



**Science  
Societies**

# **Unprecedented times, challenges require everyone's engagement**

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| December 25, 2020



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Happy New Year to all of you! As we begin another year, let us remember the loved ones we lost in 2020 as well as the ties we strengthened by facing a pandemic

together. I am thankful to Ole Wendroth and the SSSA Board of Directors for their leadership last year as well as the headquarters staff for keeping our Societies afloat in these bizarre times.

Like most professional societies, we experienced our first virtual Annual Meeting and learned so much about our science and ourselves in the process. I know that many of you were disappointed because of the unprecedented early deadlines for recording your presentations, and I just want to assure you that we are carefully reviewing all of the procedures to determine what worked well and what did not. We will use your responses to member surveys to establish best practices for future meetings. In upcoming face-to-face meetings, we may include virtual components for the business, board, and editorial meetings, which could save time, money, and improve inclusivity. Participants enjoyed being able to use the “chat” feature during presentations and awards ceremonies—still not as good as hugs and “high fives,” but a good way to share your virtual congratulations and support.

I hope that one of your New Year’s resolutions is to be more engaged in SSSA. Please encourage your colleagues and students to join SSSA and help us increase our diversity and grow for the future of “healthy people on a healthy planet.” We are facing unprecedented environmental and agricultural challenges that soil scientists could help address, but we have to be part of the discussion. Our meeting theme of “Translating Visionary Science to Practice” is more applicable than ever as we continue to communicate the value and usefulness of soil science in solving problems. As World Food Prize Laureate Mary-Dell Chilton said, “The single most important contribution that others can make is to provide accurate information about the food security challenge we are facing and the solutions that can meet the challenge” (<https://bit.ly/3gsXOOz>).

# Top Goals: Diversity, External Engagement, and Publication Impact

The top three strategic goals for SSSA are to improve diversity, broaden external engagement, and increase publication impact. New members from diverse backgrounds, ethnicities, and experiences will bring new ideas and promote creativity, which is what we need to tackle the problems ahead. Improved communication and outreach to other groups, including policymakers and other professional societies, will strengthen our ability to collaborate and build partnerships. We continue to improve the influence and impact of our flagship journals and ask that you submit your research to them and provide timely peer reviews.

We have a Grand Challenge that will need everyone's involvement to succeed, and I look forward to hearing your ideas to make 2021 the best year ever for SSSA. What can we do to serve you better?

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