



Annual Report for FY25

Submitted by Katherine Ryker, 1st Vice President

Executive summary

Over the past year, I have contributed to strengthening the NAGT community and promoting membership to potential new members. This has included participation in the Outstanding TA Committee and JGE Editor-in-Chief search as chair, as well as being a member in the NAGT Development Committee, EER Planning Committee, NAGT Membership Committee, participating in AGI's Member Society Council meetings, and representing NAGT on GSA's Joint Technical Program Committee (JTPC). I also manage the list of field camps accepting outside students. On the EER Planning Committee, I am local co-host with Dr. Michelle Hardee of the 2026 Earth Educators' Rendezvous at the University of South Carolina in Columbia, SC.

Detailed report

Goals for NAGT work over the past year

Progress towards goals: Participation and achievements as an officer of NAGT

I have chaired the Outstanding TA (OTA) Committee and JGE Editor-in-Chief Search Committee. Both committees were especially rewarding. I believe the OTA Committee and awards making process has grown well and as intended over the last four years. We have developed holistic review criteria, flyers, social networking calls, and an opportunity for award winners to present at professional meetings, including the Earth Educators' Rendezvous and GSA Connects. The number of nominees and the institutions they represent have both grown over time. We have developed a timeline and process that can be handed off to future committee members. The JGE Editor-in-Chief Search was successful, with Dr. AJ Jolley being named as the new EiC.

I continue to find great joy in serving as local co-host of the EER, while also being challenged by the large workload. I am working diligently to find opportunities locally for the program to be successful, including field trips and museum visits, meeting rooms, dorms, technology, sponsors/exhibitors, connections with K-12 teachers and our zoo's educational staff, as well as other opportunities for attendees in collaboration with the college's Center for Science Education, the University at large, and the city of Columbia. This has led to significant professional growth and networking on and around campus. I served as a member of NAGT's Development Committee, Membership Committee, several ad hoc committees, representing NAGT at AGI's Member Society Council meetings and serving on GSA's Joint Technical Program Committee (JTPC). I also continue to manage the list of field camps accepting outside students and communicating with the relevant field camp instructors. In all of my efforts, I strive to be a welcoming face of NAGT and always look for ways in which I can continue to support our members and their needs.



Progress towards goals: Other achievements and work relevant to NAGT

I serve as the Co-Director of USC's Center for Science Education and in this capacity look for ways in which I can simultaneously advance the CSE and NAGT, especially in the promotion of geoscience education research (GER) and discipline-based education research (DBER). I participate regularly in the GER Knowledge Exchanges and the GER Writing Circle and have begun networking with GER/DBER folks at other institutions and internationally with the intent of bringing more of our community together. I was grateful to receive JGE's Outstanding Paper Award for the 2025 article, "The geoscience education research (GER) community of practice: a brief history and implications from a needs assessment survey." This article represents a labor of love lifted up with five colleagues who I respect and admire for the many ways in which they too have supported the GER community of practice. I was also grateful to provide the citation for Dr. Rachel Phillips (aka @GeoGirl on YouTube) receiving the 2025 James Shea Award for her outstanding work in the world of online science communication. Finally, I am working on three federally funded efforts supporting geoscience education in labs, lecture, and K-12 spaces. I am working to fill a gap left by a loss in Department of Defense funding to support the Junior Science and Humanities Symposium (JSHS), rapidly banding together states across the southeast to create an ad hoc virtual event to take its place. I also help run the Region 2 Science & Engineering Fair for South Carolina, which brings me in closer connection with our area K-12 teachers. I've published four papers, one of which was student led. I graduated one PhD student and will graduate one master's student in 2025. My current research lab includes seven members besides myself: one undergraduate (Jeffreys), four master's students (Chilton, Thoms-Warzecha, Willoughby, Rainey), one PhD student (Baumann), and one postdoctoral scholar (Phillips) and I am recruiting a new graduate student for Fall 2026. I've served as a tenure file reviewer for several geoscience educators, reviewed proposals for federal funding, and helped nominate colleagues for several awards, in and outside of NAGT.

Goals for NAGT work in the next year

My primary work over the coming year will be to faithfully and with humility serve as the President of NAGT and to serve as local co-host of the Earth Educators' Rendezvous. I will work diligently to promote NAGT resources and opportunities and find more ways to recruit participation and support community building at the Earth Educators' Rendezvous. I will also continue to participate in events and opportunities as a member of the GER Division and Southeastern section.