

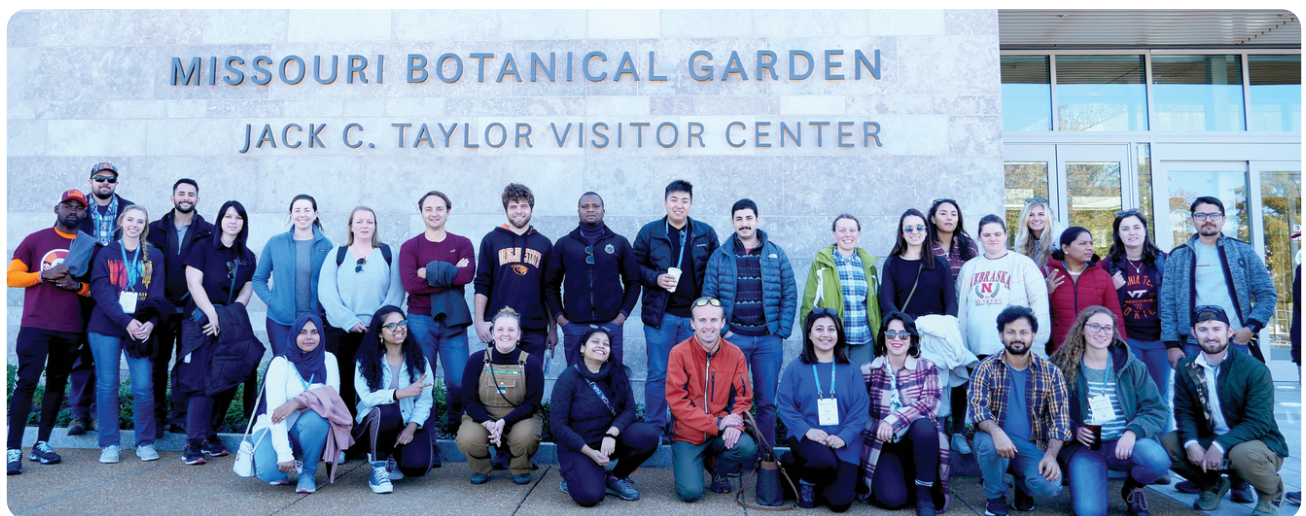


Science
Societies

Graduate Student Tour Spans the Ancient to the High Tech

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Students pose for a picture in front of the Missouri Botanical Gardens. Photo by Jyoti Prasad Kakati.



The ASA, CSSA, and SSSA (ACS) Graduate Student Committee set out for the first time to lead a graduate student tour at the 2023 International Annual Meeting to provide students a chance to learn about the local area. The tour consisted of four stops ranging from the ancient Cahokia Mounds in Illinois to the advanced agricultural technology presented to us at SydenstrickerNobbe Partners in Missouri.

Display sign covering the history of Cahokia Mounds. Photo by Om Ghimire.

Stop 1: Cahokia Mounds

Cahokia Mounds was a great start for the first graduate student tour. The Cahokia Mounds represent the remains of an ancient Native American city. This archaeological site was once the center of the preColumbian Mississippian culture, flourishing between the 9th and 15th centuries. Cahokia was likely a regional economic, social, and religious hub with a population that may have exceeded 20,000 at its peak. The site is now a UNESCO World Heritage site and a State Historic Site, which offers visitors insights into the culture and history of the ancient inhabitants of the region. The graduate students enjoyed the guided tour, which gave insights about this culture and how it survived at the time.

Stop 2: SydenstrickerNobbe Partners

As the tour's second stop, students visited SydenstrickerNobbe Partners, a John Deere training and distribution site. Serving as the "hightech" portion of the tour, students learned about how advanced agricultural technology is shaping the future with a behindthescenes look at the training, e-commerce, and dealership parts distribution activities at the facility.



*Students learning about the behind-the-scenes process at Sydenstricker-Nobbe Partners.
Photo by Jyoti Prasad Kakati.*

Stop 3: Missouri Botanical Gardens

For the third stop of the tour, graduate students visited the oldest botanical garden in continuous operation in the United States, the Missouri Botanical Gardens. Offering 79 acres of horticultural display, the Garden has served as a center for botanical research and science education for more than 163 years. Upon arrival, students learned about the history of the Botanical Gardens and heard from the esteemed Dr. Robbie Hart, Director of the William L. Brown Center at the Gardens. Students were able to “choose their own adventure” in exploring the gardens and viewing the multitude of horticultural displays and exhibits available.

Stop 4: Still 630 Distillery

Still 630 Distillery was a great way to cap off the graduate student tour. Still 630 is a local distillery in St. Louis with a very passionate master distiller of spirits. The tour covered the process of distilling and how different spirits are made from chemistry and a careful selection of locally sourced ingredients. These locally sourced ingredients included grain, apples, and even barrels sourced from Missouri. One of the spirits has 100% of the ingredients sourced from Missouri, making Missouri bourbon something that no other state can offer. The key takeaway from this fun lesson on spirit distilling was the owner's amazing entrepreneurial spirit that inspires everyone to follow their passion.



Visiting Still 630 Distillery where students ended the tour with a tasting. Photo by Om Ghimire.

Look Forward to San Antonio

Overall, the first-ever graduate student tour at the Annual Meeting was well received by the tour participants and had a fantastic turnout. This tour would not have been possible without the guidance and support of Timothy M. Reinbott, Susan Chapman, and the lead tour organizer Tauana Ferreira de Almeida. The ACS Graduate Student Committee would also like to thank the Agronomic Science Foundation for defraying costs and providing the necessary support that made the tour a reality. Due to the positive response the tour received, the Committee will reconvene in 2024 to plan the second graduate student tour to be hosted at the 2024 Annual Meeting in San Antonio, TX. If you would like to collaborate with the Committee by helping plan this tour, please reach out to Chandler Gruener at chandler.gruener@uga.edu. We look forward to seeing you in Texas!

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