



**Soil Science Society of America Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
Thursday Jan. 23, 2025, 12:15-1:30pm (Central Time)**

Resources: [Strategic Plan, Bylaws, Minutes](#) | [Membership Dashboard](#) | [Board Outreach](#)

President Samira Daroub called the meeting to order.

Board members present:

President: Samira Daroub, U of Florida (2025)
 Past President: Michael Thompson, Iowa State (2025)
 President-Elect: Aaron Daigh, U of Nebraska (2025)
 Ag Soil & Food Systems Group: Hero Gollany, USDA-ARS (2025); Julie Howe, Texas A&M (2027)
 Education & Practicing Professionals Group: Clay Robinson, CRC Consulting (2025)
 CPSS Rep: Jacob Berkowitz, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (2026)
 Grad Student Rep: Megan Bourns, K-State (2025)
 Fundamental Soil Science Group: Rebecca Lybrand, UC-Davis (2025); Ganga Hettiarachchi, K-State (2026); Vanessa Bailey, Pacific Northwest National Lab (2027)
 Soil & Ecosystem Processes Group: Thorsten Knappenberger, Auburn (2026); Ron Reuter, Oregon State (2027)
 Ex-officio without Vote: CEO Jim Cudahy; Editor-in-Chief Markus Flury, Washington State (2027); Program Planning Officer Shannon

Osborne, USDA-ARS (2027); ASF Chair Stella Salvo, Bayer CropScience (2025)

Unable to attend:

Ag Soil & Food Systems: Dorivar Ruiz Diaz, K-State (2026)
 DEI-at-Large: Xia Zhu-Barker, UW-Madison (2025)
 Early Career Rep: Dianna Bagnall, Soil Health Institute (2025)

Also attending:

Susan Chapman, Special Projects Director
 Susan Dearing-Bond, Development Director
 Dawn Gibas, Certifications Director
 Sanford Moore, Finance Director
 Ian Popkewitz, IT & Operations Director
 Luther Smith, Chief Administrative Officer
 Sara Uttech, Governance Director
 Susan Varghese, People & Culture Director

S003 SSSA Board of Directors

1. CEO Jim Cudahy reviewed the Role of the Board as a Re-orientation: Duties, Conflict of Interest
2. What you should be communicating and how:
 - New 2025 Division Chairs: www.soils.org/membership/divisions
 - New Member Hub Circles replace Discussion Boards: memberhub.sciencesocieties.org
3. Outreach Resources including Power Point: www.sciencesocieties.org/about-society/outreach
4. Monthly Cross-Society Board Communique. He also reviewed the SSSA Strategic Plan (2024-2028): SSSA Strategic Objectives and Cross-Society Objectives
5. The SSSA Strategic Objectives will feed into the Board Meeting Themes & ACSESS Board Meeting Task Force proposed:

Proposed SSSA Board Meetings & Themes for 2025		
Month	Theme/SSSA Strategic Objectives	Additional Topics
January	Role of the Board	
March	Increase, engage, and diversify our membership	Budget & Finance: Investment Strategies
May	Ensure SSSA is positioned to be responsive to emerging issues	Science Policy
June/July/August – Summer Board Meeting in Madison	Raise the visibility of our disciplines & members	2026 Budget, Priorities
June/July/August	Innovate Stakeholder Experiences	
September	Expand our economic engine: increase revenue to support vision & strategic objectives	Publications
November - Salt Lake City	Workforce Development	
December	Year-End Wrap Up	

6. January Discussion Question: What are your New Year Resolutions related to Board activities?
 - Scaling the K-12 program to extend its reach and supporting practicing professionals to feel part of the Society

- Increase participation and collaboration with divisions that have been struggling, highlighting the need to include certified professional soil scientists in all discussions about certified crop advisers
 - Improving the connection between the board and the divisions they represent through regular updates.
 - Use of the member hub to create a sense of community among graduate students and developing a plan to have graduate students speak at their own institutions about the benefits of joining SSSA
 - Bring energy and resources to graduate students and early career members, and to leverage resources globally
 - Learn more about how the board influences the Society and how it responds to its needs
 - Promote the Society's publications, ensure they adapt to new developments like Open Access and AI, maintain quality and reputation, and align with other Society editors
 - Working groups - one on organizational structure and another exploring potential new publications
 - Review and update policies, and using the Science Policy Committee to advocate for soil science and engage members in understanding policymaking
 - Interest in workforce development, increasing awareness of diverse career paths for soil scientists to attract new talent
 - Concerns about changes made to the undergraduate program and suggested revisiting changes for potential benefits
 - Engage everyone at the meetings and make business meetings more interactive.
 - Revive mentoring program for the Soil Conservation Division and establish a website to facilitate knowledge transfer
 - Desire to get to know the team better and the importance of engagement and communication within the board
 - Improve communication between the board and society level
 - Need to update the members of Working Group 2 and to review the structure of the Society to remove silos and promote interdisciplinary groups
7. Governance Director Sara Uttech explained Consent Agendas. These are non-controversial items such as appointments, committee reports, updates, and minutes that are grouped together by the Executive Committee and approved with one motion. They can reduce meeting duration and allow boards to focus on more important issues
- Board members thoroughly read the consent agenda items before the meeting
 - If no one requests to remove an item, the president calls for a motion to approve the entire consent agenda
8. ACTION: Motion by Clay Robinson, seconded by Ron Reuter, to approve the Consent Agenda. Unanimous approval.
- Jan. 23, 2025 SSSA Board Meeting Agenda
 - Dec. 19, 2024 SSSA Board Meeting Minutes
 - SSSA, ASA, CSSA to sign on to Food Security Letter from World Food Prize Laureates
9. Governance Director Sara Uttech requested volunteers for Board-Level Committees:
- Budget & Finance Committee seeks one board member with 2027-ending term who will ascend to chair during their final year: Ron Reuter
 - Science Policy Committee: Ganga Hettiarachchi
10. Board members are reminded of the Awards Policy, which opens Jan. 21-March 25, 2025. To avoid a conflict of interest, SSSA Board members cannot be a nominee, nominator, or reference on any SSSA Award; they can be nominee, nominator or reference in ASA and CSSA Awards; and Board members (except Exec Committee) can be a reference on SSSA scholarships. A reminder that all awards, except Fellow, allow for self-nominations.
11. Next Meeting Dates, Agenda Preview:
- Thursday March 27, Noon-1:30 (now 90 minutes) – will reschedule calendar invites
 - Theme: *Increase, engage, and diversify our membership*

- March Discussion Question: What is at least one idea to increase, engage, and diversify our membership? Ask your colleagues for their input!
 - Challenge: Post answers on the SSSA Board Circle Member Hub: memberhub.sciencesocieties.org
- Will poll for dates for our Summer In-Person/Hybrid SSSA Board Meeting in Madison for June/July/August.

Consensus to adjourn.