

Public Policy Committee Annual Report, 2021-2022

BSA Public Policy Committee

Krissa Skogen (2023), Co-Chair

Tanisha Williams (2023), Co-Chair

Michelle Gaynor (2023) *Student Rep*

Norm Ellstrand (2022)

Scott Gevaert (2023)

Andrew Pais (2024)

Heather Cacanindin, Executive Director, ex officio

The joint committee of the BSA Public Policy Committee and ASPT Environmental and Public Policy Committee held a Zoom meeting in February 2022. Committee members communicated via email on grant evaluation and selection processes in the fall of 2021 and spring of 2022. Annotated agendas from each meeting are available on request.

The Joint Committee's work focused on four main areas in 2021-2022:

- 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.

The BSA Public Policy Award was provided to Zachary Quirk (University of Michigan, Ph.D. candidate) and Brendan Kosnick (Arkansas State University, Master's student), who both participated in the 2022 Virtual Congressional Visits Day and AIBS Boot Camp training.

Future Work for 2022 - 2023

- 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.

The 2022 recipients of the BAL Grant were Sara E. Hansen (PhD Student, Earth and Ecosystem Science, Central Michigan University), Rhea Ewing (visual artist), and Anna K. Monfils (Professor and Director of CMU Herbarium, Department of Biology, Central Michigan University) for their proposal "Creating Inclusive Resources for Botanical Science Education."

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 2021 (67-3, p. 160-163): Report from Virtual Congressional Visits Day

- A personal account from Mary Sagatelova, MPA
- Taylor AuBuchon-Elder's Experience

IV. Participation in the Nagoya Protocol....

Co-Chairs Skogen and Williams served as hosts representing BSA for the American Institute of Biological Sciences International Workshop Series "How does sharing genetic sequence data impact biodiversity science and conservation?" for the session on "Phylogenetics, genome evolution, and taxonomy" on 5 November 2021.

V. 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 2022 - 2023

- 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.