

Annual report of the BSA Committee on Human Diversity. July 2019.

Diversity Committee Membership as of July 2019:

Ann Sakai (2020), chair

James Cohen (2021), co-chair

Eric Wada (2019)

Vivian Negron-Ortiz (2020)

Roland Roberts (2021)

Muriel Poston (2021)

Anna Monfils (2021)

Michelle Garcia, Student Representative (2019)

Amy Litt (2020), Program Director, ex officio

Andi Wolfe (2019), President ex officio

Heather Cacanindin, Executive Director, ex officio

1. Committee meeting. In 2018, the Committee on Human Diversity met in Rochester, Minnesota. Very few committee members attended, but plans for several events in 2019 were initiated. In 2019, the Committee will meet Sunday morning at BOTANY 2019 in Tucson, Arizona. A request was made by Eric Wada for the capability of remote attendance at the meeting, and the possibility of this is being investigated.

2. Discussion and Funding of a Diversity and Inclusion Initiative (Education for a diverse and inclusive community in botany).

During the 2018 meeting, the ideas for a Diversity and Inclusion Initiative with several events at BOTANY 2019 were discussed. Several large community college (CC) systems as well as tribal colleges (TC) near the meetings have a high proportion of undergraduates from groups under-represented in biology, including the plant sciences. This new initiative focused on CC and TC institutions with the goal of providing faculty interested in the plant sciences with professional development opportunities, and providing students with exposure to the opportunities available in STEM, and particularly in research and careers related to botany. The Diversity and Inclusion Initiative includes a Sunday workshop for faculty (Broadening botanical pathways in teaching, Gordon Uno and Marshall Sundberg leads), a Monday morning contributed paper session (Education and Outreach, Kyra Krakos organizer), and a Monday afternoon special session (The Future of Botany: Educating for a Diverse and Inclusive Community in Botany (Ann Sakai, Muriel Poston, Anna Monfils). Speakers in this special session include Muriel Poston (Pitzer College, moderator), Anthony DePass (Long Island University; Increasing diversity in STEM: Bridging practice and scholarship), Teresa Newberry (Tohono O'odham Community College; The Role of tribal colleges in promoting a diverse and inclusive community in botany), Monica Gaughan (Arizona State University; The ecological fallacy and why botanists still need to understand student demographics), and Pamela Soltis (University of Florida; Engaging a diverse biodiversity workforce through natural history collections). Clif Poodry (HHMI) was initially scheduled to present but had to withdraw because of medical reasons. Tribal and community college students were invited to join the PLANTS program with its associated mentors and activities (applying to grad school, career lunch, etc.). The special session, and travel awards to CC and TC faculty and students were funded by NSF award 1929435 (Conference: The Future of Botany: Educating for a Diverse-PI and Inclusive 21st Century Workforce; July, 2019, Tucson, AZ; Catrina Adams PI, Kyra Krakos, co-PI) to the Botanical Society of

America (\$63,599). Heather Cacanindin, Catrina Adams, Johanne Stogran and the rest of the BSA staff were instrumental in helping to facilitate submission and administration of this one-year award.

### 3. Enhancing Scientist Diversity in Plant Biology Luncheon

Co-chair Jim Cohen coordinated the visit of Tom Antonio (Institute of American Indian Arts; What I learned about teaching botany to Native American students). The Human Diversity Committee welcomes ideas for future luncheon topics, formats, and speakers from the Diversity Committee as well as other BOTANY participants.

4. PLANTS. In 2011, the Botanical Society of America was awarded a five-year NSF-funded PLANTS grant (Preparing Leaders and Nurturing Tomorrow's Scientists): Increasing the diversity of plant scientists), directed by Ann Sakai (UC-Irvine), Ann Hirsch (UCLA), and Heather Cacanindin (BSA). The goal of this program is to increase the number of undergraduates from underrepresented groups who attend the annual BOTANY meetings, and to increase their level of academic excellence and motivation to pursue advanced degrees in the plant sciences. The program for the PLANTS students is based on extensive mentoring by BSA volunteers (faculty, postdocs, PLANTS alumni) at the meeting. In 2015, the Botanical Society of America was awarded a second NSF grant (directed by Ann Sakai, Anna Monfils (Central Michigan University, and Heather Cacanindin) for another five years (2016-2020). In 2018, Monfils was the PI while Sakai was in conflict for the year because of her employment at the National Science Foundation. If BSA wishes to submit a proposal for a third five year period, then this document should be written in 2020.

5. SACNAS. SACNAS is an organization devoted to advancing Hispanics, Chicanos & Native Americans in Science. In recent years, the BSA gave \$500 poster awards to two undergraduates and usually recruited at least one student from the SACNAS meetings for PLANTS. These SACNAS awards were based on the evaluations of the few dedicated BSA members attending SACNAS willing to volunteer their time to judge posters. In 2018 the BSA decided not to sponsor undergraduate poster awards at the annual SACNAS meetings because of the difficulty in finding enough judges and coordinating judging with SACNAS for other awards.

### 6. Issues to discuss at Human Diversity Committee meeting:

- follow up on products from Diversity and Inclusion initiative involving BSA
- choice of speaker/panel/event for Tuesday Enhancing Scientist Diversity in Plant Biology Luncheon
- should the Diversity Committee pursue new directions for initiatives, and if so, topic and leadership for them (continued national effort for NSF-defined URM; local outreach at each meeting site; outreach to other types of underrepresented groups, etc.)
- should BSA apply for a third PLANTS grant and if so, who would lead the effort
- relationship of the PIs of the PLANTS award and membership and position on the Human Diversity Committee (potential bylaw change)

Prepared by Ann Sakai, Human Diversity Committee Chair

July 23, 2019