

Ankit Yadav – Vice-President

Ankit Yadav is a second-year PhD student in Dr. Amit Jhala's Lab at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Growing up in Haryana, India, he earned his bachelor's in Agricultural Sciences from Haryana Agricultural University and completed his MS in Weed Science at Auburn University (2023–2024). His PhD research aims to develop integrated weed management systems for specialty corn and soybean. Passionate about the WSSA GSO vice-president role, Ankit draws on his previous experience with the organization to understand its commitments and responsibilities. Inspired by the impactful leadership before him, he seeks to build on their legacy by supporting student initiatives and promoting professional growth through events like student mixers, mock interviews, symposia, and topical webinars. If elected, he is confident he can work well with the officer team to advance the growth of graduate students in the society.



Jackson Alsdorf – Vice-President

I am beginning my second year as a Ph.D. student under Dr. Charlie Cahoon at North Carolina State University. As a master's student, I attended two different WSSA meetings, San Antonio and D.C. I am very involved in both the Northeastern (NEWSS) and Southern (SWSS) Weed Science Societies. I have spent the last year serving as the Weed Resistance and Technology Committee Representative on the SWSS GSO, where I act as a liaison between the Weed Resistance and Technology Committee and the students. It has been a great opportunity serving with the GSO,



working together to plan student events for our upcoming meeting in Nashville, Tennessee. I have also been recently elected Student Representative-Elect for the Northeastern Weed Science Society. This is a two-year position that oversees the events, communication, and organization for the students. Responsibilities also include being involved in board meetings for NEWSS. I have gained so much insight as to what it takes to organize and plan student events at meetings along with organizing virtual zoom webinars throughout the year. I would like to use these experiences to continue to strengthen the student organization within WSSA. It would be an honor to represent the student body and serve the societies at the National level.

Michael Dodde – Vice-President

Hello! I'm Michael, a first-year PhD student at Michigan State University under Dr. Christy Sprague. My research focuses on waterhemp control in Truvera sugarbeet, with an emphasis on evaluating strip tillage and cover crops as integrated management strategies. Truvera is a new sugarbeet trait that allows in-crop applications of glyphosate, glufosinate, and dicamba.

This is my third year as a WSSA member, and I would love the opportunity to give back to the society by serving on the Graduate Student Organization Executive Board. I believe I would be a strong fit for this role because I am committed to supporting and advocating for graduate students.

During my master's program at the University of Arkansas, I served as President of our departmental graduate student club, where I developed my leadership skills and worked to ensure all students' voices were heard.

As Vice President, I would work closely with the executive board to help coordinate graduate student events, strengthen communication between graduate students and WSSA leadership, and foster an inclusive and engaged graduate student community. I would be honored to serve in this position and look forward to seeing everyone in Raleigh, sharing ideas, and building lasting connections within WSSA!



Midhat Zulafkar Tugoo – Vice-President

My name is Midhat Zulafkar Tugoo, and I am a PhD student in the School of Integrative Plant Science at Cornell University, working under the guidance of Dr. Vipin Kumar. My doctoral research focuses on developing integrated weed management strategies for herbicide-resistant pigweed in the Northwestern United States. Through this work, I am actively engaged in weed science research, extension programming, and interdisciplinary collaboration aligned with the mission of the Weed Science Society of America (WSSA).

I bring strong leadership, organizational, and communication skills to the role of Vice President.

During my master's program at Kansas State University, I served as Social Chair and Graduate Student Representative, gaining experience in collaborative leadership and student representation. I currently continue this service as a Graduate Student Representative at Cornell University, where I remain involved in student advocacy, professional development, and community engagement.

As Vice President, I am committed to supporting WSSA leadership, strengthening member engagement, and advancing programs that promote scientific excellence, inclusivity, and professional growth for all WSSA graduate students.



Tanner King – Secretary

Tanner King is currently a PhD Student at Mississippi State University working under the direction of Dr. Jason Bond, and he completed his MS degree in Weed Science at the University of Arkansas under the advisement of Dr. Jason Norsworthy. Tanner's PhD research focuses on identifying effective herbicide options for control of Virginia pepperweed, an increasingly problematic weed in the Midsouth. Considering little information exists about Virginia pepperweed, Tanner's work also aims to characterize the weeds growth habits and evaluate how various environmental factors affect its germination



in field and controlled environments. Tanner has been highly involved in his academic departments, holding leadership positions within GSO's at the University of Arkansas and Mississippi State University. He has been an active member of WSSA and SWSS for the last 3 years, serving as Secretary, Vice-president, and soon, President of the SWSS GSO. These opportunities have sharpened his ability to communicate effectively, manage time wisely, and be a team player, which he believes can help benefit WSSA and its students experiences. Tanner is eager to be of service to WSSA as secretary of the GSO and wants to use his passion for agriculture and community to contribute towards the mission of WSSA GSO.

Akashdeep Singh Brar – Secretary

I am a Ph.D. student in Weed Science at Virginia Tech's Eastern Shore Agricultural Research and Extension Center in Painter, Virginia, where I joined the program in 2023 under the guidance of Dr. Vijay Singh. I earned my Master's degree in Agronomy from Punjab Agricultural University, India. My research focuses on developing integrated weed management strategies for specialty crops such as edamame and major row crops including corn and soybean, with emphasis on cover crop-based weed suppression, herbicide evaluation, and the use of precision agriculture tools such as spray drones and ground-based sprayers.



I believe I am well suited for the role of Secretary because of my commitment to service and demonstrated leadership in student organizations and outreach. I served as the Representative for our research center to the Graduate Organization for the School of Plant and Environmental Sciences (GOSPES) at Virginia Tech, where I helped coordinate meetings, communicate between students and faculty, and assist with organizing graduate student events. I have also been actively involved in K-12 outreach and extension activities, including field tours and educational demonstrations on weeds and precision agriculture.

As WSSA GSO Secretary, I would be eager to support effective communication by maintaining accurate records, preparing and sharing meeting minutes, assisting with the monthly newsletter, and helping strengthen engagement among graduate student members. I would be honored to serve in this role and contribute to the WSSA graduate student community.

Gabriel Gava – Secretary

My name is Gabriel Gava, and I am a 26-year-old Brazilian in the second semester of my master's in weed science, focusing on herbicide resistance in Palmer amaranth at Clemson University, under the supervision of Dr. Fernando Oreja. Previously, I graduated in agronomy from the University of São Paulo and completed a one-year internship at Texas A&M under the supervision of Dr. Muthu Bagavathiannan, where I was able to gain practical experience in a wide range of sub-areas of weed science.

During my time at A&M, I was also able to interact with a large number of students involved in associations such as the WSSA and through them I was able to understand not only the activities carried out by these organizations but also their importance for the scientific community as a whole, which sparked my interest in becoming involved in it when I became a graduate student.

I believe that early involvement in the organization as a graduate student through the GSO is extremely important, as it allows for networking and the acquisition of skills that will be invaluable for future moments in academic and professional life.

The position of secretary is of particular importance for producing the monthly newsletter, identifying individuals related to weed science who deserve recognition and publicizing important events, funding opportunities and deadlines of the organization.

Through my communication, organizational, and teamwork skills, I believe I can perform these activities with excellence, contributing immensely to WSSA GSO maintaining its status and respectability.



Andrea Sagiorato – Secretary

My name is Andrea Sagiorato and I'm a master's student at Texas Tech University, where my research focuses on evaluating low-input herbicide programs for Palmer amaranth control in cotton. While this will be my first year attending the WSSA Annual Meeting, I am eager to contribute to the organization's mission of promoting research, education and extension, as well as foster awareness of weeds and their impacts on agriculture. I am committed to becoming an active member and would love serving my fellow graduate students. My strengths align well with the responsibilities of secretary. I have been regarded as highly organized and responsible. During my undergrad in Brazil, I gained valuable experience coordinating events with my colleagues, which taught me the importance of communication and teamwork. I would be honored to serve as secretary and contribute to the success of our organization during the 2026-2027 cycle.



Sougata Roy – Social Media Chair

My name is **Sougata Roy**, and I am a PhD student in Agronomy at Texas A&M University, specializing in Weed Science, with a research focus on precision and non-chemical weed management strategies. I earned my BS in Agriculture from Uttar Banga Krishi Vishwavidyalaya, India, and my MS degree in Agronomy from the Indian Agricultural Research Institute (IARI), New Delhi, where my academic training emphasized sustainable cropping systems and integrated weed management. Before joining Texas A&M, I served as a Senior Research Associate with the CGIAR system (International Potato Centre), where



I led and coordinated multi-country research and extension activities across India, Bangladesh, and Cambodia. Working closely with scientists, extension professionals, and farming communities strengthened my leadership skills and reinforced the importance of clear, inclusive, and impactful science communication. I was invited as a guest speaker at the Mekong Forum 2025 in Cambodia, sharing experiences on sustainable and low-input agronomic solutions.

At Texas A&M University, I currently serve as a Soil and Crop Sciences Ambassador, actively representing students, promoting academic programs, and increasing the visibility of agronomy and weed science research. I bring strong experience in digital outreach, with **4,000+ followers on [LinkedIn](#)**, educational **[Instagram](#) content reaching 20,000+ views**, and active engagement on **[X \(Twitter\)](#)**.

I aim to translate cutting-edge weed science research, including new modes and sites of action, herbicide resistance developments, innovative non-chemical strategies, and emerging weed management techniques, from research papers into clear, engaging, and accessible content for a global audience. As Social Media Chair, my goal is to amplify graduate student voices, highlight achievements, and strengthen connections within the weed science community globally beyond the borders.

Midhat Zulafkar Tugoo – Social Media Chair

My name is **Midhat Zulafkar Tugoo**, and I am a PhD student in the School of Integrative Plant Science at **Cornell University**, working under the guidance of **Dr. Vipin Kumar**. My research focuses on developing **integrated weed management strategies** for managing **herbicide-resistant pigweed** in the Northwestern United States. Through my doctoral work, I actively engage with current weed science research, extension activities, and interdisciplinary collaboration. In addition to my research background, I bring strong **leadership, communication, and outreach**



experience that directly aligns with the responsibilities of the Social Media Chair. During my master's program at **Kansas State University**, I served as both **Social Chair** and **Graduate Student Representative**. These roles strengthened my ability to communicate information clearly, creatively, and responsibly to diverse audiences. I currently serve as a **Graduate Student Representative at Cornell University**, continuing my commitment to student advocacy, professional development, and community engagement. I am passionate about using social media as a tool to amplify weed science research, promote society activities, highlight member achievements, and engage students and early-career scientists. With my combination of weed science expertise, prior social media leadership, and dedication to professional service, I am well-prepared and highly motivated to contribute effectively as **Social Media Chair for the Weed Science Society of America**.

Nisith Nishank Purohit – Social Media Chair

I am enthusiastic about serving as the **WSSA Graduate Student Organization Social Media Chair** because I am committed to strengthening communication, engagement, and visibility for graduate students within the Weed Science Society of America. My academic training in weed science, combined with leadership experience and science communication skills, aligns well with the goals of the WSSA GSO.

During the 2024–2025 academic year, I served as **Treasurer for the Department of Crop, Soil, and Environmental Sciences at Auburn University**, where I managed financial records, supported departmental student activities, and worked closely with faculty and graduate students. This role required accountability, organization, and clear communication skills that are directly transferable to managing WSSA GSO social media platforms in a professional and consistent manner.

In addition to my leadership experience, I actively engage in science communication through my own **PhD-focused Instagram and YouTube platforms**, where I create content to motivate graduate students, share research experiences, and communicate agricultural and weed science concepts to a broader audience. Through this work, I have developed experience in content planning, visual storytelling, audience engagement, and maintaining an informative and inclusive online presence.

As Social Media Chair, I would work to highlight WSSA GSO activities, promote student awards and achievements, increase awareness of meetings and deadlines, and strengthen connections among graduate students across institutions. I am particularly interested in using social media to foster inclusivity, encourage student participation, and enhance the visibility of graduate student contributions within WSSA.

I would be honored to support the mission of WSSA GSO and contribute to an active, engaged, and connected graduate student community.



Connor Purvis – Social Media Chair

Hi! I'm Connor, currently a PhD candidate at Michigan State University working on johnsongrass herbicide resistance mechanisms, hybridization, and the role of soil microbes in this invasive weed species. I've been a member of WSSA for three years and have always been passionate about sharing research with the broader weed science community. Especially now, effective communication is essential for science to address emerging environmental and social challenges. I feel apt for this position because of my experience as the social media chair for the Graduate Student Organization for Crop and Soil Sciences at Michigan State. In this role, I developed skills in creating content and engaging graduate students to highlight events and opportunities. My Canva skills have seen the largest improvement by far! As WSSA continues to grow, I'm excited to connect graduate students with opportunities and highlight the incredible work happening year-round. If selected, I would focus on continuing people spotlights, interactive posts, and sharing opportunities for students. I'd also love to introduce video spotlights to increase engagement and make our research accessible across our community. Social media is a powerful tool to share our work promoting science literacy but also building a strong, connected community. I would be honored to help share WSSA's mission through our network of graduate students.

