**ASPT 2017 Draft Business Meeting Minutes**

June 27, 2017, Fort Worth Ballroom 7

Fort Worth Omni Hotel

Fort Worth, Texas

(Draft, to be voted on for approval at the 2018 ASPT Business Meeting)

Meeting called to order by President Jeff Doyle at 5:32pm.

Approval of 2016 ASPT Business Meeting Minutes were approved unanimously.

**Report on BSA Council meeting (Amanda Ingram, BSA Systematics Chair)**

* Changes coming for *American Journal of Botany* and *Applications in Plant Sciences*. Both are getting out of self-publishing which has been a positive process. Related to these publications, both *American Journal of Botany* and *Applications in Plants Sciences* are looking for contributions. For instance, for ‘*On the nature of things’* feature in *American Journal of Botany* — please have interested contributors reach out directly to editors. *Applications in Plant Sciences* is looking for special issues and review papers.
* With respect to future Botany meetings, the society had been considering Alaska (Anchorage) for 2020 but there is concern about cost. Please give feedback to Amanda to take back to BSA.
* Requests for mentors - Planting Science links up grade school teachers with scientists to get K-12 hands on experience in botany. Right now there is a need for lots of mentors as it is expanding. The commitment is about an hour a week and can be a great experience for graduate students and post docs.
* BSA is working on human development (led by Ann Sakai) that focuses not just on issues of diversity but also raising the profile of botanists and systematists. If you have anyone to nominate for AAAS fellow or other positions let her know.
* Continuing the symposia discussion from last year: this year we are only doing six symposia. However, there were only six proposals this year. Next year we need more proposals. Please consider and spread the word!

**Secretary Report (Wendy Clement)**

Voting this past year (2017) decreased to 33% as compared to last year (2016) when it was 41%. This may have been due to fewer email reminders. Voting spikes were observed on days reminders were sent. This coming election more frequent emails will be sent. All voting was done on-line. Hard copy ballots were available only by request but none were requested.

**Program Director Report (Harvey Ballard)**

This year ASPT and BSA sections made some improvements for programming. After the Council Meeting, there was lots of discussion about loss of traditional taxonomists. We do not have a taxonomy or floristics section, yet looking through talks there are many that fit this category. To help spur participation again, it might be worthwhile to have a taxonomy category (classification, nomenclature, species delimitation) with two different sections (1) floristics and (2) taxonomy. This year, talks and posters were down 45% compared to 2016 which could be due to lots of things (same year as IBC, our meeting overlapping with Evolution). Also the first year we tried to only have six symposia (costs shared with BSA). We had 40 students travel grants, 19 field trip reimbursements, 150 banquet tickets (out of 160 seats). Question from membership – do topic areas in program drive registration? Answer from Harvey – could send out an email to let folks know the topics and better informed before submitting abstracts. Suggestion from Dick Olmstead – remove requirement to submit an abstract.

**Business Manager Report (Linda Brown)**

No major changes from report except two things:

1. Due to financial circumstances at her host institution in Wyoming, Linda is now a full-time employee as the institution has eliminated straight time hours. The ASPT Council happily approved her full-time status.

2. At this time, Linda usually has the developing country list but she cannot download it from the World Bank until July 1st. It will be included when report is posted on time.

Jeff publicly thanked Linda for her work as well as Wendy.

**Treasurer Report (Austin Mast)**

The society is in good financial shape. Warren will talk about Siebert investment account. Top income includes membership (but decreasing), BioOne royalties (increasing), and institutional subscriptions (but decreasing).

Currently, the incomes that are decreasing are not too much of a problem with our overall funds, but this could present problems in the future. Austin presented the 2018 budget and said our projected expenses are expected to be the same. We will have a transfer from the Seibert account to cover expenses which is sustainable in the short term.

This spurred a discussion about membership and how to increase and retain membership. Suggestions included joint BSA-ASPT society membership renewal, but this was met with some concern that it may appear expensive to folks or leave folks wondering why they need to join both societies if the benefits appear to overlap to the member. Other suggestions along this line included a joint membership price, as well as more explanation as to why one society does not ‘do it all.’ Another suggestion included the possibility of a joint meeting with the Mexican Botanical Society or Society of Systematic Biology (in an off-year) to recruit new members from different and new audiences. Amanda acknowledged that this was discussed at the BSA council meeting. Moving forward with any of this would also require an IT investment to have a website to support signing up for membership for multiple societies simultaneously and keep donations specific for each society – this would also require both societies to contribute to pay to have this website built.

Linda acknowledged that reminders are sent to those whose membership has been lacking, and surveys to understand why we are losing members have been used in the past. Still, reason behind declining membership is unclear – we are losing Regular Members the most. Some outcomes from the survey showed quite a bit of variation ranging from students moving on to other fields, others who had a career change, others just forgetful. Other suggestions of introducing a 3-year membership (BSA tried and got 12% in first year). We could consider this as a new category but Jeff Doyle said we will continue with a survey first to try to better understand the problem.

**Finance Committee Report (Warren Wagner)**

Since the 2017 meeting is earlier than a typical year, the report is only for a 9-month period. Over this time, income has increased 5%. Now, most of the way through June we have added almost another 5%. At the end of March, we were at $962,000. This past year we took out about $30,000 to cover costs which can be made up by the dividends. We can sustainably continue to spend up to that without taking out from invested parts. The big announcement is that ASPT has hit a milestone: currently, the ASPT assets are over 1 million dollars! Since we consolidated funds in several places in 2004, we have deposited $588,000 and withdrew $186,000, but we are still up 250% since 2004.

Last year, Warren mentioned finding someone to take over and who would have the ability to follow rules about investing. Eric Schuettpelz will take over and he has been transitioning over this past year. Warren and Eric have written a 7-page operating manual with all the rules, which has been added to the Duties Roster to help with continuity from chair to chair of the Finance Committee. Warren has been approved as a committee member for one more 3-year term to help transition but has stepped down as chair, Eric will now take over.

Jeff expressed gratitude for Warren’s work and thanked Eric for taking over.

**Communications Report (Mark Mayfield in lieu of Emily Sessa)**

Emily has been mostly concerned with getting urgent news out to the membership and enhancing communication among members. In her report she has a list of emails (36 send over the past year) and how often folks clicked on them (40% of emails get opened). There was a discussion at the Council meeting about whether or not we should increase the number of emails as she is conservative as she doesn’t want to flood your email inbox. There could potentially be room to increase the number of emails going out to the membership. Emily’s term is coming to an end – Tommy Stoughton has been recommended but the Council still needs to approve this.

Question about whether emails are going to spam? Some folks are not getting any emails. What can be done? Suggestions ranged from getting help from IT departments, having emails mirrored on the ASPT website, recommend folks check filtered email from time to time.

**Website Report (Mark Mayfield)**

The website has recently gone through another platform migration, and we are now on using Squarespace. The transition has been smooth but we are currently missing a lot of content (just got up and running this past January). From Jeff – important to note that this was a forced migration as we were told with short notice that the place we had been using was going out of business. Plan now is to further refine the website to increase professionalism using money in this year’s budget. Please let Mark know if you have any suggestions.

Linda wondered if having a place on the website for communications would be useful – others said they’d have to remember to look on the website for it so perhaps not.

Jeff thanked Mark for his work on migrating website

**Systematic Botany Report (Dan Potter in lieu of Jim Smith)**

Things at the journal are in good shape. The annual submission peaked in 2012 (with 2014-2015 having had larger issues). At this point they have gotten through backlog, and they are now on schedule for getting things published. All articles published on line ahead of print version, but there is some inconsistency about when the articles are published on line.

This past February, the editors, managing editors, and copy editors for *Systematic Botany* and *Systematic Botany Monographs* went through the submission format for both journals and made them consistent. New guidelines will be made available in 2018, and the guidelines will be presented in the format of a mock manuscript.

No *Systematic Botany Monographs* report at this time.

**Honors and Awards Committee Report (Dianella Howarth)**

This past year, there were 37 graduate award applications (lower than last year - partly due to last year being a banner year, and one fewer emails went out this year). The committee made 21 awards, four of which were named awards. They found that many returning applications had used feedback they received from last year when their application was declined.

Multiple strong nominations for Peter Raven and Asa Gray Awards. ASPT Council decided that we will hold on to nominations for these awards for three years and seek updates in following years. We have not had any nominations for the Innovations in Teaching award. We will change the name of the award as it doesn’t need to represent innovation, but rather just that the awardee reaches many as a teacher. As for Undergraduate applications, last year received two applicants and both were given award. We need more applicants for this award. To help align with undergraduate schedule, the due date will change from December to March to allow for more students to apply who are finishing their senior projects.

**President’s Report (Jeff Doyle)**

Jeff remarked that it had been an interesting year considering the US election, etc. In response, there has been lots of activity in advocacy and responses to the political situation. We signed on as a society to advocate for the March for Science and the Botany Bill. Ingrid Jordon-Thaden, as chair of Environment and Public Policy Committee, has been very active. They have new awards and grants for botany advocacy and are continuing to connect more science with congress, workshops with AIBS, etc. The demise of NSF-DDIG program has caught everyone’s attention and is an ongoing issue. Jeff drafted a letter and was signed by incoming president and sent directly to NSF. Unsure what the next steps should be.

Many comments from the membership about loss of NSF-DDIG but consensus is that we need to keep pushing on this. Some mentioned that there have been programs cancelled and reinstated so community response can make a big difference. Need to continue to reach out to NSF and our elected officials.

Jeff thanked Peter Fritsch and Brooke Byerly Best and all those that make the society run.

**Discussion**:

Chelsea Specht: thanked generous donors who bought left over t-shirts and gave them to students on first come first serve basis. Turns out students rushed the ASPT booth. Want to buy t-shirts? Students walk away with t-shirts and brochure.

Dick Olmstead on behalf of BSA: BSA is moving to commercial publication and feel as though it was an excellent choice. This is helping to combat the loss of institutional subscriptions, and helping marketing, moving into new technology and publication, etc. One suggestion to other societies that meet with BSA, might consider looking at commercial publication and consider doing this as a group of societies. Might be a way to help with declining revenue from subscriptions and get the best deal.

Jeff welcomed next ASPT President, Chelsea Specht. Meeting was adjourned 6:38pm.