The overarching question in the minds of students, post-docs, and early career members is “What career path is right for me?” This question lingers in the back of our minds for years leading up to that first “career” job, and in many cases, the second and third job afterwards. In college, we choose a particular major and a set of classes that peak our interest. From there, we tend to narrow our sights to excelling at the immediate tasks at hand. For undergraduate students, it is easy to direct all our focus on classes, student clubs, and a part-time job. For graduate students, our research project and writing a thesis or dissertation consume our minds. For the post-doc and early career member, we are driven to finish the next “product” whether that is a journal manuscript, grant, field day, or contract for a satisfied customer. While these are worthwhile objectives, we still need to find time to address that original question when we first started our studies, “What career path is right for me?” At the 2016 International Annual Meeting in Phoenix, AZ, four committees are coming together again to co-sponsor a session aimed at helping students, post-docs, and early career members address this question.

On Monday, 7 November, the ACS Graduate Student, ACS Early Career, and SSSA Early Career committees along with the SSSA Soil Consulting Scientists division will be co-sponsoring the session “Career Path Opportunities for Students, Post-Docs, and Early Career Members” from 9:30 to 11:00 am in the Phoenix Convention Center North, Room 120D.

This session will bring students and early career members an exciting opportunity to speak with experts in various career paths in order to gain a better understanding of career options in our discipline. Experts will represent academia, government, extension, industry, international institutes, NGO/non-profit, and consulting career opportunities. Informal mini-panels of two to three experts per career path will allow for conversation and personal interaction between participants and mentors. Participants will also be able to move freely between groups if they are interested in multiple career avenues.

By tapping into the insights and experiences of these experts, you will feel more ready than ever to take that leap into consulting, industry, or research at an international institute, for example. To optimize your best chance at success, you need dedication and knowledge. You already have the dedication part covered! Now, we hope you will join us in speaking with our vast array of experts from various career paths and increase your knowledge for answering what career path might just be right for you.

Our committees are dedicated to bringing you the information you need and that will benefit you. If you have an interest in a career path that is not on the list above, please feel free to contact any of the session organizers. We will do our best to bring experts from all career paths of interest to you. Additionally, if you would like to serve as an expert in one of our career paths and share your insights and experiences, please feel free to contact us with your information. More information on this session can be found in the online program at http://bit.ly/2cVqiUr.

A.L.M. Daigh, 2016 SSSA Early Career Members Committee Chair and 2016 ASA, CSSA, and SSSA Early Career Members Committee Past Chair; and Rachel K. Owen, 2016 ASA, CSSA, and SSSA Graduate Student Committee Chair