

2023-2024 Phytochemistry Section Annual Report

On behalf of the officers (Gaurav Moghe, chair; Stacey Smith, secretary; Kira Tiedge, international representative; Kate Eastman, student representative)

Student Awards

- BSA provided us with funds for organizing a social at the Boise Botany meeting. A Phytochemical Trivia Night was successfully organized, with participation of over 25 conference attendees. Prizes (botanical lapel pins) were given to all members of the winning team.
- For the 2023 Botany meeting, we awarded one student travel grant (\$500; Abigail McCoy), and we gave one best talk and one best poster award (\$100 each).

Programming

- At Botany 2023, we organized the symposium “Standing your ground: understanding plant defense from molecules to morphology”. The speakers covered diverse fields, backgrounds and career stages and include: Kira Tiedge (U. Groningen), Maggie Wagner (KU), Dan Kliebenstein (UC Davis), Annika Nelson (UC Irvine), Vivian Irish (Yale), Ashish Ranjan (U. Minn.)
- The PhytochemTalks seminar series is ongoing and has ~600 registrants on the mailing list. We have been able to share Botany abstract submission deadlines and grant opportunities through the mailing list.
- Nine talks were organized for the Phytochemical Section contributed talks session. In addition, multiple posters were also submitted to the Phytochemical Section, highlighting our emerging presence among Botany attendees.
- Section Officers came together to organize a Special Issue in the APPS journal on “Advances in analyzing and engineering plant metabolic diversity”. We obtained 10 proposals for this issue, which were selected for full submission due October 2024.

Governance

- We successfully held elections for the 2024-2026 term for various officer posts. The new officers are Dr. Joshua Widhalm (Purdue, President), Ishveen Kaur (Virginia Tech, Secretary), Federico Roda (Columbia, International Representative), Abrianna Soule (Michigan, Student Representative)
- The current officers have included the new representatives in decision-making and communications to enable a smooth transition.

Future plans

- The section would like to organize a workshop on transcriptome annotation and co-expression networks for Botany 2025. Jen Wisecaver has offered to lead the session, but we will need to apply for external funding to support travel and accommodations for instructors as well as space and IT support at the meeting.
- We will continue efforts to secure additional funding through various means – grants, donations and membership dues.