



# Annual Training Conference and Career Expo

**MANRRS: I AM, BECAUSE YOU ARE**

**APRIL 2-6, 2025**

Renasant Convention Center | Memphis, TN

## Preliminary Program and Registration Guide



**Presented in partnership with:**



[www.manrrs.org](http://www.manrrs.org)

MANRRS wishes to thank the following organizations that have partnered with us and have significantly contributed to the successful planning of the 39th Annual Training Conference and Career Expo.



## MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY

Mississippi State University's College of Agriculture and Life Sciences (CALS) presents a broad array of opportunities for the study of life, encompassing 9 academic units which offer 17 majors and 45 concentrations for undergraduates and 18 majors and 41 concentrations for graduate degrees. The College is closely associated with the Mississippi Agricultural and Forestry Experiment Station and the Mississippi State University Extension Service, which both share knowledge and solutions with farmers, businesses, communities, and government agencies throughout the southeastern United States and beyond.

[www.msstate.edu](http://www.msstate.edu)



## Tennessee State University

The USDA-NIFA-funded NEXTGeneration Inclusion Consortium is a grant project and team charged with workforce development for minorities in Food, Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Human Sciences (FANHS) through student scholarship, outreach and engagement, and experiential learning. Specifically, our mission is to raise awareness of FANHS careers and pathways, recruit students and help them matriculate through higher agricultural education, provide experiential learning opportunities and other forms of engagement, offer financial support, and create a dynamic platform for professional connections and networking in the industry.

[www.tnstate.edu](http://www.tnstate.edu)



## Tennessee Department of Agriculture

The Tennessee Department of Agriculture is proud to serve, support, and promote agriculture and forestry in Tennessee.

[www.tn.gov/agriculture](http://www.tn.gov/agriculture)



## Tennessee Department of Environment & Conservation

The Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC) exists to enhance the quality of life for citizens of Tennessee and to be stewards of our natural environment. Our department is committed to providing a cleaner, safer environment that goes hand-in-hand with economic prosperity and increased quality of life in Tennessee.

[tn.gov/environment/about-tdec/employment-and-internships](http://tn.gov/environment/about-tdec/employment-and-internships)



## Tractor Supply Company

For more than 85 years, Tractor Supply Company has been passionate about serving the needs of recreational farmers, ranchers, homeowners, gardeners, pet enthusiasts and all those who enjoy living Life Out Here. Tractor Supply is the largest rural lifestyle retailer in the U.S., ranking 293 on the Fortune 500. The Company's more than 50,000 Team Members are known for delivering legendary service and helping customers pursue their passions, whether that means being closer to the land, taking care of animals or living a hands-on, DIY lifestyle. In store and online, Tractor Supply provides what customers need – anytime, anywhere, any way they choose at the low prices they deserve.

[www.tractorsupply.com](http://www.tractorsupply.com)



## University of Tennessee Knoxville

Founded in 1794, the University of Tennessee, Knoxville is the state's flagship, land-grant, comprehensive research 1 institution. Its mission is to serve all Tennesseans and beyond through education, discovery, and outreach. With over 38,000 students and 14 colleges and schools across campus, undergraduate and graduate students alike are able to enjoy a variety of experiential opportunities that enhance their educational journey and advance their career.

[www.utk.edu](http://www.utk.edu)



## University of Tennessee Martin

The University of Tennessee at Martin is a primary regional university in the University of Tennessee System that includes the main campus and six regional centers located throughout West Tennessee. With more than 150 academic areas of study, UT Martin is a small-town university for people with big dreams.

[www.utm.edu](http://www.utm.edu)



Thank You to our National Partners for helping us make it to this wonderful milestone! MANRRS would like to thank our current partnering organizations for their support of the 39th Annual Training Conference and Career Expo.

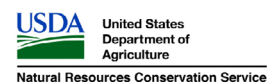
## TITANIUM PLUS LEVEL (\$250,000+)



## TITANIUM LEVEL (\$100,000+)



## DIAMOND LEVEL (\$75,000+)



## PLATINUM LEVEL (\$50,000+)



## GOLD LEVEL (\$25,000+)



NATIONAL PARTNERS

## MANRRS Conferences Then & Now...

1986	Progressive Agriculture in the Eighties
1987	Linkages: Uniting to Face the Challenges of the Future
1988	Agricultural Sciences: The Place to Be
1989	Graduate Education: Your Key to a Secure Future
1990	Preparing for Our Future and Building on Our Past
1991	Diversity: The Key to Excellence
1992	The Changing Face of Agriculture
1993	Facing the Challenges of Agriculture Now and in the 21st Century
1994	MANRRS: A Mosaic in the Making
1995	MANRRS 2000 - A Global Vision
1996	Networking in the Information Age Empowerment for the Future
1998	Science and Information Technology for Tomorrow
1999	MANRRS: A Diversity of Cultures, A Diversity of Opportunities
2000	MANRRS 2000: Making Today's Dreamers Tomorrow's Leaders
2001	MANRRS in the Millennium – Remembering Our Past and Embracing Our Future
2002	Developing One Nation: Bringing Together Culture, Diversity and Technology
2003	MANRRS – Pursuing Excellence in Leadership, Scholarship, and Service
2004	Building on the Past, Embracing the Present and Shaping the Future
2005	Encouraging Innovation, Promoting Diversity, Achieving Excellence
2006	MANRRS: The Signature of Success
2007	MANRRS: Innovation, Exploration and Discovery
2008	MANRRS: Cultivating Minds for Tomorrow's Leadership
2009	MANRRS: Expanding Our Horizons, Embracing the Challenge, and Preparing for the Future
2010	MANRRS: 25 Years of History, Excellence and Opportunities...The Best is Yet to Come!
2011	MANRRS: Cultivating a Generation of Excellence
2012	MANRRS: Planting the Seeds for Global Success
2013	MANRRS: Turning Vision into Action
2014	Embracing Today's Challenges to Embark on Tomorrow's Opportunities
2015	Thirty Years of Triumph: Branching Out and Excelling to Greater Heights
2016	Growing the Next Generation of Agricultural Leaders
2017	Sculpting Minds, Nurturing Hearts, and Creating Diverse Leaders
2018	MANRRS: Preparing our Future, Empowering our Present, and Honoring our Past
2019	MANRRS: Innovate to Elevate
2020	This is Impact
2021	MANRRS: Reclaiming Our Time, Territory, and Triumph!
2022	MANRRS: Broadening Horizons and Changing the Narrative
2023	MANRRS: Collaborate. Cultivate. Motivate.
2024	MANRRS: Aspire to Inspire
2025	MANRRS: I Am, Because You Are

## OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

To our MANRRS family

We are looking forward to seeing you all at the MANRRS 39th Annual Training Conference & Career Expo in the soulful city of Memphis, Tennessee, the birthplace of blues and rock & roll, and a city that echoes the themes of innovation, resilience, and transformation that define our organization.

MANRRS39 will mark a groundbreaking moment in our history. For the first time, we will be gathering in a convention center, a testament to our growth, increased engagement, and your record-breaking participation. This momentous occasion aligns beautifully with this year's theme, "I Am, Because You Are." It reflects the collective power of our community, where every member's success is built on shared support and collaboration. Your representation, advocacy, and commitment to our shared mission of changing the face of the industry, encapsulates

MANRRS' commitment to building and sustaining a legacy of mutual respect, shared success, and collective progress. MANRRS continues to stand as a beacon and premier organization for various communities and groups. Our work is more critical than ever, as we advocate for representation, equity, and inclusion in the spaces where decisions are made and futures are shaped. As we prepare for our time together in Memphis, we celebrate our intentionality in being visible, elevating the membership experience, and strengthening the bonds that make us a force for change.

Throughout the year we have maintained consistency in our dialogue with partners, government officials, senior leaders and aspiring supporters that action-driven conversations are pivotal in shaping meaningful progress and success for our organization as we continue to champion for diverse voices in these spaces. At this year's conference, we are thrilled to engage with our partners and senior leadership across industries, fostering conversations about the future of our workforce and ensuring that our voices are heard at every level. These collaborations empower us to chart bold new paths, positioning MANRRS as a leader in cultivating talent and advancing opportunities for our members. I challenge you to connect with MANRRS members from the past and present. Share your stories, celebrate your experiences, and if you are

new to the MANRRS family, you are in for a treat. Thank you for being a part of this historic gathering.



It has been my absolute honor to serve as your President this year. Your presence affirms the strength of our mission and the impact we create together. Let us use our time together to learn, connect, and inspire one another as we continue to make strides toward a diverse, brighter, and more inclusive future. I AM MANRRS, YOU ARE MANRRS, WE ARE MANRRS.

Dr. Stephon D. Fitzpatrick  
National President, 2024-2025



## 2024-2025 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE



Dr. Stephon Fitzpatrick  
National President



Ryan Locke  
National President-Elect



Dr. Derris Burnett  
National Past-President



Jahgethea Johnson  
National Secretary



Brandon Bell  
National Treasurer



Dallas Cooks  
National Parliamentarian



Jarred Taylor  
National Historian



Kayla Braggs  
GR Student President



Drew Parker  
UG Student President



Emmanuel Wallace  
Past GR Student President



Olivia Holliman  
Past UG Student President



Logan Quinn  
Region I GR Vice President



Naydeline Navarrete  
Region I UG Vice President



Ruth Fennell  
Region II GR Vice President



Sheniqua Glover  
Region III GR Vice President



Julia Edwards  
Region III UG Vice President



Maia Woodard  
Region IV GR Vice President



Regina Williams  
Region IV UG Vice President



Favour Ojike  
Region V GR Vice President



Aminata Diagana  
Region V UG Vice President



Mikiyah Baldwin  
Region VI GR Vice President



Jannai Oganeku  
Region VI UG Vice President



Dillon Ford  
GR Student Parliamentarian



Blake Wright  
UG Student Parliamentarian

## NATIONAL STAFF



Ebony Webber  
CEO



Ashantae Smith  
Business Manager



Dwane Matthews  
Program Manager



Marquel Lett  
Director of  
Development



Carla Soto  
University Relations  
Coordinator



Darren Armstrong  
Gov't Relations  
Associate



Brianna Tiafoe  
Marketing  
Associate

## ADVISORY BOARD



Courtney White  
BASF  
Advisory Board  
Chair



Dr. Antoine Alston  
NCAT



Dr. Derris Burnett  
Mississippi State



Steve Evans  
Smithfield



Kevin Flagg  
Valent



Karis Gutter  
Corteva  
Agriscience



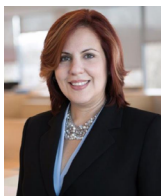
Olivia Holliman  
Tuskegee



Morgan Kinross-  
Wright  
Land O' Lakes



Dr. Pamela Morris  
Purdue



Evelyn Ortiz  
Zoetis



Robert Stewart  
Cargill



Cynthia Stokley  
Bayer



Emmanuel Wallace  
BASF



# PAST CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS





## 2025 CONFERENCE PLANNING COMMITTEE

As we prepare for the MANRRS 39th Annual Training Conference and Career Expo, the 2025 Conference Planning Committee and Region III invite you to join us in this celebratory event in Memphis, TN. Awaiting you are opportunities to network, attend workshops, share ideas, and visit the Career Expo where you will explore various employment opportunities with many world-renowned, agricultural industry leaders, colleges and universities, and federal and state agencies.

We encourage your participation and involvement in this great Society and a great conference. We look forward to seeing you, as we continue to demonstrate INSPIRATION in the fields of Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Related Sciences for the 21st century and beyond.

### Conference Planning Committee

Mississippi State University  
Tennessee State University  
Tennessee Dept. of Agriculture  
Tennessee Dept. of Environment and Conservation  
Tractor Supply Co.  
University of Tennessee Knoxville  
University of Tennessee Martin

## AN OVERVIEW OF MANRRS HISTORY

In the early 1980s, a concerned student, Dave Weatherspoon, recognized the need for a support group for minority students in agricultural programs at Michigan State University (MSU). With the help and guidance of a sensitive college advisor, Eunice Foster, he set out to form such a group on his campus. From these efforts, the Minority Agriculture and Natural Resources Association (MANRA), a registered student organization in the College of Agriculture at MSU, was founded in the spring of 1982. News of MANRA reached a staff person whose responsibilities included promoting participation of minority students in agricultural sciences at The Pennsylvania State University (PSU). In 1985, after a series of communications between institutions, representatives of MANRA and their faculty mentor visited PSU to help form an organization for minority students in its College of Agriculture. Out of this meeting, Minorities in Agriculture (MIA) was formed by the Penn State group. Dr. William Henson served as the first advisor for this group at Penn State.

In April 1986, MANRA and MIA jointly sponsored “The First Annual Conference of Minority Students in Agriculture and Natural Resources” at MSU. A primary focus of the conference was the problem of how to organize student disciplinary interest groups on university campuses. Over 40 students and faculty from six colleges participated. The second conference, also sponsored jointly by MANRA and MIA, was held, April 1987, at PSU. More than 60 people from 11 colleges, six government organizations, and five private organizations participated. The third conference was held at the University of Maryland Eastern Shore, April 1988. This was a pivotal meeting for the formation of MANRRS. Student and faculty representatives from all 1862 and 1890 land grant colleges and universities, including Tuskegee University, were invited. Representatives from interested public and private agencies were also invited to participate.

## Online Registration

To register online for the MANRRS 2025 conference, go to [www.manrrs.org/national-conference](http://www.manrrs.org/national-conference). Follow the links to complete the online registration.

**All payments must be paid in full by March 17, 2025.**

A full conference registration includes the following:

- Entry to all Workshop Sessions and General Sessions (Thu., Fri., & Sat.)
- Entry to the Career Expo (Friday)
- **The following meals:**
  - **Thu: Reception**
  - **Fri: Breakfast, Box Lunch and Dinner**
  - **Sat: Brunch and Gala Dinner.**
- Conference Packet with giveaway items

**MANRRS INCLUDES © is NOT INCLUDED with your conference registration fee and is a separate, add-on event.**

Each participant will receive a Registration Packet containing a MANRRS name badge. Attendees must be registered participants to attend conference activities. Admission to all activities will require your name badge.

## Payment Policy

**All registration fees must be received in the National Office and paid in full by March 17, 2025.** Acceptable forms of payment include checks, invoice requests for POs, and credit cards. All payments should be made payable to MANRRS.

**Mail payment to:**  
**Attn: MANRRS Conference**  
**P.O. Box 767726, Roswell, GA 30076**

Questions, email - [billing@manrrs.org](mailto:billing@manrrs.org)

All conference cancellations must be received in writing by February 15, 2025, and directed to [MANRRS@ameetingplace.com](mailto:MANRRS@ameetingplace.com). **Registrations may be transferred to another participant of the same registration type by March 17, 2025.** To transfer your registration, please modify the existing registration and update with the new registrant's information.

**No refunds will be provided for cancellations.** If you have a speaking/program role at the Conference, we ask that you notify us at your earliest convenience so that a replacement can be secured.

## Badges and Tickets

Your name badge is your ticket into the conference. You will receive your conference badge when you check-in at the MANRRS Conference Registration Desk. Name badges must be worn at all times. Meal tickets are provided for the Career Expo Box Lunch. Special tickets are provided to attendees with dietary restrictions.



## Individuals with Special Needs

MANRRS encourages the full participation of individuals with special needs or disabilities. The Sheraton Memphis Downtown is handicap accessible. Please indicate on the registration form if you need special assistance, and the Conference Planner will contact you.

## Conference Shirts

Attendees may pick up their conference shirt during registration check-in. Shirt sizes are included on the registration form. Shirts ARE included in conference registration. **Shirt sizes cannot be guaranteed.** No shirts will be ordered after March 1, 2025. Shirt sizes are gender neutral.

## People Power

Volunteers are an intricate part of the conference success. Numerous volunteers are needed to assist with a variety of tasks during the conference. A People Power Coordinator will arrange and coordinate the work of volunteers, our "People Power" program. Register to volunteer as People Power in your conference registration to help assist with a variety of tasks during the conference. Additional details will be provided prior to the conference.

## Photo/Video Disclaimer

All photographs and videos sent to or taken by MANRRS become the property of the National Society. By completing this registration, you understand that you are giving all rights and titles in and to all photographs and videos taken to the National Society for MANRRS. As owners of the photographs and videos, MANRRS will have all rights to use and publish the photographs/videos, and no compensation is made or owed for use of



the photographs/videos. Photographs/ videos will not be given or sold to any other company or individual.

## Conference Registration Cancellation Policy

Registrations will NOT be processed or space assigned without the required payment. All registrations must be accompanied by full payment.

Checks should be made payable to: **MANRRS**, and mailed to: **ATTN: MANRRS, P.O. Box 767726, Roswell, GA 30076**. Receipt of payment does not oblige MANRRS to accept a contract as binding. MANRRS retains the option of returning funds.

Cancellations of registration must be directed to: [MANRRS@ameetingplace.com](mailto:MANRRS@ameetingplace.com) by **March 1, 2025**. Refunds will not be provided. In case of fire or any other causes beyond the control of MANRRS that prevent holding the show, this contract will not be binding.

## Liability

By attending the MANRRS Training Conference and Career Expo, all participants agree to assume certain inherent risks, which accompany attendance at such events. Participants are expected to comply with the travel policies of the entity(ies) that they represent. This may include completion of release forms, assumption of risk forms, and other required paperwork. All participants accept personal responsibility and liability for their actions while at the conference site in the Memphis area, and while traveling to and from the conference site. The MANRRS

organization may not be held liable for individual acts of negligence or unlawful activity on the part of conference participants. The MANRRS organization may be held liable only for incidents in the case of gross negligence on the part of its agents. All MANRRS conference participants are expected to conduct themselves in a professional manner during the conference.

**NOTE:** Chapter Advisors are requested to help ensure that their students represent their institutions professionally and that they adhere to the expectations of conference attendance.

## Covid Policy

If you test positive for COVID-19 within seven (7) days of the conference start date (by March 26th), we will cancel your conference registration and you will receive a 50% refund.



## 2025 REGISTRATION COSTS

MEMBER	Regular By Feb. 28	Late By Mar. 17	On-Site Fees Starting Mar. 18
Junior MANRRS .....	\$375 .....	\$425 .....	\$500
Chapter Advisor/Chaperone.....	\$525 .....	\$575 .....	\$675
Collegiate Advisor.....	\$550 .....	\$600 .....	\$675
Collegiate Student .....	\$450 .....	\$500 .....	\$575
Professional.....	\$650 .....	\$700 .....	\$775
Career-Expo Only (Collegiate) .....	\$225 .....	\$275 .....	\$350
<b>NON-MEMBER</b>			
Collegiate Non-Member .....	\$550 .....	\$600 .....	\$675
Professional Non-Member.....	\$850 .....	\$900 .....	\$975
Career-Expo Only (Collegiate) .....	\$225 .....	\$275 .....	\$350

## Online Conference Registration is REQUIRED

Please visit [www.manrrs.org/national-conference](http://www.manrrs.org/national-conference) for complete details. Registration questions can be directed to:

A Meeting Company  
Phone: (856) 429-8305  
E-mail: [MANRRS@ameetingplace.com](mailto:MANRRS@ameetingplace.com)



### HOST HOTEL:

#### Sheraton Memphis Downtown

Reserve your Guest Rooms Early.  
This Event will Sell Out!

To reserve a hotel room, guests must first register for the national conference. A link to reserve the hotel room will be provided with the registration confirmation email.

Total with tax: **\$177 per night PLUS TAX**

Make your reservations EARLY! The group rate and rooms will be available until the MANRRS Room Block is full or by **February 17, 2025**, whichever occurs first.

Reservations may be made, modified, or canceled by individuals on-line.

ALL ROOMS must be secured with a credit card. Cancellations made after February 17th, will incur a non-refundable, one night's deposit charge of \$216.02.

#### Sheraton Memphis Downtown

250 N. Main Street  
Memphis, TN 38103

Phone: (901) 527-7300

MANRRS Group Rate: \$177.00 + tax

(current tax 17.4%)

Internet: Complimentary in sleeping rooms

(For Marriott Bonvoy Members. Join Anytime.)

Check-In: 4:00 PM | Check-Out: 11:00 AM

### Restaurants, Bars, Lounge & Dining Options

Experience the charm of Memphis, Tennessee from Sheraton Memphis Downtown Hotel. Centrally located in the heart of downtown, this hotel near the Beale Street Entertainment District is conveniently connected to Renasant Convention Center via a skywalk. Start your morning with a Starbucks® coffee from the on-site restaurant, Crossroads Tavern & Grille, or stop by in the evening for delicious Southern fare. The Library, the pop-up speakeasy style pizza bar, is perfect for group business or social outings in downtown Memphis.

### OVER FLOW HOTELS:

#### Aloft Memphis Downtown

63 N B.B. King Blvd., Memphis, TN 38103  
Phone: 901-779-4823

The cutoff date is February 17, 2025

Rate: \$179 per night, plus tax

Located .6 miles from the Convention Center

#### Courtyard by Marriott Memphis

75 Jefferson, Memphis, TN 38103  
Phone: 901-522-2200

The cutoff date is February 17, 2025

Rate: \$184 per night, plus tax

Located .3 miles from the Convention Center

#### Doubletree Hotel Downtown Memphis

185 Union Avenue, Memphis, TN 38103  
Phone: 901-528-1800

The cutoff date is February 17, 2025

Rate: \$189 per night, plus tax

Located .8 miles from the Convention Center

#### Moxy Hotel

40 N Front Street, Memphis, TN 38103  
Phone: 901-522-9700

The cutoff date is February 17, 2025

Rate: \$184 per night, plus tax

Located .3 miles from the Convention Center

#### Springhill Suites by Marriott Memphis

85 Court Avenue, Memphis, TN 38103  
Phone: 901-522-2100

The cutoff date is February 17, 2025

Rate: \$184 per night, plus tax

Located .3 miles from the Convention Center

#### Comfort Inn

1000 N Front Street, Memphis, TN 38103  
Phone: 901-526-0584

The cutoff date is February 17, 2025

Rate: \$169 per night, plus tax

Located .2 miles from the Convention Center







## JESSE THOMPSON CHAPTER ADVISOR OF THE YEAR AWARD

This award recognizes the Advisor that has gone over and beyond to support their chapter members and endeavors. The Advisor of the Year Award honors MANRRS advisors who demonstrate exceptional dedication and leadership. This award includes a total of \$4,000 with \$3,000 awarded to the advisor and \$1,000 allocated to support their chapter.

**NOTE:** The MANRRS Advisor must have served in this position for at least two years. The Nominator and the two other persons writing the letters of reference must be current or past MANRRS members. Self-nominations and nominations for members, posthumously, will not be accepted. The Nominator, the primary, and secondary mentees must be three different individuals.





## DRESS CODE

### What to Bring

Professional business attire is expected throughout the conference with the exception of the late night social activities, when casual attire is acceptable. We strongly encourage students and professionals to wear professional attire during the conference. Remember, you only get one chance to make a first impression! The dress code and accepted attire is listed below. **We will be sending out supplemental information prior to the conference on appropriate attire for attendees.**



## RECOMMENDED ATTIRE

### Wednesday, April 2

#### **MANRRS INCLUDES**

**Business Casual or Professional Attire:** Slacks (Dockers, Khakis), or Company Shirts are acceptable. Suit (pants or skirt) or dress, sport coat, dress slacks, and appropriate dress shoes.

### Thursday, April 3

#### **Opening General Session, Contests, and MANRRS Homecoming (theme)**

**Business Casual:** Slacks (Dockers, Khakis), No Jeans, Chapter, Organization, or University Shirts are acceptable.

**MANRRS Homecoming:** Homecoming Attire

### Friday, April 4

#### **General Session, Career Expo, Meetings, Workshops, Contests, and President's Reception: Blues, Boots, and BBQ (theme):**

**Professional Attire:** Suit (pants or skirt) or dress, sport coat, tie, dress slacks, and appropriate dress shoes.

**Blues, Boots, and BBQ:** Denim and boots, Western and chic, or your favorite trail ride look!

### Saturday, April 5

#### **Meals, Business Meetings, Workshops**

**Business Casual:** Slacks, Dockers, Khakis, and School Polo Shirts are acceptable

**Gala Dinner:** Formal Attire or Professional Attire

### Friday/Saturday evening

#### **Social Events & Evening Dance**

**Casual Dress:** Appropriate casual attire





## WEDNESDAY, APRIL 2

1:00 PM - 3:00 PM      Advisory Board Meeting  
 3:00 PM - 8:00 PM      Registration Opens  
 5:00 PM - 8:30 PM      MANRRS INCLUDES

6:00 PM - 6:30 PM

6:30 PM - 10:00 PM

9:00 PM - 12:00 AM

Past Presidents' Reception  
*special invite only*  
 Presidents' Reception  
*"Blues, Boots, and BBQ"*  
 Professional Hospitality:  
 MANRRS-Chella

## THURSDAY, APRIL 3

7:00 AM - 6:00 PM      Registration  
 7:30 AM - 12:00 PM      MANRRS INCLUDES  
 8:00 AM - 12:00 PM      Animal Health and Care  
                                  Academy *invitation only*  
 8:00 AM - 4:00 PM      Farm Credit VIP Program  
 12:00 PM - 6:00 PM      MANRRS Pop-Up Shop  
 12:00 PM - 6:00 PM      Exhibitor Setup  
 1:00 PM - 2:30 PM      Annual Appreciation  
                                  Luncheon\* - *invitation only*  
**2:00 PM - 5:00 PM**      Student Contests  
     • MANRRS Bowl - *preliminary round*  
     • *Impromptu Speaking*  
     • *Undergraduate Oral Research Div I*  
     • *Graduate Oral Research Div I*  
     • *Undergraduate Oral Research Div II*  
     • *Graduate Oral Research Div II*  
     • *Undergraduate Posters setup - Div I & II*  
     • *Graduate Posters setup - Div I & II*  
 3:00 PM - 4:30 PM      Branding You: Mock  
                                  Interviews and Resume  
                                  Critiques  
 3:00 PM - 4:30 PM      Junior MANRRS Kick-Off  
 5:00 PM - 6:00 PM      Opening Reception  
 6:00 PM - 7:30 PM      Opening General Session  
 8:00 PM - 10:00 PM      Welcome to Memphis:  
                                  MANRRS Homecoming

## SATURDAY, APRIL 5

7:30 AM - 8:00 AM      Continental Breakfast  
 8:00 AM - 12:00 PM      Junior MANRRS High School  
                                  Symposium  
 7:30 AM - 12:00 PM      Graduate Student Summit  
 8:00 AM - 8:50 AM      Workshop I  
 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM      MANRRS Pop-Up Shop  
 9:00 AM - 9:50 AM      Workshop II  
 10:00 AM - 10:50 AM      Workshop III  
 11:00 AM - 11:50 AM      Workshop IV  
 12:00 PM - 2:00 PM      MANRRS Golden Awards Brunch  
 2:00 PM - 2:30 PM      Networking Break  
 2:30 PM - 4:30 PM      National Leadership Forum &  
                                  Business Meeting  
 7:00 PM - 9:30 PM      MANRRS Closing Gala Dinner  
                                  **\*Doors Open at 6:30 PM\***

## FRIDAY, APRIL 4

7:30 AM - 7:30 AM      Networking Breakfast  
 7:30 AM - 8:30 AM      General Session  
 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM      Registration  
 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM      Junior MANRRS  
                                  Programming  
 9:00 AM - 10:30 AM      Membership Meetings  
     • *Graduate Student Meeting*  
     • *Professional Meeting*  
     • *Undergraduate Student Meeting*  
 9:00 AM - 4:00 PM      Non-Competitive Poster  
                                  Display  
 10:30 AM - 11:30 AM      Branding You  
 10:30 AM - 11:30 AM      Professional Development  
                                  Workshop  
 11:00 AM - 1:00 PM      Student Contests  
     • *3-Minute Thesis*  
     • *Business Pitch*  
     • *Graduate Posters - Div I & II*  
     • *MANRRS BOWL - Semi-Finals/Finals*  
     • *Prepared Speech*  
     • *Research Review*  
     • *Undergraduate Posters - Div I & II*  
 11:30 AM - 1:00 PM      Career Expo Box Lunch  
 12:00 PM - 5:00 PM      Career Expo  
 12:30 PM - 1:30 PM      Advisor Appreciation  
                                  Reception











## 9th Annual MANRRS INCLUDES Summit

The Summit **IS NOT** included with conference registration. This event is an **ADD-ON** and can be added to your full registration or attended as a single event.

### Regular Rate: \$300

The MANRRS INCLUDES Summit provides a forum for robust and informed discussions among university faculty, government leaders, corporate executives, and MANRRS members on building and sustaining a culture of belonging and engagement. This year's summit will feature dynamic discussions, panels, and workshops led by experts with firsthand experience in recruiting, retaining, and developing diverse talent.

At the conclusion of the summit, participants will gain valuable insights into fostering an environment where all individuals feel valued and supported. Attendees will build connections with professionals dedicated to cultivating inclusive workplaces and learn strategies to create welcoming spaces that empower success.

The summit is designed for institutional leaders, university administration and faculty, corporate executives, HR professionals, and those responsible for hiring and student academic success. We invite all leaders in agriculture, natural resources, and related sciences to join the conversation and contribute to this vital dialogue. Your voice matters as we unite under the theme, 'I Am, Because You Are.'

### Preliminary Agenda

#### WEDNESDAY, APRIL 2

- |                 |   |
|-----------------|---|
| 6:00 PM–8:30 PM | MANRRS INCLUDES Summit Kick-Off & Reception |
| 7:30 PM–9:30 PM | Civil Rights Museum Tour                    |

#### THURSDAY, APRIL 3

- |                   |                      |
|-------------------|----------------------|
| 7:30 AM–8:00 AM   | Networking Breakfast |
| 8:00 AM–8:50 AM   | NowGen Panel         |
| 9:00 AM–9:50 AM   | Breakout Sessions    |
| 10:00 AM–12:00 PM | General Session      |
| 12:00 PM–12:30 PM | Closing Session      |

### Wednesday, April 2

6:00 PM–8:30 PM

#### MANRRS INCLUDES: Legacy, Leadership & Liberation Networking Kick-Off

Join us at the National Civil Rights Museum for an evening of reflection, connection, and empowerment. Held during the week commemorating Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s legacy, this MANRRS INCLUDES networking event offers a unique space to engage in meaningful dialogue about belonging, leadership, and the ongoing pursuit of equity in agriculture and beyond. Connect with fellow professionals, students, and industry leaders as we honor the past, celebrate progress, and inspire action toward a more inclusive future.





## Thursday, April 3

9:00 AM–9:50 AM

### 1A) IYDKNYK: The Fragility of Diversity Efforts

As efforts to disband Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) initiatives rise, it is imperative to examine their fragility and the role each of us plays in remaining accountable and sustaining their impact. This workshop invites participants to explore the challenges marginalized groups face as DEI initiatives are questioned, underfunded, or dismantled.

### 2A) Intersectionality in Leadership: Understanding the Impact of Race and Gender

This workshop delves into the concept of intersectionality, exploring how race, gender, and other aspects of identity shape leadership styles, opportunities, and challenges. It is perfect for aspiring and current leaders committed to understanding and leveraging the power of diversity to inspire innovation and equity in the workforce.

### 3A) Translating Experiences into Industry Competencies

Every experience you've had—whether in school, internships, community projects, or personal endeavors—carries unique value. But how do you effectively communicate those experiences to align with corporate expectations and competencies? Join us to uncover how your unique background can drive corporate success and position you as a standout candidate in any industry. Whether you're preparing to enter the workforce or aiming for your next career milestone, this session will empower you to confidently translate your journey into measurable impact.



With varied demographics and shifting expectations, it often appears that the inclusion of one group may result in the exclusion of another. However, differences don't have to cause division. Instead, understanding the value of diversity in the work environment can promote acceptance, respect, and teamwork. Through shared lessons and actionable principles, the L.E.A.D. Lens will inspire participants and equip them with tools necessary to reduce conflict, enhance collaboration, and increase performance.

#### About Charles Weathers:

Charles C. Weathers is a nationally recognized consultant and professional speaker known for helping leaders in the nonprofit, government, and private sectors facilitate courageous conversations and strengthen organizational performance.

Charles is known for his signature keynotes, captivating audiences with his contagious energy, insight, and humor. He is a veteran of the U.S. Air Force, certified mediator, and American Leadership Forum Senior Fellow. Charles is also a member of the National Speakers Association, the Institute of Management Consultants, and a regular contributor to Forbes.com as a member of the Forbes Coaches Council. His thought leadership is frequently featured in publications nationwide.

### General Session

10:00 AM–12:00 PM

### L.E.A.D. (Leading & Engaging Across Differences)

Individuals in today's workforce currently face the challenge of learning how to effectively lead across different cultures, perspectives, experiences, and needs.







# JUNIOR MANRRS CONFERENCE PROGRAM

Across the country, colleges and universities are establishing Junior MANRRS chapters to spark interest in agriculture and natural resources among middle and high school students. These chapters provide hands-on learning experiences, mentorship, and exposure to career pathways in the industry. Collegiate MANRRS members play a vital role as mentors, guiding Junior MANRRS students through service-learning projects, science fairs, and educational programs that connect their skills and passions to opportunities in agriculture.

This year, Junior MANRRS chapters are invited to take part in the 39th Annual MANRRS Training Conference and Career Expo! The Junior MANRRS Committee has curated an exciting lineup of activities designed to help students build leadership skills, tackle real-world ethical challenges, and connect with professionals and peers in food, agriculture, natural resources, and related sciences.

Through the High School Symposium and Junior MANRRS programming, MANRRS is committed to ensuring students see themselves in the future of agriculture. This conference isn't just about education—it's about empowerment. We're here to equip students with the knowledge, resources, and networks they need to thrive in college and beyond. By planting seeds of opportunity today, we're growing the next generation of agricultural professionals, scientists, and leaders.

The future of agriculture starts with our youth. Let's support, guide, and inspire them as they step into their potential!

## JUNIOR MANRRS PRELIMINARY AGENDA

Daily Curfew: 10:00 PM

### THURSDAY, APRIL 3

- 3:00 PM - 4:30 PM Junior MANRRS Kick-Off
- 5:00 PM - 6:00 PM Opening Reception
- 6:00 PM - 7:30 PM Opening General Session
- 7:00 PM - 10:00 PM MANRRS Homecoming

### FRIDAY, APRIL 4

- 7:30 AM - 8:30 AM Welcome Breakfast
- 8:30 AM - 10:00 AM Contests
- 8:30 AM - 10:00 AM Workshop Rotations
- 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM Junior MANRRS Career Expo Prep
- 12:30 PM - 2:30 PM Ag and Natural Resources STEM Mobile Lab Rotations
- 3:00 PM - 5:00 PM Junior MANRRS Career Expo Exploration
- 6:30 PM - 10:00 PM Presidents' Reception: Blues, Boots, and BBQ

### SATURDAY, APRIL 5

- 8:00 AM - 12:00 PM High School Symposium
- 12:00 PM - 2:00 PM Golden Awards Brunch
- 2:30 PM - 4:30 PM Junior MANRRS College Fair
- 7:00 PM - 9:30 PM MANRRS Closing Gala Dinner

JUNIOR MANRRS





# FRIDAY, APRIL 4

7:00 AM - 7:30 AM BREAKFAST

8:00 AM - 8:30 AM WELCOME

8:30 AM - 10:00 AM CONTESTS

**8:30 AM - 9:05 AM WORKSHOPS I**  
**Cultivating Confidence: Unlocking Your Potential for Success**

Success starts with self-awareness and confidence. This workshop helps students identify their strengths, set goals, and build resilience to thrive in school, careers, and leadership roles.

**Leading with Purpose: How to Make an Impact Now**

Leadership is about action, not just titles. Students will explore their leadership style, strengthen communication skills, and learn how to inspire and influence others effectively.

**From Likes to Leadership: Using Social Media for Positive Impact**

Social media is a powerful tool for advocacy and branding. This session teaches students how to create meaningful content, build their personal brand, and use digital platforms for positive impact.

9:15 AM - 9:50 AM WORKSHOPS II (REPEAT)

**10:00 AM - 11:00 AM WORKSHOPS III**  
**Stand Out & Succeed: Navigating the Career Expo with Confidence**

Learn key networking tips, resume hacks, and strategies to make a great first impression, connect with recruiters, and turn opportunities into success!

11:00 AM - 12:00 PM BOX LUNCH

12:30 PM - 3:00 PM AG AND NATURAL RESOURCES STEM MOBILE LAB ROTATIONS

3:15 PM - 5:00 PM CAREER EXPO EXPLORATION

Dive into the Career Expo! Meet industry leaders, explore career paths, and connect with professionals who can help shape your future.

# SATURDAY, APRIL 5

8:00 AM - 8:30 AM WELCOME

8:45 AM - 11:45 AM AG AND NATURAL RESOURCES STEM MOBILE LAB ROTATIONS

12:00 PM - 2:00 PM GOLDEN AWARDS BRUNCH

2:30 PM - 4:30 PM COLLEGE FAIR

Meet representatives from top universities, explore academic programs, and discover scholarships to kick-start your journey in agriculture and related fields.

## AG AND NATURAL RESOURCES STEM MOBILE LAB ROTATIONS

### No Needles? No Problem! Elastic Loop Knitting

Learn to knit—without needles! Using elastic loops, students will create unique, stretchy fabrics with just their hands. This fun, beginner-friendly workshop encourages creativity, patience, and hands-on crafting.

### Plant Science Plot Twists: When Fruits Aren't What They Seem

Pumpkins are berries, but strawberries aren't? Explore plant anatomy with UTM experts and uncover surprising facts about fruits. Through hands-on activities, test your food knowledge and think like a plant scientist!

### Veterinary Science and Technology: More Than Just Animals!

Veterinary science goes beyond animals! Discover the diverse world of veterinary technology in this interactive session and explore exciting career possibilities.

### Flower Power

Agriculture meets art in floral design to create beautiful additions to our everyday lives. Come talk about design theory and see works of art created with cut flowers and plant materials from all around us.

### The Buzz About Bees

Pollinators' benefits are tremendous. Learn how bees benefit our crops and other commodities! Fly into our session, observe a few bumble bee colonies, and leave with a sweet honey treat!

### Soaring to New Heights

Using technology to monitor and manage crops allows for more precise application of resources and greater yields. See agriculture drones on display and learn how research is helping support the agriculture industry!

### Fashion in Agriculture

Do you understand the connection between agriculture and fashion? Learn how agricultural crops are used to create natural fibers in the transition from field to fashion to create the looks you see every day and on the runway.

### Stream Ecology

Explore stream ecosystems with Tennessee State Parks! Participate in the 'No Creek, Creek Crawl' to assess stream health, discover local wildlife, and meet special guests from T.O. Fuller State Park.

### Conservation and Technology

Discover how technology is revolutionizing conservation! Join the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation to see real-world tools in action, from data collection to sustainable resource management.

### Stay in the Game with Turfgrass Science

The biomechanics of artificial turf vs natural grass – what's best for the athlete?

### Sediment Survival

Students will take on the role of a fish searching for food. They will be presented with mock waterbodies featuring various concentrations of sediment pollution and will be directed to find as much prey as possible within a given time frame.

### Food Science

The science behind taste vs flavor using jellybeans. Students will taste test jellybeans to learn how smell impacts the taste vs flavor of food.



## JUNIOR MANRRS CONTESTS

### Agriculture & Science Photography 2026 Theme Contest

These two contests are open to Junior MANRRS students. Check pages 30-31 for contest details.

### Junior MANRRS Written Essay

This contest is for high school students to prepare a clear, concise, and well thought out essay that discusses the theme of the conference. This contest provides an opportunity for students to gain experience in expressing themselves through writing. Essays will be judged and winners selected prior to the conference.

#### Awards:

- 1st Place: Monetary Award and a certificate
- 2nd Place: Monetary Award and a certificate
- 3rd Place: Monetary Award and a certificate

### Junior MANRRS Chapter of the Year Award Sponsored by Purdue University

The Junior MANRRS Chapter of the Year Award (COYA) competition was designed to promote leadership development among local chapters. Such development should further the goals and objectives of the National Society, as well as promote professional growth among local student members.

The chapters will be selected and rated on the following:

- Building chapter membership,
- Leadership development,
- Community service, and
- Promotion of the National Society.

#### Awards:

- National Winner: Monetary Award and trophy
- 2nd Place Winner: Monetary Award
- 3rd Place Winner: Monetary Award

### Junior MANRRS Prepared Speech

This contest is for high school students who submit and deliver a speech that will be rated on content, style, and clarity of expression, power of expression, voice, stage presence, organization, and logic. Participation in this contest will give students skills in public speaking, written communication, organizing information, leadership, and communicating in an interactive setting.

#### Awards:

- 1st Place: Monetary Award and a certificate
- 2nd Place: Monetary Award and a certificate
- 3rd Place: Monetary Award and a certificate

### Junior MANRRS Impromptu Public Speaking

The MANRRS Impromptu Public Speaking Contest is designed to develop the ability of all MANRRS members to express themselves on a given subject without having prepared or rehearsed its content in advance. This gives the MANRRS members an opportunity to formulate their remarks for presentation in a very limited amount of time. The event requires students to think on their feet, state their case quickly and persuasively, and to be able to answer relevant questions based upon their presentation.

#### Awards:

- 1st Place: Monetary Award and a certificate
- 2nd Place: Monetary Award and a certificate
- 3rd Place: Monetary Award and a certificate



## THURSDAY, APRIL 3

### Annual Partner Appreciation Luncheon

1:00 PM–2:30 PM

The Partner Appreciation Luncheon is an invitation only event to recognize MANRRS Supporters and Partners.

### National Student Competitions

2:00 PM–5:00 PM

- MANRRS Bowl
- Impromptu Public Speaking
- Undergraduate Oral Research Division I
- Graduate Oral Research Division I
- Undergraduate Oral Research Division II
- Graduate Oral Research Division II
- Undergraduate Research Poster Preview - Division I & II
- Graduate Research Poster Preview - Division I & II

### Branding You with Industry Partners

3:00 PM–4:30 PM

Looking to land your dream job!? Learn how to market yourself and develop your personal brand and target your ideal job. You will receive resume critiques and set yourself up for success with mock interviews.

### Opening Reception

5:00 PM–6:00 PM

### General Session

6:00 PM–7:30 PM

Join us as we kick off the anniversary celebration of MANRRS 39th Annual Training Conference and Career Expo, commencing with this year's Opening General Session.

### Welcome to Memphis: MANRRS Homecoming

8:00 PM–10:00 PM

Join us as we kick off the 39th Annual Training Conference and Career Expo! Start the celebration at the Opening General Session and keep the momentum going at our lively networking event. Reconnect with chapter members from across the country, make new connections, and celebrate the vibrant spirit of MANRRS like never before!



# FRIDAY, APRIL 4

## General Session

7:30 AM–8:30 AM

Join this session to recognize MANRRS Gives individual donors and supporters. Badges will be checked upon entrance. **Additional GIVING details are included in the back of this program guide.**

## Non-Competitive Poster Display

8:00 AM – 4:30 PM

## Membership Business Meetings: Graduate, Professional, and Undergraduate

9:00 AM–10:30 AM

Open to all financial members and delegates from chapters in good standing. Badges will be checked upon entrance.

## Branding You with Industry Partners

10:30 AM–11:30 AM

## United Voices: Building Inclusive Communities Through Organizing Activity

10:30 AM–11:30 AM

To engage students from all backgrounds—considering race, ethnicity, disability, religion, immigrant status, and socio-economic status—in understanding the significance of inclusive community organizing. The activity will foster an appreciation for collective action that prioritizes inclusivity, highlighting how diverse voices and perspectives strengthen community movements in college and beyond.

## National Student Contests

11:00 AM–1:00 PM

- MANRRS Bowl Semi-Finals & Finals
- Improptu Public Speaking
- Business Pitch
- Research Review
- 3-Minute Thesis
- Undergraduate Digital Posters - Division I & II
- Graduate Digital Posters - Division I & II

## Career Expo Box Lunch

11:30 AM–1:00 PM

## Career Expo

12:00 PM–5:00 PM

The Career Expo is the ideal space for students and professionals to connect with representatives from government, industry, and academia. It's a great opportunity to network, build relationships, and explore potential internships or job openings. Some employers will even conduct on-the-spot interviews. Whether you're a freshman, senior, or a professional seeking a career change, be sure to bring your resume, business cards, and your ambition!

## Advisor Appreciation Reception

12:30 PM–1:30 PM

Hard work and dedication are not new concepts to our chapter advisors. To show our appreciation, Chapter Advisors are invited to attend the Reception Lounge for refreshments.

## President's Reception: Blues, Boots, and BBQ

6:30 PM–10:00 PM

## Professional Hospitality: MANRRS-Chella

9:00 PM–12:00 AM

Open time for registered professional attendees to enjoy a Coachella themed event, music, and anticipated Spades Tournament.

## MANRRS POP-UP SHOP

Shop MANRRS store for the latest attire and gifts. **Cash is not accepted.**

### SHOPPING HOURS:

Thursday, April 3: 12:00 PM - 5:00 PM

Friday, April 4: 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM

Saturday, April 5: 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM







## SATURDAY, APRIL 5

### Continental Breakfast

7:30 AM–8:00 AM

### Workshops

8:00 AM–11:50 AM

### Golden Awards Brunch

12:00 PM–2:00 PM

National Partners will have the opportunity to celebrate with the brightest students attending the National Conference. The event is open to all registered full conference attendees.

### Networking Break

2:00 PM–2:30 PM

### National Leadership Forum and Business Meeting

2:30 PM–4:30 PM

**Open to active members only.** All members are encouraged to attend as official business items are shared, amendments presented and national officers confirmed. Chapter delegates and paid professional members are strongly encouraged to attend.

### MANRRS Awards Gala

7:00 PM–9:00 PM (Doors open at 6:30 PM)

The Awards Gala is an event to celebrate, congratulate and recognize MANRRS Scholarship Winners, Supporters and the winner of the Public Speaking Contest will give their winning speech.









# SATURDAY, APRIL 5

## Session A Workshops 8:00 AM–8:50 AM

### A1) Shootin for the Stars: The Launchpad to Career Success (Roundtable)

Starting your career can be both exciting and challenging. This interactive roundtable workshop is designed to guide students and young professionals through the critical steps of launching a successful career. This session, led by industry leaders and career development experts, offers a collaborative environment to ask questions, share experiences, and gain actionable advice tailored to your aspirations.

### A2) Funding Your Future

Learn the essentials of grant writing in this hands-on workshop designed for both college students and farmers. Discover how to identify funding opportunities, craft compelling proposals, and navigate the application process to secure grants for educational and agricultural projects. Whether you're pursuing academic research or enhancing your farm, this session will provide the tools and strategies to turn your ideas into funded realities.

### A3) The Future of Food: Exploring Alternative Proteins

Join the Good Food Institute for an engaging session on alternative proteins and their potential to transform food systems. We'll explore the science, technology, and market opportunities behind plant-based, cultivated, and fermented proteins driving sustainability and innovation in the food industry. Learn about the environmental, health, and scalability benefits of these alternatives, the challenges of production, and their impact on agriculture's future. Whether you're passionate about innovation, sustainability, or entrepreneurship, this workshop will inspire you to think about how alternative proteins can help tackle global food security and climate issues.

### A4) Ag Tech & Innovation: Shaping the Future of Food and Sustainability

Discover how cutting-edge technology and innovation are revolutionizing the agriculture industry. Join leading experts from companies like Cargill to explore advancements in precision agriculture, sustainability solutions, and digital transformation in food systems. This session will delve into real-world applications of artificial intelligence, robotics, and data analytics in agriculture, highlighting how these innovations address global challenges like food security and climate change. Attendees will gain insights into career opportunities at the intersection of technology and agriculture and learn how to position themselves for success in this rapidly evolving field.

### A5) Pause with Purpose: The Power of Intentional Self-Check-Ins

In the hustle of academic and professional life, losing touch with your well-being is easy. This MANRRS workshop emphasizes the importance of being intentional about self-check-ins to maintain balance, resilience, and focus. Participants will explore practical strategies for assessing mental, emotional, and physical health, setting boundaries, and realigning priorities. Through guided exercises and open discussions, attendees will learn how regular self-assessment can improve productivity, strengthen relationships, and a more fulfilling journey toward their goals.

### A6) Be Intentional: Promoting Self-Growth while Creating a Healthy Work Culture

(Professionals & Alumni)

As professionals, developing intentional leadership skills is crucial for personal growth and fostering a positive and productive work environment. This MANRRS workshop focuses on the strategies and mindset required to actively invest in your leadership development while nurturing a healthy organizational culture. Participants will learn to set clear leadership goals, engage in continuous self-reflection, and implement practices promoting trust, collaboration, and accountability within their teams. Through interactive discussions and actionable steps, attendees will leave equipped with the tools to elevate their leadership journey and create a work culture that values well-being, inclusivity, and sustainable success.

## Session B Workshops 9:00 AM–9:50 AM

### B1) Thinking Outside the Box to Grow and Leverage Your Network (Roundtable)

This MANRRS workshop encourages participants to step outside the traditional boundaries of networking by exploring unconventional approaches to connect with people across industries, cultures, and geographies. Through interactive exercises, attendees will learn how to identify untapped networking opportunities, nurture relationships in innovative ways, and leverage their network for personal and professional growth. Get ready to challenge the status quo and unlock the full potential of your network by thinking beyond the obvious!

### B2) The Future is Here: Innovations in Agriculture and Sustainability

Explore cutting-edge technologies transforming agriculture and sustainability, including precision farming, AI, robotics, and genetic engineering. This workshop highlights how these innovations are tackling global challenges like food security and climate change. Through interactive discussions, participants will learn how STEM professionals are shaping the future of agriculture and promoting sustainable solutions.

### **B3) Sowing Seeds of Knowledge: Turning Your Ag Degree into an Education Career**

Passionate about agriculture and eager to inspire the next generation? This interactive session will explore the many ways you can apply your agriculture degree to a career in education—whether in the classroom, extension services, corporate training, or curriculum development. Hear from professionals who have turned their ag expertise into impactful careers and gain insights on the skills, certifications, and opportunities that can help you do the same. If you're ready to cultivate a future where you educate, mentor, and advocate for agriculture, this workshop is for you!

### **B4) The Future is Fresh: Transforming Agriculture Through Innovation in Supply Chain & Technology**

Explore how innovation in supply chain logistics and cutting-edge technology is revolutionizing agriculture in this engaging workshop. Featuring industry leaders from C.H. Robinson and Land O'Lakes, this session will provide a comprehensive look at the intersection of logistics and ag tech in reshaping global food systems.

Learn how advancements in perishable supply chain management and innovative tools like data analytics, automation, and sustainable practices are addressing the challenges of food distribution and production. Through real-world case studies and expert insights, this workshop will demonstrate how logistics and technology work together to enhance efficiency, ensure sustainability, and meet the demands of a growing global population.

### **B5) From Farm to Fork: Exploring Careers in Meat Science**

Ever wondered what it takes to bring high-quality meat products from pasture to plate? This workshop dives into the exciting world of meat science careers, where agriculture, technology, and food safety intersect. From meat processing and quality control to product development and regulatory roles, explore the diverse opportunities available in this field. Hear from industry experts who will share their career journeys, essential skills, and the latest innovations shaping the future of meat science. Whether you're interested in research, production, or sustainability, this session will help you carve out a path in this dynamic and essential industry.

### **B6) Going Forward Together: How Alumni, Professionals, and Supporters Can Elevate MANRRS Chapters and the National Organization (Professionals/Alumni)**

This session brings MANRRS alumni, professionals, and supporters together to discuss how they can play a pivotal role in strengthening local chapters and the national organization. Participants will explore various ways to contribute, from mentoring and networking to securing resources and amplifying the organization's mission.

## **Session C Workshops** **10:00 AM–10:50 AM**

### **C1) LEAD Mentoring Session (Roundtable)**

Join an exclusive mentoring session with experienced MANRRS LEAD Mentors dedicated to empowering the next generation of diverse leaders. This interactive roundtable provides a unique opportunity to engage with professionals who have successfully navigated academic and career challenges. Gain valuable insights on career development, leadership, and personal growth while receiving tailored advice. Whether you're seeking guidance on defining your goals, expanding your network, or overcoming obstacles, this session will leave you inspired and equipped to reach your full potential.

### **C2) Building Employability Skills and Professionalism**

In today's competitive job market, it takes more than knowledge and passion to succeed—it requires a strong foundation of professionalism and employability skills. This interactive MANRRS workshop is designed to prepare students and professionals to thrive in their careers. Participants will explore key topics such as resume building, effective communication, networking, and workplace etiquette while learning to navigate professional environments confidently and authentically. With practical tips and real-world scenarios, this session equips attendees to cultivate a personal brand that stands out and grows into a flourishing career.

### **C3) From Lab to Launch: Empowering MANRRS Entrepreneurs**

This workshop aims to equip undergraduate and graduate MANRRS students with the tools, resources, and strategies to transform innovative ideas and technologies into thriving businesses successfully. Participants will gain insight into entrepreneurship fundamentals, funding opportunities, and pathways to commercialization, focusing on leveraging support from programs like the MBDA Capital Readiness Program and SSBCI funds. Join us to learn how to launch and scale your ideas, access investment opportunities, and become a driving force within the innovation ecosystem.

### **C4) More Than What's on Paper: Showcasing Your True Potential**

This MANRRS workshop helps students understand that they are more than what's written on their resumes. Through interactive activities and discussions, participants will learn to highlight their soft skills, including leadership, adaptability, and emotional intelligence, and demonstrate their community involvement and volunteer experiences. This session will empower students to present themselves as multifaceted candidates who bring value beyond their qualifications, preparing them for success in the workforce.



## SATURDAY, APRIL 5

### Workshop Session C 10:00 AM–10:50 AM

#### C5) From Farm to Future: Navigating Opportunities in the Global Supply Chain

Explore the exciting world of supply chain management and discover how every step, from farm to consumer, impacts global food systems and agriculture-related industries. This workshop will introduce key components of the supply chain, including logistics, procurement, inventory management, and sustainability. Attendees will gain insights into how emerging technologies, environmental concerns, and consumer trends are shaping the future of supply chains.

#### C6) Leadership in the Making: Building Management Skills as a Career Professional (Professionals & Alumni)

Leadership and management skills are key to success in any career, and the journey to developing them can start long before entering the workforce. This MANRRS workshop from companies like Cargill to explore advancements in precision agriculture, sustainability solutions, and digital transformation in food systems. This session will delve into real-world applications of artificial intelligence, robotics, and data analytics in agriculture, highlighting how these innovations address global challenges like food security and climate change. Attendees will gain insights into career opportunities at the intersection of technology and agriculture and learn how to position themselves for success in this rapidly evolving field.

### Session D Workshops 11:00 AM–11:50 AM

#### D1) Bridging the Gap: Navigating Campus to Career Success (Roundtable)

Transform your academic achievements into professional triumphs with this empowering MANRRS workshop. Designed to help students transition seamlessly from college to the workforce, this session explores strategies for leveraging the skills, knowledge, and experiences gained during your degree program to excel in your chosen career path. Participants will learn how to align their academic strengths with industry demands, articulate their value to employers, and confidently step into the next phase of their professional journey. Whether preparing for your first job or planning long-term career goals, this workshop will set you on the path to success.

#### D2) Leaders in the Making: Building Leadership Skills as a Student

Discover the tools and strategies to unlock your leadership potential while balancing the challenges of student life. This interactive workshop will equip participants with essential skills such as effective communication, decision-making, and team-building, tailored specifically for student leaders. Learn how to cultivate confidence, foster collaboration, and leave a lasting impact within your campus and community. Whether you're just starting your leadership journey or looking to refine your skills, this session will inspire you to lead with purpose and vision.

#### D3) Climbing the Ladder: Thriving in Corporate and Government Sectors

Navigating corporate America and government sectors' professional landscapes requires adaptability, resilience, and strategic planning. This workshop empowers students and early-career professionals to excel in these environments by understanding their unique cultures, challenges, and opportunities. Participants will explore key topics such as effective communication, networking, navigating workplace dynamics, and aligning personal values with organizational goals.

#### D4) Growing Change: Advocacy for Urban Agriculture

Urban agriculture is more than just growing food in the city—cultivating healthier communities, fostering environmental sustainability, and promoting food equity. This workshop empowers participants to become champions for urban agriculture in their communities. Through engaging discussions, hands-on activities, and collaborative problem-solving, attendees will explore the challenges and opportunities of urban farming. Learn how to advocate for supportive policies, engage local stakeholders, and inspire action to transform urban spaces into thriving hubs of food production and community resilience.

#### D5) Navigating the Future: Industry Trends and Innovations Impacting Agriculture, STEM, and Leadership

In today's fast-paced world, staying ahead of industry trends is crucial for personal and professional growth. This interactive workshop for MANRRS members will provide insights into the latest innovations and future trends impacting agriculture, STEM, and related industries. Participants will engage in dynamic discussions, explore case studies, and gain actionable strategies to align their career paths with the evolving demands of the workforce.



## D6) Sowing Seeds of Understanding: Agriculture, Environment, and Community Engagement

Dive into the intricate connections between agriculture, environmental policy, and community well-being in this dynamic workshop. Designed for students, professionals, and community leaders, the session fosters a deeper understanding of how policies shape agricultural practices, environmental sustainability, and local communities. Participants will explore ways to advocate for sustainable solutions in agriculture and environmental policy to better engage their communities.







## THURSDAY, APRIL 3

### MANRRS Contests

2:00 PM-5:00 PM

## FRIDAY, APRIL 4

### Graduate Student Meeting

9:00 AM-10:30 AM

### MANRRS Contests

11:00 AM-1:00 PM

## SATURDAY, APRIL 5

### Graduate Student Summit 7:30 AM-12:00 PM

### Welcome Breakfast

7:30 AM-8:00 AM

### Workshop I: Mapping Your Graduate Journey: Tips for Success and Balance

8:40 AM-9:30 AM

So you're in grad school- now what? Do you even know why you choose to go? Plenty of new people, experiences, and expectations are coming at you, but at the core of it all should be why you are even doing this in the first place. Use this interactive round table workshop to network with other graduate MANRRS students to talk about the ins and outs of advisors, class load, committee selection, and all the little things that go into putting those extra letters at the end of your name.

### Workshop II: Perfectly Imperfect: Achieving Without Burning Out

9:40 AM-10:30 AM

How many of you have ever felt that you had to be excellent and perfect throughout your academic journey to reach the spaces and positions you desire? Graduate school will be one of the most challenging and demanding life experiences you will likely encounter. Join this empowering and vulnerable session around self-compassion and intellectual prowess.

### Workshop III: From Research to Results: Leveraging Your Graduate Work for Industry Success

10:40 AM-11:30 AM

Useful tips for current graduate students for using their dissertation to solve real-world problems in non-academic settings. A deep dive into salary negotiations for specific skills, using your research background to prepare you for industry positions, and how to market your expertise for potential post-graduation positions

### Closing Session

11:30 AM-12:00 PM



## FRIDAY, APRIL 4

### Professional Meeting

9:30 AM–10:30 AM

### Chapter Advisor Appreciation Reception

12:30 PM–1:30 PM

### Professional Hospitality: MANRRS-Chella

9:00 PM–12:00 AM

## SATURDAY, APRIL 5

8:00 AM–8:50 AM

### Chapter Advisors' Meeting

#### A6) Pause with Purpose: The Power of Intentional Self-Check-Ins

See description on Page 26

9:00 AM–9:50 AM

#### Chapter Advisors: Passing the Torch: Succession Planning for MANRRS E-Boards

Ensure your MANRRS chapter's continued success with this essential succession planning workshop. Designed for current and aspiring e-board members, this session focuses on creating a seamless leadership transition by identifying future leaders, transferring knowledge, and preserving chapter momentum. Participants will explore strategies for mentorship, documentation, and collaborative decision-making to build a sustainable legacy. Empower your chapter to thrive for years by preparing the next generation of leaders today!

#### B6) Going Forward Together: How Alumni, Professionals, and Supporters Can Elevate MANRRS Chapters and the National Organization

See description on Page 27

10:00 AM–10:50 AM

#### Chapter Advisors: Pitch Perfect: Crafting Compelling Fundraiser Appeals for MANRRS Chapters

Unlock the secrets to successful fundraising in this practical MANRRS workshop for chapter leaders and members. Learn how to craft compelling pitches that resonate with potential donors and secure the financial support your chapter needs to thrive. From identifying your chapter's unique value proposition to developing persuasive messaging and building relationships with

donors, this session will equip you with the tools to pitch for funds confidently. Whether you're raising money for events, scholarships, or community initiatives, this workshop will help you turn your vision into a reality with strong, strategic fundraising.

#### C6) Leadership in the Making: Building Management Skills as a Career Professional

See description on Page 28

11:00 AM–11:50 AM

#### Chapter Advisors: Staying the Course: Supporting Students Amid Evolving DEI Landscapes in Higher Education

As higher education faces shifts in diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives, advisors play a crucial role in supporting students and fostering inclusive environments. This workshop empowers advisors to navigate these changes with confidence and renewed purpose. It is an opportunity to recharge, connect with peers, and reaffirm your vital role in shaping an equitable and inclusive academic community. Together, we'll discover how to continue making a meaningful impact in this evolving landscape.

#### D6) Sowing Seeds of Understanding: Agriculture, Environment, and Community Engagement

See description on Page 29







## Student Contests

Contests will be held on Thursday afternoon and Friday morning. All students should be prepared to compete upon arrival. There will be no practice time or space available.

Contests are open to all undergraduate or graduate students who are members of MANRRS through chapter or independent membership. All students must be a registered member before the contest deadline: **January 15, 2025**. The 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place winners for select contests will receive a monetary award and framed certificate. The winner of the Public Speaking Contest will present their speech at the Gala Banquet on Saturday evening.

### 1. MANRRS Bowl

The MANRRS Bowl Contest is designed to increase and test the knowledge of collegiate MANRRS members on MANRRS history and topics related to agriculture, natural resources, and related sciences. The contest also increases and further encourages regional pride and support of chapters within regions

#### Awards:

1st Place: \$500 and MANRRS Bowl trophy  
2nd Place: Certificate



2. Undergraduate Oral Research  
(Division I – Biological, Chemical, and Physical Sciences)
3. Undergraduate Oral Research  
(Division II – Education, Social Sciences, and Business)
4. Graduate Oral Research  
(Division I – Biological, Chemical, and Physical Sciences)
5. Graduate Oral Research  
(Division II – Education, Social Sciences, and Business)

The Oral Research Presentation Contest allows undergraduate and graduate students to gain exposure and experience presenting their research before an audience. Graduate and undergraduate students will be judged in separate contests. The top ten contestants will be invited to present at the annual training conference and career expo. Students will select the division to which they are submitting their research abstracts for competition.

#### Awards:

1st Place: Monetary Award and a certificate  
2nd Place: Monetary Award and a certificate  
3rd Place: Monetary Award and a certificate

6. Graduate Research Poster  
(Division I – Biological, Chemical, and Physical Sciences)
7. Graduate Research Poster  
(Division II – Education, Social Sciences, and Business)
8. Undergraduate Research Poster  
(Division I – Biological, Chemical, and Physical Sciences)
9. Undergraduate Research Poster  
(Division II – Education, Social Sciences, and Business)

The Research Poster Contest provides collegiate MANRRS members with an opportunity to gain experience presenting research in digital poster form before an audience. Undergraduate and graduate students will be judged in separate contests. Posters can be entered as “Competitive” or “Non-Competitive”. Those in the “Competitive” division that do not make the Top 10 will be invited to showcase during the “Non-Competitive” division. Students should select the division they are submitting their research abstracts for competition.

#### Awards:

1st Place: Monetary Award and a certificate  
2nd Place: Monetary Award and a certificate  
3rd Place: Monetary Award and a certificate

## 10. Research Review

This contest is for undergraduate and graduate students who are members of MANRRS through chapter or independent membership and focuses on interactive communication processes using research-based material. The goal is for participants to demonstrate a higher level of competence in oral communications, learn to present research information in an interactive setting, develop critical thinking skills, and show an ability to handle information. Participation in the contest will help undergraduates and graduates prepare for the real world work place, obtain leadership and management activity skills, and learn more about current research issues and topics.

### Awards:

1st Place: Monetary Award and a certificate  
2nd Place: Monetary Award and a certificate  
3rd Place: Monetary Award and a certificate

## 11. Written Essay

This contest is for undergraduate students to prepare a clear, concise, and well thought out essay that discusses the theme of the conference. This contest provides an opportunity for students to gain experience in expressing themselves through writing. Essays will be judged and winners selected prior to the conference.

### Awards:

1st Place: Monetary Award and a certificate  
2nd Place: Monetary Award and a certificate  
3rd Place: Monetary Award and a certificate

## 12. Prepared Speech

This contest is for undergraduate students who submit and deliver a speech that will be rated on content, style, and clarity of expression, power of expression, voice, stage presence, organization, and logic. Participation in this contest will give students skills in public speaking, written communication, organizing information, leadership, and communicating in an interactive setting. The winner of the Public Speaking Contest will give their speech at the Closing Gala Dinner to be held on Saturday, April 5th.

### Awards:

1st Place: Monetary Award and a certificate  
2nd Place: Monetary Award and a certificate  
3rd Place: Monetary Award and a certificate

## 13. Impromptu Public Speaking

The MANRRS Impromptu Public Speaking Contest is designed to develop the ability of all MANRRS members to express himself or herself on a given subject without having prepared or rehearsed its content in advance. This provides the MANRRS members an opportunity to gain public speaking skills and effective quick and critical thinking as they formulate their remarks for presentation in a very limited amount of time. The event requires students to think on their feet, state their case quickly and persuasively, and to be

able to answer relevant questions from the audience and judges based upon their presentation. Regional winners were selected from the regional clusters and compete in the national competition.

### Awards:

1st Place: Monetary Award and a certificate  
2nd Place: Monetary Award and a certificate  
3rd Place: Monetary Award and a certificate

## 14. Agriculture & Science Photography

The purpose of the MANRRS Photography Contest is to provide MANRRS members the opportunity to express their love for agriculture and related sciences in an artistic form.

The National Executive Committee will determine the top five photographs in the preliminary round to advance to the National Conference. The top 5 finalists' entries will be displayed and voted on by conference attendees via electronic voting. The overall winner will be announced at the Closing Gala Dinner, Saturday, April 5th.

### Award:

- 1st Place: Monetary Award and a certificate

## 15. 2026 Theme

The MANRRS Executive Committee is soliciting your recommendations for the theme of the next Annual Training Conference and Career Expo. All MANRRS members are encouraged to enter this contest.

Submissions will be voted on by the National Executive Committee. The theme with the most votes will be announced at the Annual National Conference. The overall winner will be announced at the Closing Gala Dinner, Saturday, April 5th.

### Award:

- 1st Place: Monetary Award and a certificate

## 16. CHAPTER OF THE YEAR AWARD

The MANRRS Chapter of the Year Award (COYA) competition was designed to promote leadership development among local chapters. Such development should further the goals and objectives of the National Society, as well as promote professional growth among local student members.

The chapters will be selected and rated on the following:

- Building chapter membership,
- Leadership development,
- Community service, and
- Promotion of the National Society.

Chapters competing in this contest should develop a Chapter Annual Summary.

### Awards:

- National COYA Winner: Monetary Award and trophy
- 2nd Place Winner: Monetary Award
- 3rd Place Winner: Monetary Award



## CALL FOR JUDGES FOR STUDENT CONTESTS

We are soliciting professionals to serve as a contest judge for any of the collegiate or Junior MANRRS contests.

Register as a contest judge through your conference registration. The contest superintendent will confirm your participation.

For complete contest and judging guidelines and timelines, refer to the National Contest Guidelines on the MANRRS website. Additional questions can be directed to [contest@manrrs.org](mailto:contest@manrrs.org).

- Business Pitch Contest
- Impromptu Public Speaking Contest
- Graduate Oral Research (2 divisions)
  - Division I – Biological, Chemical, and Physical Sciences
  - Division II – Education, Social Sciences & Business
- Graduate Poster Research
  - Division I – Biological, Chemical, and Physical Sciences
  - Division II – Education, Social Sciences & Business
- MANRRS Bowl
- National Theme
- Photography Contest
- Prepared Speech Contest
- Research Review Contest
- Three-Minute Thesis
- Undergraduate Oral Research (2 divisions)
  - Division I – Biological, Chemical, and Physical Sciences
  - Division II – Education, Social Sciences, and Business
- Undergraduate Poster Research
  - Division I – Biological, Chemical, and Physical Sciences
  - Division II – Education, Social Sciences & Business
- Written Essay Contest



## FUNDRAISING GOAL \$390,000

MANRRS is unleashing the power of generosity around the world and see how much farther we can go when we unite for the good of others.

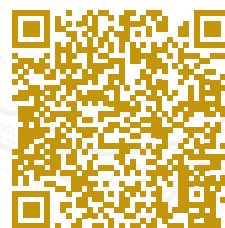
Non-profit organizations rely on donors like you to grow and thrive so that we can do more for the communities that we serve.

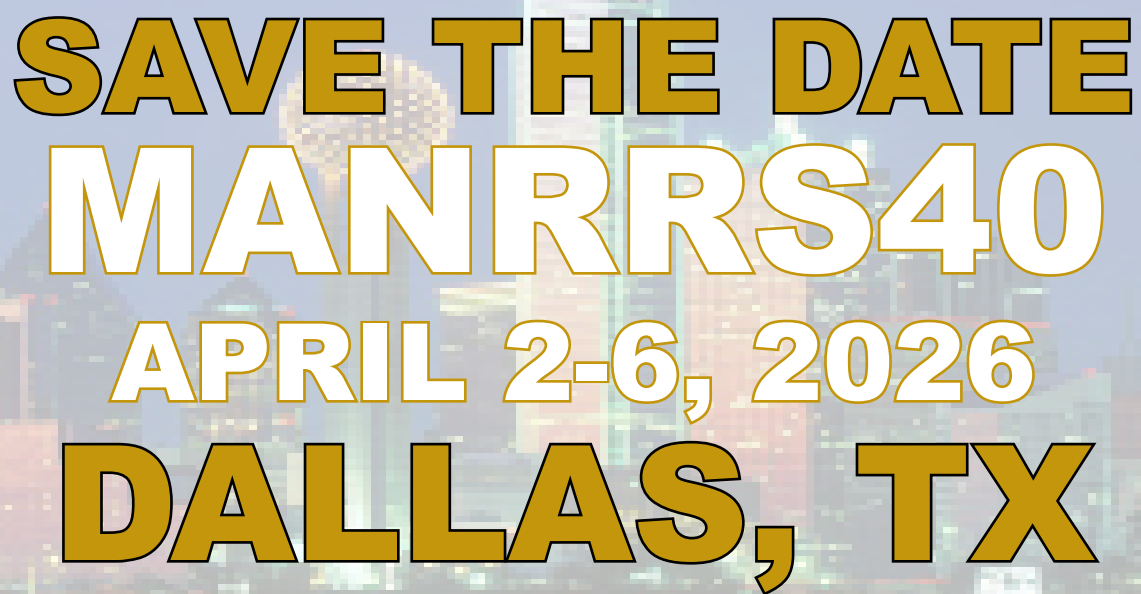
### OUR MISSION IS CLEAR:

MANRRS is the voice that promotes academic and professional advancement for minorities in agriculture, natural resources, and related sciences. Through community, affirmation, and empowerment, our members change the future of the industry to a more equitable and diverse environment.

Every dollar will benefit the development of our MANRRS members. By donating to MANRRS **you** become the change, **you** change the narrative, and **you** change an experience.

### SCAN TO DONATE




A background image of the Dallas skyline with various skyscrapers under a clear sky.

**SAVE THE DATE**  
**MANRRRS40**  
**APRIL 2-6, 2026**  
**DALLAS, TX**

A background image of the San Diego skyline with buildings and a body of water in the foreground.

**SAVE THE DATE**  
**MANRRRS41**  
**MAR 31-APR 3, 2027**  
**SAN DIEGO, CA**

A background image of the Birmingham skyline with several tall buildings and a cloudy sky.

**SAVE THE DATE**  
**MANRRRS42**  
**APRIL 5-9, 2028**  
**BIRMINGHAM, AL**





**MANRRS**39

**ANNUAL TRAINING CONFERENCE  
AND CAREER EXPO**

[www.manrrs.org](http://www.manrrs.org)

**#MANRRS39    #WEAREMANRRS**