

National Council of The Society of
Sigma Gamma Epsilon



NATIONAL HONORARY SOCIETY in the EARTH SCIENCES

Diane M. Burns, President
Eastern Illinois University
600 Lincoln Avenue
Charleston, IL 61920

Department of Geology and Geography
Phone: (217) 581-2626
E-mail: dmburns@eiu.edu

Hello fellow members of Sigma Gamma Epsilon!!

Welcome back to school and undertaking the second half of your academic year. I hope that everyone's holidays were safe, peaceful and restorative, allowing you to rejuvenate your batteries to take on this semester with renewed vigor and finish the school year strong!

I would like to take a moment to introduce myself as the new President of SGE, a result of the National Convention held this past September. I am predominantly a sedimentologist, and I have done research in the geomorphological changes along the Little Wabash River in central IL, investigations into the tectonic history of the Rocky Mountain Region as well as some sequence stratigraphic work on the Casper Formation, SE Wyoming. Research is an integral and important part of your training to be future scientists, and I hope you take the call to involve yourself in investigative work seriously. It is an under-explored part of undergraduate education that will take you to all areas of the world, from surface to deep underground – absolutely fascinating!!

Many of you found research to be worth pursuing, as was exhibited by the sixty-seven entries into the Sigma Gamma Epsilon poster session at the GSA National Convention this past Fall in Seattle, WA. The competition was stiff, as all worked hard and long on their projects – thank you for the chance to see all of the great work in which SGE members engage! It was a difficult decision, but the officers finally decided which two posters deserved recognition as being outstanding research. The 2017 National Council Best Poster Award was bestowed upon Katie (Denver) Gurnicz from the Theta Omicron chapter at Indiana University Northwest. Denver's project was entitled, "*An Analysis of Potential Regional Sources of Atmospheric Ca²⁺ and Mg²⁺ Suspected to Contribute to the Formation of Decomposition Chimneys in Mount Baldy Dune at Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore.*" The 2017 Austin A. Sartin Best Poster Award was given to Lukas Harvey from the Eta Xi chapter at St. Lawrence University. Lukas' project was entitled, "*Facies, Depositional Environments and Sea-Level Trends within the Upper Ordovician Stony Mountain Formation, Western North Dakota.*" Congratulations, Denver and Lukas!!

Our society has welcomed a new chapter into our ranks, with Theta Sigma being installed at the University of Little Rock, Arkansas this past October. We hope to increase the number of new chapters installed in the coming semester as well as encourage dormant chapters to reactivate. If you have friends at other universities that do not have an active chapter, please let them know about Sigma Gamma Epsilon. The bigger our society is, the more we can help one another in research as well as career information and guidance.

Dr. Larry Davis has continued to provide the society with stellar service as Editor-in-Chief of The Compass. He would love to have some more submissions, though. This is YOUR opportunity to showcase your research talents! Take advantage of the fact that the honor society to which you

belong has a respected peer reviewed journal that could be the vehicle for your first publication. One suggestion that was made at the National Convention was to have chapters submit multiple papers all at the same time so that YOUR chapter can be the focus of an entire issue. What a great way to show how strong your individual chapters are in the society! Access is online through the SGE home page (<http://www.sigmagammaepsilon.com>) or directly at (<http://digitalcommons.csbsju.edu/compass>).

Last, but certainly not least, I would like to recap our National Convention that was held here at Eastern Illinois University this past September. There was warm and beautiful weather, a field trip led by yours truly to local glacial and geomorphological sites of interest as well as an inspiring keynote speech at our banquet by Dr. Lois Yoksoulian. Lois is a geochemist (Ph.D. University of Kentucky) who also earned a Master's degree in Journalism and is now the Physical Sciences Editor for the University of Illinois News Bureau. Her speech was entitled, "*Becoming an Ambassador for Science.*" This convention was made possible by tireless work by Paula Even, our Associate Director, who ensured delegates and guests had every need addressed from convention handouts to delicious food to eat. Thank you, Paula! Without you, this convention would not have run smoothly. Special thanks to Dr. Aaron Johnson, our outgoing President, for his dedication over the last two years, and to Dr. Jim Walters, our National Secretary-Treasurer, who brings years of wisdom, a generous and good nature, and a kind smile to any society endeavor. Thanks as well to our Vice Presidents (Dr. Mike Gibson, Dr. Rick Langford and Dr. Mark Knoll) who have spent countless hours tending to the needs of their various provinces over the last two years, and who have agreed to continue to guide their sections for the coming two years. We also welcome a new Vice President, Dr. Steve Bennett, who will take over the reins of command for the Central Province.

Several exciting changes were enacted at the Convention, not the least of which was to change the Lifetime Membership dues to \$100, representing a significant reduction in the cost and making it extremely affordable to maintain your participation and involvement in the society. As you near graduation, consider taking advantage of this opportunity as we look to grow how Sigma Gamma Epsilon can be a fruitful resource beyond your undergraduate years.

Our next convention will be held in Spring, 2020 and hosted by the Eta Alpha chapter at the University of Tennessee at Martin. Please start making plans to have YOUR chapter represented at this next convention.

Best to all of you,

Diane Burns