

Report to Council; September 2005

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. Since 1990, meeting attendance has averaged over 600 (this includes joint meeting attendance figures) and because of this, and the fiscal prudence of local committees, revenues from meetings usually have increased. Our meeting in Minneapolis in 2005, held jointly with the Minnesota Ground Water Association, had 906 attendees. Our meeting schedule is confirmed through 2008 including a meeting in Akron in 2006, a joint meeting with the South-Central Section in Lawrence, Kansas in 2007, and a 2008 section meeting in Evansville, Indiana.

The Section had a 2004-2005 fiscal-year-end balance of approximately \$88,467. This balance is a significant increase over 2004, which was in turn a significant increase over 2003, and is due in large part to the excellent organizing and fiscal prudence of our St. Louis 2004 and Minneapolis 2005 organizing committees. The 2005 balance meets the Management Board's target; to have assets approximately equal to the cost of one typical-sized 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 2005 (cost shared with GSA Foundation). Included in 2004-2005 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; 11 grants totaling \$2,100 were awarded in the 2004-2005 fiscal year. During 2004-2005, expenditures for student support programs were more than 80% of all expenditures (exclusive of meeting costs). In 2005-2006, the Section will continue these student programs.

The Board made an initial pledge and payment of \$2,000 in 1996 to the GSA Second Century Fund 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. The funds from this section endowment fund are intended for use in supplying travel grants. Because of the need to increase the financial stability of the section, however, payments were not made over a number of years, but \$2,000 was contributed in September of 2005.

Scientific Meetings Program:

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.

2005: The 39th Annual Meeting was held on 24-25 March 2005 in Minneapolis, MN, hosted by the Minnesota Geological Survey, in conjunction with the Department of Geology and Geophysics of the University of Minnesota, and the Minnesota Ground Water Association. Approximately 436 papers (244 talks, 191 posters, 1 keynote lecture) were presented. Nine field trips were held. Meeting attendance was 906.

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 30% to 40% the last few years.

In 2005, the Section provided \$1000 for 8 Outstanding Student Paper/Poster awards at the North-Central Section meeting. With greater fiscal stability, the Section continued funding for student travel grants of \$10,100 in 2005 (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 2005 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 Shlemon Mentors Program and a John Mann Mentors in Applied Hydrogeology Program were held in 2005 for students. These programs were provided through GSA headquarters. GSA Campus Representatives from the Section met 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. The 2005 grants will be awarded after this

report is circulated to Council and will be reported to Council in the 2006 report. In the 2004-2005 fiscal year, 11 grants were awarded for \$2,100. Since 1993, 80 grants have been awarded to students for a total of over \$24,950.

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 K-12 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 2005 meeting included several sessions with a focus on applied geology. These dealt with groundwater, forensics, and sources of shallow gas. 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. The geological guidebook for the 2005 Minneapolis meeting was published and is available from the Minnesota Geological Survey.

Cooperation With Other Professional Societies:

The Section continues to foster cooperation with other societies by providing opportunities for joint meetings and sponsorship opportunities. The 2005 meeting was held in conjunction with the Minnesota Ground Water Association. Other societies sponsoring sessions and/or having programs and luncheons at the Section meeting in 2005 included: the North-Central Section of the Paleontological Society; the Great Lakes Section of the Society for Sedimentary Geology; 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 2008. The schedule is:

- 2006: University of Akron, Akron, Ohio
- 2007: Combined with the South-Central Section; hosted by the University of Kansas and the Kansas Geological Survey, Lawrence, Kansas
- 2008: University of Southern Indiana, Evansville, Indiana.

The section will be responding to some of the suggestions made in the Ad Hoc Committee on Sections Report of March 2005.

North-Central Section Website:

Duane Mohlman, at the Nebraska Conservation and Survey Division (CSD), has continued to be the webmaster of the North-Central Section Website. Thanks are due to him and the Nebraska Geological Survey. Our website has been up and running at the CSD website for several years. The site is at: <http://ncgsa.unl.edu/>.

The marking of Bob Diffendal's role as Executive Secretary from 1997 to 2005:

The end of the Annual Business Meeting at the 2005 North-Central Section Meeting at Minneapolis, MN, marked the end of Robert Diffendal's second four-year term as Executive Secretary of the North Central Section. Dr. Diffendal oversaw the increased financial stability of the section and the growth of programs supporting student travel and research. This report reflects the hard work of , and closely follows the template developed by, Dr. Diffendal. Joe Hannibal of the Cleveland Museum of Natural History then began his term as Executive Secretary of the GSA North-Central Section.

Respectfully submitted,
Joseph Hannibal
Executive Secretary, North-Central Section