

Report To Council; September 2003

The annual report provides a summary of the past year's accomplishments and the coming year's initiatives, summarized under the topical headings from the Section's Strategic Plan.

Summary, The State of The Section:

In 1990, the North-Central Section Management Board initiated a long-range planning effort to enhance meeting quality and marketing, which has been successful. Meeting attendance has averaged over 500 and consequently revenues from meetings usually have increased. Our meeting schedule is now confirmed through 2007 including a joint meeting with the South-Central Section in 2007.

The Section had a 2003 fiscal-year-end balance of approximately \$59,915. This meets the Management Board's target; to have assets approximately equal to the cost of one annual meeting plus operating costs, to provide stability and ensure continuity of Section activities. For perspective, the dues income for the Section is slightly less than the general operating costs of the Section, hence, to support other programs, the Section must continue to ensure income from the Scientific Meetings Program. As the financial state of the Section has stabilized, the Board has dedicated its fiscal resources to student support programs and to other GSA strategic initiatives.

The Section has increased maximum Student Paper awards from \$400 in 1990 to \$1,000/meeting since 1999. Student Travel Grants to meetings have been increased from \$0 in 1990 to about \$10,100 in 2002 (cost shared with GSA Foundation). Included in 2002, was \$5,000 for the Section's student travel grant program for the Annual Meeting. In 1993, the Section initiated a Research Grants Program for undergraduate student associates; up to 7 grants totaling \$2,100 may be awarded in 2003. During 2002-03, expenditures for student support programs equaled > 80% of all expenditures (exclusive of meeting costs). In 2003-04, the Section will continue these student programs.

The Board made an initial pledge and payment of \$2,000 in 1996 to the SCF from the Section treasury and further donations of \$2,000 per year since then if our finances allowed a donation. The Board also approved that a continuing annual contribution to the SCF would be considered at each Board meeting, after review of the budget and financial status of the Section.

Scientific Meetings Program:

2002: The 36th Annual Meeting combined with the Southeast Section was held from 3-5 April in Lexington, KY, hosted by the Kentucky Geological Survey, University of Kentucky Geosciences Department and the University of Cincinnati

Geology Department. Approximately 579 papers were presented. Ten field trips and six workshops were held. Meeting attendance was about 1,163.

2003: The 37th Annual meeting was held on 24-25 March 2003 in Kansas City, Missouri, hosted by the Department of Geosciences and the Environmental Studies Program of the University of Missouri, Kansas City. Approximately 225 papers were presented. Eight field trips were held. Meeting attendance was about 405.

Professional Development/Awards/Membership and Employment Services:

The Section's primary Awards and Professional Development Programs are targeted to increase student involvement. Student attendance at Section meetings continues to be substantial, averaging over 35%.

In 2003, the Section provided \$800 for 8 Outstanding Student Paper/Poster awards. With greater fiscal stability the Section continued funding for student travel grants of \$10,100 in 2003 (cost shared with GSA Foundation). No grants were offered prior to 1991. In 1996, the Section initiated a student travel grant program for the Annual Meeting, and in 2003 allocated an additional \$5,000 for this program. Also, the Section has a Research Grants Program for undergraduate student members (see below).

The Section has solicited exhibitors from the private-sector. A Roy Shleman Mentors Program workshop was held again in 2003. A breakfast meeting is provided for GSA Campus Representatives for discussion of GSA business.

Research Grants Program:

The Section initiated a competitive Research Grants Program for undergraduate student associates in 1993. Grant application and review forms and procedures were developed and have been refined over time. The maximum amount of an individual grant is limited to \$300. RFPs and travel grant applications are distributed to all GSA Campus Representatives and DEOs in the Section. The 2003 grants will be awarded after this report is circulated to Council and will be reported to Council in the 2004 report. In 2002, 6 grants were awarded for \$1,800. Since 1993, 73 grants have been awarded to students for a total of over \$21,800.

GeoScience Education:

The Section initiated special GeoScience Education sessions at their 1990 meeting. These have now become a standard part of meeting planning. Some costs are generally underwritten by the Section, with reduced or nominal registration for all secondary teachers. A member of the GSA GeoScience Education Committee is included as an ex officio member of the Management

Board. The success and level of effort of these programs are dependent upon the local committee.

Applied and Environmental GeoScience Programs:

The Section continues to pursue greater involvement from professionals in the private sector in environmental geology, engineering geology/geotechnical engineering, and hydrogeological consulting. The Section initiated this with a highly successful effort at the 1991 meeting. Special sessions for, and by consultants have become part of standard planning for all meetings. The 2003 meeting included at least 6 different sessions dealing with applied geology. With such involvement private firms have also provided various donations to support the meetings and many consulting/applied firms or agencies are repeat exhibitors.

Publications Program:

The Section continues to produce and market its Field Trip Guides to a broader audience than meeting participants.

Cooperation With Other Professional Societies:

The Section continues to foster cooperation with other societies by providing opportunities for joint meetings. Other societies meeting concurrently with the Section in 2003 included: the North-Central Section of the Paleontological Society; the Pander Society; the Great Lakes Section of SEPM; the Central Section of NAGT; the Geology Division of the Council on Undergraduate Research; and the Association for Women Geoscientists.

Long-Range Planning and Coordination:

As a result of its long-range planning the Section has continued to review and implement better marketing strategies for its meeting and activities; has tried to increase attendance at its meetings, has stabilized financially, and has continued to support several student programs. The meeting schedule is now planned through 2007.

- **2004:** St. Louis University, St. Louis, Missouri
- **2005:** University of Minnesota-Twin Cities, St. Paul, Minnesota
- **2006:** University of Akron, Akron, Ohio
- **2007:** Combined with the South-Central Section; hosted by the University of Kansas and the Kansas Geological Survey

North-Central Section Website:

After seeing the fine work of Don Neal, Southeast Section Secretary, in developing a SE Website some years ago, I worked with one of our fine support staff people, Duane Mohlman, at the Nebraska Conservation and Survey Division (CSD) to set up a North-Central Section Website modelled after Don's. Our website has been up and running at the CSD website (<http://ncgsa.unl.edu> for several years now. Check it out and see some of the possibilities.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert F. Diffendal, Jr., Executive Secretary, North-Central Section