Earlier this year, the three Societies collectively created an Emeritus Member Task Force and charged it with finding new ways to serve members and increase emeriti member engagement.

However, members of this informal group have been active even before their official status as a Task Force. It all started at the 2015 Annual Meeting when Task Force member Mary Collins presented in a session titled “Synergy and Partnering with Retired and Emeriti Seniors in Professional Societies.” In 2016, the group built on this idea and developed a session with three presentations and a group discussion on opportunities for more emeriti member engagement. Now, with the Task Force in place, these members are rapidly moving forward.

2017 Annual Meeting Activities

The Task Force developed a symposium titled, “Emeritus and Late-Career Members: Exploring Retirement Opportunities within our Sciences and Emeritus Memberships.” Talks included work on projects in Ethiopia, Lithuania, development of an alternative sustainable corn production methodology, emeriti status in the federal government, and working with an NGO. All of the presentations were fascinating and provided just a glimpse into the unique opportunities that our emeritus members are involved in. The symposium concluded with a presentation on surveys conducted by the Task Force this summer. The Task Force also held an informal networking session in the exhibit hall over the coffee break.

Survey Results

During discussions this year, the Task Force concluded that feedback from the larger emeritus and long-term member community was needed to develop recommendations to the ASA, CSSA, and SSSA Boards. Over the summer, three separate surveys were distributed to: (1) current emeritus members, (2) former emeritus members who no longer hold membership, and (3) active long-term members (30+ years). Overall response to the survey was excellent as shown in Table 1.

Emeritus Members in Action!

by Gary “Pete” Peterson, Lee Sommers, Susan Chapman