

Connecting across organizations: The Societies participate in the MANRRS conference

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Elizabeth Gillispie (Chair of the Societies' Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee) meets with attendees of the MANRRS Annual Training Conference and Career Expo in Dallas, TX, Apr. 9–11, 2026.

The MANRRS Annual Training Conference and Career Expo focuses on providing workshops, leadership sessions, and networking with top organizations to students, shaping the next generation of agriculture and environmental science. The Societies were represented with a booth at this year's event in Dallas, TX in April.

The [MANRRS Annual Training Conference and Career Expo](#) focuses on providing workshops, leadership sessions, and networking with top organizations to students, shaping the next generation of agriculture and environmental science. This year's conference was held in Dallas, TX, Apr. 9–11, 2026. One of the highlights was the Career Expo, which provided an opportunity for representatives of government, industry, academia, and nonprofit organizations to connect directly with some of the best and brightest students and professionals from more than 100 high schools, colleges, and universities representing 1862 and 1890 land grant institutions as well as Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSI).

ASA, CSSA, and SSSA were represented with a booth, where we highlighted the CANVAS meeting (abstract submission and student programming), the Bridge Scholars program, and membership. Traffic at our booth was non-stop with students eager to learn more about our Societies and how their unique majors in agriculture (e.g., agribusiness, animal science, etc.) are welcomed. We had quite a number of students

noting that they were in plant and soil science degree programs! They had many questions about agronomic, crop, and soil science careers and finding jobs within these fields, which were ably answered by Society members Elizabeth Gillispie (Chair of the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee), Candiss Williams (Agronomic Science Foundation Board of Trustees and long-time MANRRS member), and Susan Chapman (Director of Special Projects). For fun, students also registered for a drawing of “I Heart Soil” mug raffle prizes.

Professional Associations and Your Career Workshop

How does being a member of your scientific community (i.e., association or society) help advance your career? That was the question answered for MANRRS attendees at a workshop titled “Professional Associations and Your Career” by Society members Elizabeth Gillispie and Candiss Williams. In addition, Ebony Webber, CEO of MANRRS, joined us for the presentation. The presentation started with some fun facts about associations and societies, what they are, and general programs (communities/networking, job boards/mentoring, publishing, presenting research at meetings, certification, and advocacy). It then focused on the value of being a member in a chosen profession:



Candiss Williams (Agronomic Science Foundation Board of Trustees and long-time MANRRS member), on the right, meets with an attendee of the MANRRS Annual Training Conference and Career Expo in Dallas, TX, Apr. 9–11, 2026.

- Keeping up to date on the science and industry
- Networking and being part of a specialized community
- Recognition
- Giving back

The presenters then talked about ASA, CSSA, and SSSA and our programs and benefits (including the Bridge Scholars program, which was open for nominations and generated a lot of interest from students). Ebony Webber talked about MANRRS and their programs and how engagement in MANRRS connects to all associated organizations.

The workshop closed with encouragement for the students to be their own advocate by reading emails and newsletters to keep up to date on science and opportunities, volunteer and participate in communities, make connections through events, and recruit peers to be members.

Collaboration with MANRRS and participation at the conference are important components of the [Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Initiative Recommendation Report](#) of the DEI Committee. We look forward to continuing to foster our relationship with MANRRS.

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