

## **Soil Science Society of America (SSSA) and Pennsylvania Association of Professional Soil Scientists (PAPSS) Memorandum of Understanding**

In recognition of the common missions of the Soil Science Society of America (SSSA) and the Pennsylvania Association of Professional Soil Scientists (PAPSS) in certifying soil scientists, it is hereby mutually understood that a specific cooperative relationship between SSSA and PAPSS has been established and in place since July 1, 2021. This memorandum of understanding (MOU) describes the duties and responsibilities of each party involved in the certification process.

**Policy and Procedures:** The SSSA national Soils Certifying Board (SCB) shall establish all policies, procedures and standards for certification. The SSSA shall establish a Pennsylvania Soils Certifying Board (PA SCB) to implement said policies, procedures and standards set by the national SCB in the state of Pennsylvania. The PA SCB shall be the state level version of the national SCB. As such, the PA SCB shall follow and enforce the same policies, procedures and standards, without deviation.

The PA SCB may recommend changes to the national SCB for consideration, but the national SCB shall enact said recommendations prior to implementation.

**Pennsylvania Soils Certifying Board (PA SCB):** The PA SCB shall be maintained with a minimum of five members and a maximum of seven members representing a diverse segment of soil scientists from academia, private practice, and government. At least one member should be from a county, state or federal agency that works within a soil related program. At least one member shall be a current national SCB member, as appointed by the national SCB. At least four members of the PA SCB shall be a CPSS.

Each member shall serve a three-year term and no more than two consecutive three-year terms. Individuals interested in serving on the PA SCB shall submit their credentials to the PAPSS Board of Directors for review of qualifications and recommendation to the national SCB. Nominees shall be appointed to the PA SCB by the SSSA President. If a representative from a governmental agency is not available to be seated on the PA SCB, the board may move forward while the vacancy is being filled. The PAPSS board shall provide PA SCB members' contact information to SSSA and provide timely updates when changes are made to the PA SCB so a current board members' list can be maintained at SSSA. All PA SCB members shall sign the SSSA appointment letter before their term becomes active. The PA SCB shall keep the national SCB informed of its activities and the

SSSA shall conduct reviews as necessary to ensure compliance with stated policies, procedures and standards.

**Application Credential Review:** CPSS applicants shall submit their credentials to the SSSA office in Madison, WI. The SSSA office shall be the official records collection point for all CPSS programs. Once the application is deemed complete by SSSA staff, each member of the PA SCB shall be sent an electronic copy and shall be requested to provide their vote directly to the national office by the stated deadline. The standard review time is 30 days from receipt by the PA SCB to have a response back to the national SCB.

A simple majority vote determines the outcome of the application. A majority in favor is required to grant certification, ties shall equal a denial.

**Exams:** CPSS applicants shall be required to pass the Fundamentals in Soil Science exam administered by the SSSA's Council of Soil Science Examiners (CSSE). Applications shall be submitted to, and educational background requirements approved by, the PA SCB before the applicant may sit for the Fundamentals exam.

**Fees:** Fees shall be set by the national SSSA SCB.

**Continuing Education:** PA SCB shall follow the national standards for continuing education.

**Ethics and Violations:** PA SCB shall enforce the national SCB Code of Ethics. All PA SCB members shall sign the Code of Ethics as a requirement for being appointed to the PA SCB. The PA SCB shall review all ethics complaints on CPSSs and render a decision based on the standards set by the SSSA SCB. The SSSA SCB shall act as the appeal body for all ethics complaints.

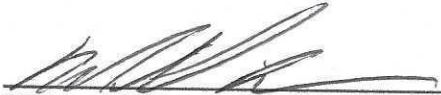
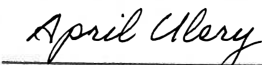
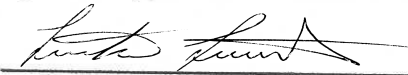
**Optional Grandfathering Clause:** The PA SCB shall offer for a limited time period of no more than 6 months to current PAPSS Full Professional Members who do not currently have the CPSS credential, an application process that does not require the passing of the Fundamentals Soils exam. All other CPSS requirements shall be met, including submittal of full CPSS application and fees. On a special case basis, the PA SCB may consider an applicant qualified based on unique experience and recommendations during the grandfathering period.

The grandfathering time period shall begin as designated within the announcement by PAPSS and the SSSA regarding the signing of the MOU, and shall last for no more than six months.



Implementation of these cooperative activities shall proceed equitably in accordance with the policies and procedures of the cooperating organizations. This MOU automatically remains in effect until rescinded or replaced by written agreement between signatory boards. Either party may terminate this MOU by giving 60 days written notice to the other party.

This MOU is implemented with the signatures of Society officers on behalf of their respective organizations and replaces prior MOUs.

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| <br>Michael J. Brown, PAPSS President | <u>6/11/21</u><br>Date |
| <br>April Ulery, SSSA President       | <u>6/23/21</u><br>Date |
| <br>Luther Smith, SSSA Interim CEO    | <u>6/23/21</u><br>Date |