coursework must come solely from their home department. Thus, take classes outside of your department, and see how other disciplines approach some of the problems and subjects with which you work. Gaining a new perspective on an old issue may help you in finding a solution.

- **Join other professional societies.** You would be amazed at how much you may learn just from holding a membership in another discipline’s professional society. For instance, a soil science graduate student may benefit greatly from understanding data analysis from the perspective of the American Statistical Association. Likewise, a crop science student may gain a better understanding of the fate and use of their crop of interest by joining the American Society of Animal Science. All societies are open to a diverse range of members, and both you and the society will benefit.

- **Network.** It seems that in recent years, we all increasingly need to network. This is one of the key components of a successful interdisciplinary experience. Make contacts within your discipline, but also branch out and try to establish relationships with those across your field and outside of your discipline.

Overall, graduate studies provide a unique opportunity to take part in an increasingly diverse focus in research. Taking the time to think about these topics will ensure a productive and rewarding professional career.

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**Auburn Takes First in National Soil Judging Contest**

The Auburn University soil judging team took first place in the 2015 National Collegiate Soils Contest, 18–24 April at the University of Arkansas–Monticello. Nearly two dozen teams competed, with contestants examining various soil pits to identify, evaluate, classify, and describe four soil profiles.

The second- and third-place teams were West Virginia and Purdue, respectively. In individual competition, Kristen Pegues (Auburn) took first, followed by Stephen Geib (second, Delaware Valley College), Adrienne Nottingham (third, West Virginia), and Erin Bush (fourth, Kansas State). The top four individuals are invited to represent the U.S. in the international soil judging competition, 1–5 Sept. 2015, in Godollo, Hungary (http://soiljudging-iys2015.com/). Joey Shaw, Auburn University, will be the coach.

Nearly two dozen teams competed in this year’s National Collegiate Soils Contest, examining various soil pits to identify, evaluate, classify, and describe four soil profiles (top). Auburn University taking first place (bottom).

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