

National Council of The Society of
Sigma Gamma Epsilon



NATIONAL HONORARY SOCIETY in the EARTH SCIENCES

Dr. Mark R. Noll
Department of Earth Sciences
327 Lennon Hall
SUNY College at Brockport
Brockport, NY 14420

National Vice President
Northeastern Province
Phone: (585)-395-5717
Fax: (585)-395-2416
E-mail: mnoll@brockport.edu

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RE: Site visit to **SUNY New Paltz**

In response to a petition from students interested in forming a new chapter of *Sigma Gamma Epsilon (SGE)*, I visited the Department of Geology at the State University of New York College at New Paltz on 5 December 2011. Dr. Frederick Vollmer, associate professor and chair, and Ms. Alexandra Danz gave me a tour of the facilities within the Wooster Science Building. The facilities are in good condition considering their age and construction of a new building to house the department is scheduled to start early in 2012. I met the remainder of the six full-time faculty during my visit and discussed their individual research interests and how they engage students. The faculty are very active in research and actively encourage students to participate is a departmental priority. This has been evident to me for several years as I frequently see the faculty and their students at the national and regional Geological Society of America meetings presenting the results of their work.

I had lunch with almost twenty interested students and had discussions on the numerous extra-curricular field excursions sponsored by the department. The students felt that these trips were highlights of their experience at New Paltz and increased their interest in the discipline. Following lunch I continued my discussion with the student applicants with our discussion focusing on research and its importance to their career goals. One student's comment, "the faculty expect us to learn outside of our regular classes", seemed to sum up the atmosphere in the department. It was apparent from these discussions that current efforts of the department fit well with the goals of *SGE*.

The Department of Geology offers a major in geology with options for tracks in environmental geochemistry and secondary education. The department is staffed by six full-time faculty and one full-time technician. The faculty are very dedicated to both their students and their own research efforts. The geology student body is about 40 majors, and has been growing over the past few years. The students petitioning for a new chapter of *SGE* are very enthusiastic and academically oriented. I hope that you will enthusiastically approve their petition.

Cordially,

Mark R. Noll, PhD

SGE Vice President, Northeastern Province