



## BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF AMERICA

**Mission:** *The Botanical Society of America exists to promote botany, the field of basic science dealing with the study and inquiry into the form, function, development, diversity, reproduction, evolution, and uses of plants and their interactions within the biosphere.*

**The objectives of The Society are to:** *sustain and provide improved formal and informal education about plants; encourage basic plant research; provide expertise, direction, and position statements concerning plants and ecosystems; and foster communication within the professional botanical community, and between botanists and the rest of humankind through publications, meetings, and committees.*

### I. 2019 BSA Business Report – Introduction

The following report provides an overview of the activities of the Botanical Society of America's business office over the past twelve months. It has been a challenging second full year as Executive Director as we dealt with the ramifications of the Covid-19 pandemic and what it means for our organizational operations and the conference. In mid-March, just two weeks after the BSA Board met in St. Louis, the St. Louis office staff moved to remote operations and has remained flexible and focused. There were a few things that slowed down and issues from the March Board meeting that took a backseat to the immediate issues of the conference conversion. I would like to thank the Board, section leadership, and committee chairs for their support, understanding and direction. On behalf of the Board, the Society and myself, I also would like to thank our staff Catrina Adams, Rob Brandt, Jodi Creasap Gee, Richard Hund, Wanda Lovan, Amy McPherson, Amelia Neely, Beth Parada, and Johanne Stogran, for their dedication and perseverance through the last several difficult months. Your staff continues to work hard to deliver on the Society's mission and serve our members.

### II. Financial Update

BSA finances are quite healthy. We ended FY2019 with a net operating income of \$377,905. This total includes the large gift from the Kaplan family and is missing a quarterly payment from Wiley that arrived late, just after the end of the fiscal year. If you remove the large donation and add the Wiley quarterly payment in, we arrive at around \$96,000 for net operating income which is very close to the budgeted surplus for FY2019 - \$85,836.

FY2020 income is on track and expenses are lower than normal. (Please see FY2020 Budget to Actual). Key things to note about our financial picture for FY2020 so far:

- 1) Our salaries and benefits and overall admin costs are down this year compared to last year, same period. After the pandemic hit, the Missouri Botanical Garden applied for a Payment Protection Plan loan and included the BSA staff as part of this application, since they administer our payroll and HR. Their loan (which does not need to be repaid) saved us two months of salaries. Thank you, Missouri Botanical Garden! Staff and the Board are also traveling less, which has cut down on expense.
- 2) Publication income is now solely reliant on the contracted amount with Wiley and is spread throughout the fiscal year. We will receive an additional \$150,000 in income prior to the end of the fiscal year. We received our second royalty payment, which stems from the sales in 2019. The royalty payment totaled \$45K (half of what we received as a royalty the previous year).

- 3) Publication expenses are somewhat lower than last year at this time, largely due to savings on Pub staff salaries/benefits from the PPP loan.
- 4) Income and expenses for grant activity is down significantly as our education and outreach programs were greatly affected by the pandemic. We are also in an extension year for the Digging Deeper education and outreach grant. The largest expenditures were captured in the early years of the grant. We have received another no-cost extension to continue the work on this grant for one more year.
- 5) Conference income and expenses will be noted closer to the end of the fiscal year. It is still hard to say if we will make any profit from the virtual conference. We were lucky enough through the skilled negotiation and patience of our conference staff to avoid paying cancellation penalties to Anchorage.

As of July 30, 2020:

BSA Conference Account: \$105,937  
 BSA Checking Account: \$359,365  
 BSA Money Market Account: \$307,192

\*Cash in our accounts is higher than normal. The conference account is yet to pay out most of the expenses for Botany 2020 and for the BSA checking account recall that this is the majority of the revenue we will work with for the remainder of the calendar year.

### **BSA Investment Portfolio**

We extend a special thank you to the members who donated to our endowment, the Past Presidents' Fund, and to the various BSA section and award funds. Total giving so far this year includes 610 donations totaling \$46,509 in all categories. Though our number of donations has actually increased compared to the same dates last year (610 vs 562) the total amount is lower compared to last year by about \$9,400, which is not including the large \$355,000 gift given last year. Total BSA endowment giving so far is \$12,486, which came from 90 donors (a decrease from \$26,101 vs. the same period last year).

As of June 30, 2020, our BSA investment portfolio (BIP) stood at **\$5,944,268**, which is a 5% increase from last year.

Society and Sectional Funds as part of the Total BIP  
 Actuals as of June 30, 2020

<b>TOTAL MS Investment Portfolio</b>	<b>\$5,944,268</b>
Designated Funds (BSA/Sections)	\$1,737,394
Undesignated Funds	\$4,206,874
BSA Designated Funds	\$131,105
BSA Awards	\$1,505
BSA Endowment	\$505,147
BSA Restricted Funds	\$642,209
SUBTOTAL BSA Funds	\$1,286,966
Sectional Accounts	\$137,573
Sectional Awards	\$141,660
Sectional Endowments/Restricted	\$171,197
SUBTOTAL Sectional Funds	\$450,430

<b>Botanical Society of America</b>			
<b>Profit and Loss</b>			
<b>JUN - 30 - 2020</b>		<b>FY2020 Budget</b>	<b>FY2020 YTD Actual</b>
<b>Administration</b>			
	Income	\$207,916	\$221,536
	Expenditure	\$469,492	\$284,475
		-\$261,576	-\$62,939
<b>Publications</b>			
	Income	\$797,516	\$724,412
	Expenditure	\$361,139	\$196,377
		\$436,377	\$528,035
<b>Conference</b>			
	Income	\$250,000	\$2,294
	Expenditure	\$248,769	\$12,626
		\$1,231	-\$10,332
<b>Education</b>			
	Income	\$0	\$0
	Expenditure	\$42,652	\$28,588
		-\$42,652	-\$28,588
<b>Grants</b>			
	Income	\$572,314	\$94,334
	Expenditure	\$572,314	\$88,001
		\$0	\$6,333
<b>Development</b>			
	Income	\$35,000	\$21,177
	Expenditure	\$16,439	\$5,320
		\$18,561	\$15,858
<b>Board</b>			
	Income	\$0	\$0
	Expenditure	\$47,800	\$26,853
		-\$47,800	-\$26,853
<b>Operations Subtotal</b>			
	Income	<b>\$1,862,746</b>	<b>\$1,063,753</b>
	Expenditure	<b>\$1,758,605</b>	<b>\$642,240</b>
		<b>\$104,141</b>	<b>\$421,513</b>

<b>Sections</b>			
	Income	\$24,500	\$11,743
	Expenditure	\$30,000	\$12,061
		-\$5,500	-\$318
<b>Awards</b>			
	Income	\$27,000	\$31,480
	Expenditure	\$43,000	\$23,218
		-\$16,000	8263
<b>Investments</b>			
	Income	\$20,000	\$103,489
	Expenditure	\$0	\$56,148
		\$20,000	\$47,341
<b>Total</b>			
	<b>Income</b>	<b>\$1,934,246</b>	<b>\$1,210,466</b>
	<b>Expenditure</b>	<b>\$1,831,605</b>	<b>\$733,667</b>
		<b>\$102,641</b>	<b>\$476,799</b>

### III. Governance

In the last four months, I have been dealing with several issues related to the pandemic's impact on our staff and workplace. These include HR issues, family work/life balance for staff, adjusting to new procedures for working entirely from home, receiving and sending mail, and handling dual control over check writing and deposits for our accounts. Our office staff will continue to work from their homes for the foreseeable future, while two essential employees have access to the office to handle the mail.

Making the transition to a virtual conference due to Covid-19 was a heavy lift and involved legal consultations, contractual revisions as well as several negotiations with the hotel and conference center staff in Anchorage to avoid large penalties. This transition involved a few Board conference calls and a call with all conference partner societies. With over 1200 registrants from 44 countries, we are looking forward to holding our first ever virtual conference and to consider what the possibilities this option may hold for future meetings. A hearty thanks to Johanne Stogran and Amy Litt for their tireless work this spring and summer to convert Botany conference into a new format.

Our contract with the Missouri Botanical Garden for our business office space and HR/payroll services comes to an end this year. I began negotiations for a renewal of this agreement with the Garden President and Chief Operating Officer last summer. They are keen for us to remain at the Garden, and have asked for a slight increase for rent and their services that they provide to us (mail, HR, payroll). I have asked for some improvements to the structure of our building where we are experiencing leaks with windows during heavy rains and some deterioration of exterior walls. In the last contract, the BSA paid the entire eight-year fee up front due to a significant renovation that needed to take place for our building. This time, we plan to make annual payments to the Garden. A draft agreement should be ready before the end of July and I will work with our officers to review it.

Working with the Investment Committee, we have had several ongoing discussions this year about the BSA investment portfolio and implementing an environmentally and socially responsible (ESG) portfolio that screens out investments in pipelines and fossil fuels, while investing in funds that meet ESG guidelines. The committee is also working on a revision of our BSA Investment Policy which will come to the Board for approval this fall.

BSA's Treasurer and I have been working closely for two years to review all of the accounts/partitions within the BSA investment portfolio and engage in discussions with sectional leaders about some of the smaller funds. A few sections have rolled up their smaller accounts into their main sectional account or combined two small funds into one. In February, the Board voted to get rid of some of the special Board designated funds (virtual partitions) and let those funds roll into BSA undesignated/unallocated. In addition, the Board approved a new policy dealing with sectional funding requests to assist any sections that have special financial needs.

Fundraising efforts continue and this year we launched a gift membership campaign in December which surpassed its goal. I was able to work with Dorothy Kaplan to complete a signed gift agreement in December and we just provided the first Kaplan Research Award in Comparative Morphology to Annika Smith for \$10,000. A significant donation was made to the Development & Structural Section to fund student travel awards to Botany conference and we continue to hold

conversations with another BSA family who wants to potentially provide a gift to support female scientists.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion issues have come into sharper focus this summer since the killing of George Floyd. The Board worked quickly and released a statement against racism against our Black colleagues and community. We released a Google form to solicit feedback from Society members on suggestions and changes that need to be made to BSA policies and procedures. That feedback is being used on an ongoing basis by the Human Diversity Committee which has met twice this summer. Changes to the Emerging Leader and Distinguished Fellow awards are being proposed and I have been working with a DEI facilitator who will assist us in holding a DEI Listening and Discussion session during Botany conference. DEI training sessions for staff and the Board are scheduled (with this same facilitator) for the coming year.

Oversight of the new awards platform has been more time consuming than planned, as we made the first tweaks to the system and helped SSE and BSA to onboard several awards and nominations to the online platform. We often spend time walking the evaluators through the system and provide troubleshooting for applicants. After a few conference calls with their leadership, the Society for Systematic Biology has made a payment to BSA in order to “buy-in” to the awards system. Any enhancements or programming changes going forward can now be shared by the four societies that shared in the cost of building the platform – SSE, ASPT, BSA and SSB.

Other items I have been working on are:

- Hired a new insurance broker to achieve better coverage at a lower price
- Completing the performance review process for all staff members
- Discussion with PLANTS Co-PIs about planning for the future of the program
- Conducting a membership survey in January and gathering information on potential strategic planning consultants and how best to implement the process in a virtual environment
- Planning and working with the conference organizers for the SEB meeting, which was postponed to 2021
- Preparation for and attendance at two SSE Council meetings

#### **IV. Membership**

We were able to grow membership in 2019 for the first time in several years. 2020 membership is very strong and looks to either end around the same spot or outpace 2019 totals. We have seen strong adoption of the 3-Year student membership option, implemented last August. We are requesting the addition of a 3-Year PostDoc option for \$105. The year-end gift membership push was quite a success. Please see the Membership and Marketing Report for more information.

**Recommendation 1:** It is recommended that we again hold a “new” student membership drive, in which any of our members can provide a gift membership at the rate of \$10 per student.

**Recommendation 2:** It is recommended that we instituted a 3-Year PostDoc Membership option for \$105 (versus \$40 per year).

## V. Publications

In 2019, we focused on marketing, discoverability, and raising our journals' profiles. Several of the items identified at the January 2019 Strategy Day have been implemented. We are hopeful that the steps we are taking will bring up our impact factors and lead to more submissions, thus generating a snowball effect going forward. In fact, impact factors for both of our journals are up this year! One concern is that in the second year of our Wiley contract, our royalty decreased by half (from \$93K to \$45K). Wiley expects that \$45K is more in line with what we can expect as a royalty in the future.

Please see the Publications Report for more detailed information on the *American Journal of Botany*, *Applications in Plant Science*, as well as the *Plant Science Bulletin* report.

## VI. BSA Management Support Services

Working with their officer teams, four BSA staff members provide a range of support services to SEB and SSE. We write and deploy communications and membership campaigns and manage their membership databases, assist with their IT needs, and I attend their Board meetings and provide governance and management advice. These two societies will bring in \$74,000 to BSA during this calendar year. It must be noted that these contracts allow us to carry an additional staff member to support our overall efforts. Especially this last year, we have been able to find areas of synergy where we learn and share information among societies.

## VII. Botany Conference

Last fall, I oversaw the final financial reconciliation from the 2019 conference. We saw a small profit from the meeting in Tucson. Some of the Botany conference issues I have been involved with are the Covid-related Anchorage meeting cancelation (renegotiation for 2022), consulting with legal counsel on contract provisions for future conference protection, and working with our Conference Manager to demo an online platform and make the conversion to a virtual meeting. Please see the Conference Report for more details.

## VIII. Education and Outreach

We are in a no-cost extension year on our \$2.88 million grant, "**Digging Deeper Together – A Model for Collaborative Teacher/Scientist Professional Development**" which has helped to fund PlantingScience over the last several years. Much effort has been put into the development and submission of a new education grant which was recently funded by NSF for \$3.8 million! This is very exciting news for the continuation of our K-12 outreach efforts that bring plant-based inquiry and scientists into schools through an online platform. It should be noted that K-12 outreach and PlantingScience was ranked as the number one priority for education and outreach in our latest member survey.

Our second PLANTS grant (\$99,000) is in year 5 of 5 years of funding from NSF, supporting students from under-represented groups to attend our Botany Conferences. We have a no-cost extension for this grant which will take us through the meeting in Boise next year. The Business office manages the advertisement, application and evaluation process; the communications and tracking of the selected PLANTS fellows over time; as well as mentor cultivation. The staff support on this grant is handled by the Membership and Finance Managers. Discussions about submission of a PLANTS III grant will begin post-conference.

A third NSF grant related to a Diversity and Inclusion grant funded travel and expenses for speakers at a special spotlight session on in Tucson, brought Community College and Tribal College educators to the conference, and supported the addition of 8 extra undergraduate students from local community and tribal colleges as part of the PLANTS program. A no cost extension on this grant allows us to bring together some of these individuals to the virtual conference, covering their registration, with some remaining funds to continue the program in Boise in 2021.

### **IX. IT Support**

Much of the last several months, our IT Manager spent a good deal of time working with a contractor on the new awards submission and evaluation system, rolling it out for both SSE and BSA awards. He also provides updates to the CiviCRM database, which is used for by BSA, ASPT and SSE for member data. It is important to note that he also spent a good deal of time responding to threats/needed changes and ongoing server updates to our IT systems. The IT Manager works with the Conference and program managers to handle the abstract submission site for Botany conference and assist in the creation of the scientific program. Although the work was delayed by the pandemic, we are looking forward to starting an overhaul of botany.org this year in conjunction with our new Ad Hoc Committee for Website Redesign. An RFP will be developed with committee input post-conference and potential contractors will be contacted to prepare proposals for this important work. Please see the IT Report for more details.

Respectfully submitted,  
Heather Cacanindin  
Executive Director  
7/20/2020