

From the Desk of the GER President

Greetings GER colleagues! I wanted to bring you up to speed on the latest happenings of the NAGT Council, which meets periodically throughout the year. Our most recent meeting was February 10, and each of the division presidents and section chairs attend to learn about what the parent group is working on and to share our own efforts and ideas. It's generally a productive and collegial meeting, and it's always interesting to hear what the other groups are up to.

There are a few big items that I thought you should know about from this past meeting, mostly related to the structure and mission of the NAGT.

Geoscience Education Advocacy

Part of NAGT's mission is to advocate for the importance of Earth Science instruction in the United States, and as part of that mission, we have maintained a Public Policy group email list for people who are interested in responding rapidly to issues related to geoscience education. Don Duggan-Hass, who is also First Vice President, chairs the Advocacy committee and invites new members to join him at this tumultuous time. He also shared the text of a letter sent to the South Dakota legislature in opposition to their Senate Bill 55, which opens a door to allowing non-scientific information to be used in science classrooms. It's another aspect of the work we all do, and if it interests you, please consider joining the Advocacy committee's efforts.

Mission and Vision

President Anne Egger led a discussion on revising the current mission and vision statements for NAGT, last updated in 2005. These are still a work in progress, but currently read:

- Vision: NAGT seeks to sustain a diverse, thriving community of Earth educators.
- Mission: The mission of the National Association of Geoscience teachers is to sustain a diverse, thriving community of educators dedicated to improving all aspects of teaching and learning about the Earth.

If you'd like me to pass on any feedback to Dr. Egger and the Executive Committee, please let me know.

Banking and Taxation

One big change in structure for the divisions and sections of NAGT is in financial and fiscal policy. There has been little structure and less consistency in how the divisions (e.g. TED, GER) and sections (e.g. the Eastern section) manage their finances and reporting. This has included practices that have made it nearly impossible for NAGT to be able to accurately report their own finances, and have made it equally hard for leadership in the divisions to turn over bank accounts and records to subsequently elected treasurers and presidents. In light of this, Amy Collette, the new financial officer of NAGT, is helping all of us put new policies in place to uphold our fiduciary responsibilities. This will not mean a whole lot to you the members, but does create extra work as we figure out if we need to become 501(c)(3) organizations and have bank accounts with dual signatures required. It's a complicated process, but Anne Gold and I have

been trying to stay on top of things as best we can.

EER Reminders

Finally, just some reminder dates about the Earth Educator's Rendezvous.

Registration for the 2017 EER in Albuquerque is open, check out the program here

Abstract/Poster/Teaching demo submission deadline March 3, 2017

Working group application deadline March 3, 2017

Travel stipend application deadline April 1, 2017

Early Bird registration deadline May 1, 2017

We're talking over the logistics of hosting a coffee break for GER participants and maybe some other GER gatherings during the week. Please stay tuned.

As always, if you have any questions, thoughts about GER activities, ideas for new initiatives, or just want to chat, you can always contact any of the GER officers for more information. My contact info is todd.ellis@wmich.edu or (269) 387-5660.

Best,
Todd Ellis