

National Council of The Society of
Sigma Gamma Epsilon



NATIONAL HONORARY SOCIETY in the EARTH SCIENCES

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TO: Active Chapters of Sigma Gamma Epsilon
Members of the National Council of SGE

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FROM: Jim Walters, National Secretary Treasurer

The purpose of this letter is to welcome back all Chapters to their respective campuses for the start of the second half of the 2013-2014 academic year and to provide details on some of the many SGE happenings.

1. SGE electronic membership database

Since fall 2010, SGE has been using new forms for Chapters to report on **returning members, new initiates, and Chapter officers**. These forms are to be completed electronically and can be found on the SGE Website under the Officer Resources link or on the Home Page under New Forms. The SGE Website is located at <http://www.sigmagammaepsilon.com>. Once you have completed these forms, save them as files under your Chapter name and e-mail as an attachment to even@sigmagammaepsilon.com. Then print out and snail mail copies of these electronic lists to the National Office of SGE along with dues and fees as appropriate. (**Please do not submit hand-written lists**---we often have a very difficult time deciphering handwritten names.) Also, please note that it is preferable to submit total dues and fees as one check.

2. Spring half-year dues

If your Chapter conducts an initiation ceremony this spring, after February 1st, in addition to the one-time initiation fee of \$25, new members will pay half-year dues of \$8, for a total of \$33. This is sometimes misunderstood by Chapters. The Constitution specifies that half-year dues be assessed **only** for those members initiated after February 1st. So, for new members initiated in the fall and for all returning members (even if graduating that fall) it is necessary to pay full year (annual) dues of \$15. If you held an initiation last fall and have yet to send in your list of returning members, new initiates, appropriate dues and fees, and your chapter officers list, please do so as soon as possible.

3. Cash and old checks

When paying your Chapter's dues and fees, **Please do not send cash through the mail!** Another problem is old checks. These checks bounce when we attempt to cash them and it creates all sorts of problems with the affected Chapter. Please make sure you submit your payments as a check or money order as promptly as possible.

4. Department addresses

We continue to have issues with lost items when they are sent to off-campus addresses. For this reason, we suggest that all Chapters use Departmental addresses (perhaps your advisor's address) when notifying the SGE national office of where to send shingles, membership cards, pins, and other items.

5. Honor cords

Order forms for honor cords can be found on the SGE Website under SGE Products. We try to send out the cords as soon as we receive the order, but Chapters should keep in mind that we need at least three weeks to process orders due to slow campus mail systems and the fact that our SGE Office Administrative Assistant is only part time.

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6. IRS tax information requests and filing Form 990-N (e-Postcard)

Although we consider all SGE Chapters to be subordinate organizations under the SGE National Office, and we file a parent organization return each year, the IRS is now requiring subordinates to electronically submit Form 990-N, also known as the e-Postcard. If your Chapter receives such a request, you should file the form so that you do not lose your tax-exempt status. It only takes a few minutes to file the e-Postcard. The form asks for your Taxpayer Identification Number (EIN), which will be located in the upper right corner of the letter of request. It also asks for your Chapter's address, SGE website (for your local Chapter, if you have one) and we are also suggesting that the Principal Officer (incidentally, type of name is "person") for Chapters be the Chapter Advisor at the same address. That's all the information it requests. It appears the IRS expects Chapters to file a new 990-N **every year**, so please make every effort to comply. You can find instructions for submitting Form 990-N (e-Postcard) at <http://epostcard.form990.org/>.

7. The COMPASS

As most of you know, the COMPASS is now being published as an online journal and is available at <http://digitalcommons.csbsju.edu/compass/>. It can also be accessed from the SGE homepage at <http://www.sigmagammaepsilon.com>. The last hard copy back issue of The COMPASS (Vol. 83), which covered the 41st Biennial Convention held at Indiana University in 2010, was published last fall, and copies were sent to all Chapters.

8. Quality Chapter Award

The **Quality Chapter Award** is available to all Chapters that meet the qualifications. These qualifications consist of things such as having submitted the Chapter Officers form, New Initiates form, and Returning Member form and appropriate fees and dues to the National Office by the deadlines. Guidelines and applications for this award are available on the SGE Website under the Awards link.

9. W. A. Tarr Award

Each **active Chapter** of SGE has the option of granting the W. A. Tarr Award to an outstanding student in the Earth Sciences. The Tarr Award consists of a certificate and a check for \$50 and is normally given to a graduating senior on the basis of scholarship and activity in the department. Regulations are noted on the form and may be used as a guide in your selection process. Please note that it is important that we have the recipient's full name, date of presentation, and your Chapter name. The form is available on the SGE Website under the link to Awards.

Also note that **only active Chapters can grant a Tarr Award**. Active Chapters are those that submit annually the New Initiates form, Returning Members form, and Chapter Officers form along with appropriate fees and dues by November 15th.

10. Chapter Service award

The **Chapter Service Award** recognizes Chapters providing exemplary outreach and service to their campus and/or community. A form specifying the requirements is available on the SGE Website under the link to Awards. A certificate and a check for \$50 will be presented to each Chapter recognized with this award.

11. SGE 43rd Biennial Convention and Centennial Celebration

SGE was founded at the University of Kansas in 1915. We will be having our 43rd Biennial Convention and a celebration of our 100th anniversary in spring 2015 at KU, and the Alpha Chapter has graciously agreed to host this event. A committee has been formed and has already begun the planning of this important occasion.

We wish you all the best for a productive and enjoyable Spring Semester, and we look forward to hearing from you whenever we may be of assistance. You can contact Paula Even, our Administrative Assistant, at even@sigmagammaepsilon.com or call 319-273-3818 or fax 319-273-7124.