



CSSS Soil Science Education Committee

2025 CSSS Annual Meeting, Winnipeg, MB

July 21, 2025 (noon – 1 pm, St. Vital, 2nd floor)

Committee Co-Chairs: Amanda Diochon, Maja Krzic, and Tom Yates

Meeting Agenda

- 1) Land acknowledgement
- 2) Approval of agenda
- 3) Committee report regarding activities since our 2024 meeting in Vancouver, BC
- 4) Ideas for future activities, including potential theme for the Soil Education session for the next year's CSSS conference in Guelph, ON
- 5) Any other business
- 6) Meeting adjournment

Meeting notes:

Maja welcomed everyone at 1210.

Maja asked for approval of the agenda. Max P moved; Bobbi H seconded. No one opposed.

Maja began with a land acknowledgement

Maja gave an update on the projects from the last year. One is the re-examination the status of soils in post-secondary education in Canada ten years later. Group (13) started work last October. Still collecting data and project is progressing. Second is on the use of the textbook (survey). Sandra Brown is leading. Working group is small and more members are welcome to participate. Please contact Sandra.

Maja asked for new ideas for projects that the committee could work on moving forward and/or the session for next year and then opened the floor. Most of the discussion focused on certification/accreditation for soil scientist.

Question about preliminary findings of the project on post-secondary education from Dawn Gibas (US). She coordinates exams for certification through SSSA. Last soil science department in US (Wisconsin) closed. There is an education component to certification. Australia perspective offered from Damien Field. Similar to US with a fundamentals exam and challenges around satisfying knowledge requirements when students aren't getting a degree in soil science. Suggested to universities that they could advertise that their courses could contribute to



certification or satisfying those knowledge requirements so that students could identify courses that could help them satisfy requirements.

Angela (BH) asked if certification/accreditation was required to work as a soil scientist. In Australia requirements/legislation fall to the States and this usually a certification/accreditation or equivalent to do a job. In the consulting environment, they usually have a couple of accredited soil scientists and then a larger group that works under them. Accredited soil scientists have an advantage in the job market.

In the US there are some States that have a licensing requirement. Rest of the country is certification; sometimes makes its way into policies; government workers usually exempt. Certification is not required but licensure is. Dawn works with CCAs from Ontario, eastern Canada, and a few other areas in western Canada. Academics in the US generally aren't licensed or certified and so they may not be encouraging their students to get certified or licensed. SSSA has been working on this. SSSA also investigated accreditation but dropped it.

In Australia, many folks don't want to do the exams. If you have the degree and they can demonstrate knowledge then may not have to do exam. Encouraging way forward focuses on not using an exam because it is a hurdle. Society grants the certificate/certification but there is a board that does the evaluation. Could accredit institutions but this could introduce challenges for institutions (curriculum, workload). Minimum number of course units within competencies. (Damien Field)

In Canada, have lost several soil science departments. There is more interest and growing interest in soil science but there isn't much depth because most students have only taken a course or two in soil science. Certification could help. Currently students get their PAg and there may be assumptions about their knowledge of soil science and they aren't trained. Scope of practice isn't in alignment with degree e.g. economics type degree but advising on agronomy or soils.

US: could meet knowledge requirements using micro-credentials offered by SSSA to satisfy certification requirements.

Richard Heck sits on soils exam committee for US. Possible opportunities to collaborate; certification would come from Canada but meeting the requirements could be done in collaboration with SSSA. CCAs working with ASA.

Need to have a business model. Australia uses SSSA for the exam. Michael Walker (Australia) don't use the word exam. Develop standards and knowledge requirements. Accreditation framework being developed for IUSS.

Angela emphasized importance of working with the provincial governments/institutes around certification/accreditation for soil science.



Richard H brought up performance objectives and how to assist folks with developing capacity in certain areas to meet performance objectives (knowledge requirements).

Australia: when institutions facing cuts could advocate for keeping soil science courses because they are required for certification. Want to have grads that can apply for certification.

Offering continuing education through the society could be attractive for industry/consultants. Need to add value.

Maja suggested having a session next year on what developing an accreditation or certification would look like and how we could move it forward.

Attendees

Maja Krzic
Amanda Diochon
Bobbi Helgason
Adam Gillespie
Nate Basilliko
Max Pare
Joanne Thiessen Martens
Angela Bedard Haughn
Chantel Chizen
Laura Van Eerd
Melissa Arcand
Michael Walker (SSA-Australia)
Dawn Gibas (SSSA)
Damien Field (SSA-Australia)
Kymberly Eppick
Tahmid Huq Easher
Adrian Unc
Amanda Mitchell
Richard Heck
Asim Biswas
Myles Dyck
Anoka