

# Botanical Society of America Ethical Guidelines for Nominated Awards and Invited Speakers/Panelists

*[updated 8.2023]*

## **BSA Awards Background:**

To recognize scientists and students for significant contributions to the field of Botany, including the public's understanding of botanical science, the Botanical Society of America (BSA) sponsors a wide range of awards and prizes.

The BSA is committed to equal opportunity for all persons, without regard to race, color, religion, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, national origin, age, disability, veteran status, genetic information, protected EEO activities or other protected categories. BSA seeks as diverse a pool of award nominations as possible, including a wide range of disciplines, institutional types, and geographical locations.

All award winners are expected to meet the commonly held [BSA Guidelines for Professional Ethics](#).

## **Professional Conduct Disclosure Form:**

A Professional Conduct Disclosure Form (SEE FORM ON PAGE 3) will be required. Lead nominators and each letter writer should complete the Professional Conduct Disclosure Form about the nominee.

## **Important Considerations for Award Committee Members:**

### **(1) Conflicts of Interest**

Committee members are not eligible to vote on a nominee if there is a conflict of interest where the committee member is or has been in a position of trust (such as employment, officer, consultant, contractor) with the nominee such as:

- Currently (or recently) being a member of the same institution as the nominee
- Being a current or recent collaborator (past six years)
- Being or having been a dissertation supervisor or student of the nominee
- Having close familial ties or a personal relationship with the nominee
- Other conflicts as determined by the Board of Directors

### **(2) Considerations for Reviewing Award Packets**

Letters of support should include at least two letter writers that are independent of the nominee and who are able to provide an objective evaluation and commentary on the nominee's work. For example, it is advisable to have one from researchers in the same country, from a different country, and/or from junior scientists at the home institution who are not currently supervised by or in a power relationship with that researcher. These measures may help detect possible issues with inappropriate behavior, such as bullying and harassment. Awards committees should decide how many letters are required and if any specific types of letters should be included in the award's description. Consider for example-

- Could this nomination benefit from including a letter of support from a student or early career professional at the home institution?
- Could this nomination benefit from a letter of support from someone outside their institution but in the same country?
- Is the nominee lacking a nomination from someone at their current institution?

Award Committees reserve the right to solicit the Professional Conduct Disclosure Form and additional information from another person not included as an initial nominator or letter writer. Awards Committees must complete any follow-up with those who complete the form if any issues are raised.

As a practice, we will not retain the forms beyond the duration of the Award process, nor retain the names nor circumstances of anyone who is removed from consideration for an Award through our process.

### **(3) Bias Training**

Award committee members should confirm that they have taken bias training within the past 2 years (e.g. for a search committee or awards committee). If you have not, (or want to brush up on these principles), then we recommend the following:

<https://equity.ucla.edu/know/implicit-bias/>

<https://www.projectimplicit.net/services/education/>

<https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html>

<https://www.chairs-chaire.gc.ca/program-programme/equity-equite/bias/module-eng.aspx?pedisable=false>

Viewing one or more of these videos/training sites will help our awards committees to ensure evaluation of the nominations is done fairly.

### **Invited speakers and panelists to BSA sponsored events:**

- The Professional Conduct Disclosure form also applies to BSA sponsored events including Student Rep events, Botany360, Conference invited speakers.
- To ensure that the speakers we invite adhere to our professional ethics guidelines and to minimize the burden on those arranging the event, the event organizer asks the invited speaker to seek out one person who can complete the Professional Conduct Disclosure Form on behalf of the invited speaker. The form should be emailed to the event organizers by the person completing the form.