The land available for food production is decreasing, and our population is rapidly growing; the optimization of our natural resources has never been more important than it is right now. The fastest way to impact the world, in that respect, will be through research and innovation in our sciences. You can aid that effort and help make a difference in the future of agronomy, crop science, and soil science by joining with the Agronomic Science Foundation (ASF) to seed, cultivate, and harvest new talent on a global scale.

Since 1968, ASF has been a nonprofit 501-(c)(3) organization, and during this time, it has accomplished many goals. The numerous and generous contributions from donors have been used to fund student programs, scholarships, lectureships, conferences, awards, international travel, and other programs not covered by Society membership dues. So I encourage you to think about what your contribution, of any size, might be for this year.

As we usher in 2017, I would like to feature the various funds and scholarships that focus on the growth of talent within your sciences.

The Golden Opportunity Scholars Institute Fund (GO) supports promising undergraduates (15 in 2016) with the overall aim of cultivating a long-term, professional commitment to our sciences.

The Greenfield Scholars Fund is a program within GO sponsored by ASA and the International Certified Crop Adviser (ICCA) program to support a focused program for talented undergraduates (seven in 2016) who will go directly into the agronomic workforce and with an interest in certification.

Our other scholarships are in need of help to grow the future of agronomy, crops, and soils:

ASA
Cross Cultural Travel Scholarship (L.B. Johnson Fund)
Frank D. Keim Graduate Fellowship

CSSA
Gerald O. Mott Scholarship for Meritorious Graduate Students in Crop Science
Robert F Barnes Graduate Education Award
J. Fielding Reed Scholarship

SSSA
Francis and Evelyn Clark Soil Biology Scholarship
Gary “Pete” Peterson Dryland Soil Management Scholarship
Hubert J. Byrd Sr. Scholarship
Soil and Water Conservation Scholarship

Graduate Student Programs
Richard R. Johnson Graduate Student Program Fund

Travel Grants
Chris Stiegler Travel Fund
Dixon Soil Mineralogy Fund
Luxmoore Student Travel Grants (Wilde-Luxmoore Forest, Range and Wildland Soils Fund & Soil Physics Mentoring Fund)

A new tax law was recently passed—Charitable IRA Rollover—allowing donors the age of 70 ½ or older to make direct gifts to charities from their IRA. If you meet the age requirement, you can use this option to support any of the ASF funds highlighted above. A gift of any size will make a difference. Whether your gift is large or small, please consider ASF, which benefits many important initiatives, including scholarships, travel grants, lectureships, and more.

If you need some guidance on getting started, please contact me today at 608-273-8081 or ewelsh@sciencesocieties.org.