



Highlights of the 2019 annual meeting graduate student committee events

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The Graduate Student Committee is proud to report on the successful, student-led events from the 2019 Annual Meeting that took place in November in San Antonio. Each day of the meeting, students had opportunities to enhance their leadership skills, network with colleagues, and learn about career paths from professionals in different fields. These events were well attended and received positive feedback from the attendees.

Leadership Conference

Events in San Antonio kicked off with the Graduate Student Leadership Conference on Saturday. This two-day event provided graduate students the tools to improve their

leadership skills through interactive sessions run by professionals in leadership ethics, etiquette, professional planning, and leadership styles. A highlight of the conference was the DiSC personality assessment. This behavior assessment tool helped students determine their personality traits and how they can be used for conflict management and effective leadership. The conference ended with a shared lunch between conference attendees and Society leaders, allowing students to ask practical leadership questions.

Student Networking Session—Building Professional Relationships

The Student Networking Session was a success with more than 110 participants. Approximately 30 of the participants were mentors representing academic research, extension, industry, and government. There were two invited speakers at the session, Dr. Marion Limberger (Corteva Agriscience) and Dr. Martha Mamo (University of Nebraska–Lincoln) who gave short presentations on networking skills and professional communication. The Graduate Student Committee would like to thank Corteva Agriscience, Dr. Limberger, Dr. Mamo, and all of the ASA, CSSA, and SSSA volunteer mentors who made this a valuable experience for graduate students.

Career Paths for Students, Post-docs, and Early Career Members

The Career Paths Session consisted of five panels of professionals with different areas of expertise. Approximately 100 students, post-docs, and early career members rotated through the panels to talk with experts in academic teaching and extension, research in government labs and academia, and careers with nonprofits, consulting, and advocacy. The informal panels allowed participants to ask panelists about their career path, leading to meaningful conversation and discussion. More than 25 professionals volunteered their time to be panelists for this session, and the Graduate Student Committee is thankful that Society members are always willing to donate time

and expertise for graduate student events. The committee will begin searching for volunteers for 2020 Annual Meeting events in August 2020. In the meantime, if members would like to engage with graduate student events, they can contact the Graduate Student Committee or the staff liaison Katie Reiels ([Send Message](#)) as the Annual Meeting approaches.

Socials

Many graduate students who attended the Leadership Conference and the Student Networking Session on Sunday gathered with other graduate students at the Graduate Student Social at Café Ole on Sunday evening. The social was a great opportunity for ASA, CSSA, and SSSA graduate students to meet other students over drinks and appetizers in a relaxed setting. One of the most successful events from San Antonio was the Trivia Night Social that took place on Tuesday prior to the *Food Evolution* movie screening. About 80 people gathered to test their knowledge on agronomy, crops, soils, and environmental science in the bar-style trivia. The Graduate Student Committee looks forward to organizing this event again for Phoenix Annual Meeting in 2020!

Planning for 2020

Our time in San Antonio closed with the monthly ACS Graduate Student Committee meeting. Committee members gathered to reflect on the 2019 Annual Meeting and the collective effort that made it a success. The committee recognized outgoing 2019 ACS Graduate Student Committee Chair Ekrem Ozlu for his leadership that helped make the events in San Antonio a major success. Moving forward, the committee is going to build on the successes of the 2019 Annual Meeting and begin planning its initiatives and goals for 2020 and the events for the Annual Meeting in Phoenix in 2020.

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