

**Spring 2022: Student Representatives Board Report**  
**Botanical Society of America**

Imeña Valdes (2020 - 2022)

Ioana Anghel (2021 - 2023)

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**STUDENT GRANTS**

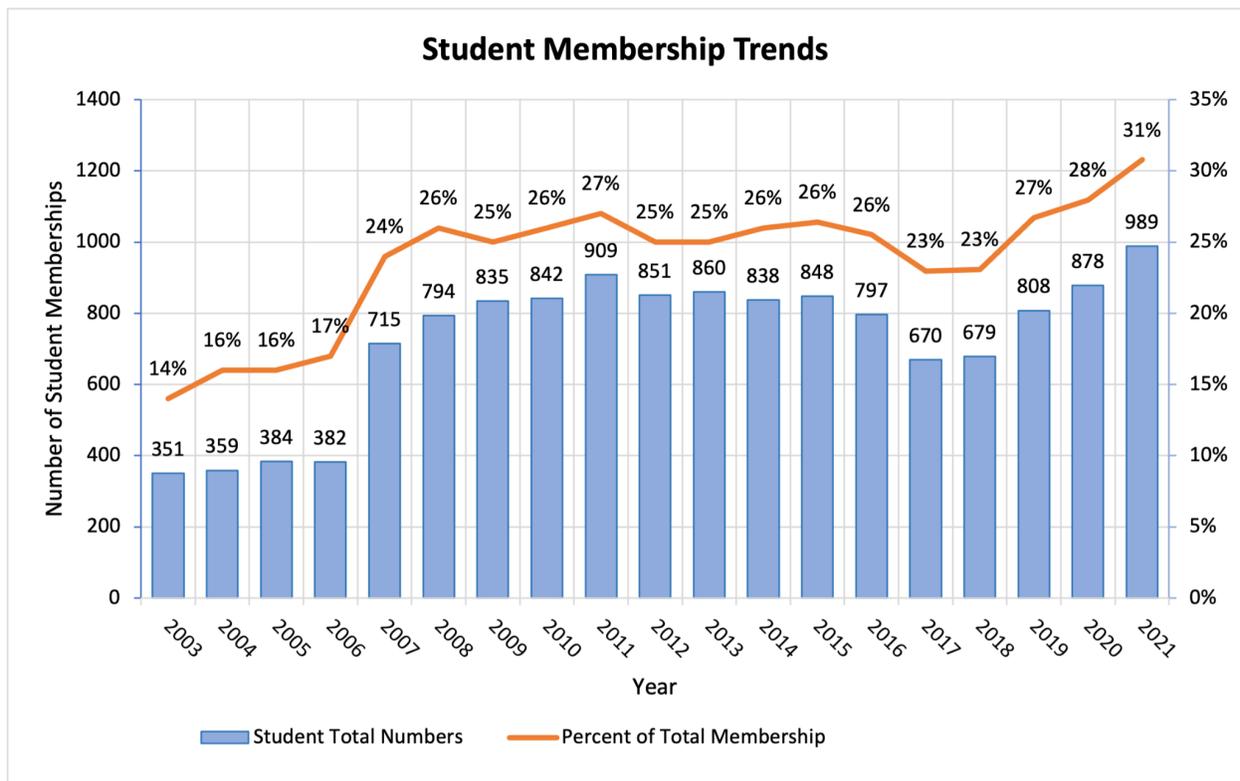
We love seeing graduate student grants increase over time!

2018	20 awards, \$500 each
2019	20 awards, \$1500 each
2020	26 awards, \$1500 each + 1 Kaplan award for \$10,000
2021	40 awards, \$1500 each + 1 Kaplan award for \$10,000

Last year we proposed an increase of the Undergraduate Research Award to \$500 and the removal of the BSA faculty mentor requirement for applicants. This proposal was approved by the Board and will take effect this year for 6 award winners.

## STUDENT MEMBERSHIP

In 2021, BSA had a record 989 Student Members, an increase from 878 in 2020, and 808 in 2019. Student members made up 31% of the total membership, which is also a record for the organization. The student percent of total memberships increased by 2.8% from 2021, despite the slight decrease in overall membership. Both the student total membership number and the student percentage of the total membership has been steadily increasing for the past four years. Overall, we added a total of 111 Student Members last year. Of the 989 student members, 76% had General membership, 22% had a 3 year membership, and 2% had a Chapter membership.



We hope to continue to increase student membership from the 28 BSA Student Chapters. One of the new requirements for the chapters is that the two primary officers are current BSA members. This requirement was implemented so that we can more easily communicate with our student chapter members, as some email communications are only sent to members. This will likely increase student membership significantly from the 15 student chapter memberships in 2021.

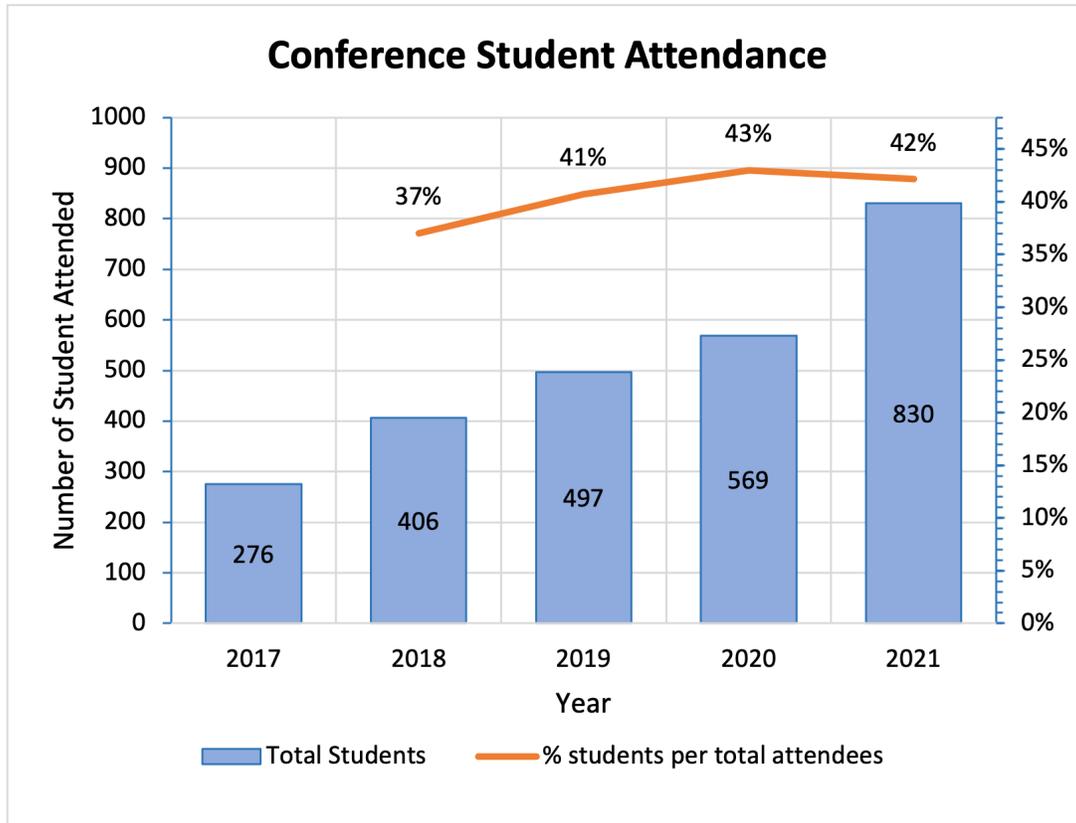
The low student chapter membership, and low renewal of student members, may reflect the lack of BSA student benefits outside of the annual Botany conference. In the last year, we have taken many steps to create opportunities for students:

- We continued to compile student resources in a [Google Doc](#) and actively interacted with student members via social media and slack.
  - We get lots of feedback from students and when applicable we bring this feedback forward.
- We proposed the development of the Early Career Professional Development Committee and in the last year they have officially started meeting and working on professional development events for our members.
  - We assisted in their take over the GRFP workshop.
    - 2 NSF speakers: Christopher Hill and Narcrisha Norman
    - 64 students and 28 mentors
- The new committee application process took effect this past application season and we heavily advertised these positions to students through social media and the student newsletter.
- We, along with Amelia, modified the BSA Student Chapter [requirements](#) to increase retention and create a stronger connection between BSA and the student chapter members. We also created a new Slack channel for student chapters and a new hashtag (#BSAStudentChapter) for students to share their events on social media. The new requirements are as follows:
  - Must have a faculty advisor (it is recommended for the advisor to be a current BSA member but it is not required).
  - At least two student officers (President and Secretary/Treasurer) and they must be BSA members.
  - The Secretary is responsible for forwarding BSA email communications to the chapter members.
  - Must hold two botany themed events per year and submit a report for each.

## **BOTANY 2021 RECAP**

### **Summary**

The Botany 2021 conference had very high student attendance, with 830 registered students. That is almost double the number of students at our last in person conference. Students made up 42% of the total conference attendees. The total number of students attending has increased dramatically over the last few years, with a 45% increase in student registration compared to 2020 when 569 students attended, and a 52% increase from 2019 with 497 students. We believe that the virtual conference option has had a large positive impact on this increase in student attendance. Conference travel costs are often prohibitive for student attendance and the virtual option allows students to participate at just the price of registration.



Out of 830 student attendees, 573 (69%) were graduate students and 257 (31%) were undergraduates. The percentage of graduate/undergraduate students attending the conference has stayed fairly consistent from 2020. Out of the total 1139 abstracts submitted at the conference, 492 (43%) were submitted by students. The presentation rate per student at the conference is 59%, versus 57% for the rest of the attendees. Students submitted 231 paper presentations, which made up 35% of total paper presentations. The total number of paper presentations by students was consistent with 2020 at 229 presentations, but the overall percentage of total papers dropped from 52%. Students presented 62% of total posters and 15% of total lightning talks, compared to 77% and 23% in 2020. Overall it looks like student engagement in the conference talks decreased in 2021 from 2020, but it is difficult to attach meaning to this because of the exceptional circumstances of the past two years.

#### **Proposal #2 from Spring 2021 Student Report**

In Spring 2021, the student reps recommended to the board that “starting with Botany 2022 we require all symposiums and colloquiums to include at least 1 student in their proposal to be approved and continue to encourage organizers to take into account the diversity, including the career stage diversity, of their speakers”.

This was discussed at the summer 2021 board meeting and followed up with past-president Dr. Cynthia Jones at the presidents meeting with the Botany 2021

participating societies. There wasn't strong support for mandating that at least one student be included as a speaker in the symposia and colloquia proposals. Instead, they supported a more generic call for diversity in their speakers.

The language change included in the [2021 call for proposals](#) is underlined:

*“Please note that when preparing proposals, organizers are expected to consider gender, seniority, nationality, and all other axes of diversity traditionally underrepresented in conference symposia and to describe their efforts in the proposal. We seriously consider the diversity of participants as a criterion for symposium funding. [...] We also welcome proposals that include outstanding student and PostDoc speakers.”*

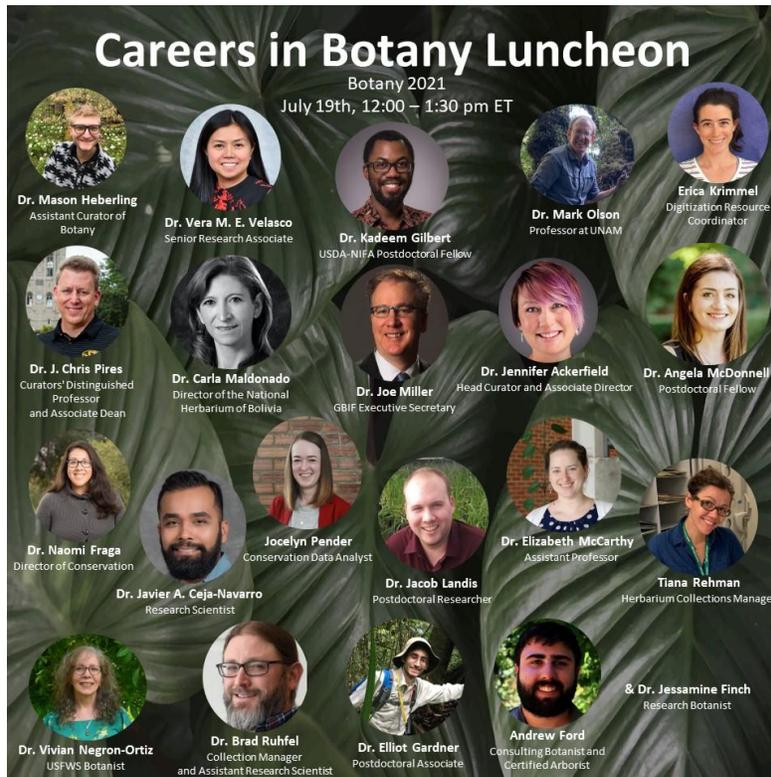
To evaluate whether the application language change had an effect on inclusion of students in the colloquia and symposia, we pulled information from the Botany 2022 selected sessions applications. The applications had varied information about the career stage or position of the proposed speakers, so we were able to identify student speakers and post-docs in 9 out of 15 proposed sessions. Out of the 61 speakers proposed, 8 were students and 6 were post-docs. Considering the last two conferences, the symposia/colloquia student participation seems to be continuing to decrease, with 23% in 2020, 15% in 2021 and an expected 13% in 2022. **So far, this data does not appear to support that the language change has had an effect on student invitations to colloquia/symposia.** We will continue to evaluate this as more information is available.

Proposal ID	#Students	#Post-Docs	Total
Colloquim_1	3	1	8
Colloquim_7	2	3	12
Colloquim_9	0	0	5
Symposium_1	2	0	6
Symposium_2	0	0	6
Symposium_3	0	0	6
Symposium_4	0	0	6
Symposium_5	0	0	6
Symposium_6	1	2	6
Total	8	6	61

### **Event Recap**

**Career in Botany Luncheon:** We had 21 speakers and capped this event at 180 participants of which 176 registered. This diverse set of panelists exposed all the

participants to many different career options and the luncheon received lots of positive feedback from students. Profiles were added to Botany.org.



 **Gil Yardeni**  
@GilYardeni

Huge thanks for the organizers of the career luncheon at [#Botany2021](#). It was a reminder of why I love this conference: botanists are generally joyful, excited people when they talk about what they love and the sessions were inspiring. I may have shed a tear writing this

12:34 PM · Jul 19, 2021 · Twitter Web App

 **Elizabeth McCarthy**  
@EMcCNicotiana

Awesome Careers in Botany event! So nice to meet and chat with all of you and so very cool to interact with folx from 5 different continents!!! Wow. ❤️  
Thanks so much @ShellyGaynor and @imenarv for organizing! [#Botany2021](#)

12:30 PM · Jul 19, 2021 · Twitter for Android



**SciComm Celebration Day Mixer:** We featured 12 SciComm’ers throughout the day and in the SciComm Celebration Day Mixer. The mixer was popular and we allowed attendees and panelists to join themed rooms so they could focus on topics they wanted to learn more about.



 **Sarita Muñoz-Gómez**  
@biosarita1

I was just in the SciComm celebration at [#Botany2021](#) and I loved the teaching botany discussion. I am excited to be a TA in the fall and would like to make it as enjoyable as possible for everyone. Any tips on teaching effectively and making science interesting?  
1/n

4:23 PM · Jul 19, 2021 · Twitter Web App

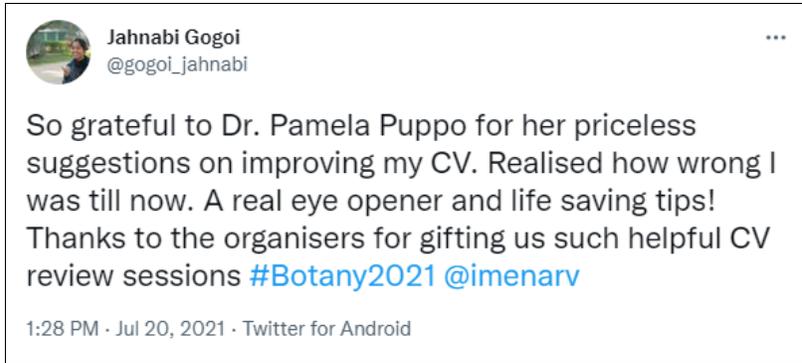
**Student Social and Networking Events:** We had 119 students register for both zoom socials (Monday, 65 students and Friday, 54 students). We had lots of positive feedback and we think these events were overall successful. Here is a visual from one of our socials!





**CV Review Sessions:** We had 10 reviewers and 30 student participants. We had 32 students contact us, which is less than the previous year but we closed the form earlier. Students have continued expressing interest in the event and we will work with the ECPD committee to provide CV reviews outside of the conference.





**Botany 2021 Networking Board:** We had 73 entries for ‘ECR Looking For’ and 41 entries for ‘Open Positions’.

## LOOKING FORWARD - BOTANY 2022

### Networking

- Botany 2022 Networking Board - *in progress*
- Increase collaborations with other BSA committees and sections under the Botany360 initiative

### Conference events

- Workshop - Planting the Seeds of Science Communication with Taran Lichtenberger, Molly Edwards, and Teresa Alexander
- Careers in Botany Luncheon
- CV Reviews
- 1 Student Social
- BSA Officer Mixer

### Field Trip Reimbursements

Starting in 2022, student members of BSA or ASPT will be able to apply for funding for up to [\\$100 to go toward the cost of Botany field trips](#). This will be a great opportunity for students to meet new people in a low-stakes environment. We think that the chance to explore the conference location's natural areas will enrich students' conference experience and encourage them to attend again in the future.

## OTHER CONTRIBUTIONS

### Plant Science Bulletin

#### **Summer 2021**

Gaynor ML and Valdes I. 2021. Student Section. [Plant Science Bulletin 67\(2\): 116 – 121.](#)

- 8 Members shared important advice for starting graduate school

- Shared 4 new articles in the Papers to Read for Future Leaders section
- New BSA student representative was highlighted

### **Fall 2021**

Valdes I and Anghel I. 2021. Student Section. [Plant Science Bulletin 67\(3\): 191 – 194.](#)

- We asked participants of the Career in Botany Luncheon to share advice
  - 5 Professionals shared their advice
  - 4 Students shared what they learned
- Shared 8 new articles in the Papers to Read for Future Leaders section

### **Spring 2022**

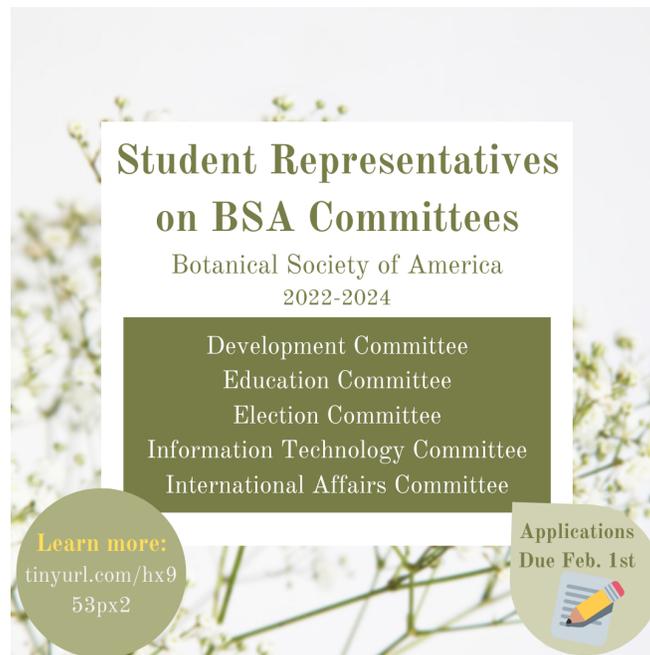
- We compiled more than 70 grants/internships/workshops in the PSB spring issue
- Shared the entire collection (26 articles) of Papers to Read for Future Leaders thus far

### **Summer 2022**

- *In progress*

### **Committee applications**

We had 5 open positions for student representatives on BSA Committees. 24 applications in total were received with 9 applications from students. We advertised in the student newsletter and on Twitter.



### **Botany360**

We are co-hosting two abstract writing workshops with BSA Member, Dr. Bruce Kirchoff, and the Early Career Professional Development Committee.

- Ace It - Write a Better Title - March 2, 2022

- About 80 registered, 30 attendees
- Ace It - Write a Better Abstract - March 23, 2022

**NEED HELP  
WRITING YOUR  
CONFERENCE  
ABSTRACT?**

Botany 360 Presents:

Ace It! - Write a Better Title  
**March 2nd, 3-5pm EST**  
Register here: <https://tinyurl.com/2p9fts2>

Ace It! - Write a Better Abstract  
**March 23rd, 3-5pm EDT**  
Register here: <https://tinyurl.com/bddvyf3p>

Presented by Dr. Bruce Kirchoff, University  
of North Carolina at Greensboro, USA

### **Connecting with Student Members**

We continue to update the [BSA Student Resources Google Doc](#).