

Early Career Members

Why You Should Attend the Annual Meetings in 2011 and Beyond

“To me, the meetings are the greatest opportunity for ‘in service’ training that exists in our profession. We need to realize that being awarded a Ph.D. is just the beginning in our profession. There is just nothing like interacting with the pillars in our field.”



Rob Michitsch
Early Career Members Committee
rmichits@uwsp.edu

This unprompted message was sent to me just months ago by one of my mentors, a 57-year member of SSSA, in response to an article about the value of being a member in our Societies. While the message alludes to an academic faculty member, it is relevant to all aspects of our membership—whether one is a student or consultant or works in government, industry, or academia.

The ASA, CSSA, and SSSA International Annual Meetings are a perfect time for us all to come together as a group, regardless of field, occupation, age, etc. It is a chance to interact among professionals and develop those bonds that last a lifetime. Particularly from an early career member perspective, the meetings are an opportunity to present our work, expand our horizons, learn new things, and socialize with friends.

The meetings are also the best time to gain a better understanding of the many professional opportunities available to us, while helping us to understand the roots of our scientific interests. They provide a common ground for employees and employers and for friends and colleagues (new and old) to exchange information and ideas. As well, there is an active undergraduate program (SASES) and a career placement center that offers employment and graduate study opportunities.

Some Reasons to Attend

Below are some reasons to attend the meetings in 2011 and beyond:

- It’s a venue to hear from renowned national and international experts (e.g., industry, politics, or academia) in our critical areas.
- You can observe presentations and technical sessions of current topics in the agronomic, crop, and soil sciences.
- With the 2011 meetings, you have an opportunity to learn about research from the Canadian Society of Soil Science and interact with their membership.

- There are graduate student competitions for research presentations.
- There are daily poster sessions that present cutting-edge research and activities, with the opportunity to talk in person with the authors of the research.

- Countless networking opportunities are available.
- You can participate in Society and divisional business meetings to understand how the Societies work.
- You get exposure to leading technologies and instrumentation at the tradeshow.
- Local tours and excursions provide the opportunity to explore topics related to activities in the agronomic, crop, and soil sciences.

The Early Career Members Committee (ECMC) has been proactive to consider your ideas and needs for the 2011 Annual Meetings. We will be offering six interactive sessions about mentoring, preparing a professional application (e.g. CV, research statement), writing and publishing manuscripts, interviewing and negotiating, and grant writing. More information will follow—visit the ECMC website sometime in June.

As well, the meetings can provide a bit of a distraction. We meet in unique locations from year to year (e.g., San Antonio), highlight top speakers in our areas of interest (e.g., Sam Dryden, Marianne Bänziger, and John Soper), and bring in keynote speakers (formal as well as funny) from outside our Societies to give us a fresh perspective on the world around us (e.g., William Davies, Jim Hightower, and Don McMillan).

This article is just a glimpse at reasons to attend the 2011 Annual Meetings. The ECMC continues to improve, expand, and meet the needs of all early career members at both the Annual Meetings and throughout the year. Please share your thoughts and ideas with any member of the ECMC (see websites below for contact information).



web extra

Learn more about the Early Career Members Committee at:

www.agronomy.org/membership/early-career

www.crops.org/membership/early-career

www.soils.org/membership/early-career