



ASA, CSSA, and SSSA Ethics Committee formed

By Jennifer Bower, Soil Health Institute; and Susan Chapman, ASA, CSSA, and SSSA

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Within many STEM-focused professional societies, there has been a greater awareness and understanding of responsibilities for establishing expectations for professional conduct as well as opportunities for reporting inappropriate behaviors and the consequences for those behaviors.

Within the approved ASA, CSSA, and SSSA DEI Recommendations Report, the formation of an Ethics Committee was a top priority. The three boards of directors established a task force , across the Societies, to develop the guidelines and operating parameters. In August of 2023, the Ethics Committee was approved by the three boards of directors.

The newly formed Ethics Committee is a collaborative group dedicated to creating a safe and welcoming environment in ASA, CSSA, and SSSA. The purpose of the Committee is to guide the Societies' efforts to continue fostering a culture of integrity, appropriate conduct, and accountability within the Societies.

Key functions

Key functions include:

- Evaluating and updating the [Statement of Ethics](#) and Code of Conduct.
- Developing guidelines and processes for receiving and evaluating reports of misconduct or breach of ethics.
- Confidentially evaluating reports of misconduct or breach of ethics in accordance with established and approved procedures, including disciplinary actions if appropriate.
- Enhancing awareness of the process for reporting misconduct or breach of ethics.
- Suggesting improvements for member training in ethical conduct.
- Providing annual written reports to the boards of directors.

The committee is composed of 10 members including the chair and vice-chair (chair-elect), three representatives from each Society (appointed by their respective presidents), and a representative of the DEI Committee. Members of the committee have demonstrated experience and/or training in professional ethics.

2024 Ethics Committee Members

Chair: Lee Tarpley, Texas A&M AgriLife Research (CSSA)

Vice-chair: Barbara Cade-Menun, Agriculture & Agri-Food Canada (SSSA)

Jennifer Bower, Soil Health Institute (SSSA)

Liza Garcia, University of Florida (CSSA)

Navdeep Godara, Virginia Tech (CSSA)

Nityananda Khanal, Agriculture & Agri-Food Canada (ASA)

Raj Khosla, Kansas State University (ASA)

Augustine Obour, Kansas State University (ASA)

Philip Scoles, Terra Science, Inc. (SSSA)

Loutrina Staley, National Association of Conservation Districts (DEI Committee Representative)

Susan Chapman (Staff Liaison)

The important work of this committee has begun, and thoughtful consideration of the issues and development of process are front and center to the initial work. Member input during the developmental phase will be requested and encouraged.

More information on the committee can be found [here](#).

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