



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. 2020-2021 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. Despite the challenges the Covid-19 pandemic has presented, the Society continues to thrive, with increased connectedness due to Zoom meetings and virtual professional development opportunities. Membership numbers are up, our investment account is performing extremely well, and conference attendance at 1200 and climbing. I would like to thank the Board, section leadership, and committee chairs for their support, understanding and direction during challenging times. On behalf of the Board, the Society and myself, I also would like to thank our staff, especially Wanda Lovan who is retiring after 18 years of service to the Society as our Accounting and Administration Manager. Your staff continues to work hard to deliver on the Society's mission and serve our members.

II. Financial Update

BSA finances are strong. We ended FY2020 with a net operating income of \$242,062, which was higher than the budgeted surplus of \$104,141 due to lack of spending during the pandemic.

FY2021 income is on track and expenses are again lower than normal. (Please see FY2021 Budget to Actual).

Key things to note about our FY2021 fiscal year performance:

- 1) Our overall income from membership dues is down 21% from last year at the same time. This is mostly due to the large influx of 3-year membership renewals in FY2020 causing higher than normal dues income in that fiscal year as well as the increased ratio of students to professional members in 2021.
- 2) Publication income will be about 4-5% less than the previous year due to a decrease in our royalty from Wiley (decrease in sales and APC income)
- 3) Our salaries and benefits are more in line with a regular year. You will recall that last year we received a PPP loan through the Missouri Botanical Garden which covered 2 months of salary for our staff. In FY2021, we are receiving Employee Retention Credits.
- 4) Meeting income from the 2020 conference was better than projected and is reflected in our FY2021 income. (\$7,487.46 was the BSA share of the profit)
- 5) Grant income and expenses are greater than last year. Activity and spending for our new F2 Education grant is picking up as the work gets underway.
- 6) Travel and meeting expenses have been all but negligible due to the pandemic.

As of June 30, 2021:

BSA Conference Account: \$154,436
BSA Checking Account: \$504,387
BSA Money Market Account: \$507,358

*Cash in our accounts is higher than normal. The conference account is yet to pay out most of the expenses for Botany 2021 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 as most of our revenue is front loaded to the first six months of the 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 519 donations totaling \$49,918 in all categories. Though our number of donations has decreased compared to the same dates last year (519 vs 610) the total amount is \$3,400 more compared to last year. Total BSA endowment giving so far is \$16,590, which came from 89 donors (an increase of \$4,000 vs. the same period last year).

As of June 30, 2021, our BSA investment portfolio (BIP) stood at **\$8,025,407** which is whopping 35% increase from last year.

Society and Sectional Funds as part of the Total BIP
Actuals as of June 30, 2021

TOTAL MS Investment Portfolio	\$8,025,407
Designated Funds (BSA/Sections)	\$1,773,712
Undesignated Funds	\$6,251,695
BSA Designated Funds	\$144,908
BSA Awards	\$1,515
BSA Endowment	\$530,003
BSA Restricted Funds	\$647,973
SUBTOTAL BSA Funds	\$1,304,400
Sectional Accounts	\$119,830
Sectional Awards	\$172,129
Sectional Endowments/Restricted	\$177,353
SUBTOTAL Sectional Funds	\$469,311

III. Governance

In the past year, I have worked on several key governance-related issues. First, the restructure of the committee appointment process and development of the new committee application process as well as new committee description web pages and expansion of the Committee on Committees.

I worked closely with BSA President, Cindi Jones, the strategic planning working group and the consultant to finalize the Strategic Planning Committee meeting plan and agenda. Together our staff pulled together the needed background information and briefings for the Strategic Planning Committee to use in preparation for SPC working sessions.

You can view the briefing book here - <https://cms.botany.org/2021-strategic-planning.html>

As part of the preparation process, I worked with our DEI Committee Chair and President to ensure that DEI issues were central throughout strategic planning by hiring and working with Come Abide Here LLC to conduct racial intelligence training with our SPC members prior to strategic planning. The draft plan has been reviewed by the strategic planning working groups and is ready for Board and Council review and approval.

I have also been working with the DEI Chair and Committee to launch a broad demographic data collection effort that spans membership, award applications, as well as a cross-society survey and dealing with the security and privacy issues around that data storage and use. When the Dear Colleague Letter from NSF with the LEAPS grant opportunity arose this spring, BSA staff spent several weeks working to assess and forge potential collaborations with other scientific societies and assess proposals that would make an impact on positive cultural change in our societies. BSA committed to participation in four NSF LEAPS proposals (but declined to submit a proposal spearheaded by BSA due to resource limitations).

The Investment Committee has continued ongoing monitoring of the recent implementation of an environmentally and socially responsible (ESG) investment portfolio that screens out investments in pipelines and fossil fuels, while investing in funds that meet ESG guidelines. Our investment portfolio is performing extremely well! I also supported the committee in their work through a revision of our BSA Investment Policy which was approved by the Board this spring and places a limit on investments in equities, making it a bit more conservative than the previous approach.

In the last four months, I have been dealing with several issues related to the pandemic's impact on our staff and workplace. 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 and accounts payable. We will entertain a return to the office more fully after monitoring the Covid-19 Delta variant and deploying an employee survey post-Botany conference. In addition, I have been working with HR on two job openings for our staff and have been conducting interviews. The most impactful change is in the area of accounting and finance, when our long-time accounting manager, Wanda Lovan, retires this July. While we have made an offer to a potential candidate, they have not yet accepted and we are preparing for a gap period in which Wanda will complete minimal financial business through a contractual arrangement until we can transition to a new staff person.

Other items I have been working on are this year:

- Reviewing and revising contracts to launch our new Education Grant (F2)

- Completing the performance review process for all staff members
- Discussion with PLANTS Co-PIs and contributions to crafting the PLANTS III: Botany and Beyond proposal which was submitted in June to NSF (\$1.2 million)
- Conference planning and oversight for Botany 2021 and contractual revisions
- Supporting the BSA nominations and election process
- Planning and work with SEB leadership for multiple virtual 2021 SEB symposia and panels
- Preparation for and attendance at three SSE Council meetings

IV. Membership

Membership Overview

	as of 7/1/21		All of 2020		All of 2019		All of 2018		All of 2017	
	2021	% of Total	2020	% of Total	2019	% of Total	2018	% of Total	2017	% of Total
Corresponding	69	2.4%	69	2.2%	69	2.3%	65	2.2%	68	2.3%
Life	96	3.3%	94	3.0%	87	2.9%	76	2.6%	69	2.4%
Emeritus	301	10.3%	299	9.5%	283	9.4%	280	9.5%	281	9.6%
E Family	43	1.5%	43	1.4%	39	1.3%	39	1.3%	38	1.3%
Retired	65	2.2%	73	2.3%	66	2.2%	65	2.2%	53	1.8%
R Family	2	0.1%	3	0.1%	2	0.1%	0	0.0%	4	0.1%
3 Yr Professional	287	9.9%	289	9.2%	300	9.9%	242	8.2%	178	6.1%
3 Yr Prof Family	20	0.7%	22	0.7%	20	0.7%	17	0.6%		0.0%
Professional	<u>747</u>	25.7%	857	27.3%	881	29.1%	984	33.5%	1050	36.0%
P Family	<u>102</u>	3.5%	103	3.3%	111	3.7%	129	4.4%	145	5.0%
CC Professional	32	1.1%	41	1.3%	38	1.3%	34	1.2%	44	1.5%
CC Family	2	0.1%	3	0.1%	3	0.1%	2	0.1%	4	0.1%
3 Yr Postdoc*	27	0.9%	15	0.5%						
PostDoc	124	4.3%	158	5.0%	159	5.3%	173	5.9%	173	5.9%
PD Family	0	0.0%	3	0.1%	3	0.1%	3	0.1%	1	0.0%
3 Yr Student	173	5.9%	144	4.6%	94	3.1%		0.0%		0.0%
Student	648	22.3%	713	22.7%	692	22.9%	643	21.9%	630	21.6%
S Family	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	2	0.1%	3	0.1%
S Chapter	<u>14</u>	0.5%	21	0.7%	22	0.7%	34	1.2%	37	1.3%
K-12 Teachers	<u>7</u>	0.2%	14	0.4%	12	0.4%	15	0.5%	13	0.4%
Affiliate	18	0.6%	30	1.0%	22	0.7%	24	0.8%	33	1.1%
Associate	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	0.0%	2	0.1%	5	0.2%
Amateur	47	1.6%	59	1.9%	51	1.7%	60	2.0%	64	2.2%
Developing Nations	85	2.9%	89	2.8%	69	2.3%	52	1.8%	24	0.8%
	▲ 2909		▲ 3142		▲ 3024		2941		2917	
			2020	% of Total	2019	% of Total	2018	% of Total	2017	% of Total
Professional	2002	68.8%	2161	68.8%	2130	70.4%	2161	73.5%	2132	73.1%
Student	835	28.7%	878	27.9%	808	26.7%	679	23.1%	670	23.0%
Other	72	2.5%	103	3.3%	86	2.8%	101	3.4%	115	3.9%
<i>Growth/Decline</i>	2909		3142		3024		2941		2917	

We continue our membership growth for the third consecutive year. 2020 membership increased almost 4% over the same time last year and 2021 membership numbers are on track to match or exceed the 2021 total of 3142 members. We are very pleased with this number in light of the pandemic. We have seen strong adoption of the 3-Year student membership option. The year-end gift membership push was quite a success, exceeding its goal. 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 a 3-Year gift membership option be created to support both students and developing nations colleagues at the price of \$30.

V. Publications

In recent exciting news, the impact factors for both of our journals are up for a second year in a row! However, we have seen a steady decrease in our royalties from Wiley for our journals. Publication revenue issues came to the forefront this spring as we began discussions with Wiley on whether to renew our Publications agreement with them for another five years and how best to move toward an open access model for the *American Journal of Botany*. We are currently in the fourth year of the Wiley agreement and must notify them by the end of 2021 if we intend to seek bids from other publishing partners. Wiley’s current financial offer is a 22% reduction on the contract deal we have with them right now. This is a significant reduction to BSA revenue and has repercussions for future budgeting and finances of the Society. We have begun negotiations with Wiley and conversations among BSA leadership regarding how the Society can diversify its income sources. Is it willing to use some of its investment funds (currently near \$8 million) to support publications and its other goals and activities 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

Please see the Conference Report for more details.

VIII. Education and Outreach

We are wrapping up our 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. Our new F2 grant is now under way and the first Advisory board meeting was held virtually over several days 2/11-2/19. The Education Coordinator position that supported the DIG grant (coming to a close this year) has been revamped to handle the work required for our new grant under the title “Education Program Supervisor”. We have advertised the new job description and are in the midst of interviews.

With the assistance of PI Anna Monfils, Co-PIs Muriel Poston and Catrina Adams, as well as past PLANTS PI Ann Sakai, the BSA has submitted a PLANTS III: Botany and Beyond grant proposal for \$1.2 million to NSF. Under this grant, a new PLANTS Program Manager will be

funded with 80% dedicated time to this grant and 20% time funded by BSA to support DEI initiatives.

Please see the Education Report for more detailed

IX. IT Support

Our IT Manager spreads his time throughout the year on providing updates to the CiviCRM database, which is used for by BSA, ASPT, SEB and SSE for member data. Much of the last several months, Rob spent working with American Fern Society and SEB to transfer their old membership databases to CiviCRM. He also assists with questions and revisions to our awards management system, which is now used by BSA, SSE, SSB, and ASPT. He has also been spending time to convert that awards application and evaluation system for use in our new BSA committee application process. In addition, he assisted with making all of the changes to BSA Join/Renew which included removal of the volunteer check boxes and demographic data collection adjustments.

It is important to note that Rob spends 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 and its import into our online conference platform. Although the work was delayed by the pandemic, strategic planning and staffing changes, we are looking forward to starting an overhaul of botany.org in the coming year.

Respectfully submitted,
Heather Cacanindin
Executive Director
7/2/2021