



**AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF  
BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES**

# AIBS STRATEGIC PLAN 2024-2028

APPROVED BY THE  
AIBS BOARD OF  
DIRECTORS  
DECEMBER 8, 2023

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[www.aibs.org](http://www.aibs.org)

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# INTRODUCTION

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*The American Institute of Biological Sciences (AIBS) Strategic Plan articulates priorities to chart the organization's course of action. The plan provides AIBS with the flexibility to use new information and respond rapidly to changing circumstances. Regular review of the plan by the staff and Board of Directors ensures that it is an evolving and responsive strategy.*

# INCLUSIVITY STATEMENT

*Science is strengthened by the open exchange of diverse perspectives and ideas. In our mission to advance science-based decision-making for the benefit of science and society, AIBS is dedicated to promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion in our staff, members, volunteers, as well as the broader life sciences community. AIBS values and embraces diversity in gender, race, color, ethnicity, age, sex, class, religion, national origin, ability, language, sexual orientation, marital status, gender identity, as well as career stage, life experience, and area of expertise. Bolstering a framework supporting the highest quality science, we are committed to cultivating a culture based on inclusion, equal opportunity, and mutual respect by promoting diversity in our community programs, publications, communications, peer advisory and review services, leadership, advocacy, and outreach.*





## AIBS STRATEGIC PLAN

# BACKGROUND

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AIBS was established in 1947 as a part of the National Academy of Sciences. The overarching goal was to unify the individuals and organizations that collectively represent the biological sciences, so that the community could address matters of common concern. Our mission is more relevant today than at any other point in our history. The pace of change in modern society and the scope of the challenges requiring the insights derived from scientific study demand that AIBS provide the leadership and forum for

the community to work collaboratively to advance integration in biology for the benefit of science and society. AIBS's agility, resilience, and integrity are the keys to our success.

Since the 1950s, when AIBS became an independent, member-governed, nonprofit public charitable scientific organization, we have worked diligently to communicate biology to the scientific community, funders, policymakers, and other groups interested in exploring cross-cutting

ideas in the biological sciences. AIBS has achieved this mission in part through publications, which once included the *Quarterly Review of Biology* and now include our highly respected journal, *BioScience*, as well as white papers and other documents, which collectively shape biology. Indeed, the pages of *BioScience* have helped stimulate the formation of major new fields, many of which are interdisciplinary and boundary crossing, such as conservation biology, ecosystem science, and citizen science.

Since the early 1960s, AIBS has played an important role in the research enterprise by providing peer review and advisory services to research-funding organizations. Our work of convening independent subject matter experts and developing scientifically rigorous and equitable review procedures for proposed research has guided agency and foundation allocation of billions of dollars in research funding. For example, AIBS was an essential partner in helping to build the United States space program. For decades, AIBS worked with the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) to identify the best research for exploring the effects of space travel on humans. In the early 1990s, AIBS coordinated the initial independent peer review of nearly 2700 applications in support of the Department of Defense's

pioneering Breast Cancer Research Program. For over a quarter of a century, we supported the goals of the Department of Defense to identify promising research that would lead to better treatment of and cures for maladies that threaten the health and safety of our service members and their family members and care givers. AIBS worked with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) to provide peer reviews of proposals for individual and multi-institutional research in marine biotechnology. For over a decade, we supported the Gulf of Mexico Research Initiative Research Board in their allocation of \$500 million to improve society's understanding of the effects of oil on the environment of the Gulf of Mexico and those who depend on it. More recently, we have worked with dozens of private research foundations and state governments to support their grant-making and research administration operations. Research funds have been granted in a wide variety of scientific topic areas, including but not limited to: cancer, spinal cord injury, stem cells, heart disease, diabetes, autism, diseases caused by secondhand smoke, maternal and infant health disparities, mental health and social impacts, environmental conservation, animal health, emergency medicine, and social sciences.

In 2007, we developed the proprietary Scientific Comprehensive Online Research and Evaluation System (SCORES®) software suite. Over the last 15 years, AIBS has facilitated more than 500 peer review projects for several dozen clients, facilitating the review of tens of thousands of proposals and progress reports using our dynamic peer review system.

In addition to facilitating advisory and review services for more than 60 years, AIBS staff members have been leaders in performing research on the scientific peer review process, its effects, best practices, and potential future directions. Over the last decade, AIBS staff members have authored over 15 peer reviewed publications. This research, intended to improve the science of peer review, elevates the support AIBS provides to our clients through the use of the best scientifically informed peer review practices in the industry and advances work and the knowledge base for the scientific community.

A key role for AIBS has long been to incubate and synthesize ideas. Our initiatives to foster novel thinking helped the community conceive the National Ecological Observatory Network (NEON)—the only biological sciences program ever to be funded by the National Science Foundation’s

Major Research Equipment and Facilities Construction program.

For almost two decades, AIBS has worked with biodiversity scientists and natural history museums to promote the digitization of biodiversity specimens and their associated data. In 2015, AIBS established the Biodiversity Collections Network (BCoN), a Research Coordination Network funded by the National Science Foundation, to develop a new, sustainable community of practice that will ensure that all US biodiversity collections are digitally available for research, education, and informed decision-making, as well as other scholarly and creative activities. Under AIBS’s leadership, BCoN developed a community-informed national vision that leverages digital data in biodiversity collections for new uses and calls for building an Extended Specimen Network.

AIBS has provided a launching pad for numerous science education initiatives. For years, AIBS developed instructional materials that were used in classrooms across the nation. These materials guided the training and resulted in the recruitment of a significant number of modern-day scientists. Importantly, the AIBS programs that developed these resources ultimately gave rise to the Biological Sciences Curriculum Study (BSCS)—an independent nonprofit

organization that is now an AIBS member and partner organization. More recently, AIBS helped facilitate the work of the Partnership for Undergraduate Life Science Education (PULSE)—a collaborative effort to re-envision undergraduate instruction.

AIBS has consistently played an important leadership role in shaping science policy, most notably by leading efforts that have helped secure hundreds of millions of dollars in support of scientific research. In recent decades, these activities have ensured that biological sciences research is a priority at multiple federal agencies. In the 1990s, AIBS's efforts were central to thwarting proposals to eliminate funding for biology at the National Science Foundation.

AIBS has also provided steadfast scientific advocacy to promote science education—from local school boards to state commissions—and our policy campaigns have defeated efforts to introduce creationism into the nation's science curricula. Working with member organizations, we have played a central role in highlighting for policymakers and the public the important research conducted at research centers, such as natural history museums, botanic gardens, and field stations. AIBS has provided the leadership necessary to establish coalitions, such as the former

Biological and Ecological Sciences Coalition and the United States Geological Survey (USGS) Coalition, and has been a key partner in other national efforts, such as the Coalition for National Science Funding. Our own advocacy programs have enabled our members to educate and influence policymakers at the state and federal level.

Inherently, professional societies and other scientific organizations must operate with an innovative, nimble, and fiscal perspective. Our strategic goals and activities are implemented and properly measured to ensure that AIBS is deploying new information and innovative technology and tools to address the frontier issues that are shaping the biological sciences, as well as our organization and affiliated societies.

AIBS works with organizations to advance biology through a shared commitment to scientifically informed decision-making and inclusion, diversity, equity, acceptance, and accessibility. We partner with organizations to synthesize and integrate the life sciences, identify high-quality research for funding, increase diversity in the sciences, communicate matters of common concern, and connect with their communities for idea and information exchange.

# STRATEGIC PLAN SUMMARY

## VISION

Advance the biological sciences to promote increased understanding of all life.

## MISSION

Promote the use of science to inform decision-making and advance biology for the benefit of science and society.



Photo Credit: Mike Hamilton

### STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

- Scientific Peer Advisory & Review Services
- Publications & Communications
- Community Programs

### ORGANIZATIONAL VALUES

- Scientifically Informed Decisions
- Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, Acceptance, & Accessibility (IDEA<sup>2</sup>)
- Collaboration
- Scientific Advocacy
- Agility & Innovation
- Stewardship

## STRATEGIC PLAN SUMMARY

### THE CHANGES WE PROMOTE

- Informed Decision-Making
- Empowerment & Leadership
- Responsibility & Stewarding

### CORE ACTIVITIES

- Assessment
- Advocacy
- Training
- Communication

# STRATEGIC PRIORITIES



## AIBS WORKS TOWARD OVERARCHING OUTCOMES THROUGH THREE STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

***Scientific Peer Advisory and Review Services*** for research proposals and programs sponsored by funding organizations, including the federal government, state agencies, private research foundations, and other non-governmental organizations. AIBS also educates the community about the science of peer review.

***Publications and Communications***, including reliable reports, analyses, and the peer reviewed journal *BioScience*, which is a forum for integrating the life sciences and educating scientists, students, and the public about biological sciences.

***Community Programs*** that advance the field and profession of biology while promoting and providing leadership, with particular emphasis on public policy and advocacy, education and professional development, as well as public awareness of science.



# ORGANIZATIONAL VALUES



## SCIENTIFICALLY INFORMED DECISIONS



We promote the use of peer reviewed research, empirical evidence (that possesses scientific rigor and integrity, transparency, honesty, and objectivity), and rigorous scientific synthesis and integration as the basis to inform decisions made by researchers, educators, or any other knowledge consumer.

## INCLUSION, DIVERSITY, EQUITY, ACCEPTANCE, & ACCESSIBILITY (IDEA<sup>2</sup>)



We are committed to increasing IDEA<sup>2</sup> in science and society. IDEA<sup>2</sup> is the foundation of our core activities and is deeply integrated into all of our work. We embrace and leverage the benefits of people with diverse backgrounds and experiences to achieve our mission.



## COLLABORATION

We partner with and solicit input from individuals and groups within our community and beyond to advance our goals and galvanize unified action.



## SCIENTIFIC ADVOCACY

We promote the use of scientific information to guide science policy and science-informed decision-making.

## AGILITY & INNOVATION



We swiftly adapt to evolving landscapes and develop and embrace ethical tools and technologies to facilitate our work.

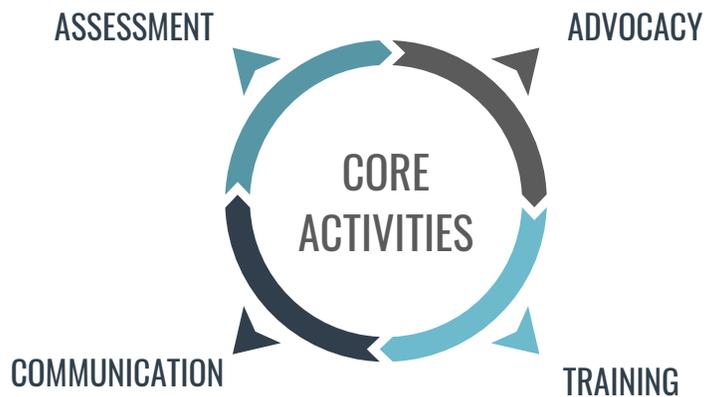
## STEWARDSHIP



We are an organization grounded in ethics, stewardship, sustainability, accountability, integrity, and excellent governance.

# CORE ACTIVITIES

AIBS promotes the use of science to inform decision-making and advances biology for the benefit of science and society through:



Coordinating and facilitating expert merit-based evaluation of research proposals, ongoing programs, and completed efforts, as well as analyzing merit-based peer review activities sponsored by a diverse group of research-funding organizations.

ASSESSMENT

ADVOCACY

Advancing biology through programs, partnerships, and advocacy, with a particular emphasis on public policy that benefits and promotes the interests and diversity of the life sciences community and informed decision-making.

Providing educational training programs to scientists and students of science that enhance their professional skills and opportunities, as well as improve their ability to engage with and inform diverse audiences.

TRAINING

COMMUNICATION

Convening, publishing research findings, and sharing scientific information with the breadth of the scientific community, decision-makers, and the public.

This work galvanizes the biology community and provides the knowledge required to solve problems of societal concern.

# THE CHANGES WE PROMOTE

AIBS has three overarching outcomes that define what will change in the world as a result of our work. The work is advanced through our core activities:



## INFORMED DECISION-MAKING

As a result of AIBS's actions, the public, legislators, funders, and the biological sciences community—including the leadership of biology-serving organizations—will have access to information that guides them in making informed decisions about matters that require biological knowledge.



## EMPOWERMENT & LEADERSHIP

As a result of AIBS's actions, the biology community is armed with information and resources that enable significant advancements and innovations in the field and the profession.



## RESPONSIBILITY & STEWARDSHIP

AIBS maintains a financially and programmatically sustainable organization and continues to operate with sound governance, oversight, integrity, and transparency.

## THE CHANGES WE PROMOTE

# INFORMED DECISION-MAKING.

## GOALS & ACTIONS

### GOAL: FUNDERS OF BIOLOGICAL RESEARCH MAKE INFORMED FUNDING DECISIONS.

- AIBS works with government agencies, foundations, academia, and other institutes to implement a peer review process that informs decisions about the best allocation of research resources.
- AIBS works with funding organizations and other institutions to conduct and share research findings that improve best practices in the peer review process.
- AIBS works with policymakers to ensure that they are able to make informed public policy decisions about research priorities and promotes the appropriate use of peer review as a decision-support tool.
- AIBS publishes and disseminates synthetic and integrative scientific information to the scientific community, which helps the community (e.g., funders, researchers) identify emerging research frontiers.

### GOAL: THE PUBLIC—INCLUDING FORMAL EDUCATORS, INFORMAL EDUCATORS, AND STUDENTS—HAS ACCESS TO HIGH-QUALITY SCIENTIFIC INFORMATION THAT CONTRIBUTES TO THEIR UNDERSTANDING OF SCIENCE AND ABILITY TO MAKE MORE INFORMED DECISIONS ABOUT ISSUES OF PERSONAL AND PUBLIC CONCERN.

- AIBS produces and widely disseminates scientific information through scientific publications, podcasts, webinars, public events, science briefings, and other channels.
- AIBS works with our members and partners to collaboratively promote increased public awareness of science and its role in informed decision-making.
- AIBS provides professional development programming and training to help scientists and students of science more effectively educate and engage with diverse audiences, including those in other fields of study, news reporters, policymakers, program administrators, and members of communities who collectively constitute the “public.”



# INFORMED DECISION-MAKING

## GOALS & ACTIONS

**GOAL: POLICYMAKERS ARE ABLE TO MAKE DECISIONS INFORMED BY VETTED AND RELIABLE KNOWLEDGE FROM THE BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES, PARTICULARLY ABOUT FEDERAL INVESTMENTS IN SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH AND RESEARCH INFRASTRUCTURE, SCIENCE EDUCATION AND A WELL-TRAINED WORKFORCE, THE ROLE FOR SCIENTIFIC PEER REVIEW, AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR SCIENCE TO INFORM POLICYMAKING.**

- AIBS works to promote the use of biological sciences knowledge to develop public policy and advance science policy that serves the needs of the scientific community.
- AIBS prepares scientists to more effectively engage with policymakers, through briefings and meetings and by coordinating collective action.
- AIBS publishes peer reviewed articles and opinion pieces that contribute to a more informed public policy discourse.

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**GOAL: BIOLOGISTS FURTHER ADVANCE INTEGRATED BIOLOGICAL KNOWLEDGE THROUGH PUBLISHING, READING, AND CITING PEER REVIEWED RESEARCH.**

- AIBS provides a forum for the publication of peer reviewed overviews of current biological research, together with information about biology education, ethics, history, and the profession in general.

## THE CHANGES WE PROMOTE

# EMPOWERMENT & LEADERSHIP

## GOALS & ACTIONS

### GOAL: THE BIOLOGY COMMUNITY KNOWS THE FORCES THAT INFLUENCE THE FIELD AND PROFESSION

- AIBS conducts research that leads to the development of best practices and other innovations that contribute to an inclusive, diverse, equitable, accepting, and accessible environment for the community of biologists and their work.
- AIBS provides scientists with professional skills training that enables them to advance their careers and achieve their desired professional goals, as well as to build and advance the leadership skills and capacity of the profession and the organizations that serve biology and biologists.
- AIBS gathers necessary information and convenes meetings to educate the community about important issues that affect the field.
- AIBS leads efforts to formulate and execute responses to these issues.

### GOAL: AIBS ENHANCES THE PROGRESS OF SCIENTIFIC KNOWLEDGE BY HELPING ENSURE THAT THE BEST NEW IDEAS ARE SUPPORTED.

- AIBS publishes reports, articles, and peer reviewed materials that inform the biological sciences community.
- AIBS helps members of the scientific community become effective advocates for the biological sciences.
- AIBS engages the community to promote and advance science policy.

### GOAL: BIOLOGY-SERVING ORGANIZATIONS AND BIOLOGISTS WILL COLLECTIVELY ACT TO ADVANCE BIOLOGY.

- AIBS facilitates activities that bring biology organizations together around matters of common concern.
- AIBS works with biology-serving organizations to advance innovative ideas, particularly those centered on IDEA .

THE CHANGES WE PROMOTE

# RESPONSIBILITY & STEWARDSHIP

GOALS & ACTIONS

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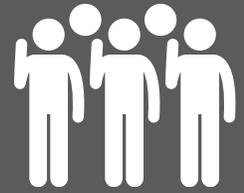
AIBS MAINTAINS A FINANCIALLY AND PROGRAMMATICALLY SUSTAINABLE ORGANIZATION AND CONTINUES TO OPERATE WITH SOUND GOVERNANCE, OVERSIGHT, INTEGRITY, AND TRANSPARENCY.

- AIBS invests in itself to expand and strengthen capabilities and maintain or improve infrastructure.
  - AIBS maintains an encompassing implementation plan. AIBS closely monitors its key milestones, performance indicators, and financials to ensure that they remain sustainable, relevant, and contribute to the organization's mission.
  - AIBS demonstrates how each business line supports the organization's overall success and how the programs work synergistically to achieve the outcomes.
  - AIBS leads and champions inclusion, diversity, equity, acceptance, and accessibility for the benefit of science and society.
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Photo Credit: Stefano Oppo

# OUR PLEDGE



This strategic plan is a document that is routinely reviewed and updated as conditions require.

Through the successful implementation of this plan, AIBS will sustainably prepare and empower biologists for positions of leadership and impact and enable staff to leave a bigger mark on the world, expand and create partnerships, and uphold the utmost integrity in all of its practices.

Using strategies incorporating agility, ingenuity, and resilience we will capitalize on unforeseen opportunities and continue to maximize operational efficiencies to advance biology and increase knowledge for the benefit of science and society.



# Our Team

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Diane  
Bosnjak



DaJoie  
Croslan



Arati  
Deshmukh



Scott  
Glisson



Ian  
Johnson



Syreeta  
Jones



Michael  
LeMaster



Jyotsna  
Pandey



Jennifer  
Petitt



Keisha  
Smith-Wade



Joanne  
Sullivan



Lisa  
Thompson



James  
Verdier



Joel  
Wagener

# Board of Directors

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**Row 1:** John Bates, Gabriela Chavarria, Todd Crowl, Raymond Mejía, Betsy Myers; **Row 2:** Eric Nagy, Richard Nakamura, Susan Perkins, Clifton Poodry, Muriel Poston; **Row 3:** Veronica Segarra, Judy Skog, Krissa Skogen, Pamela Soltis, Lydia Villa-Komaroff; **Row 4:** Michael Willig

# Member Societies and Organizations

*Through AIBS membership, biological societies and related organizations are connected to matters that are of collective concern, including trends in research and biology funding, public policy, education, and public understanding of science.*

Academy of Natural Sciences of Drexel University  
American Arachnological Society  
American Fern Society  
American Malacological Society  
American Museum of Natural History  
American Ornithological Society  
American Phytopathological Society  
American Society for Gravitational & Space Research  
American Society of Ichthyologists & Herpetologists  
American Society of Mammalogists  
American Society of Naturalists  
American Society of Parasitologists  
American Society of Plant Taxonomists  
American Society of Primatologists  
Animal Behavior Society  
Arkansas State University  
Association for the Sciences of Limnology & Oceanography  
Association for Tropical Biology & Conservation  
Association of Ecosystem Research Centers  
Association of Southeastern Biologists  
Bell Museum of Natural History  
Biodiversity Institute & Natural History Museum  
Biological Sciences Curriculum Study  
BioQUEST Curriculum Consortium  
Bishop Museum  
Botanical Research Institute of Texas  
Botanical Society of America  
Brigham Young University  
California Botanical Society  
Cary Institute of Ecosystem Studies  
Center for Advancing Research Impact in Society  
Center for Wildlife Studies  
Charles R. Conner Natural History Museum  
Clemson University, Department of Biological Sciences  
Coastal & Estuarine Research Federation Management  
Crustacean Society  
Delaware Museum of Natural History  
Denver Museum of Nature & Science  
Duke Lemur Center  
Ecological Society of America  
Florida State University  
Genetics Society of America  
Harvard University-MCZ  
Helminthological Society of Washington  
Herpetologists' League  
Human Anatomy & Physiology Society  
iDigBio  
Illinois Natural History Survey  
Institute of Environment, Florida International University  
International Association for Bear Research & Management  
International Association for Landscape Ecology - North America  
Lepidopterists' Society  
Long Term Ecological Research Network  
Louisiana State University-MNS  
Michigan State University

Milwaukee Public Museum  
Missouri Botanical Garden  
Moore Laboratory of Zoology  
Morris Animal Foundation  
Museum of Utah  
National Museum of Natural History  
National Shellfisheries Association  
Natural History Museum-LA County  
Natural Science Collections Alliance  
New York Botanical Garden  
North Carolina Botanical Garden  
Organization of Biological Field Stations  
Paleontological Society  
Phycological Society of America  
Poultry Science Association  
Purdue University, Dept. of Entomology  
Radiation Research Society  
San Diego Natural History Museum  
SDSU Natural Resource Management  
Society for Advancement of Chicanos/Hispanics & Native Americans in Science  
Society for Behavioral Neuroendocrinology  
Society for Ethnobotany  
Society for Freshwater Science  
Society for In Vitro Biology  
Society for Industrial Microbiology & Biotechnology  
Society for Integrative & Comparative Biology  
Society for Mathematical Biology  
Society for Northwestern Vertebrate Biology  
Society for Sedimentary Geology  
Society for the Preservation of Natural History Collections  
Society for the Study of Amphibians & Reptiles  
Society for the Study of Evolution  
Society of Environmental Toxicology & Chemistry  
Society of Herbarium Curators  
Society of Mineral Museum Professionals  
Society of Nematologists  
Society of Systematic Biologists  
Society of Vertebrate Paleontology  
Southern Appalachian Botanical Society  
Southern California Academy of Sciences  
Southwestern Association of Naturalists  
State University of New York-College of Environmental Science & Forestry  
The Field Museum of Natural History  
Torrey Botanical Society  
University of Connecticut, Department of Ecology & Evolutionary Biology  
University of Florida  
University of Nebraska State Museum  
University of New Mexico-MSB  
University of Oklahoma  
University of Texas-El Paso  
Utah Museum of Natural History  
Weed Science Society of America



Photo Credit: Snapwire



# OUR GRATITUDE

*We express our gratitude to all past and present members of the staff, Board of Directors, donors, member societies and member organizations, other partners, and the public for their steadfast support of the American Institute of Biological Sciences.*



Photo Credit: Getty Pro Images

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