In May, the SSSA board of directors and staff met to revise and update our strategic plan. This process was guided by several underlying principles. First, the plan must recognize and continue to work with our historic base in both the agronomic and environmental fields. Second, it should acknowledge the Reorganization Task Force Report by expanding and promoting soil science into broader audiences, including ecological and geosciences. Finally, the plan should do its utmost to promote soil science as a profession, not only among academics and researchers, but also with practicing professionals and educators at the K-12 level.

Our first task in this revision was to evaluate our mission, vision, and core values. Our mission “To advance soils as fundamental to life” remains constant, and we are indeed on consistent path. Our new vision statement “Assuring a healthy and sustainable planet through our soils” is clearer and should be more compelling, not only to our members, but also to a broader audience. Our core values have been updated to be more succinct:

Core Values
- Adherence to scientific, professional, and ethical standards
- Pursuit, dissemination, and application of knowledge
- Advocacy of science-based policy
- Environmental stewardship
- Sustainable use of land and other resources

Revising and clarifying our goals was our next task. Here the diverse background of the board was beneficial in developing three wide goals that we feel truly encompass not only what we do as a profession, but what we can and should be focused on. Along with establishing goals, we also determined how we would measure our success.

Goals
1. Promote soil science education to a broad audience
   - Increase website traffic and downloads from kids’ and teachers’ sites
   - Increase number of unique short courses and webinars
   - Enhance Social Media participation: YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, and Pinterest

2. Promote soil science research
   - Increase use and sale of publications (including impact factor)
   - Increase number of focused meetings
   - Increase presence at governmental or policy-making panels in advisory capacity

3. Promote soil science as a profession
   - Increase number of certified professionals states requiring licenses
   - Increase number of non-academic positions posted on the job board
   - Expand the certification programs internationally
   - Link the SSSA website to professional services
   - Increase number of users of SSSA products and services
   - Develop standards of practice of soil science on a regional and national level and promote standardization
   - Develop and maintain strategic partnerships with complementary organizations

The establishment of these goals forces us to constantly evaluate how we are doing and where we need to direct or redirect efforts within our strategic plan. The plan becomes a living document rather than something that simply sits on a shelf. The specifics as to the metrics that will be used to measure the progress are listed in the full strategic plan.

We encourage you to give us feedback and to volunteer wherever possible to make this plan successful. My hope is that all of us will remember our mission “To advance soils as fundamental to life” and strive to promote it in all that we do.

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