

## **NAPB Graduate Student Working Group: Annual Report 2022**

Current Graduate Student Working Group (GSWG) officers: Lance Merrick from Washington State University as Chair, Mala Ganiger from North Dakota State University as Vice-Chair, Ammani from Texas A&M University as Secretary, and Zara York from Washington State University as Past-Chair.

Leadership is transitioning after the 2022 Annual Meeting to Mala Ganiger as incoming Chair (2022-2023) and Lance Merrick will serve as Past-Chair. Elections for Vice-Chair and Secretary will be held after the 2022 Annual Meeting.

The GSWG officers recruited a subcommittee leadership team that maintained previous positions for a Diversity Award Liaison, two Planning Committee Liaisons, Social Media Representative, Graduate Student Outreach, two Graduate Student Highlight Coordinators, and an African Plant Breeders Association Liaison and Outreach.

### NAPB GSWG Leadership Team

- Diversity Award Liaison: Gurleen Kaur (University of Florida)
- Planning Committee Liaisons:
  - Sandeep Chapagain (Louisiana State University)
  - Kevin Chiteri (Iowa State University)
- Social Media Representative: Renan Souza (University of Georgia)
- Graduate Student Outreach: Matthew Davis (University of California, Davis)
- Graduate Student Highlight Coordinators:
  - Andrew Herr (Washington State University)
  - Greta Rockstad (North Carolina State University)
- African Plant Breeders Association Liaison and Outreach: Esther Achola (Makerere University, Kampala, Uganda)

### Accomplishments:

- Recruited and elected subcommittee liaisons
- Conducted a survey to provide graduate student feedback for the 2021 Annual Meeting and experience as a member during 2020-2021
- Social media engagement to share information regarding:
  - The focus of the NAPB GSWG Social Media chair is to engage with the community of students and broadcast information about seminars, training, social events, job opportunities and other relevant activities.
  - An important part of our work is the highlight of graduate students and their research.

- In the last two years, we highlighted the careers of 15 graduate students from several universities in the United States and from Africa.
- Throughout the last two years, we increased the frequency of posts and interacted more with our network. As a result, our community grew significantly.
- Our twitter account went from 529 to 1441 followers.
- Our Instagram increased from 26 to 210
- We created a LinkedIn account that currently has 709 followers (as of 7/11/2022).
- We have expanded the activities online to consolidate our presence in the web and we became an important channel of information for the Plant Breeding students across the globe.
- Professional Development Webinar Series
  - November 15<sup>th</sup> – Global Plant Breeding Careers Webinar Panel with Dr. Roberto Fritsche Neto (IRRI), Dr. Cedric Habiyaremye (Washington State University), Biswanath Das (CGIAR), Stella Salvo (Bayer).
  - January 19<sup>th</sup> – Establishing your Brand with Dr. Sarah Potts (Corteva), Dr. Jessica Rutkoski (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign), Rachel Veenstra (Kansas State University), Maya L. Allen (University of New Mexico).
  - February 24<sup>th</sup> – Establish a Successful Breeding Program with Dr. Susana Milla-Lewis (North Carolina State University).
  - March 16<sup>th</sup> – Some Yogi Berra-isms and How They're True in Plant Breeding with Dr. Rex Bernardo (University of Minnesota).
  - April 14<sup>th</sup> – The Way to My First Job with Dr. Rick Harrison (Driscoll's), Dr. Klaus Koehler (Corteva), and Dr. Chibwe Chungu (BASF).
- Diversity Enhancement Award
  - Created an independent working group and changed the name to George Washington Carver Scholars Program from Diversity Award.
  - Hosted one social for the mentors-mentees from last year.
  - Mentor-mentees applications were made available in March for this year.
  - We advertised extensively to most of the plant breeding/plant biology departments of major and underrepresented institutions across the US; on NAPB and personal social media.
  - We received 23 mentees' applications, including graduate and undergraduate students and 11 applications for potential mentors from industry and academia.
  - Our group selected six scholars for this year.
  - We are hosting a joint breakfast for Carver and Borlaug Scholars at the annual meeting.

- We will have Dr. Keith King and Dr. Christian Tobias as speakers for the Carver program.
- We have incorporated multiple details, including application materials, advertisements, press-release for scholars, and recognition for scholars at the annual meeting.
- We have coordinated with Michelle Graham and Jamie O'Rourke, managing Diversity and Inclusion for the 2022 NAPB meeting, throughout this year to strengthen the program.
- Graduate Student Highlights
  - The graduate student highlight coordinators created seven highlights for NAPB student members as of July 20th, 2022.
  - Additionally, we began a highlight series for African Plant Breeders Association student members to strengthen our relationship between the organizations and have created four highlights so far.
  - Students are chosen to be featured based on their participation in our seminars, socials, and other events held throughout the year. These highlights are shared on our social media channels including LinkedIn, Twitter, and Instagram.
- Graduate Student Socials
  - Hosted three socials during the academic year
    - NAPB GSWG Holiday Party
    - APBA and NAPB Social
    - Coffee Hour with Dr. Donn Cummings
  - Provided fun networking opportunities for graduate students outside the annual meeting.
  - Hosted a NAPB social at the Tri-Societies Annual Meeting.
- Planning Committee Liaisons
  - Participated and helped organize the NAPB Annual Meeting. Specifically with inputs from student perspective and planning.
  - Organized a Speed Networking event at the NAPB Annual Meeting

#### 2021-2022 Goals:

- Host a series of invited guest speakers for professional development webinars to provide a platform for graduate students to ask the invited guests both formal and informal questions related to their career path and current position.
- Create a Diversity Award Committee and elevate it to the same level as the Borlaug Scholars
- Monthly graduate student highlights

- Photo series with a paragraph or two highlighting how the student got into plant breeding/why their research matters/what their career goals are/what their normal day at work is like/etc.
- Include APBA students
- Publish on social media platforms
- Host socials including a social between NAPB and APBA
- Graduate student survey for the 2021 Annual Meeting
- Incorporate NAPB graduate student feedback on:
  - Graduate student activities at the 2022 NAPB annual conference
  - Activities throughout the year such as webinars and virtual socials
- Provide feedback and ideas for the new NAPB website

#### 2022-2023 Goals:

- Host a series of invited guest speakers for professional development webinars to provide a platform for graduate students to ask the invited guests both formal and informal questions related to their career path and current position.
- Graduate student survey for the 2022 Annual Meeting
- Incorporate NAPB graduate student feedback on:
  - Graduate student activities at the 2023 NAPB annual conference
  - Activities throughout the year such as webinars and virtual socials
- Monthly graduate student highlights
  - Photo series with a paragraph or two highlighting how the student got into plant breeding/why their research matters/what their career goals are/what their normal day at work is like/etc.
  - Publish on social media platforms
  - Include APBA students
- Host socials including a social between NAPB and APBA
- Host social at the tri-society meeting