



Science
Societies

Meet the Societies' Graduate Student Committee

By Maria Teresa Tancredi, Elizabeth A. Bradley

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The ASA, CSSA, and SSSA Graduate Student Committee regularly host a networking session at the Annual Meeting to help build graduate members' networks and networking skills.

The ASA, CSSA, and SSSA (ACS) Graduate Student Committee aims to support graduate members as they navigate their academic experience and promote graduate student membership, value, and involvement in the Societies. In the past years, the committee has been active on multiple fronts to reach its goals. Each year, during the spring and fall semesters, we design and host a webinar series with past topics including “Communicating Your Science 101,” “Level Up Your Career: From Grad Student to Employment,” “Navigating the Grad School Adventure,” and “Data Visualization.” The webinars are free for graduate members, and the recordings are available on the student pages of the Societies’ websites.¹

In addition to our webinar series, we regularly host a networking session at the ACS Annual Meeting to help build our graduate members’ networks and networking skills. This event provides an excellent opportunity to connect graduate students and mentors from various fields such as industry, government, and academia. Come check it out at the meeting in Baltimore!

Additionally, we work to support students’ participation at the Annual Meeting. A 2018 SSSA member survey reported that the financial costs associated with attending the meeting was one of the major barriers to student attendance. To help provide a solution for our fellow graduate students, our committee created the Graduate Student Travel Scholarship. After raising funds for several years, we were thrilled to award the scholarship to the first 11 students last year. Currently, we are working to make the scholarship a permanent and endowed fund. To help with this effort, you can donate at: www.a-s-f.org/content/graduate-student-travel-scholarship/.

Finally, the ACS Graduate Student Committee helps design and host the Graduate Student Leadership Conference (GSLC) each year at the Annual Meeting. The GSLC

provides opportunities to develop leadership skills through dedicated sessions including professionalism, leadership styles, communications, workplace etiquette, and ethics. The conference is also an occasion to network with other graduate students, Society leadership, and industry representatives.

The work done by the ACS Graduate Student Committee wouldn't be possible without the continued efforts of our committee members, the constant support of Society staff liaisons Susan Chapman and Brigid Moran, the Agronomic Science Foundation, and our generous donors and sponsors.

For updates on graduate student events and opportunities, follow us on Twitter ([@ACSGradStudents](#)) and Facebook ([ACS.gradstudents](#)) and watch your emails!

Meet Our Current Committee Members

The ACS Graduate Student Committee currently consists of 13 members with two-year terms. Every year, the members elect a president and a vice-president.

Our current president, Rachelle Davenport, is a Ph.D. candidate at Cornell University focusing on determining how microbial decomposition influences the molecular diversity of soil organic matter and how these influences impact soil organic matter persistence.



Rachelle Davenport

Our vice-president, Maria Teresa Tancredi (@MariaTeresaTan), is a Ph.D. student at the University of Georgia. She investigates farmers' and other stakeholders' shared perspectives around cover crops as well as policy effects



Maria Teresa Tancredi

on women farmers' approach and barriers to conservation practices.

Additionally, the committee includes three students that serve as the graduate student representative for their respective Society:

Our ASA representative, Tracy Campbell (@tracy_campbell), is a Ph.D. candidate at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Tracy's research focuses on improving water quality and nutrient management in agricultural systems through the use of ecosystem modeling, water testing, and ecophysiology work.



Tracy Campbell

Our CSSA representative, Karl Kunze (@kunzx37), is a Ph.D. candidate at Cornell University with the Cornell College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. Karl's research includes two projects of breeding and genetic characterization of organic multi-use naked barley and research in development of winter malting barley for New York. Areas of research include genotype-by-environment interaction, genome-wide association of disease and germination traits, weed competitive ability, characterization of malting quality, and aerial imaging.



Karl Kunze

Our SSSA representative, Elizabeth A. Bradley (@hog_wench), is a Ph.D. candidate at Auburn University. Elizabeth's current research evaluates

the impacts of invasive wild pigs on water quality, wetland ecosystem dynamics and nutrient cycling, and the resulting implications on pathogen transmission.



Elizabeth Bradley

The work of the ACS Graduate Student Committee would not be possible without the hard work of all of our members:

Fernanda Krupek (@FernandaKrupek) is a Ph.D. candidate at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. She is centering her Ph.D. project on the Nebraska NRCS Soil Health Initiative with on-farm experiments testing cover crop management practices. Fernanda's research, teaching, and extension efforts aim to promote equitable, healthy, profitable, and resilient food systems.



Fernanda Krupek

Emma Matcham (@EGmatcham @MatchamLab) completed her Ph.D. this year at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. She is now an assistant professor at the University of Florida. Emma studies nutrient cycling across agroecosystems to maintain sustainable and profitable crop production. Learn about her



Emma Matcham

research and extension programs @ MatchamLab.

Emmanuella Owusu Ansah (@Emmanuellaosans) is a master's student at the University of Idaho.

Her project is focused on evaluating various fertilizer products, application methods, rates, and timing on small grains.

Emmanuella's research seeks to improve soil health, crop yields, and nitrogen use efficiency. Find out more about her research @IDCrops.



Emmanuella Owusu Ansah

Deepak Ghimire (@agrideepak093) is a Ph.D. student at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln. His research project focuses on N management (using different sources, using crop sensors, and optimizing N rates) to increase crop yield and improve water quality in a semi-arid environment.



Deepak Ghimire

Tauana Almeida (@TauanaAlmeida5) is also a Ph.D. student at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln. She investigates the efficiency of cover crops under different management systems to improve soil health, control weeds and pests, and increase cash crop yield.



Tauana Almeida

Dwarika Bhattarai (@Dwarikabh) is pursuing his doctorate degree at South Dakota State University where he develops carbon and N budgets using ¹³C and ¹⁵N natural abundance techniques combined with microbial community assessment, short-term carbon mineralization, remote sensing, and tissue and soil samples.



Dwarika Bhattarai

Mala Ganiger (@Buckwheatgal) is a Ph.D. student at the University of North Dakota. Her Ph.D. research is focused on identifying the genomic regions associated with seed coat color in common buckwheat using genome-wide association studies and developing a high-throughput phenotyping approach to measure the seed coat color.



Mala Ganiger

Carlos Bonini Pires (@Carbpires) is a Ph.D. candidate at Kansas State University. He is conducting state-wide on-farm studies to improve soil health and agricultural resilience. Carlos is the founder of the Agro Connection Podcast (@oagroconnection) and YouTube channel, which focuses on connecting Brazilian and American agriculture.



Carlos Bonini Pires

Neha Chatterjee (@NehaC2359) is a Ph.D. candidate at the University of Illinois. Her research involves evaluation of the agronomic and environmental impact of struvite, a waste-recovered slow-release phosphorus fertilizer. She uses P radioisotopes and meta-analyses to evaluate arbuscular mycorrhizae interaction with low-solubility P fertilizers such as struvite and study P nutrition and cycling in agro-ecosystems.



Neha Chatterjee

Taylor Berkshire-Akers (@taylorberkshire) is a research specialist/lab manager with the Institute for Sustainability, Energy, and Environment at the University of Illinois–Urbana-Champaign. Her area of research involves an array of soil analyses to evaluate cover crops in different cropping systems across Illinois.



Taylor Berkshire-Akers

To connect with our members or volunteer to serve on the committee, visit:

- ASA—www.agronomy.org/membership/committees/view/ACS238/members
- CSSA—www.crops.org/membership/committees/view/ACS238/members
- SSSA—www.soils.org/membership/committees/view/ACS238/members.

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