

September 21, 2009

Greetings, Sigma Gams:

Since 1915 the members of SGE have been coming together in local chapters to recognize academic excellence and to promote the professional development of geoscience students in universities and colleges across America. Ninety-four years later, I hope that your 2009 Fall Semester is off to a good start and that you and your fellow chapter members have planned some fun and memorable activities that will sustain these goals. At the national level, there is important and exciting news that I wish to share with each of you.

• **SGE HAS A NEW NATIONAL SECRETARY-TREASURER**

For the past 42 years, Dr. Charles (“Charlie”) Mankin, National Secretary-Treasurer, and Ms. Betty Bellis, Secretary to the National Council, have been the glue that has held our society together. The student members, faculty advisors, and even the national presidents have come and gone over the years, but Charlie and Betty were always there. As you may know, Charlie recently retired from the Oklahoma Geological Survey, where he had served as Director and State Geologist; Betty retired from the Survey this past June. With these major changes in their lives, Charlie and Betty decided it was time to appoint a new National Secretary-Treasurer and turn over the day-to-day operations of SGE's National Office. They have completed an unprecedented forty-two (42) years of service (1967-2009) to Sigma Gamma Epsilon. This feat is even more remarkable considering the fact that Charlie was first approached by the National Council in 1967 to take over the office on a “temporary” basis. The Society would not be what it is today without the dedication and sustained effort of these two exceptional individuals. There is simply no way that we can say “thank you” enough. Our Society also owes a debt of gratitude to the Oklahoma Geological Survey, which has generously provided the office space for our national operations for the past 30 years or so – Betty ran the national office out of her home for about the first ten years of Charlie's tenure as National Secretary-Treasurer. **I strongly encourage each active chapter of SGE to send Charlie and Betty a note or card expressing a hearty thank-you and best wishes for their retirement years together.**

Last Spring I consulted with current and former members of the National Council to identify a candidate to take over as National Secretary-Treasurer. There was a strong consensus of opinion that Dr. James (“Jim”) Walters (University of Northern Iowa) would be the best person for the job, by virtue of his dedication to SGE and his extensive experience as a national officer and chapter advisor. Fortunately for SGE, Jim agreed to serve and to host the National Office within the Department of Earth Science at UNI. By a unanimous vote of the National Council, he was appointed the new National Secretary-Treasurer, effective September 1, 2009. Jim and I made a trip to Norman, OK, last June to begin the transition process. We still have much to do, but with your help and support the Society will move forward. **Please welcome Jim to his newest role in SGE; we are fortunate to have him in this important position.**

• **NEW CHAPTERS**

I am very pleased to report that three new chapters have been installed since my spring letter to active chapters: Eta Upsilon (University of the Pacific – May 1, 2009); Eta Phi (Northern Illinois University – April 10, 2009); and Eta Chi (SUNY-Brockport – May 11, 2009). In addition, plans are being made to install the Eta Psi chapter (Keene State University) this semester. It should be very gratifying to you to see this level of national interest in Sigma Gamma Epsilon and to see other students wanting to emulate your chapter's activities and experiences.

• **SGE AT THE PORTLAND GSA MEETING:**

The Geological Society of America's annual meeting (October 18-21, 2009) will be in Portland, OR, this year. Sigma Gamma Epsilon, as an Associated Society of GSA, has a number of exciting events planned that I hope you can attend.

1. The SGE Poster Session (session #258), highlighting undergraduate research, will be held Wednesday, October 21, 9:00 am to 6:00 pm, Oregon Convention Center/Exhibit Hall A. We have 62 student posters this year (booth #s 307-368)! This is our largest session ever. The National VPs will judge those posters presented by SGE members, beginning around 9 am, and award two cash prizes (Austin A. Sartin Award and National Council Award) for the best student research. Be sure to stop by and support this important event.
2. The Fifth Annual SGE Members Reception will be held Monday, October 19, 6 to 8 pm, at the Hilton Portland & Executive Tower (Directors Suite). Be sure to stop in and meet other SGE members and advisors from across the country. This will also be a good time to meet Jim Walters and to say thank you to Charlie and Betty.
3. SGE will have a booth (#602) in the Exhibit Hall, and either Jim, Charlie, Betty, or I will be there throughout the meeting. This is the place to touch base with National if your chapter has any questions or needs any SGE items or supplies.
4. Lastly, be sure to check out the "Hall of Fame" at the Portland meeting that highlights all the awards given in the past year by GSA and its associated societies. SGE's W.A. Tarr Award recipients (2009) and the winners of the 2008 Austin A. Sartin and National Council poster session awards will be listed in this forum.

• **CALL TO CONVENTION – Spring 2010 – Hosted by the Rho Chapter (Indiana U.)**

Plan to send a delegate from your chapter – details will be sent out later this semester.

I hope you have a great semester and I look forward to seeing many of you in Portland,

Rick Ford
National President
The Society of Sigma Gamma Epsilon