Science Societies

Donations sought for travel scholarship pilot program

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Graduate students who attend the Annual Meeting of ASA, CSSA, and SSSA benefit in many ways, including networking with members.

The Annual Meeting provides a platform for graduate students to showcase their research, network with other scientists, and attend professional development workshops that help further their careers; however, substantial financial resources are needed to cover travel costs and registration. While graduate student attendance has remained consistent over the past three years, the most recent SSSA Member Survey (2018) revealed that 61% of students selected “Can't afford to go” in response to the question “What keeps you from attending the SSSA Annual Meeting?” Though this data is specific to SSSA graduate students, the results clearly indicate that financial requirements can create a barrier to meeting attendance and demonstrate a need for financial assistance among graduate student members.

To address this issue, the 2020 ACS Graduate Student Committee has developed a Travel Scholarship Pilot Program with the goal of raising $10,000 to sponsor graduate student travel to the 2020 ASA, CSSA, and SSSA International Annual Meeting in Phoenix, AZ. The Agronomic Science Foundation has agreed to provide matching funds of up to $5,000 for the first year of this pilot program. “Attending and presenting at our Annual Meeting is so important for graduate students to kick start their networks within the Societies and their careers,” says Dr. Seth Murray, Chair of the ASF Board of Trustees. “Enabling more students to attend will result in more students who better know where they aspire to create impact in agronomy, crops, and soils, and to have the support networks built to achieve these dreams.”

Now, the Graduate Student Committee is tasked with raising the additional $5,000 to reach the $10,000 goal for 2020 scholarships. We need your help to make this a reality! Please consider donating to this program.

This program is the first of its kind because it is organized ***by graduate students for graduate students***. These funds will be awarded to a select number of qualified students who plan to present research at the 2020 meeting in Phoenix, are unable to attend the Annual Meeting without additional outside financial assistance (not fully supported by the professor, department, or program), and can provide justification outlining how meeting attendance will benefit their careers. Scholarship applications will open and close with abstract submissions for the 2020 Annual Meeting, and recipients will be notified of scholarships in late summer.

With your help through a financial contribution, we hope to bring graduate students, who because of financial strain, otherwise would not attend to the Annual Meeting in Phoenix. These students will benefit from the mentorship connections, leadership training, and opportunities for collaboration provided by our Societies. In return, the Societies will benefit by facilitating student involvement and fostering connections between graduate students and more senior Society members. Facilitating graduate student involvement is necessary to help grow and support the future of the Societies. Your donation will help us realize this mission—please donate today!

To make a secure donation online, visit **www.agronomy.org/membership/donate/AMGRADTRAVEL**, **www.crops.org/membership/donate/AMGRADTRAVEL**, or **www.soils.org/membership/donate/AMGRADTRAVEL**. Or, mail a check with "Grad Student Travel Grant Fund" noted on the memo line to the Agronomic Science Foundation, 5585 Guilford Road, Madison, WI 53711-5801.

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