

Systematics Section Annual Report for 2017-2018
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Note: This report has significant overlap with a report that is being submitted to ASPT by Harvey Ballard (this section's secretary – treasurer – program director) because of the close association in terms of membership, interests, and function between ASPT and the BSA Systematics Section.

Symposia and Colloquia

This year three systematics-related symposium proposals were selected for the annual conference. ASPT provided financial support for all three; the BSA Systematics section chose to support two of those symposia and three colloquia (at lower levels.)

Symposia	Funding support
Evolution, ecology, development, and conservation of carnivorous plants	\$1000 from ASPT, \$300 from BSA Systematics section
Evolution of plant chemical diversity: renaissance of comparative biochemistry	\$1000 from ASPT, \$300 from BSA Systematics section
Tools, standards, techniques, and methods for using herbarium specimens in phenological research	\$1000 from ASPT
Colloquia	
Ericaceae: Systematics, Ecology, and Evolution	\$200 from BSA Systematics Section
Flora of Madagascar: Mechanisms for Diversification	\$200 from BSA Systematics Section
Pacific Biogeography	\$200 from BSA Systematics Section

Botany 2018 Abstract Submissions and Programming

Prior to abstract submissions this year, BSA and ASPT adopted two additional contributed talk categories, "Floristics" and "Taxonomy", in order to accommodate more traditional systematic and biodiversity talks outside the phylogenetically organized and often heavily phylogenetically oriented "Systematics" sessions. Only three contributed talks were targeted for "Floristics", but 10 talks were submitted to "Taxonomy". The two topics were merged to provide a nearly full half-day session. We anticipate that, gradually, these new topics will generate more interest. For the second year in a row, "Biodiversity Informatics" and "Herbarium Digitization" were merged, resulting in 12 talks for a nearly full half-day session as well. "Biogeography" and "Macroevolution", consistently getting substantial attention, received sufficient talk submissions to encompass at least one half-day session. "Phylogenomics" continues to be a very strong topic, with 32 submissions making up three half-day sessions. A total of 62 talks were submitted to "Systematics", segregated into four half-day sessions. This

year, the Botany 2018 program schedule included two to three systematics-related sessions for each of six half-day periods, besides the multiple systematics-related symposia and colloquia.

As you can see from the table below, we received 149 contributed paper submissions and 66 poster submissions (excluding the “late-breaking” venue, to be made available shortly). In all categories except for “Biogeography”, this represented a substantial if not a dramatic increase over 2017 submissions (the “IBC year”), although not quite reaching submissions for 2016. But contributed talks continue to rise each year. The contributed talks for this year’s conference were scheduled into 14 sessions and half-sessions scattered across the three weekdays, up from 10 last year. The rebound we were hoping for in systematics-related talk and poster submissions has clearly occurred in one year, and we can hope for further increases in the systematics program for Tucson, AZ in 2019.

	Total '18 ('17, '16)	Talks '18 ('17, '16)	Posters '18 ('17, '16)
Biodiversity Inform./Herb. Digit.	24 (11)	12 (8)	12 (3)
Biogeography	24 (23, 41)	14 (14, 32)	10 (9, 9)
Floristics/Taxonomy (NEW)	13	13	0
Macroevolution	19 (11, 14)	16 (11, 13)	3 (0, 1)
Phylogenomics	41 (20, 48)	32 (18, 38)	9 (2, 10)
Systematics general category	94 (65, 175)	62 (44, 122)	32 (21, 53)
TOTAL FOR SYSTEMATICS S. L.	214 (130, 288)	149 (95, 213)	66 (35, 75)

ASPT continued to support student participation in field trips for Botany 2018, but the BSA Systematics Section was not able to contribute this year. More accurate information was obtained from the BSA Director about available funds and sustainable levels of spending, so ASPT stepped up to continue supporting student participation in the conference in the absence of BSA funds. A better balance between colloquium & symposium support and enabling full student participation in the Botany Conference experience should be an aim for future Systematics Section Chairs.