



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.*

BUSINESS OFFICE REPORT - March 2021

I. Financial Update

BSA finances are quite healthy and we remain operationally strong. We ended FY2020 with a net operating income of \$242,062, which is much higher than our budgeted surplus of \$104,141. Total giving in FY2020 amounted to \$82,014. In FY2020, giving to the BSA Endowment was down, ending the fiscal year at \$17,545, a 36% decrease. However, it should be noted that the focus in giving during FY2020 was on increasing funds for the Graduate Student Research Awards, which did occur and allowed us to provide \$37,500 in GSRA funding.

FY2021 income is on track, now four months into the fiscal year. Expenses are much less than projected due to the impact of the pandemic on Board and staff travel as well as other in-person planned activities. Adjustment in our budgeted expenses is necessary and will be dealt with near the end of this meeting. (See FY2021 Profit and Loss Statement in the Board agenda).

Key things to note about our FY2021 fiscal year performance:

- 1) Our overall income from membership dues is down 23% on 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.
- 2) Publication income is on target to be about the same as last year.
- 3) Our salaries and benefits are lower YTD due to two factors; timing of payroll and a credit received from the CARES Act. (as a result of continuing to keep our employees on staff for 6 months after receipt of the PPP loan)
- 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 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.

Our investment account at Morgan Stanley is performing extremely well. As of December 31, 2020 our BSA Investment portfolio stood at \$7,285,931, which is a 20.8% increase from the previous date in 2020.

As of March 1, 2021*:

Conference Account:	\$ 79,737
BSA Checking Account:	\$667,794
BSA Money Market Account:	\$407,295

**Cash in our accounts is very high. For our BSA checking account, recall that this is the majority of the revenue we will work with for the remainder of the calendar year. Wanda and I have looked over a four-year history of balances in our accounts. I believe it is time that we can move a chunk of \$50-100,000 to the investment account and this should be discussed by the Board, Treasurer and the Investment Committee.

II. Governance

Since our last meeting in November, I have spent a good bit of time related to overall governance for the Society. Wanda and I have worked with the accountants at Schowalter Jabouri regarding our FY2020 financial statements which were approved in January as well as communicating with sectional leadership regarding their individual sectional finances.

I have worked closely with our strategic planning working group and the consultant to finalize the Strategic Planning Committee meeting plan. 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 Chair and President to ensure that DEI issues were centered 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. Two dinner sessions with pre-work have been completed by the SPC (which included 4 Board and 4 staff members). In the coming month, we will be working to put together the draft plan for Board review and input.

Implementation of the new committee appointment process has gone relatively smoothly. It appears that using the awards platform for committee applications has been a success and the applications are now in the hands of the Committee on Committees for consideration.

Catrina and I have been participating in biweekly meetings with the Co-PIs on a potential PLANTS III grant. The Co-PIs are Muriel Poston and Anna Monfils. Ann Sakai is also contributing as the long-standing PI on the two previous PLANTS grants. A budget for the grant is coming together and is expected to be in the realm of \$750,000 - \$1 million for a five-year program. Much of our discussions lately have centered around how the work will be managed structurally with a new BSA staff hire as Program Coordinator of PLANTS III, a position that would fall under our Education Director.

Finally, during January and February, I have been working with the HR department of the Missouri Botanical Garden to complete the performance review process for our staff, including my own review which was conducted by Cindi Jones with the assistance of our President-Elect and Past President. The Garden has moved to a fully online review tool and process for commentary by employees and their supervisors. I want to note here that the Garden has not communicated with us about the timeline for merit increases. I know there was some discussion at the Garden about foregoing any increases this year for Garden staff, but no decision had been made at last communication. We have already made our intentions known to MOBOT HR that BSA intends to provide merit increases to our employees as we are a separate organization with our own governance and finances that are healthy. I have heard no response from them.

Other items I have been working on since our November meeting:

- Working with the DEI Chair and Committee to launch a broad demographic data collection effort that spans membership, award applications, as well as a potential cross-society survey and dealing with the security and privacy issues around that data storage and use
- Conference planning and oversight for Botany 2021 and contractual revisions
- Working with the Public Policy Committee on their conference calls and their agenda of activities for the coming year
- Monitoring issues that affect our members and alerting the Board and PP Committee to opportunities to sign-on to joint letters
- Launching join/renewal season and messaging for the BSA and SSE
- Working with IT on setting up our BSA awards in the awards portal for 2021
- Planning and work with SEB leadership for multiple virtual 2021 SEB symposia and panels
- Supporting the BSA nominations and election process
- Preparing reports and attending the SSE Council meetings in January and February

III. Publications and Education

Both of these areas will present reports to the Board for our next meeting. I just want to note that our Publications team has held strategy days for both *AJB* and *APPS* and are focused on upcoming special issues as well as increasing submissions for *APPS*. I want to highlight that 2021 starts the fourth year of our publishing partnership with Wiley. This means that we will need to discuss whether we intend to renew our contract with them for a 3 or 5-year term or plan to issue an RFP. Notice will need to be provided to Wiley by the end of this year, per our agreement.

In Education, our new F2 grant is now under way and the first Advisory board meeting was held virtually over several days 2/11-2/19. Nine advisory board members, program staff and external evaluators met for an orientation and a series of working groups. Working groups included: research; teacher professional development; Power of Sunlight curriculum, PlantingScience website; diversity, equity & inclusion; mentor and liaison professional development. The Education Coordinator position that supported the DIG grant (coming to a close this year) will be revamped to handle the work required for our new grant. We anticipate advertising the new job description later this spring and our current Education Coordinator will be able to apply.

IV. Membership

2020 membership increased almost 4% over the same time last year, with 118 more members. We are very pleased with this number in light of the pandemic as well as the change to the virtual conference. Student memberships increased by 12% and we have seen early adoption of the new 3-Year Student membership. The year-end membership push was quite a success and we exceeded our goal. We are watching 2021 membership renewals very closely. So far, we appear to be on a good track, with the same percentage having renewed as the same time last year. We are tracking this monthly to monitor for any signs of a membership drop due to the pandemic, economic downturn, and furloughs. We should have a better snapshot at the end of March since abstract submissions and most award applications are due the first of April.

Membership Overview

	All of 2020		All of 2019		2018		2017		2016		2015	
	2020	% of Total	2019	% of Total	2018	% of Total	2017	% of Total	2016	% of Total	2015	% of Total
Corresponding	69	2.2%	69	2.3%	65	2.2%	68	2.3%	63	2.0%	62	1.9%
Life	94	3.0%	87	2.9%	76	2.6%	69	2.4%	60	1.9%	57	1.8%
Emeritus	299	9.5%	283	9.4%	280	9.5%	281	9.6%	262	8.4%	255	7.9%
E Family	43	1.4%	39	1.3%	39	1.3%	38	1.3%	36	1.2%	36	1.1%
Retired	73	2.3%	66	2.2%	65	2.2%	53	1.8%	49	1.6%	52	1.6%
R Family	3	0.1%	2	0.1%	0	0.0%	4	0.1%	4	0.1%	2	0.1%
3 Yr Professional	289	9.2%	300	9.9%	242	8.2%	178	6.1%		0.0%		0.0%
3 Yr Prof Family	22	0.7%	20	0.7%	17	0.6%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%
Professional	857	27.3%	881	29.1%	984	33.5%	1050	36.0%	1305	41.8%	1367	42.6%
P Family	103	3.3%	111	3.7%	129	4.4%	145	5.0%	173	5.5%	186	5.8%
CC Professional	41	1.3%	38	1.3%	34	1.2%	44	1.5%	46	1.5%	41	1.3%
CC Family	3	0.1%	3	0.1%	2	0.1%	4	0.1%	2	0.1%	4	0.1%
3 Yr Postdoc*	15	0.5%										
PostDoc	158	5.0%	159	5.3%	173	5.9%	173	5.9%	207	6.6%	183	5.7%
PD Family	3	0.1%	3	0.1%	3	0.1%	1	0.0%	2	0.1%	5	0.2%
3 Yr Student	144	4.6%	94	3.1%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%
Student	713	22.7%	692	22.9%	643	21.9%	630	21.6%	751	24.0%	818	25.5%
S Family	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	2	0.1%	3	0.1%	5	0.2%	6	0.2%
S Chapter	21	0.7%	22	0.7%	34	1.2%	37	1.3%	41	1.3%	24	0.7%
K-12 Teachers	14	0.4%	12	0.4%	15	0.5%	13	0.4%	19	0.6%	21	0.7%
Affiliate	30	1.0%	22	0.7%	24	0.8%	33	1.1%	38	1.2%	35	1.1%
Associate	0	0.0%	1	0.0%	2	0.1%	5	0.2%	3	0.1%	2	0.1%
Amateur	59	1.9%	51	1.7%	60	2.0%	64	2.2%	58	1.9%	54	1.7%
Developing Nations	89	2.8%	69	2.3%	52	1.8%	24	0.8%		0.0%		0.0%
	3142		3024		2941		2917		3124		3210	
Professional	2161	68.8%	2130	70.4%	2161	73.5%	2132	73.1%	2209	70.7%	2250	70.1%
Student	878	27.9%	808	26.7%	679	23.1%	670	23.0%	797	25.5%	848	26.4%
Other	103	3.3%	86	2.8%	101	3.4%	115	3.9%	118	3.8%	112	3.5%
<i>Growth/Decline</i>	3142		3024		2941		2917		3124		3210	

as of 1/1/21

V. BSA Management Support Services

Working with their officer teams I continue to provide association management advice on several issues, write and deploy communications for SEB, and worked with our Membership Manager to launch the renewal season for SSE and SEB. I have been consulting with SSE officers on demographic data collection and privacy concerns as they have been one of the leading societies in this area. Amy McPherson and I have been able to provide SSE with advice on how best to handle an RFP process for a publishing partner. There is overlap among societies on several issues and that has been beneficial for all involved as we collaborate and share tools and knowledge.

VI. IT Support

Much of the last several months, Rob spent working with American Fern Society and SEB to transfer their old membership database to CiviCRM. The Society for Systematic Biology decided to buy in to our awards management system and Rob worked with them to roll that out. They are currently using it for student research awards. He also worked with me 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. Finally, in the last month, he has spent a good deal of time working on the Botany 2021 conference abstract submission site and making adaptations to accommodate the Mycological Society partners.

Individual reports on Publications, Membership, and Education will be prepared and discussed at the next Board meeting.

Respectfully Submitted,
Heather Cacanindin
Executive Director