

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

September 9, 2026

Happy New (Academic) Year! I wish you all an enjoyable and productive Fall semester.

SGE is an associated society of the Geological Society of America and we are sponsoring a poster session (129-T61, Monday 2pm, booths 114-190) at the upcoming annual meeting (*Connects 2026*) in Denver, Colorado. We hope Sigma Gams will take in the poster session and stop by our booth (#810) in the exhibit hall. Those posters authored by active SGE members will be judged for the Austin A. Sartin and Charles J. Mankin Awards for outstanding undergraduate research.

The National Office is pleased to report that SGE had a total of 1049 active members, across 64 chapters, during the last academic year (2025-2026). These numbers represent a significant increase in student participation in SGE over the past year. Below is important information regarding steps your chapter should take to maintain or regain its active status. **Please forward this letter to your chapter officers and encourage them to share this information with all members.**

1. Society/Chapter Membership

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

Chapters should submit their Member Form (including the names of new and active returning members) and Chapter Officer Form online. These forms can be accessed on the SGE website <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

It is important to have your fall initiation as early as possible, and to submit your membership fees and member lists by **November 1, 2026**, if possible. Even if your chapter does not initiate new members this semester, please submit a Member Form listing your active returning members. For various reasons, the National Office needs to know the total number of students involved in SGE activities each academic year.

Those chapters that were active during the 2025-2026 academic year will retain their active status until November 1, 2026. To be counted as active for 2026-2027, chapters need to submit the online Member Form by that deadline.

2. IRS Tax Information Requests

All SGE chapters are considered subordinate organizations under the SGE National Office and are 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 31st and chapters can file the e-Postcard any time after that, but before the absolute deadline of January 15th. This means that for the 2025 tax year the e-Postcard should be filed after August 31, 2026 and before January 15, 2027.

3. Welcome to Our Newest Chapters

We are pleased to announce that the Iota Zeta Chapter, hosted by the Department of Earth and Planetary Sciences, was installed on March 24, 2026, at Yale University – and the Iota Eta Chapter, hosted by the Department of Earth Sciences, was installed on May 8, 2026, at the University of Memphis.

4. The Compass

National Editor Scott Beason (Park Geologist at Mount Rainier NP) has done a wonderful job revitalizing our peer-reviewed journal. I encourage you all to check it out: digitalcommons.csbsju.edu/compass/. This is a great venue for publishing undergraduate research.

5. James C. Walters Quality Chapter Award

Gamma Sigma Chapter (University of Northern Iowa), Gamma Chi Chapter (Eastern Illinois University), Gamma Phi Chapter (Stephen F. Austin University), and Theta Omega Chapter (Tennessee Tech) each earned the JCW Quality Chapter Award during 2025-2026. Congratulations! This award is available to all chapters that meet the criteria listed on the SGE Website under the link to Our Community/Awards. Recognized Chapters receive a certificate and a \$100 award. All Chapters are encouraged to consider applying for this award, which is named in honor of Dr. James C. Walters, a long-serving chapter advisor and National Secretary-Treasurer, and former National President.

6. 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 \$100 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. The Gamma Chi (Eastern Illinois University), Gamma Phi (Stephen F. Austin University), and Theta Beta (SUNY New Platz) chapters earned this award for their impressive contributions to their respective campus communities during the 2025-2026 AY. Congratulations!

7. 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 upgraded to lifetime membership at no additional charge. Please notify the National Office if there has been a change in the chapter advisor – this is best accomplished by submitting the Chapter Officer form.

8. 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.

9. Please Update Your Chapter's Webpage

If your chapter has its own webpage, please update the advisor and officer contact information and check to see if the link/URL is still active.

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

I hope you have a great Fall semester and we look forward to meeting many of you during the GSA annual meeting in Denver next month.

Regards,



Richard L. (Rick) Ford, PhD, PG
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