

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

FROM: Jim Walters, National Secretary Treasurer

SUBJECT: Spring Welcome Back letter

January 9, 2017

Welcome back to the start of the second half of the 2016-2017 academic year! This note provides reminders of SGE procedures and details on some of the many SGE activities.

1. SGE electronic membership database

The SGE forms for Chapters to report on **Returning Members, New Initiates**, and **Chapter Officers** are to be completed electronically and can be found on the SGE Website <http://www.sigmagammaepsilon.com> under the Officer Resources link or on the Home Page under New Forms. Note that there is a form for Fall initiations (June 15 – Jan. 31) and a form for Spring initiations (Feb. 1 – June 14). Once you have completed these forms, save them as **excel files** under your Chapter name and e-mail as an attachment to [even@sigmagammaepsilon.com](mailto: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 1<sup>st</sup>, in addition to the one-time initiation fee of \$25, new members will pay half-year dues of \$8, for a total of \$33. Chapters sometimes misunderstand this. The Constitution specifies that half-year dues be assessed **only** for those members initiated after February 1<sup>st</sup>. 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 not yet sent in your list of returning members, new initiates, appropriate dues and fees, and your chapter officers list, please do so as soon as possible.

Also, please note that dues can only be paid for the current academic year (2016 – 2017); they can not be paid “ahead” for the next academic year (2017 – 2018).

3. Cash and old checks

When paying your Chapter’s dues and fees, **never 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 and 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 Associate Director is only part time.

6. The COMPASS

*The COMPASS*, the earth science journal of SGE, is an open-access online publication available at <http://digitalcommons.csbsju.edu/compass/>. It can also be accessed from the SGE homepage at

<http://www.sigmagammaepsilon.com>. SGE members (either undergrads or grad students) who have carried out research, are encouraged to submit their research results to Dr. Larry Davis, Editor, at [ldavis@csbsju.edu](mailto:ldavis@csbsju.edu). Chapters are also welcomed and encouraged to send chapter activities information and pictures.

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

Although all SGE Chapters are considered 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 annually Form 990-N, also known as the e-Postcard. 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 IRS letter of request (or contact the SGE National Office for this number). It also asks for your Chapter's address, SGE website (your local Chapter's Website, 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. **The SGE fiscal year runs from Sept. 1<sup>st</sup> to Aug. 31<sup>st</sup>**, and for the 2015-2016 fiscal year Chapters can file any time after Aug. 31, 2016 but **before Jan. 15, 2017**. You can find instructions for submitting Form 990-N (e-Postcard) at [www.irs.gov/990n](http://www.irs.gov/990n). It appears the IRS expects Chapters to file a new 990-N **every year**, so please make every effort to comply.

#### 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. A chapter must complete the **Quality Chapter Application** and submit it with supporting materials to [even@sigmagammaepsilon.com](mailto:even@sigmagammaepsilon.com) by May 31<sup>st</sup>. Award winning chapters receive a \$50 check and a certificate.

#### 9. W. A. Tarr Award

Each **active Chapter** of SGE has the option of granting the W. A. Tarr Award to an outstanding SGE member 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.

#### 10. Chapter Service award

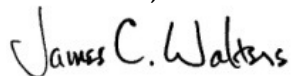
The **Chapter Service Award** recognizes Chapters providing exemplary outreach and service to their campus and/or community. A form specifying the requirements is available on the SGE Website under the link to Awards. A certificate and a check for \$50 will be presented to each Chapter recognized with this award. A chapter must complete the **Service Award Application** and submit it along with supporting materials to [even@sigmagammaepsilon.com](mailto:even@sigmagammaepsilon.com) by May 31<sup>st</sup>. The application is located on the webpage under awards along with the service project form. Please complete a **separate service project form for each service project completed**.

#### 11. SGE 44<sup>th</sup> Biennial Convention, September 22 – 24, 2017

Eastern Illinois University in Charleston, Illinois will be the site of the 44<sup>th</sup> Biennial Convention of SGE. The schedule is being planned in hopes that Chapter delegates will not need to miss more than one day of classes. The Convention will run Friday afternoon through Sunday late morning/early afternoon, with a field trip on Saturday. Chapters are encouraged to send more than one member if possible and Chapter advisors are also welcome and encouraged to attend. Convention details and registration information will be sent to all Chapters early spring semester.

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 Associate Director, at [even@sigmagammaepsilon.com](mailto:even@sigmagammaepsilon.com) or call 319-505-3391 or fax 319-273-7124.

Best wishes,



James C. Walters

SGE National Secretary-Treasurer