

Membership Committee Report July 7, 2009
Suzanne Koptur, Chair

The great news for BSA in 2009 is that we continue to grow. We have posted a 5.5% increase in members, year-to-date, with 3,080 members in total as of July 7. We have been able to maintain a strong student presence with 746 members, surpassing last year's numbers at this time. The current composition of our membership is as follows:

64% Professional members (includes Life, Corresponding, PostDoc, Retired, Community College)

24% Student members

8% Emeritus members

4% Other (Affiliate, Amateur, Associate, Community College,

Despite the economic downturn, there is a good chance we will see another new membership record for 2009 and beyond in keeping with the trajectory of the past three years.

Some highlights of the past year include:

- Targeted messaging to BSA members by career-level
- Reaching out to lapsed members of the past five years
- Creation of new avenues for membership growth: Facebook page, Member referral recognition, partnerships with other societies, AJB leads through Pay-Per-View
- Translation of our BSA membership benefits page into Spanish and Portuguese
- Launch/Analysis of our second electronic membership survey
- Opened up volunteer opportunities within the Society

Last year at this time, the first BSA membership survey revealed that 89% responding to the survey were either highly satisfied or somewhat satisfied with their BSA membership. The January follow-up survey provided insights into new avenues for reaching members and retaining current ones. The top three reasons why BSA members continue to renew are:

- 1) To support a home for all plant scientists
- 2) Networking with peers/sense of community
- 3) Publish in the *American Journal of Botany*

Creating increased and valued opportunities to connect and to publish will be key to BSA's continued growth in the future.

In the coming year, we plan to:

- 1) Launch an enhanced BSA membership directory to foster collaboration and connections among members
- 2) Continue to grow our presence and foster discussions on Facebook and Twitter to reach a broader audience of potential members

3) We need to actively solicit international colleagues (in their local language when possible) to join us, and nominate accomplished scientists for Corresponding Memberships. This will inspire their students and colleagues to get more involved with the society, for the benefit of all.

4) Continue to increase student membership, fostering an alliance that continues with professional memberships after the terminal degree. To this end, our Executive Director suggests a discount for early renewal for students (\$15) and post-Docs (\$20), to encourage renewals as well as first-time memberships.

5) Utilize the list of volunteers that we currently have and offer them meaningful ways to connect with the Society and each other while pursuing the mission of BSA. Our volunteers can serve on committees, mentor for PlantingScience, conduct beta testing of new technology for BSA use, translate documents for BSA and much more.

6) Launch a Community College Professional member push for the 2010 membership year.

Our recommendations are:

Recommendation 1: It is recommended membership rates for 2009 remain the same except for any family membership which will be raised from an extra \$5 to an extra \$10.

Recommendation 2: It is recommended we provide students and Post-Docs an incentive to renew, with an "early renewal" rate of \$15 for Students and \$20 for Post-Docs.

Recommendation 3: It is recommended we hold a new student membership drive beginning at the opening of classes in the fall of 2009 at a gift-rate of \$10 per student.

Recommendation 4: In conjunction with this drive, it is requested the sections waive fees to allow student memberships to include sectional memberships.

Recommendation 5: It is recommended we add a \$10 shipping charge to AJB print subscriptions from memberships and renewals that are received after May 15 to recover the cost of extra postage incurred by shipping journals from the BSA office.