

National Council of The Society of
Sigma Gamma Epsilon



NATIONAL HONORARY SOCIETY in the EARTH SCIENCES

James C. Walters, National Secretary-Treasurer
Department of Earth Science
University of Northern Iowa
Cedar Falls, IA 50614-0335

Phone: 319-273-2707
Fax: 319-273-7124
E-mail: james.walters@uni.edu

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 19, 2018

Welcome back to the start of the second half of the 2017-2018 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.sigmagamaepsilon.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. 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. Chapters sometimes misunderstand this. 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 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 (2017 – 2018); they cannot be paid “ahead” for the next academic year (2018 – 2019).

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 encourage 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.sigmagamaepsilon.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. 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 requires 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. 1st to Aug. 31st**, and for the 2016-2017 fiscal year Chapters can file any time after Aug. 31, 2017 but before Jan. 15, 2018. You can find instructions for submitting Form 990-N (e-Postcard) at 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 by May 31st. 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 to an active member**. 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 by May 31st. 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 44th Biennial Convention, September 22 – 24, 2017

Eastern Illinois University in Charleston, Illinois was the site of the 44th Biennial Convention of SGE. Although a small convention, with just 26 attendees, the students were very articulate and there was much excitement and activity. A summary of the convention will be published in a future issue of *The COMPASS*, but let me briefly share here the list of elected officers for 2017-2020 and tentative plans for future Conventions.

President – Dr. Diane Burns: Gamma Chi advisor at Eastern Illinois Univ., Central Province Vice President (2015-2017).

Central Province VP – Dr. Steve Bennett: Delta Psi advisor at Western Illinois Univ.

Western Province VP – Dr. Richard (Rip) Langford (Incumbent): Alpha Lambda advisor at Univ. of Texas at El Paso.

Northeastern Province VP – Dr. Mark Noll (Incumbent): Eta Chi advisor at SUNY Brockport.

Southeastern Province VP – Dr. Michael Gibson (Incumbent): Eta Alpha advisor at the Univ. of Tennessee at Martin.

National Editor – Dr. Larry Davis (Incumbent): College of St. Benedict/St. John's Univ., Collegeville, MN.

Future Conventions – VP of the SE Province, Dr. Michael Gibson, has offered Eta Alpha Chapter at the Univ. of Tennessee at Martin to host the next Convention of SGE in Spring 2020. Past President Dr. Rick Ford indicated that Eta Gamma Chapter at Weber State Univ., Ogden, UT would consider hosting the Fall 2022 Convention at their institution.

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 or call 319-505-3391 or fax 319-273-7124.

Best wishes,

James C. Walters

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