It is hard to imagine a stronger advocate for SAS, than Ms. Debbie Serna, the SAS Student Representative. Debbie’s role is to meet with students, inform them of the advantages of SAS membership, and encourage them to join the society.

“I really enjoy meeting with students and talking about SAS,” Debbie explains. “Students are often unsure of the opportunities available to them. My job is to make sure they know they are welcomed in SAS and at our national meeting, FACSS.”

“SAS is a wonderful bargain for students,” she adds. “For $20 per year, you have receive a hardcopy and online access to Applied Spectroscopy, as well as the opportunity to learn about careers and network with leaders in all areas of spectroscopy. It’s a great way to turn technical training into a high-paying career.”

She is currently enrolled in the Ph.D. program in Chemistry at New Mexico State University, working with Professor Gary Rayson. Her research involves spectroscopic techniques used to determine the binding of lanthanide and actinide metal ions in cell walls of a plant-like material. She graduated from New Mexico Tech with a B.S. in Chemistry.

Debbie has organized a variety of activities for SAS student members, including the events described here. She organized a social event at Pittcon 2004, providing students with pizza and the opportunity to learn about the activities at the meeting. Similar events are planned for the future.

“I have found that students are very interested in learning how they can convert their graduate training into professional opportunities,” she explains. “What I find really interesting is that the employers learn almost as much from these sessions as the students. It is fascinating to listen to the differences between academic, government, and industrial employment.”

Debbie is very interested in hearing from all students who are interested in learning more about SAS, FACSS meetings, or suggestions for future activities. “We want to make SAS work for you, so please contact me with your ideas. I would love to hear them.”