SSSA Board of Directors Meeting  
May 4-6, 2009  
Lexington, Kentucky

The meeting was called to order by SSSA President Paul Bertsch. Board members present were:

Paul M. Bertsch, SSSA President
Nicholas B. Comerford, SSSA President-Elect
Gary A. Peterson, SSSA Past President
David E. Radcliffe, S-1 Board Rep.
Michael E. Essington, S-2 Board Rep
Daniel W. Sweeney, S-4 Board Rep.
Carolyn G. Olson, S-5 Board Rep. (Joined portions of the meeting via phone)
Harold M. van Es, S-6 Board Rep.
Robert L. Mikkelsen, S-8 Board Rep.
April Ulery, S-9 Board Rep.
Martin C. Rabenhorst, S-10 Board Rep.
Gary M. Pierzynski, S-11 Board Rep.
Sally D. Logsdon, SSSA Editor-in-Chief, ex officio
Ellen Bergfeld, Chief Executive Officer, ex-officio
Also present:
Charles W. Rice, Incoming SSSA President-Elect
Wes Meixelsperger, Chief Financial Officer
Cathy Goudreau, Recorder

S003 Board of Directors
1. ACTION: It was moved by Rob Mikkelsen to approve the February 19, 2009 Board of Directors conference call minutes. Seconded by David Radcliffe. Carried unanimously.

2. The Board discussed the feasibility of adding the Program Planning Officer as an ex-officio member of the Board of Directors. It was the consensus of the Board to delay action until the duties of the position are clarified at the June program planning meeting. This will be an agenda item for the July 16 Board conference call.

3. ACTION: It was moved by Gary Peterson that the Board meet from 7:00-9:00 AM on November 5 during the annual meeting in Pittsburgh. Seconded by Gary Pierzynski. Carried unanimously.

4. The Board will be polled to select a date in June for the next conference call.

S050 Regional Branches
The Board discussed the Society’s role and responsibility for Branch activities as well as Branch meetings. Rob Mikkelsen, David Radcliffe and Harold van Es will work with Susan Chapman to research Branch activities and meetings, as well as budgetary implications, and report back to the Board at a future date.
S201.4 Strategic Planning
To set the stage for discussion of the 2006 Strategic Plan, Gary Peterson provided background on development of the Plan and how it is used to guide the Board’s decisions. Ellen Bergfeld highlighted accomplishments from 2007 and 2008, as well as expected accomplishments for 2009 for each Goal and Strategy. An overhaul of the Strategic Plan document is anticipated in 2010.

The Board divided into five subgroups to identify items under each of the Goals that need additional development.

Goals A and B – SSSA will be the indispensable resource for enhanced programs and services to its members/practicing soil scientists and associated professionals – Marty Rabenhorst-Lead, Sally Logsdon, Harold van Es

Goal C – SSSA will be recognized as the most powerful advocate for soil science – Paul Bertsch-Lead, Chuck Rice, Mike Essington

Goal D – SSSA will be financially secure and capable to carry out its strategic direction and vision – David Radcliffe-Lead, Gary Peterson, Dale Johnson, Wes Meixelsperger

Goal E – SSSA will partner in a coalition of scientific societies to advance sustainability (outreach/collaboration) – Rob Mikkelsen-Lead, April Ulery, Ellen Bergfeld

Goal F – SSSA will be known for its innovative infrastructure that advances and sustains its success – Nick Comerford-Lead, Gary Pierzynski, Dan Sweeney

The Board reconvened and each group presented their suggestions (see Attachment). Due to time constraints, the Board will identify priorities via email.

S201.4.8 Alternative Revenue Task Force
Gary Peterson reported preliminary results of the task force survey asking members for input on possible alternative revenue sources. The task force will discuss the survey results via conference call and follow up with a report to the Board.

S211 Budget and Finance
1. Wes Meixelsperger reported that revenues and expenses for the first quarter are on target. David Radcliffe informed the Board an additional savings of $162,000 - approximately 6.4 percent of the total 2009 budget - has been identified. Anticipating a drop in attendance, the annual meeting budget has been reduced by 10 percent. The B&F Committee and the Board will continue to receive monthly financial statements from Headquarters.

2. Ellen Bergfeld reported that staff is investigating the feasibility of starting an in-house print shop for Society publications including journals, books, and magazines. Although more research needs to be done, it is unlikely that the new printing machine will fit in the current Headquarters building. Staff was recently informed of an office building for sale in the Madison area that has many of the elements contained in the Boldt proposal and would accommodate a print shop. The in-house print shop is coupled with the purchase of a replacement Headquarters building and provides an opportunity to move strategically.
ACTION: It was moved by Gary Pierzynski to give the Executive Committee power to make a decision on purchase of a replacement Headquarters building that meets the needs of the Society. Seconded by David Radcliffe. Carried unanimously.

The Executive Committee will carry this action to the ACSESS Board. In addition, Paul Bertsch will send a letter to the ASA and CSSA Presidents encouraging them to consider similar action for their respective Societies. Staff will prepare a proposal for the in-house print shop for presentation to the Board at a future date.

3. The Board discussed the pros and cons of continued Society membership in several affiliated societies, including CAST.

ACTION: It was moved by David Radcliffe that SSSA no longer continue membership in CAST. Seconded by Harold van Es. Carried unanimously.

ACS237 Membership and Society Identity
1. The Board expressed concern over declining membership, particularly in the Graduate Student category. Paul Bertsch will prepare a letter to Department Chairs highlighting the benefits of SSSA membership and request they encourage their students to join the Society.

2. The Board discussed the possibility of having a check-off box on the membership form for support of international activities within SSSA, working through the U.S. National Committee. The purpose of the fund would be to enhance participation with the International Union of Soil Sciences. This will be an agenda item for a future conference call.

3. The Societies launched an Ambassador Program at the end of 2007 to develop a key contact at each university – and eventually each government agency and company – for the Societies. The Ambassadors serve as the point person for the distribution of materials on outreach to students and faculty - to tell the story of the value of membership and affiliation with the Societies. The goal is to have an Ambassador on every campus. The Board provided feedback on the Ambassador packets and requested that soils specific packets be made available. The Board was encouraged to provide additional input to Susan Chapman, Director of Member Services.

S301 Editorial Affairs, Policies, and Practices
Sally Logsdon presented a draft SSSA Publication Policy that is being reviewed by Society Editors. It is anticipated that a final version will be presented for approval at a future date.

ACS536 Washington Presence
1. The Board held a philosophical discussion on the types of issues the Board should become involved in and/or respond to. It was the consensus of the Board that the policy approved at the October 9, 2008 Board meeting is still in effect:

   Regardless of the turnaround time on a request for Society support or endorsement for position papers, legislation, and letters, the request will be sent to the Board of Directors with a deadline for responding. To obtain Society approval, a majority of the voting members of the Board must respond favorably. If in the time period allotted for a response, less than a majority of the voting members of the Board respond to the request, then the Executive Committee is permitted to make a decision on behalf of the Society, taking into consideration those votes received by the voting members of the Board.
2. The Board discussed the feasibility of developing a process to develop Society position papers.

ACTION: It was moved by Nick Comerford that SSSA establish a Policy Development Committee. Seconded by Marty Rabenhorst. Carried unanimously.

Although the Executive Committee will develop a formal charge for the committee, the major responsibilities will be to seek advice, develop topics, and identify subgroups to write the policy statements. The initial committee will be appointed by Paul Bertsch. It is anticipated that the committee will become a Standing Committee in the future. Paul Bertsch also requested Board members contact their Divisions for input on potential areas for development of position papers.

**S589 Smithsonian Soils Exhibit**

Ellen Bergfeld reported the total dollars contributed toward the Smithsonian soils traveling tour goal of $1 million is currently $700,767, leaving $299,233 yet to be raised. While the tour can begin the summer of 2010 with current funding in place, finalizing full funding continues. Smithsonian’s Traveling Exhibition Service (SITES) recently indicated there has been little response to multiple marketing efforts. The museums either find the show too expensive or feel that the subject will not draw visitors. In response, SITES recommends reducing the exhibit size and booking fee each museum pays in order to widen the potential exhibitor market. This new marketing will be a major focus of SITES’s efforts at the American Association of Museums annual meeting in early May.

**S711 Program Planning**

1. Nick Comerford provided an update on the 2009 annual meeting. Anticipating a drop in meeting attendance due to the general economic conditions and decreased travel budgets, Headquarters has worked diligently to reduce the meeting budget by 10 percent. A WEBEX meeting room will be set up for the week and Society Program Chairs will identify key sessions that qualify for WEBEX broadcast. A trailer to Dirt The Movie will be shown prior to the awards program; the entire movie will be played at various times throughout the week.

2. The Board previously approved the concept of doubling the amount of money available for program enhancement funds. Rob Mikkelsen presented the final version of the proposal which includes a recommendation for fees and allocation of enhancement funds, and another recommendation to initiate a competitive grants for program enhancement funds.

ACTION: It was moved by Gary Peterson to approve the program enhancement fund proposal as presented. Seconded by Rob Mikkelsen. Carried unanimously.

It is anticipated that the proposal will become effective for the 2010 annual meeting. The proposal has been forwarded to ASA and CSSA with the recommendation it be approved by their respective Boards.

**S800 Scientific Affairs**

The National Science Foundation has partnered with the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to support the Basic Research to Enable Agricultural Development (BREAD) program. BREAD will focus on major problems facing agriculture in developing countries, particularly Africa. This presents a unique opportunity for SSSA to assume a leadership role in developing a workshop focusing on the key gaps in knowledge of soil science and to provide future direction for world research.
ACTION: It was moved by David Radcliffe that SSSA fund a BREAD workshop as soon as possible. Seconded by Mike Essington.

AMENDMENT: It was moved by Gary Pierzynski to authorize Paul Bertsch to allocate $10,000 as seed money to organize a workshop on the BREAD program with a proposal to NSF to fund it. Should that fail, approve up to $30,000 for SSSA to fund the workshop. Seconded by Mike Essington. Carried unanimously.

Paul Bertsch will develop a charge for appointment of an ad hoc committee to identify additional areas where SSSA can provide a leadership role. The Board will discuss the charge on the June conference call.

S890 North American Proficiency Testing Program (NAPT)
The Board discussed the Society’s role in the NAPT program as well as related budget issues.

ACTION: It was moved by Nick Comerford to reconfirm SSSA’s commitment to the NAPT program as important to the Strategic Plan and request the B&F Committee Chair write a letter to the NAPT Board explaining the Board’s position and expectations. Seconded by Gary Peterson. Carried unanimously.

Meeting adjourned.
Summary of Strategic Plan Break-Out Groups

**Goal: SSSA will be the indispensable resource for enhanced programs and services to its members/practicing soil scientists and associated professionals**

**Grad Students/Early Career focus:**
- Continue to identify people to serve as Ambassadors/send Ambassador packets to Department Heads
- Subsidize/offer free membership to Grad Students for first year
- Capitalize on website for Grad Students/Early Career members (current events/science, RFP's, tips on searching for a job, evaluation of skills, networking, etc. - 1 click in)
- Session at Annual Meeting informing Grad Students/Early Career members of materials on the web

**International focus:**
- Promote certification program (India) through other member societies

**Practicing soil scientists/associated professionals:**
- Topical meetings - rethink Regional Branch meetings
- Explore partnership/coalition with Soil and Water Conservation Society
- Explore partnership/coalition with National Society of Consulting Soil Scientists
- Play a role in setting standards to provide rigor to the discipline

**Goal: SSSA will be recognized as the most powerful advocate for soil science**

**Education-University Curricula/K-12:**
- Develop network of available courses for general education/provide templates
- Appoint Working Group to develop college level curricula
- Develop Z series sessions at annual meeting focused on education
- Package information from survey results to talk with Deans/advocate for keeping soils departments
- Become more interactive with National Science Teachers Association and Envirothon
- Charge K-12 Committee to develop "canned" presentations focused on middle and high school
- Publicize availability of Ambassador packets - CSA News article

**Policy:**
- Provide administrative support for Science Policy Office/Karl Glasener
- Investigate feasibility of soils specific person in Science Policy Office - fellow on sabbatic
- Continue using Rapid Response Team/expert list
Goal: SSSA will be financially secure and capable to carry out its strategic direction and vision

Foundation and endowments:
- Agronomic Science Foundation (ASF) running out of operating funds
- Current economic environment not good for pursuing endowments
- Building on Smithsonian soils exhibit is an exception (see item below on leveraging Smithsonian)
- Study found little evidence for large donors for ASF
- Simply investing funds currently going to ASF would likely get a better return

Continuing education opportunity:
- Way to diversify income stream
- Alternative Revenue Task Force found strong evidence to support expanding continuing education opportunities
- Need business plan for workshops that would pay speakers and include a registration fee
- Could be offered as webinars or via Web-X
- Don't compete with universities that offer continuing education credits
- Do we need someone to "market" this?
- Example courses: organic farming, storm water management, low impact development, soils 101

What to cut:
- Assume revenues will be flat at best
- Funding new initiatives identified in the strategic plan will require cutting old programs
- Use the budget and go through each cost center and ask if it's still a priority

Leverage Smithsonian exhibit:
- Build on momentum developed by the exhibit
- Continue to develop K-12 material
- Continue to seek funds and new sites for traveling exhibit
- Explore possibility of smaller exhibit and smaller museums

Replacement building and new publication facility:
- Likely scenario is that ACSESS would purchase building and Societies would "loan" funds as investment (from fixed income investments)
- Question is how to allocate the cost among Societies
  - If based on membership, what would you do about joint memberships?
  - If based on time allocation, this changes from year to year
- Simplest method to allow is 1/3 to each society
- Need to consider what would happen if a new society joins ACSESS

Goal: SSSA will partner in a coalition of scientific societies to advance sustainability (Outreach/Collaboration)
- Improve visibility of SSSA pubs/books - CSA News article to reflect new attitude
- Improve visibility of SSSA education partners - website notices of workshops throughout the USA that provide relevant material for soil scientists
- Improve success of Branches, Chapters, and Affiliate Organizations (Mikkelsen, Radcliffe, van Es to work on this)
- Improve opportunities for on-line discussions/forums on SSSA website (Div and general)
- Initiate new initiatives on soil science education (for professionals and practitioners; general public; educators)
- Invite industry Sustaining Members to be more active participants (reception at annual meetings/listening session/highlight SM's in CSA News)
- Maintain/expand communication with Cooperating Members listed on web
Goal: SSSA will be known of its innovative infrastructure that advances and sustains its success

Governing Issues:
- Board of Directors composition - keep as is/selection based on membership in Division (O&P Committee to study pros/cons and make recommendation to Bd.)
- Division definition - silos vs. umbrella vs. hybrid - preserve positive aspects of current structure and expand
- Scientific leadership - Define stands through policy statements

Activity/Perspective Issues:
- Develop Board strategy to improve visibility of SSSA - Ag/Environment/International
- Define Board role in survival of the Society - Review membership dues model/financial survival/alternative revenue
- Develop Board strategy for survival of the science - priority setting workshops/science information resource/science teacher ceu's
- Define ACSESS role in facilitation of above