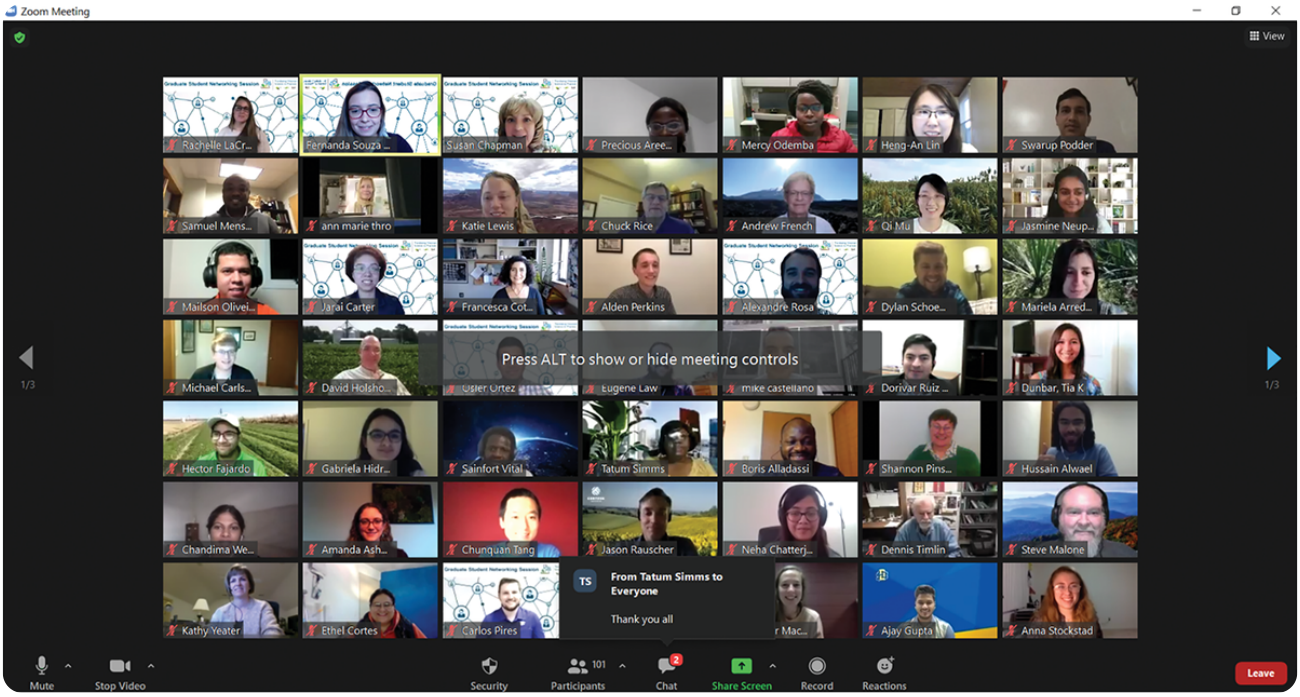
Science Societies

# ASA, CSSA, and SSSA graduate student committee: A year in review

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December 25, 2020




*More than 110 students and mentors from academia, industry, and government met to learn networking tips at the Virtual Networking Session hosted by the ASA, CSSA, and SSSA Graduate Student Committee during this year's virtual Annual Meeting.*

What a year it has been. Despite the challenges of 2020, the ASA, CSSA, and SSSA Graduate Student Committee is reflecting on a year full of successes. Our committee started two new initiatives in 2020: a webinar series and a graduate student travel grant program.

In the spring, we planned our first webinar series: Navigating the Grad School Adventure, designed to help undergraduate and graduate students overcome the myriad of challenges that come with graduate school. The series premiered in August when current graduate students shared their perspectives of graduate school and offered honest tips to undergraduate and early-stage graduate students. After hosting webinars each month in the fall, covering topics from research planning to balancing work and education, the series culminated in December 2020 with a webinar on internship experiences during graduate school. Our committee is planning a spring 2021 webinar series—more information is available at **www.agronomy.org/gradstudents**, **www.crops.org/gradstudents**, and **www.soils.org/gradstudents**.




Our second new initiative of 2020 was a graduate student travel grant pilot program. After fundraising from January through July, our committee raised $3,315 to support graduate student travel to the Annual Meeting with a supporting match from the Agronomic Science Foundation (ASF) to total $6,630 in 2020. Due to the Annual Meeting moving to a virtual format, these funds are being saved for future Annual Meetings and are being used as base funding for the new

program. We were very pleased with our fundraising efforts during a year of economic uncertainty and are very appreciative of our donors. Fundraising for the program is continuing with the goal of raising an additional $5,000 before April 2021 to provide support for travel to the 2021 Annual Meeting. Since ASF has agreed to match these funds, our potential total has been increased to $10,000 in 2021. Overall, this program will support graduate student attendance at future Annual Meetings, with emphasis on increasing the attendance of students who can bring diverse perspectives to the Societies. If you would like to learn more about the scholarship or if you are interested in donating, please visit: **www.a-s-f.org/content/graduate-student-travel-scholarship**!

The Graduate Student Leadership Conference, sponsored by ASF, is the highlight of the graduate student events each year and provides students training in networking, leadership ethics, workplace conflict resolution, and professional etiquette. The 2020 Leadership Conference kicked off with a session on professional presence in a virtual world with Patricia Rossi (Etiquette Coach). Graduate students met the following evening for a casual virtual social where they got to know their cohort and received a virtual tour of the Societies' headquarters in Madison, WI. Throughout the week, the 38 participants received training from Dr. Sherry Harsch-Porter (PorterBay Insight) in effective leadership and conflict mana

gement using a DiSC assessment and concluded the conference with a session on ethics in research and leadership with panelists Dr. Renee Rioux (University of Wisconsin–Madison), Dr. Kimberly Gwinn (University of Tennessee–Knoxville), and Dr. Elisha Allan-Perkins (University of Massachusetts–Amherst). Dr. Harsch-Porter rejoined the group later in the week to give tips on how to ace an interview, and

students also had the opportunity to attend a virtual coffee hour with past and present Society presidents and leaders where they received career advice and learned more about getting involved in the Societies.

The Virtual Networking Session, funded by Corteva, was our largest event this year. More than 110 students and mentors from academia, industry, and government met to learn networking tips from Corteva's Dr. Jason Rauscher and Dr. Raj Khosla from Colorado State University. Participants then put those skills to the test in virtual breakout rooms where they were able to network with professionals from each sector.

The Graduate Student Committee would like to thank Corteva Agriscience, ASF, our speakers, and Susan Chapman (Director of Member Services), our Society liaison, for helping make this year's virtual Annual Meeting a success! We are especially thankful for Susan, who devoted many hours of time and guidance to help make 2020 a successful year for our committee.

## Looking Forward: 2021

This past year has been one of "visionary" growth, which is especially true for the ASA, CSSA, and SSSA Graduate Student Committee. Despite the virtual nature of nearly all of our events this year, we learned that there are some clear benefits to these styles of events—mainly that virtual events permit greater accessibility for students, faculty, and professionals to participate. With these new formats in mind, we hope to further engage more members in 2021 by continuing our new webinar series and incorporating more widely accessible events. Furthermore, the Graduate Student Committee is aligning our goals to those of the cross-Society ASA, CSSA, and SSSA objectives of commitments to diversity and inclusion and broadening our external engagement

throughout 2021 and beyond.

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