Science Societies

Helping students discover our sciences as viable career paths

Learn what the Societies are doing to build the workforce pipeline—and how you can participate

By Wade Thomason

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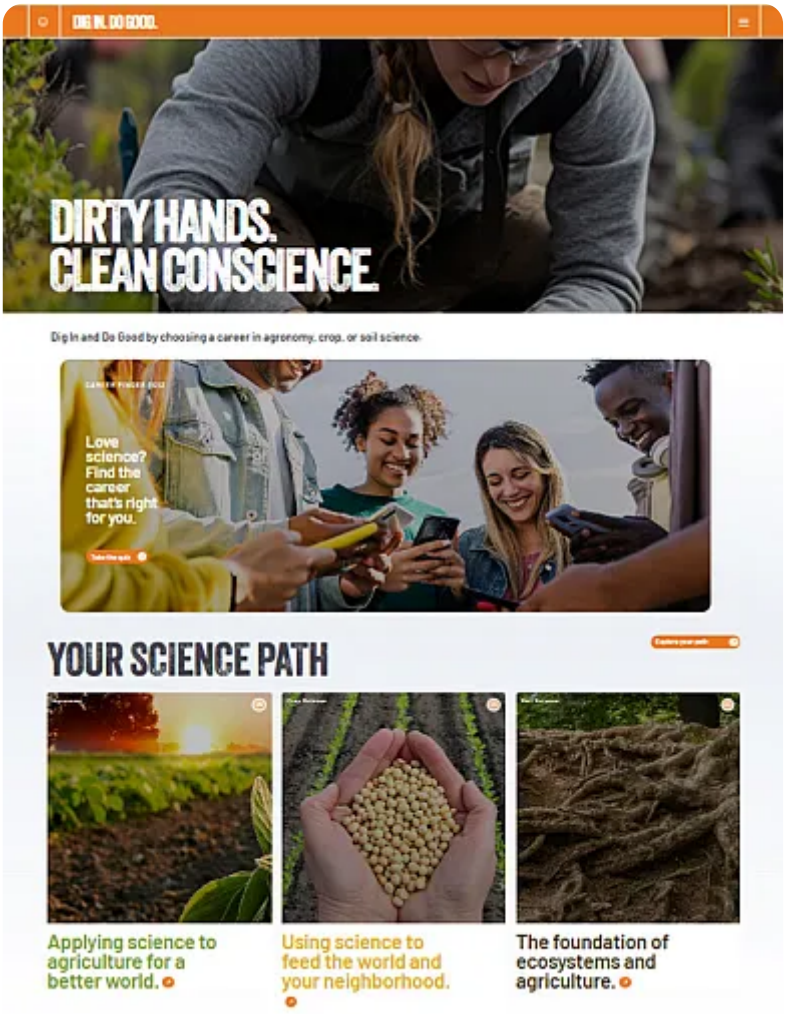
> If you've ever tried to explain what an agronomist, crop scientist, or soil scientist actually does to a high school student—or their parents—you know the challenge we face. Our sciences sit at the center of some of society's biggest challenges: producing enough food, protecting soil and water resources, and helping agriculture adapt to a changing world. Yet too many bright, curious students never hear about these careers until it's too late to choose a path toward them. As someone who regularly talks with prospective students and their families, I'm continually reminded how few people have ever met an agronomist, crop scientist, or soil scientist before arriving on a college campus.

That's why I want to highlight a (relatively) new initiative: **"Dig In. Do Good."** (digindogood.com), a campaign built specifically to reach students where they are and show them where our sciences can take them.

"Dig In. Do Good." is a public-facing website designed for middle and high school students, their teachers, and their guidance counselors. Its tagline—"Dirty Hands. Clean Conscience."—captures exactly the pitch we've struggled to make ourselves: these are hands-on sciences with real, tangible impact on the world.

Every one of us got into this field somehow—a professor, a 4-H project, a summer job, a parent in agriculture. For the next generation, that spark increasingly needs to come earlier, and it needs to come from us. "Dig In. Do Good." is our Societies' answer to that need: a single, credible place where students can explore careers they may never have encountered otherwise.

Only the first step



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Recruiting students is only the first step. We also need to help them connect with mentors, explore career opportunities, and see a future for themselves in the profession—and that's where the rest of our workforce development efforts pick up where "Dig In. Do Good." leaves off.

"Dig In. Do Good." works alongside several other member-facing efforts already underway:

- **Mentoring through the Member Hub.** Our online mentoring platform connects students and early-career members with experienced professionals across academia, industry, and government. If you've benefited from a mentor at any point in your career, this is the most direct way to pay it forward—sign up as a mentor through the Member Hub in a matter of minutes.

- **Science Societies Career Center.** Our careers board continues to be one of the most visible benefits we offer, connecting employers directly with our membership and with students entering the workforce. If your organization is hiring, post the opening there first.

- **The return of the physical job board at CANVAS.** By popular request, we're bringing back the printed job posting board on-site this year. It's a simple thing, but it matters—students and job seekers walking the halls between sessions can see, in one place, who's hiring and where. If you have a position to fill, bring a flyer.

By popular request, we're bringing back the printed job posting board at CANVAS this year.

Here's what you can do to help

Taken together, these efforts form a pipeline: "Dig In. Do Good." sparks interest before college, our university partnerships and career resources guide students through their degree, and mentoring, job postings, and the CANVAS job board carry them into the workforce and beyond.

I'm asking you to help this pipeline do what it's designed to do:

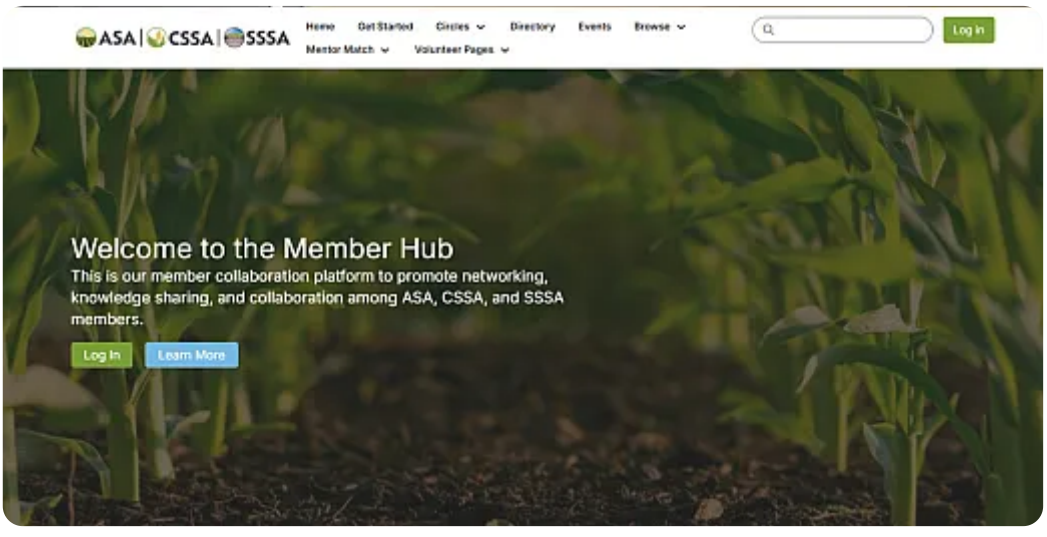
- **Share "Dig In. Do Good."** Send the link to a local high school teacher, a guidance counselor, or a 4-H or FFA advisor you know.

- **Point students to it.** If you mentor undergraduates, judge a science fair, or give a career talk, mention the Career Finder Quiz.

- **Make sure your program is represented.** If your university isn't yet featured on the site, reach out through the "For Universities" page and get it added.

- **Sign up to mentor.** A single conversation through the Member Hub can be the difference for someone finding their footing in this field.

- **Post your openings—twice.** List them on the Society website and bring a flyer for the job board at CANVAS.



Sign up to be a mentor in the Member Hub. A single conversation through the Member Hub can be the difference for someone finding their footing in this field.

None of these efforts, by themselves, will solve our workforce challenges. Together, however, they can help more students discover our disciplines, connect with professionals, and see a place for themselves in the future of agriculture and environmental science. That's work worth doing, and it's work every member can help move forward.

Visit 'Dig in. Do Good.'

Member Hub

CANVAS

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