I am honored and excited to be serving as your SSSA president for the all-important 2015 International Year of Soils (IYS). It’s been quite a journey to this point, and I expect it to be a year of continuing surprises. Since the beginning of the year, I have been working more closely with our staff in Madison, WI, which provides management and administrative support services for SSSA, ASA, and CSSA. I was reminded how efficient and committed they are in helping us all achieve success as a Society. We are extremely fortunate to be working with them.

SSSA’s strategic plan contains three goals, promote soil science education to a broader audience, promote soil science research, and promote soil science as a profession, which are particularly relevant to my interest in engaging minorities and disadvantaged groups in the sciences, especially soil science. There are numerous potential soil science majors and would-be soil science professionals who have not had the opportunities to consider soil science as a profession in part because of lack of exposure to the science itself. How we develop a relationship and interact with these students on a sustained basis is an important factor in gaining attention as a Society of value. We are continuing to do a great job for K-12 but are we doing as well in offering materials targeted to engaging educators and students from historically disadvantaged groups and helping link them to research universities with graduate opportunities? How can we as a Society improve the odds that they will select soil science as a potential career track? How do we draw these future professionals to soil science?

International Year of Soils

In the January issue of CSA News magazine, the Agronomic Science Foundation column introduced the International Year of Soils (IYS) and described the 12 soils themes for this year. By now, you will have received the 2015 IYS “Planner” and can see that these same 12 themes identified on our website are repeated each month with a number of key points, quotes, and amazing photos on each page. The soils.org/IYS web page is our “go to” location for IYS to communicate to our colleagues, friends, and acquaintances the importance of soil, its influence on our very existence, and the need for soil to remain a sustainable resource. There are many educational and outreach activities available for educators and young people to investi-

Promoting Soil Science as a Profession

SSSA President’s Message

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Annual Meeting and Specialized Conferences

It is time to start thinking about the Annual Meeting to be held in Minneapolis, MN this year. We will be welcoming the participation of the Entomological Society of America (ESA) for the first time. Admission to ESA’s sessions will be included in your Annual Meeting registration fee. In addition, joint sessions will once again be scheduled or co-sponsored both through SSSA and other professional societies and their meetings. Stay tuned for highlights, registration, and housing.

One challenge of a mid-November meeting in Minneapolis is that field tours will be restricted largely to indoor activities. Not to worry—this year, we have several other opportunities for those who need their fix of outdoor field tours, and conveniently, they will be held earlier in the year in several parts of the country. Among these are: the Consulting Soil Scientist Division-sponsored Meeting and Soil Tour to Napa Valley, CA in March, which includes a visit to the Ecological Staircase in Mendocino County made famous by the work of Hans Jenny1; a “Dust Bowl” region field tour through the Texas Panhandle that concludes in College Station, TX just in time for the SSSA specialized conference on “Global Soil Security” in May2; and in June, the National Cooperative Soil Survey Planning Conference in Duluth, MN.3 These meeting and conferences

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