In mid-March, CCAs; members of the American Society of Agronomy (ASA), Crop Science Society of America (CSSA), and Soil Science Society of America (SSSA); and graduate students from across the U.S. came to Washington, DC to meet with their congressional delegation to raise awareness and support for food, agriculture, and natural resources research funding during the fourth annual Congressional Visits Day (CVD). Participants met with 56 congressional offices, specifically focusing on USDA agriculture research programs—the Agricultural Research Service and the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative.

ASA, CSSA, and SSSA have a long history of working to connect fundamental research discoveries to the practical applications of this knowledge. One shining example of this connection is seen in the involvement of the International Certified Crop Adviser (ICCA) program, which provides a benchmark for practicing agronomy professionals who provide scientifically sound agronomic advice to farmers.

For the 2013 CVD, the CCAs described how they depended on unbiased research, done at land grant universities, to help shape agricultural practices.

The importance of this "research pipeline" is often lost on congressional members and staff. "The CVD teams can illustrate how the appropriations are used to fund basic research, which evolves into applied research, which spins off into technologies and applications," says ASA Science Policy Committee Chair and CCA Fred Vocasek. "As the CVD teams present their [funding] ask, the staffer or legislator has a chance to see how the investment in research actually pays out at the farm gate, at the grain elevator, at the biofuel plant. I think the Society–Student–Certificant teams can be a rather unique combination that other entities may not be able to easily match."

Because of the success of the CCA participation in the 2013 CVD, the Science Policy Office hopes to expand their participation in 2014.