Engaging Emeritus Members

R
ealizing that the average age of members in most scientific societies is increasing, societies must reach out to these individuals to keep them as members. Thus, the Entomological Society of America (ESA) along with ASA, CSSA, and SSSA organized a symposium at their co-located annual meetings in Minneapolis in 2015 entitled, “Synergy and Partnering with Retired and Emeriti Seniors in Professional Societies (ESA, ASA, CSSA AND SSSA) on their Involvement in Research, Teaching, Special Interests, Travel, and Consulting in Retirement.” Contributors from all Societies presented talks on senior and emeritus society members. After the 2015 meetings, activity began to surface within ASA, CSSA, and SSSA with a small group of emeritus members discussing the contributions, needs, and accomplishments of “retired” members. This resulted in a special session targeted to late career and emeritus members attending the 2016 Annual Meeting in Phoenix.

The group wanted to continue the discussion and asked the Society presidents to form a task force (the Emeritus Membership Task Force), which has been created to evaluate ways that each Society can meet the needs of current, former, and future emeritus members. Initial activities of the Task Force were to follow up on suggestions/questions shared at the sessions held at the 2015 and 2016 meetings. The general questions being considered are: How can the Societies retain emeritus/late-career members and encourage these members to continue to attend/participate at the Annual Meeting?

Emeritus Member Numbers, Participation

By way of background, ASA, CSSA, or SSSA members who retire from full-time employment and have been members of one or more of our Societies for 25 or more years qualify for emeritus membership. Annual membership dues are $50 per Society. Emeritus membership provides the benefits of full membership, including optional subscription to the Digital Library, reduced fees to attend the Annual Meeting, and receipt of CSA News magazine.

There are currently about 500 emeritus members of the Societies. However, the number of emeritus members has shown a significant decrease since 2008 when there were 1,100 members. Attendance at the Annual Meeting ranges from 6 to 10% of the emeritus members. The decrease in the number of emeritus members combined with the low percentage attending the Annual Meeting gave impetus to the Societies to create this task force to evaluate the interests of emeritus members and how best to meet those interests.

Benefits of Membership

Volunteering: Committees … and so Much More!

Volunteerism is widely recognized for its leadership-building capabilities, a positive addition to one’s curriculum vitae, and provides an avenue for networking partnerships, job advancement, lifelong friendships, and personal fulfillment/recognition. Consider becoming involved, in a volunteer role, with one of these opportunities:

Serve on a committee or boards—Members guide the direction and development of the Societies. Visit these webpages below to view the lists of committees and volunteer. See:
www.agronomy.org/about-society/committees/volunteer
www.crops.org/about-society/committees/volunteer
www.soils.org/about-society/committees/volunteer

Submit a lesson plan—Do you have a lesson plan that you use for K-12 outreach? Share it with ASA and SSSA, so we may share it with K-12 teachers through our K-12 outreach program: www.soils4teachers.org/lessons-and-activities/submit.

Expand the network by referring a colleague or student—A bigger Society means a stronger profession, a larger knowledge base, more expertise to draw on, more benefits, and increased visibility and influence in our advocacy efforts. See
www.agronomy.org/membership/refer
www.crops.org/membership/refer
www.soils.org/membership/for-members/grow