

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

January 22, 2024

HAPPY NEW YEAR! I hope your chapter had an enjoyable and productive fall and that your members are excited for spring semester. SGE's poster session at the GSA annual meeting (Pittsburgh) last October was a big success. Chapters are continuing to revitalize themselves post-pandemic and we are actively communicating with two groups of geoscience students that want to establish new chapters. **However, many chapters that were active last year have yet to submit fees and forms to the national office for the current academic year.** This is important if your chapter wishes to award a W.A. Tarr Award this semester (see item 2. below). Important information regarding steps your chapter should take to maintain or regain its active status is provided below. **Please forward this letter to your chapter officers and encourage them to share this information with all members.**

### 1. Society/Chapter Membership

As of August 1, 2021, new members (student or associate) pay a one-time fee of \$55 to become a **LIFETIME MEMBER** of the Society.

**Ideally, spring initiations should take place prior to March 15 and chapters should submit their Member Form (including the names of new lifetime members) online by that date.** This form can be accessed on the SGE website <[www.sgeearth.org](http://www.sgeearth.org)> under the link to Officer Resources. At the conclusion of your submission, you will have the option to pay online or to send your payment through the mail with a copy of your completed forms. If you choose to mail your payment, please send a check or money order payable to Sigma Gamma Epsilon with a copy of your forms to:

Sigma Gamma Epsilon  
P.O. Box 324  
Cedar Falls, IA 50613

If your chapter previously submitted the names of its **returning members** (those members initiated prior to the 2023-2024 academic year) on a Member Form during the fall semester, there is no need to list those members on the spring submission. However, **if your returning members were not reported during the fall semester, please list them on your spring Member Form.** For various reasons, the national office needs to know the total number of students participating in SGE activities during the academic year.

### 2. W.A. Tarr Award

Each **active chapter** of SGE has the option of presenting the **W.A. Tarr Award** to a graduating active member of the chapter. The award -- based on scholarship, leadership, service, and collegiality -- includes a certificate and a check for \$50. The award criteria and application form, to be submitted by the chapter advisor by **April 1, 2024**, are available on the SGE website under the link to Awards. Please allow 3-4 weeks for delivery of the certificate and check. For the purposes of the Tarr Award, an **active chapter** is one that has submitted dues during the current academic year.

### 3. The Compass: Earth Science Journal of Sigma Gamma Epsilon

Many geoscientists started their career by publishing their first paper, including undergraduate research, in *The Compass*, SGE's official peer-reviewed publication. *The Compass* can be accessed from the SGE home page at [www.sgeearth.org](http://www.sgeearth.org) or by going directly to [digitalcommons.csbsju.edu/compass/](http://digitalcommons.csbsju.edu/compass/). **The position of National Editor is presently vacant.** If you, or someone you know, would be interested in serving our society in this capacity, please contact a member of the National Council.

#### 4. James C. Walters Quality Chapter Award

Gamma Sigma Chapter (University of Northern Iowa), Gamma Chi Chapter (Eastern Illinois University), and Epsilon Omega Chapter (UTSA) each earned the JCW Quality Chapter Award during 2022-2023. Congratulations! This award is available to all chapters that meet the criteria listed on the SGE Website under the link to Our Community/Awards. They consist of things such as having submitted the Officer Form, Member Form, and appropriate fees and dues to the National Office by the appropriate deadlines. Recognized Chapters receive a certificate and a \$50 award. All Chapters are encouraged to consider applying for this award. The JCW Quality Chapter Award is named in honor of Dr. James C. Walters, a long-serving chapter advisor and National Secretary-Treasurer, and former National President. Jim did much to support SGE at the chapter and national levels over many years; this recognition is very well deserved.

#### 5. Chapter Service Award

To be eligible for this award, chapter members must complete a significant outreach and/or service project or multiple projects during the year. Specific criteria are listed on the SGE Website under the link to Our Community/Awards. Chapters earning this award receive a certificate and a \$50 award. Chapters conducting outreach and/or service projects are asked to submit photos of their activities to be posted on the SGE Website and/or the Facebook page. Gamma Chi Chapter (Eastern Illinois University) earned this award for their impressive contributions to their campus community during the 2022-2023 AY.

#### 6. Membership Status of Chapter Advisors

Any faculty member who volunteers to serve as a chapter advisor will be granted a lifetime associate membership in SGE at no charge to the advisor or chapter. Those advisors who were members of SGE during their student days will be granted lifetime membership at no additional charge.

#### 7. Please Check Your Spam Folder

This letter was also sent to you in an email. We commonly receive reports from chapter advisors that they are not receiving communications from the national office. Please check your spam folder and/or contact us if this is an issue for you.

#### 8. IRS Tax Information Requests

All SGE chapters are considered subordinate organizations under the SGE National Office and they should be covered in a group exemption that we file annually. However, the IRS still requires 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 Form 990-N. The form asks for your Taxpayer Identification Number (EIN), which will be located in the upper right corner of the letter of request. Please make every effort to comply with IRS requests. The SGE tax year ends on August 31<sup>st</sup> and chapters can file the e-Postcard any time after that, but before the absolute deadline of January 15<sup>th</sup>. This means that for the 2023 tax year the e-Postcard should be filed after August 31, 2023 and before January 15, 2024. However, better late than never.

#### 9. Mission Statement (approved by the student delegates to our 2022 biennial convention)

*Sigma Gamma Epsilon is a national honor society that supports and encourages academic excellence, professionalism, and scholarship in the Earth Sciences. With guidance from the National Officers, student members shape and maintain the constitutional objectives of this honor society. The Society is committed to diversity and inclusion and promotes collaboration between and among faculty, students, and professionals in colleges and universities.*

If you have any questions about your chapter's standing, or SGE honor cords and the like, please contact Lee Potter, SGE's Associate Director, at the National Office, 319-505-3391 or [potter@SGEearth.org](mailto:potter@SGEearth.org). Of course, you are always welcome to contact me directly ([rford@weber.edu](mailto:rford@weber.edu)).

Regards,



Richard L. (Rick) Ford, PhD, PG  
National Secretary-Treasurer