

## Public Policy Committee Annual Report, 2022-2023

### BSA Public Policy Committee

Krissa Skogen (2023), Co-Chair

Tanisha Williams (2023), Co-Chair

Michelle Gaynor (2023) *Student Rep*

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 did not hold any Zoom meetings in 2022-2023. Committee members communicated via email on grant evaluation and selection processes in the fall of 2022 and spring of 2023.

The Joint Committee's work focused on four main areas in 2022-2023:

- 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 received 4 proposals and was provided to Katherine Charton (Ph.D. candidate, University of Wisconsin-Madison) and Lauren M. Orton, PhD (Professor, Biology, Sauk Valley Community College), who both participated in the 2023 Congressional Visits Day and AIBS Boot Camp training, which were held in person for the first time since 2019.

#### *Future Work for 2023 - 2024*

- 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 Committee received X proposals for the BAL Grant.

The 2023 recipient of the BAL Grant was Maya Sahmsid-Deen representing Zeta Phi Beta Sorority for the proposal titled "Zeta Day at City Council: Social Action for Integrative Botanical Education, Access to Land, & Food Sovereignty."

#### *Future Work for 2023 - 2024*

- Increase the number of applications received

## **II. *Plant Science Bulletin* content on public policy issues**

The Public Policy Committee did not contribute to the *Plant Science Bulletin* in 2022-2023 but is working on a large contribution for Winter 2023.

### *Future Work for 2023 - 2024*

- Work with award recipients on providing content for two issues of the PSB in a timely manner and provide additional (3rd) piece on a public policy topic of interest to the Society.

**III.** There were no legislative issues that were tracked by the Committee nor advanced to BSA leadership for consideration in 2022-2023.

## **Future Work - 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 2023 - 2024*

- 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.