

# Membership and Communications Report

2022 July Board Meeting

Amelia Neely – Membership & Communications Manager

## Membership Overview as of July 1 each year

	as of 7/1/22		as of 7/1/21		7/1/20		7/1/19	
	2022	% of Total	2021	% of Total	2020	% of Total	2019	% of Total
Corresponding	73	2.6%	69	2.4%	69	2.4%	65	2.4%
Life	107	3.8%	96	3.3%	91	3.2%	82	3.1%
Emeritus	311	11.0%	301	10.3%	282	10.0%	278	10.3%
E Family	46	1.6%	43	1.5%	42	1.5%	39	1.5%
Retired	67	2.4%	65	2.2%	63	2.2%	53	2.0%
R Family	4	0.1%	2	0.1%	4	0.1%	2	0.1%
3 Yr Professional	252	8.9%	287	9.9%	275	9.7%	287	10.7%
3 Yr Prof Family	18	0.6%	20	0.7%	21	0.7%	18	0.7%
Professional	705	24.9%	747	25.7%	814	28.8%	813	30.2%
P Family	90	3.2%	102	3.5%	101	3.6%	108	4.0%
CC Professional	35	1.2%	32	1.1%	41	1.4%	32	1.2%
CC Family	2	0.1%	2	0.1%	3	0.1%	2	0.1%
3 Yr Postdoc*	46	1.6%	27	0.9%				
PostDoc	103	3.6%	124	4.3%	147	5.2%	145	5.4%
PD Family	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	3	0.1%	3	0.1%
3 Yr Student	281	9.9%	173	5.9%	128	4.5%	0	0.0%
Student	536	18.9%	648	22.3%	571	20.2%	618	23.0%
S Family	4	0.1%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
S Chapter	17	0.6%	14	0.5%	20	0.7%	22	0.8%
K-12 Teachers	6	0.2%	7	0.2%	11	0.4%	9	0.3%
Affiliate	17	0.6%	18	0.6%	25	0.9%	18	0.7%
Associate	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	0.0%
Amateur	32	1.1%	47	1.6%	51	1.8%	42	1.6%
3 Tr Dev. Nat	19	0.7%						
Developing Nations	60	2.1%	85	2.9%	68	2.4%	51	1.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2831</b>		<b>2909</b>		<b>2830</b>		<b>2688</b>	
Professional	1938	68.5%	2002	68.8%	2024	71.5%	1978	73.6%
Student	838	29.6%	835	28.7%	719	25.4%	640	23.8%
Other	55	1.9%	72	2.5%	87	3.1%	70	2.6%
<b>Growth/Decline</b>	<b>2831</b>		<b>2909</b>		<b>2830</b>		<b>2688</b>	

## 4-Year Membership Comparison through June 30th of each year (2022, 2021, 2020, 2019)

2022 mid-year totals are almost exactly the same as 2020, and slightly down (by 78 members) from 2021. 2020 and 2021 were boosted by low registration fees for our two virtual Botany Conferences. This year's virtual fees were higher to help pay for the expense of a hybrid conference and could have affected decisions on whether to join/renew with the Society.

Student totals were about the same as last year, showing that the Professional Member category took the brunt of the loss, a trend seen over the last several years. We met with DAL for Development, Jenny Cruse-Sanders, to discuss new ways to increase Professional members and are looking forward to some innovative approaches in line with our strategic plan goals.

## Membership Totals at the End of Each Year

(Professional totals below include all categories except Student, K-12 Teachers, Affiliate, and Amateur, whereas the totals in the paragraph above only refer to the Professional and Professional Family 1 and 3-year categories)

	2021	% of Total	2020	% of Total	2019	% of Total	2018	% of Total	2017	% of Total
Professional	2139	66.6%	2161	68.8%	2130	70.4%	2161	73.5%	2132	73.1%
Student	989	30.8%	878	27.9%	808	26.7%	679	23.1%	670	23.0%
Other	86	2.7%	103	3.3%	86	2.8%	101	3.4%	115	3.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>3214</b>		<b>3142</b>		<b>3024</b>		<b>2941</b>		<b>2917</b>	

Looking at the membership totals at the end of the last 5 years you can see a slight upward trend. In the last several years there was a bump of over 300 additional members between July and December of each year, so we can project that our year-end totals could possibly be close to the 2020 total membership number. I am working on ways to increase excitement at our BSA Member booth this conference with the hope of attracting new members. Hopefully, with those efforts and others, we can match last year's membership totals if not exceed them.

## Membership Category Highlights June 2022 vs 2021:

- This renewal cycle (starting October 1, 2021) we started both the 3-Year **Developing Nations gift membership** as well as **3-Year Developing Nations membership** options. So far 19 Developing Nations members have taken advantage of the multi-year option, 4 of them being gift membership recipients. Overall Developing Nations members are down only slightly from last year losing 6 members.
- Overall **Postdoc Member** totals are the same compared to last year at this time, however 19 more than last year have taken advantage of the **3-Year Postdoc membership option** (46 total) which was started on October 1, 2020. This has brought stability and longevity to that group since 31% are now multi-year members, and none in that group are due to renew in 2022.
- For the first time in many years **Student membership** numbers have plateaued at this mid-year time period being nearly identical as 2021 with 838 student members.
  - 281 Student members have taken advantage of the **3-Year Student membership category** so far this year compared to 173 in 2021, which shows a **large growth of 62%**. 41 of those students were given 3-Year gift memberships. This increase in three-year student memberships will significantly help us retain those student members in the coming years.
  - There have been 285 **New Student members** so far this renewal season (October 2021 to June 30, 2022), which is about 34% of our current student member total. This percentage typically increases by the end of the calendar year. We continue to have challenges renewing our student members at a high rate, but are hopeful that the three-year gift memberships will help stabilize this group.
  - The **2021 Gift Membership Drive**, which took place between October 1 through December 31, was a success! We surpassed our goal of 175 gift memberships purchased with a total of 187. This year included the 3-Year gift membership options for \$30 for the first time. Fifty-two 3-year gift memberships were purchased during the gift membership drive.
- **Professional Members** (Professional, 3-Year Professional, and Professional Family) decreased by 91 members (about an 8% decrease) in 2022 compared to 2021 YTD. As seen in past years, this category renews at a very high rate but we do not have the new members needed to keep this category growing (only 5% were new members so far this renewal season, October 1, 2021-June 30, 2022).
  - Professional members are asked each year to consider a **membership fee increase of \$25 per year**. This additional amount goes toward the **Graduate Student Research Award fund**. So far, this fiscal year (Oct 1, 2021 through June 30, 2022) \$15,925 was raised by Professional members opting-in to this membership fee increase including 460 1-Year and 59 3-Year Professional members. Through these dues, and other available funds, we were very excited to be able to give out 31 Grad Student Research Awards for 2022.

- **Recommendation to Increase Membership Dues**

It is with great thought that we put forth the recommendation to slightly increase the membership dues for certain membership levels for the 2023 renewal season starting on October 1, 2022. The BSA dues have not changed since 2014, and with the decreasing publications revenue, along with increased inflation and rising costs for everything from software to travel, we believe that changing the following membership fees is necessary.

Professional One-Year Membership = **\$75** (was \$70)

Professional One-Year Membership with GSRA donation = **\$100** (was \$95)

Professional One-Year Family Membership = **\$100** (was \$85)

Professional One-Year Family Membership with GSRA donation = **\$125** (was \$110)

Professional Three-Year Membership = **\$205** (was \$195)

Professional Three-Year Membership with GSRA donation = **\$280** (was \$270)

Professional Three-Year Family Membership = **\$250** (was \$240)

Professional Three-Year Family Membership with GSRA donation = **\$325** (was \$315)

Retired Membership = **\$40** (was \$35)

Retired Family Membership = **\$55** (was \$50)

**This recommendation must be approved by the Board, the Council and the Membership in order to go into effect.**

### **BSA eCommunications**

The first six 2022 *Membership Matters* eNewsletters had an increased **average open rate of 52.3%**, which is outstanding compared to the industry standard of around 30%. This high interest indicates that the monthly eNewsletter is seen as a great benefit to our members and has consistently included relevant and useful information to our member base.

New this year are two new newsletter features, the **Monthly Survey Question** (in which the survey results are also included in the following month's newsletter) and the monthly **Did You Know?** feature. The purpose of these two new items is to engage the membership, learn more about our members, and share BSA resources that are available and that might not be readily known.

In 2022 we continue to send **monthly eTocs for AJB and APPS** with an amazing increased **open rate of 55%**, showing the incredible value that our members find receiving eTocs from BSA. New this year, with the change in publication schedule for *APPS*, *AJB* and *APPS* have separate eTocs unless published in the same month. The open rate above is a combination of all *AJB* and *APPS* eToc emails. The **eTocs for the *Plant Science Bulletin*** are also well received garnering an impressive **56% open rate** for the first issue sent in 2022.

Please note that thanks to a change in Apple mail rules which "open" all emails when they arrive in an account, the open rate is slightly inflated for those members. It is not possible to tell which members are affected as apple can be used with any number of mail programs (yahoo or Gmail for example) and those can be affected if using an apple product to view the emails. None-the-less, we are confident that the open rate is in line with past years and well above the industry standard.

Sixteen **conference eBlasts**, including sectional Botany 2022 emails, and conference deadlines and news, have been sent out this year advertising and promoting Botany 2022. These were accompanied by numerous social media posts on all three platforms including two countdowns, one for abstract submission and one for the start of the conference.

Other types of emails sent include awards notifications, BSA officer nominations and elections, emails to specific BSA sections, education announcements, renewals, and publication emails.

## Botany360

I am excited to give an update on [Botany360](#). Botany360 is a series of programming that connects our botanical community during the 360 days outside of Botany Conferences. The Botany360 event calendar is a tool to highlight those events. The goal of this program is to connect the plant science community throughout the year with professional development, discussion sessions, and networking and social opportunities.

So far this year there have been 6 events as well as 4 “Phytochem Talks”, held by the Phytochemistry Section, which met every-other week for four weeks.

- [Ace It! - Write a Better Title](#) (March 2, 2022)  
Workshop presented by Dr. Bruce Kirchoff, University of North Carolina at Greensboro, and Dr. Eliezer Cocoltzi, University of Veracruz. In this workshop they reviewed the structure of a good title, worked in breakout groups to rewrite some titles, and gave the opportunity to draft a title for their talk.
- [Ace It! - Write a Better Abstract](#) (March 23, 2022)  
Workshop presented by Dr. Bruce Kirchoff, University of North Carolina at Greensboro, and Dr. Eliezer Cocoltzi, University of Veracruz. After reviewing the structure of a good abstract, they worked through some abstracts from Nature. Participants then revised their abstracts and got feedback from their peers. This is a follow-up workshop to an earlier workshop on titles.
- [Careers in Botany: Government Agencies](#) (April 6, 2022)  
The Early Career Professional Development Committee hosted a **Botanical Careers panel to highlight botanical career paths in government**. Panelists shared experiences and advice about working as a botanist at a federal agency.
- [De-mystifying the MS submissions process: Before you submit \(Part 1\)](#) (May 11, 2022)  
*Resources for this event can be found [here](#).*  
Part 1 of a 2-Part workshop to help navigate all stages of the peer review process. This workshop was presented by Dr. Briana Gross, University of Minnesota-Duluth, Editor-in-Chief, *Applications in Plant Sciences*, and Dr. Brittany Sutherland, George Mason University.
- [De-mystifying the MS submissions process: Before you submit \(Part 2\)](#) (May 18, 2022)  
Part 2 of a 2-Part workshop to help navigate all stages of the peer review process. This workshop was presented by Dr. Pamela Diggle, University of Connecticut, Editor-in-Chief, *American Journal of Botany*, and Amy McPherson, Director of Publications, Botanical Society of America and Managing Editor, *American Journal of Botany*.
- [So you want to get involved with section leadership...](#) (June 5, 2022)  
Presented by Kyra N. Krakos, Maryville University, 2022 Chair of the BSA Teaching and Outreach Section. A walkthrough of the roles, responsibilities, and benefits of being in section leadership.

I chair the new Ad-Hoc Botany360 committee, which includes leaders in many of the BSA committees and sections, and I coordinate meetings every quarter to bring together the committee to discuss ideas and joint ventures that could be planned and executed. Working with Rob Brandt, Rob and I created the [Botany360 calendar](#), and I created the [Botany360 application form](#), and the [Botany360 landing page](#) which currently includes six recordings that are free for anyone to access, as well as a list of other professional development recordings that could be of interest to the community. Botany360 events are advertised in BSA

Newsletters, stand-alone emails to the BSA community, the Botany360 Calendar, and on all three BSA Social Media Platforms.

Other additions to the program since its inception include a new Botany360 checklist for the organizers, a landing page for recordings, a shared drive for any materials needed before or after the event (if needed for a recorded event for example), and a survey that is taken after each event by participants. So far, the surveys have been overwhelmingly positive and show the need for more professional development opportunities for this community. If you are interested in organizing a Botany360 event please contact me ([aneely@botany.org](mailto:aneely@botany.org)) and I will be happy to help.

### Other Updates

- I spent a significant amount of time working with Heather on the awards for BSA this award season including organizing the shared doc to assist Tricia with payments, assisting applicants, gathering photos, updating the award pages on the BSA website, and preparing the 2022 Awards Slideshow for Botany 2022.
- I supported and promoted the BSA publications efforts through email campaigns, creation and updating of website pages, social media promotion, and creating graphic design for ads. I updated BSA and SEB websites as needed.
- I worked with SEB and SSE on their eCommunications and renewal needs.
- This was a particularly heavy year working with SEB due to their many conference needs and Society name change efforts. It was by far the most time spent on an organization outside of BSA.

### Social Media Report

**It is exciting to announce that the BSA's Social Media Platforms have over 55,000 followers combined!** I wanted to thank Teressa Alexander for her hard work this year as the BSA Student Social Media Liaison. To learn more about Teressa, you can check out her BSA Spotlight here: <https://botany.org/home/careers-jobs/careers-in-botany/bsa-spotlight-series/teressa-alexander.html>

**Recommendation:** It is my recommendation that the BSA Student Social Media Liaison be suspended for the October 2022-September 2023 time period, revamped the following year with input from the BSA Student Representatives, and possibly resume for the October 2023-September 2024 time period. This will allow for a re-adjustment of the position that will better serve the needs of the Society as well as the liaisons, and it will free up needed funds in the budget in a year that is incredibly tight financially. The current BSA Student Representatives have been contacted for their input and have approved this recommendation with the hope that we can make the needed changes and resume this position at some point in the future.

### Student Social Media Liaison Report: Mar – July 2022

Teressa Alexander

### Twitter

### Social Impact:

Similar to the previous report, the number of tweets affect the number of profile visits, mentions, follower growth. The past 28-day summary shows an increase in follows, and each month there has been growth in followers.

**What can be improved:**

Using video posts to see if reach, impressions, and engagements would increase.

**Facebook**

**Social Impact:**

The current reach, profile, and new likes of the Facebook page is up. This may be due to the consistent posts surrounding the conference for the audience to engage with. Similar to the last report, the posts with significant reach are the BSA spotlight, summer and job opportunities and introducing new staff or members of the BSA.

**What can be improved:**

Testing video content like instructional videos for finding information on the BSA website.

**Instagram**

**Social Impact:**

More accounts have been reached than in the previous accounts. The audience is more engaged and there has been an increase in followers.

**What can be improved:**

Using IG stories and calls to action in the captions of posts should be more consistent. For example, Taxa Tuesday posts perform better when engaging with participants to the calls to action and highlighting responses in IG stories (see post below).

