

Membership Committee Report July 18, 2008
Suzanne Koptur, Chair

Membership in the Society remains a highlight, with 2,916 members in total for the year to date. One of our initiatives, to increase student members, has been quite successful. We have been able to maintain a strong student presence with 747 members, surpassing the 2007 record of 715. The current composition of our membership is as follows:
71% Professional members (includes Life, Corresponding, Emeritus/Emeriti, Retired)
26% Student members
3% Other

Given we have three months to go before the October renewal season starts there is a good chance we will see a new membership record.

Some highlights of the past year include:

- Hiring a Director of Membership and Subscriptions
- Membership Renewal Drive (you may remember receiving some reminder notes)
- Reaching out to Lapsed Members of the past few years
- Launch of our first electronic Membership Survey

Despite the positive news regarding membership numbers, it will be quite a challenge to maintain the levels of continuous growth that we would like to see. With many libraries providing electronic access for their clientele to journals, and many modern scientists eschewing print versions of scientific publications, some of the benefits of society membership are no longer the driver for joining/maintaining BSA membership as they once were. Thus, the need for a detailed membership survey like the one that was launched in early July. To date we have had a 20% response to the survey which is well above the average response rate for these types of questionnaires.

The good news from the survey is that 89% of those responding to the survey say they are either highly satisfied or somewhat satisfied with their BSA membership. 10% were neutral on the matter. This is a phenomenal number compared to many other societies and associations. We hope that the survey will provide insights for us into new avenues for reaching new members and retaining current ones. BSA as a “community of networking peers” is a concept that keeps coming to the forefront of the survey. In the coming year, we plan to:

1) Utilize a few small surveys to test out new ideas (coming from the membership survey) that will extend our reach and influence, build community, and hopefully, increase our membership and journal subscriptions.

2) We need to actively solicit colleagues in other American (North and South) countries to join us, and nominate accomplished Americans for Corresponding Memberships. This will inspire their students and colleagues to get more involved with the society, for the benefit of all.

3) Continue to increase student membership, fostering an alliance that continues with professional memberships after the terminal degree. To this end, our Executive Director

suggests a discount for early renewal for students (\$15) and post-Docs (\$20), to encourage renewals as well as first-time memberships.

Our recommendations are:

Recommendation 1: It is recommended membership rates for 2008 remain the same.

Recommendation 2: It is recommended we create two new membership categories. Post-Doc at a rate of \$40 and Community College Professional at a rate of \$30

Recommendation 3: It is recommended we provide students and Post-Docs an incentive to renew, with an "early renewal" rate of \$15 for Students and \$20 for Post-Docs.

Recommendation 4: It is recommended we hold a new student membership drive beginning at the opening of classes in the fall of 2008 at a gift-rate of \$10 per student.

Recommendation 5: In conjunction with this drive, it is requested the sections waive fees to allow student memberships to include sectional memberships.