

**BSA SECTION REPORT, 2022**  
**PRIMARILY UNDERGRADUATE INSTITUTIONS (PUI) SECTION**

**COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP:**

- **Co-chairpersons:** Jennifer Ison (served three years as either vice-chair or co-chair/chair, rotating off 2022), and Nathan Jud (serving three years, rotating off 2024)
- **Program Coordinator/ Vice Chairperson:** Carrie Wu (serving two years to complete previous vice chairperson's term, rotating off 2023)
- **Secretary/Treasurer:** Open
- **Student/Postdoc:** Rachel McCoy (served three consecutive one-year terms, rotating off 2022)

**BOTANY 2021 MEETING ACTIVITIES:**

We held a successful virtual workshop and section meeting during Botany 2021. We had 28 attendees at the virtual workshop and 15 attendees at the section meeting. The workshops provided a space for PUI faculty and future PUI faculty to share barriers and successes of PUI research programs. We discussed restarting research programs as pandemic restrictions are lifted. The workshop also started a conversation about how to make PUI labs more inclusive, a theme we are following up on during the Botany 2022 workshop.

During the section meeting, Nathan Jud and Carrie Wu nominated themselves for the co-chair and vice chair/program director positions, respectively. They were officially elected to these positions in the fall. The Section also voted on an update to the Section Bylaws, to have overlapping section chairs in order to ease the transition between years. The adopted change is the underlined sentence at the end of the Chair description:

*The Chair shall: preside at all meetings of the Section, appoint necessary committees, serve as representative of the PUI Plant Network Section on the Council of the Botanical Society of America, Inc., and perform all other functions customary and prescribed for that office. The Chairperson shall submit an annual report of the activities of the Section to the Advisory Council of the Botanical Society of America, Inc. The term of office is three years. The first year will overlap with the final year of their predecessor's term and the final year will overlap with the first year of the successor's term.*

**ACTIVITIES DURING THE 2021-2022 ACADEMIC YEAR:**

**1. Submission of NSF and BSA conference proposals**

With the first in-person meeting in three years, and the first with the PUI section officially recognized by BSA, the PUI section committee thought the meeting will be a critical time to establish and rebuild relationships amongst PUI and future PUI faculty. We also agreed that traveling to Alaska could be cost-prohibitive for many PUI faculty. Therefore, we focused on increasing the Section's presence at the in-person Botany 2022 meeting and supporting travel and engagement of PUI faculty at the conference. To support these efforts, we applied for a grant from the National Science Foundation in January 2022 and requested funding from the Botanical Society of America in November 2021. We are grateful that both funding requests were successful.

The National Science Foundation grant was awarded June 30, 2022, for the requested amount of **\$48,081**. Co-chair Nathan Jud is PI on this grant and his institution, William Jewell College, is managing distributions of funds. Other members of the PUI section committee are senior personnel on the grant.

Project summary from grant application:

*The Primarily Undergraduate Institutions (PUIs) Section of the Botanical Society of America (BSA) ("the Section") was established in Fall 2019 to support undergraduate research and mentorship in plant sciences at public and private liberal arts colleges, community colleges, and branch campuses (collectively, PUIs). We share information, strategies, and networking opportunities to broaden participation for both students and faculty in plant systematics and biodiversity sciences and related disciplines. We view the 2022 Botany meeting as a critical time and place to build and strengthen community amongst our members, as this will be our first opportunity to gather in-person since the Section's establishment. If funded, our proposal will enable the Section to coordinate and support the participation of at least 18 current and future PUI faculty at Botany 2022. We request support for this **conference proposal** to support a half-day workshop on inclusive research mentorship at PUIs, a panel discussion on applying to jobs at PUIs, parallel networking events for PUI faculty and their students, and our annual PUI section business meeting.*

The Botanical Society of America supplemental funding was awarded on November 29, 2021, for the requested amount of **\$4,806**. This award included support for the half-day workshop on creating an inclusive research program and ten \$250 travel awards for PUI section members.

## **2. Cross-society PUI meetings**

Throughout the year we have had regular cross-society PUI meetings over Zoom, with the goal of starting and maintaining a dialogue between other society's PUI sections and working on the larger NSF grant to support PUI plant research networks. This effort was initially organized by the American Society of Plant Biology's PUI section leadership and has grown to include BSA's PUI section, Society of Microbiologists, and Ecological Society of America. Our first meeting was in August 2021, and we have had four additional meetings since then (approximately every 1-2 months). As a group, we

are working on creating a survey to distribute to PUI plant faculty. Results from the survey will help guide an NSF Research Coordination Network grant proposal.

## **PLANNED ACTIVITIES FOR BOTANY 2022**

### **1. In-person workshop on cultivating inclusive research labs at PUIs**

We are holding a half-day in-person workshop at Botany 2022. As of July 8, we have 21 registered attendees. The workshop will be led by Dr. Kimberly X. Mulligan, Assistant Dean for Inclusion, Equity, and Diversity at Auburn University.

Workshop description from the conference program:

#### ***You are welcome here: Cultivating inclusive research labs at Primarily Undergraduate Institutions***

*This workshop aims to support principal investigators (PIs) and future PIs at primarily undergraduate institutions (PUIs) as they strive to design and maintain an inclusive and equitable research lab group. Mentorship in undergraduate research integrates numerous high-impact practices that facilitate the academic growth of undergraduate students, including deep immersion in the subject matter, active learning, and an authentic scientific research experience. Authentic undergraduate research experiences also facilitate the personal growth of young researchers through the formation of peer networks, cohesive learning communities, improved self-efficacy, and solidifying feelings of identity in the sciences. Importantly, engaging students in these experiences boosts feelings of scientific competence and fosters a sense of belonging and community – key factors that help recruit and retain diversity in STEM fields. Our workshop aims to provide participants with strategies to build allyship among students and mentors in their research lab while valuing and accommodating the variety of experiences and vulnerabilities within their group. This half-day workshop will be led by expert Dr. Kimberly X. Mulligan, Assistant Dean for Inclusion, Equity, and Diversity at Auburn University. Dr. Mulligan will lead participants in creating mutually beneficial mentor-mentee relationships with clear expectations and effective communication. Break-out sessions will allow participants to share ideas and advice about fostering inclusive lab environments by supporting students in accessing information about resources (funding, external research opportunities, etc.), navigating imposter syndrome, and communicating with mentors. Finally, participants will work together to develop or improve documents to promote DEI in their labs, such as statements on inclusivity or lab/field safety. The workshop will be held Sunday morning and include a complimentary breakfast. PUI section members that receive a PUI travel award are expected to attend the workshop.*

### **2. In-person deciphering PUI job ads panel**

We are hosting a lunchtime job ad panel on Tuesday, July 26. We have six confirmed panelists and will advertise the panel before and during the conference. The panel is designed to help people on the job market interpret job ads for PUIs, demystify candidate rubrics, and provide advice on submitting strong applications.

Panel description from advertisements:

*Are you considering a career at a Primarily Undergraduate Institution? Positions at PUIs involve a balance of teaching, research & undergraduate mentorship, and service that differs from expectations at R1 universities; job advertisements for PUI positions vary accordingly. Join us for an interactive panel discussion on careers at PUIs, the nature of these job ads, and how to put together your best application for the position you want. This panel will be hosted by current PUI faculty. Registration is not required, and lunch is provided.*

**3. In-person PUI faculty and future faculty networking lunch**

During Botany 2022, we will also hold a PUI networking lunch on Monday, July 25. The goal of this lunch is to help establish and re-establish connections between PUI faculty (and future faculty). We will have a map to visualize the geographic distribution of attendees to encourage localized research or teaching collaborations.

Networking lunch description from advertisements:

*The PUI Section of the BSA was officially founded in 2019 and our membership has grown to over 200 members. One of our goals is to establish a network of botanists at PUIs across the country through which faculty and undergraduate students can continue to interact after the conference. Join our networking event, and help re-establish connections among PUI faculty and PUI-curious folks based on geography and discipline at PUIs. The event is open to all members and individuals interested in botany at PUIs. Registration is not required and lunch is provided.*

**4. PUI section meeting**

We will hold our annual section meeting from 5:15-6 pm on Sunday, July 24. We will update PUI membership on activities from throughout the year and at the conference. We will also solicit feedback on what the Section's priorities should be during 2022-23. The Treasurer/Secretary and Student/post-doc positions on the committee are open as of August 2022. We will reach out to members to self-nominate before the PUI section meeting and hold elections during the meeting. We hope to allow virtual participation in the meeting.

Respectively submitted by,  
Jennifer Ison, Nathan Jud, Carrie Wu, and Rachel McCoy