



BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF AMERICA STRATEGIC PLAN

To ensure that we set forth a path that will build a stronger botanical community and serve our mission, the Botanical Society of America embarked on the process of creating a new 5-year strategic plan in 2020. BSA membership was surveyed and a diverse and broad coalition of members debated and discussed current and future needs. The resulting priorities, goals, and strategies were finalized and approved at the 2021 BSA Members' Business Meeting on July 22, 2021. The strategic plan is a culmination of a very intentional multi-step process in which we prioritized inclusion, transparency, and BSA community involvement. The BSA officers, committees, and staff will take the plan, outlined below, and move forward in the next five years to implement changes that will make the BSA community stronger, more connected, and ready for global changes and the future of plant science.

Mission:

To inspire and promote an inclusive global community committed to advancing fundamental knowledge and innovation in the botanical sciences for the benefit of people and the environment.

Strategic Priorities

- A. Human Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (Goals 1-4, pages 2-3)
- B. Research and Scholarly Excellence (Goals 5-9, pages 3-5)
- C. Organizational Impact and Visibility (Goals 10-12, pages 5-6)
- D. Professional Development (Goals 13-15, pages 6-7)

HUMAN DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION

Goal 1

The BSA will be an antiracist and anti-discriminatory society.

Strategies

- 1.1 Offer DEI leadership training opportunities to members, including students, that encourage and foster development as inclusive leaders and innovative educators.
- 1.2 Analyze all policies, practices, and expenditures of the society to determine if and how they may be leading to DEI disparities, and then eliminate or revise policies and cease practices and activities that do not support DEI goals.
- 1.3 Foreground considerations of diversity, equity and inclusion in all society policies and practices.
- 1.4 Develop activities and opportunities that extend beyond the BOTANY conference and that do not present financial barriers for member participation.

Goal 2

The BSA will be a scientific society whose membership reflects the diversity of society as a whole.

Strategies

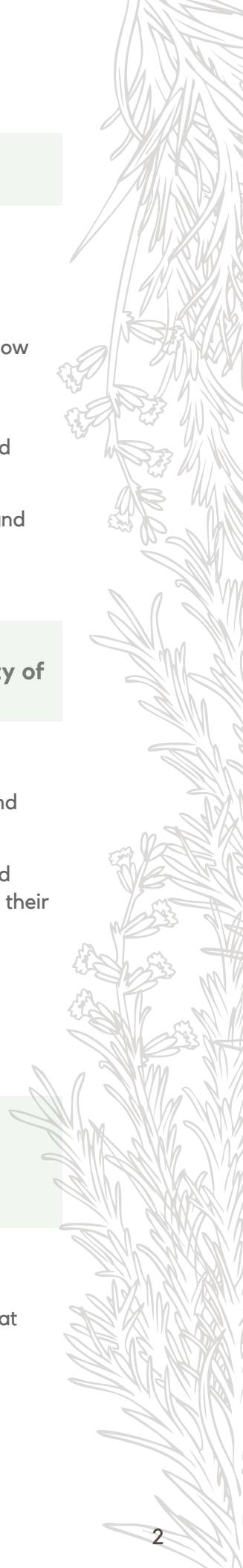
- 2.1 Increase visibility of who is a botanist, showcasing the diversity of the profession and the scientists themselves.
- 2.2 Prioritize collaborations with HSIs/HBCUs/MSIs/Tribal and Community colleges and with other professional societies and organizations to expand access to and inclusion of their students in botanical career pathways.
- 2.3 Increase recruitment and retention of BIPOC members.
- 2.4 Increase the diversity of leadership on the Board and all BSA committees.

Goal 3

The BSA will be a leader in developing initiatives to recruit and support diversity and in advocating for institutions (academic, government, etc.) to recognize and reward the diversity enhancing activities of their members.

Strategies

- 3.1 Support and facilitate increased exposure to the botanical sciences in institutions that serve underrepresented groups.
- 3.2 Develop support documentation that will help encourage members to advocate for promotion and tenure metrics that reward contributions to DEI at their institutions.
- 3.3. Advocate for the importance of diverse perspectives and inclusive excellence in all aspects of science and science education.



Goal 4

The BSA will actively evaluate its progress in recruiting and retaining members from underrepresented groups, and in understanding inequities in access and opportunity among its members.

Strategies

- 4.1 Collect and make available demographic data to be used in assessment and planning following IRB protocols to ensure privacy.
- 4.2 Develop and deploy tools for assessing the differential impact of access to existing and future opportunities (e.g. PLANTS), awards, grants, etc.
- 4.3 Collect data to understand why individuals join and leave the society.
- 4.4 Share data and assessment with the membership on an annual basis to regularly revise policies and practices that improve support for diversity, equity, and inclusion.

RESEARCH AND SCHOLARLY EXCELLENCE

Goal 5

The impacts of BSA publications (*American Journal of Botany*, *Applications in Plant Sciences*, *Plant Science Bulletin*) will increase, as evidenced by various metrics.

Strategies

- 5.1 Broaden the scope of research represented in BSA journals and at conferences while supporting the current core of the society in organismal, structural, developmental, and evolutionary biology.
- 5.2 Attract more researchers from a wide range of plant-related areas (e.g., conservation, forestry, horticulture, plant-microbe interactions) to our publications and conferences.
- 5.3 Create and promote greater international, cross- and interdisciplinary opportunities for collaboration within BSA journals.
- 5.4 Move toward an entirely open access publication model while maintaining low publication fees for members

Goal 6

The recognition of botany as an essential biological and environmental discipline will increase within the scientific community.

Strategies

- 6.1 Promote the science of botany as foundational to global restoration and actively promote interdisciplinary efforts related to repair earth systems.

- 6.2. Increase the promotion of botany and its importance as a professional scientific discipline to confront public and professional misperceptions.
- 6.3 Provide expertise to funding agencies on current/future issues related to botany.
- 6.4. Promote inclusive 'plant-person' identities to address negative associations with botanical sciences and science in general (elite, exclusive, etc.)
- 6.5 Increase recognition of the value of indigenous botanical knowledge.

Goal 7

The increased prominence of the BSA as a global leader in research, teaching, and advocacy related to the botanical sciences will be reflected in at least a 5% membership increase over three years.

Strategies

- 7.1 Establish the BSA as a prominent leader on current issues related to our field and the mission of the society.
- 7.2 Recruit and retain more professionals at all career stages who study, teach and/or promote botanical sciences to BSA from all forms of academic and non-academic institutions.
- 7.3 Recruit/retain/support members from outside of the society, or who have been affiliated in the past, through presentation, service, or publication opportunities
- 7.4 Increase international participation in society activities and governance.
- 7.5 Evaluate the possibility of revising membership fees to include additional categories/price points to better accommodate international members.

Goal 8

The BSA will provide its members with increased support for scholarly excellence and research.

Strategies

- 8.1 Increase the number of research awards and strategically increase or revise honors and awards to reflect BSA core values.
- 8.2 Promote discussions with decision-makers in funding agencies (e.g., The National Science Foundation) with the aim of increasing understanding of the importance of botany and providing additional funding opportunities.
- 8.3 Create new mechanisms for the recognition of scholarly excellence that promote our members beyond the society.

Goal 9

The annual BOTANY conference will be the premier venue to showcase and disseminate the latest research in botany.

Strategies

- 9.1 Increase access to the conference, especially for members of underrepresented groups.
- 9.2 Increase promotion of and access to special lectures/symposia beyond the conference.
- 9.3 Incorporate a virtual component in all future conferences.

ORGANIZATIONAL IMPACT AND VISIBILITY

Goal 10

The appreciation of plants and the field of botany will increase in society.

Strategies

- 10.1 Connect BSA resources with non-BSA audiences through stronger collaboration with other regional, national and international plant societies.
- 10.2 Increase emphasis on science communication and the development of science communication skills.
- 10.3 Highlight BSA members' expertise and the centrality of plants in solving pressing environmental and societal problems (climate change, biodiversity loss, benefits of nature to mental and physical health, etc.)
- 10.4 Engage with the public to promote curiosity and appreciation for plants, nature, and science.

Goal 11

The BSA will be a major contributor in efforts to educate the public about science and to shape regional, national and international policy regarding science and conservation; the BSA will be seen as a premier source of unbiased botanical information.

Strategies

- 11.1 Reward BSA members for leadership efforts beyond the BSA in areas such as innovation, strategic communication, etc.
- 11.2 Initiate or collaborate on public policy efforts broadly focused on science, botany, and pressing environmental stresses (climate change, biodiversity loss, etc.).
- 11.3 Amplify the visibility of BSA members participating in regional, national and international efforts that promote the role of science in society, influence public policy, shape educational initiatives, etc.

11.4 Lead/participate in cross-society data collection efforts to better understand opportunities and challenges, and work toward common goals focused on human diversity and scientific advancement.

Goal 12

The BSA will be recognized as the leader in education for the botanical sciences.

Strategies

12.1 Encourage, assist, and advocate for life science educators at all levels to include botanical science in their curricula, standards, and lesson plans.

12.2 Ensure that education and outreach programs are grounded in evidence-based best practices of botanical science education and contribute to our goals in broadening participation.

12.3 Lead workshops throughout the year targeted toward students and early career academics and naturalists to foster future generations of exceptional educators in botanical science.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Goal 13

All members of the BSA will share a strong sense of belonging to the society.

Strategies

13.1 Establish and support networks of affinity groups that enhance career development by providing accessible channels of communication among diverse members.

13.2 Develop and maintain strong frameworks that span career stages and peer mentoring focused on professional development.

13.3 Collect data to better understand what the BSA can do to support student members as they transition to professional positions, thus reducing attrition from botanical careers at these junctures.

13.4 Continue to increase the number and size of awards for graduate students/postdocs in outreach.

Goal 14

Membership in the BSA by people outside of academia will increase by at least 10% over five years.

Strategies

14.1 Highlight the many diverse and cross-disciplinary pathways to successful careers in the botanical sciences outside of academia through publications, conferences and activities, and develop initiatives to support and retain BSA student members to transition to non-academic professional careers.

14.2 Review and revise our governance structure to generate benefits for non-academic career members, accounting for career path and career stage as two important axes of diversity.

14.3 Review the use of a Careers job board on our website and consider ways to better disseminate and heighten awareness of non-academic careers.

14.4 Create tools for career exploration, mentoring, and building connections across interdisciplinary boundaries.

Goal 15

The Board, committee chairs, and staff will be well prepared to lead the organization with foresight and fiduciary responsibility.

Strategies

15.1 Provide leadership training opportunities for all Board members, Committee Chairs, and Section Chairs.

15.2 Create a professional development plan for all staff to ensure continued professional growth and incorporate best practices in all aspects of management.

15.3 Build institutional knowledge and facilitate the smooth transfer of operations and relevant resources to future society leadership.