Appendix 2: Proposed and tabled Workshop for Botany 2020 Anchorage on Developing a Mentorship Program**

Mentorship networks are a powerful way to support, recruit, and retain people at all points in their educational and professional journey. As the Botanical Society of America is discussing mentorship broadly, we ask what best practices we could put in place to support current and future primarily undergraduate faculty within the PUI Plant Network. As a group, we will discuss with seminal plant biologist and mentorship scholar Beronda Montgomery and develop a 'wish list' for future faculty mentorship programs.

We will discuss specifically-

What makes a great mentor and a great mentee? What training should they receive?

What are the benefits and drawbacks to paired vertical mentorship versus cohort mentorship?

How do we evaluate the success of a mentorship program?

How do we promote inclusivity in a mentorship program?

As always, all current and future faculty, graduate students, undergraduate students, and PUI- curious people are invited to our programming. We will also hold our annual sectional business meeting and a mixer during the meeting.