I am entering my final month of service as president of ASA, and it has been a memorable and highly satisfying journey.

In January, I met with staff in Madison to identify priorities for 2015, focusing particularly on developing new partnerships and working toward a unified voice for agriculture in the national policy arena and building our communications program to better reach diverse audiences about agronomic sciences and practice. Additionally, as the U.S.-Cuba national relations were undergoing a “thaw,” I wanted to explore ways to build links between the Cuban agronomic science community and our members. ASA has made major advances in all three areas, and many more.

As a basis for development of a unified message, the Science and Policy Committee, our Science Policy Office, and the Boards of ASA, CSSA, and SSSA developed Science Frontiers documents, which identified the unified grand challenge, to “Sustainably improve the human condition for a growing global population in a changing environment.” This vision resonates well beyond ASA, CSSA, and SSSA and has strengthened ongoing efforts to work with a broad coalition of agriculture and environmental groups. In December, Karl Anderson (Director of Government Relations), Ellen Bergfeld (CEO), and I will represent ASA at a workshop sponsored by the Charles Valentine Riley Memorial Foundation titled, “Pursuing a Unifying Message: Elevating Food, Agricultural, and Natural Resources Research as a National Priority.”

A Communications Committee was appointed to work with staff, providing counsel on messages to communicate, methods of communication, and how best to recruit and train members in science communications skills. This new committee has had lively dialog and many fruitful ideas to better communicate to various audiences exactly what agronomists do.

In October, Ellen Bergfeld and Wes Meixelsperger, our CFO and Director of Meetings, traveled to Cuba to assess and evaluate development of potential joint activities, conferences, and information exchange, including activities that our members could attend in Cuba in the coming year. See page 16 for more information on this.

Other Exciting Advances This Year

There have been many other exciting advances in our programs across all departments, including:

- The new journal, Agricultural & Environmental Letters, was launched this fall, with Warren Dick serving as Editor. Several new books were published, and subscriptions to our Digital Library (dl.sciencesocieties.org) are increasing.
- In November, ASA purchased a building in Washington, DC, diversifying our financial portfolio and better supporting our Science Policy staff and programs.
- We enjoyed co-sponsoring several of SSSA’s International Year of Soils activities and look forward to supporting CSSA’s 2016 International Year of Pulses events.
- The webinar and continuing education offerings continued to expand, and new certification options are being added in 4R Nutrient Management, Sustainability, Integrated Pest Management, and possibly Agroforestry.
- We welcomed several new Communities, saw the merger of two Communities, and the re-naming of another, and anticipate ongoing evolution of our dynamic Community programming.
- The Board approved adding a Graduate Student member to the Board. Necessary changes in bylaws are being developed for vote of the membership.
- We joined the World Association of Agronomists, an association of associations of agronomists, to strengthen our international partnerships and were pleased to welcome representatives of several international organizations to our Annual Meeting.

With all of these accomplishments and more, there remain many challenges ahead. The goals of ASA are not one-year undertakings but are substantial efforts that span across years. I am working with the 2016 president, Paul Fixen, to identify appropriate roles of our Society to advance 21st century infrastructure and protocols and systems to better meet the requirements for high quality, accessible scientific data in support our research and education efforts and to make possible broader ranges of knowledge-based agronomic management.

I thank the members of the Board, our outstanding staff, and you, the members, for such hard work, enthusiasm, and creativity, and particularly for the opportunity to serve as your 2015 president. I look forward to continuing our ASA journey together.