

Report To Council; September 2004

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 450 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 2004 fiscal-year-end balance of approximately \$72,063. This balance is a significant increase over 2003 and is due in large part to the fiscal prudence of our St. Louis organizing committee (**Kudos go to the committee!**). The 2004 balance 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 2003 (cost shared with GSA Foundation). Included in 2003, 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 2004. During 2003-04, expenditures for student support programs equaled > 80% of all expenditures (exclusive of meeting costs). In 2004-05, 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:

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.

2004: The 38th Annual Meeting was held on 1-2 April 2004 in St. Louis, MO, hosted by the Department of Earth and Atmospheric Sciences of St. Louis University. Approximately 216 papers were presented. Five field trips were run. Meeting attendance was 389.

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 40% the last few years.

In 2004, the Section provided \$650 and three book awards for 7 Outstanding Student Paper/Poster awards. With greater fiscal stability the Section continued funding for student travel grants of \$10,100 in 2004 (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 2004 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. Two Roy Shleman Mentors Program workshops were held in 2004 for students. This is a wonderful program provided through GSA. GSA Campus Representatives from the Section met for discussion of GSA business. Jack Hess and others met with these representatives and answered questions.

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. The 2004 grants will be awarded after this report is circulated to Council and will be reported to Council in the 2005 report. In 2003, 7 grants were awarded for \$2,050. Since 1993, 80 grants have been awarded to students for a total of over \$22,850.

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 2004 meeting included at least 4 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 2004 included: the North-Central Section of the Paleontological Society; the Great Lakes Section of SEPM; the Central Section of NAGT; and the Central Section of 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.

- 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.

New Section Executive Secretary for 2005-2009

The end of the Annual Business Meeting at the 2005 North-Central Section Meeting at Minneapolis, MN, will mark the end of my second four-year term. I announced at our 2004 Management Board Meeting in St. Louis that I would not be seeking a third term. Dr. Joe Hannibal of the Cleveland Museum of Natural History was subsequently nominated and then elected unanimously by the Management Board to replace me as Executive Secretary of the GSA North-Central Section.

I plan to attend the Spring 2005 Council Meeting in Boulder because the 2005 North-Central Section meeting will occur after that. However, I want to take this opportunity to thank the many people I have worked with during my two terms. I have enjoyed working with the members of our Section and the other sections, the several GSA Presidents and Councils, GSA staff (both old and new), and many other fine people over the last 7+ years. I wish all of you the best in your continuing efforts to make all of GSA better now and in the future.

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