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Sigma Gamma Epsilon 2014 Service Awards and Projects

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ABSTRACT

In 2012, the Sigma Gamma Epsilon Chapter Service Award was established. The Chapter Service Award is based upon a non-profit/non-chapter fund raising activity that benefits the department, institution, or community. Four chapters received the award in 2014. Information about their projects as well as other chapters' service projects is listed as well as the criteria for this award.

KEY WORDS: Alpha Lambda, University of Texas at El Paso; Gamma Sigma, University of Northern Iowa; Gamma Chi, Eastern Illinois University; Epsilon Eta, Radford University; Eta Gamma, Weber State University; Eta Epsilon, Southern Utah University

INTRODUCTION

At the 42nd Biennial Convention of Sigma Gamma Epsilon at Charlotte, North Carolina, delegates developed and approved a new award, the Sigma Gamma Epsilon Chapter Service Award. This award is based upon a non-profit/non-chapter fund raising activity that benefits the department, institution, or community. Any chapter that meets all the qualifications is eligible for the SGE Chapter Service Award annually. Chapters qualifying for this award receive a certificate and $50 in addition to being recognized on the Sigma Gamma Epsilon website and in the COMPASS.

AWARD CRITERIA

To be eligible for the Chapter Service Award a chapter must meet all of the following requirements:

1. Must be an active chapter that has paid its dues for the current academic year.
2. Minimum average of 6 volunteer hours per member (based on fall returning members and new initiates) per academic year. Participants must be dues paying members at the time of the service project for the hours to be eligible to be counted.
3. Hours must be completed either on an extensive outreach project, or multiple projects, one of which must be an outreach project. Two hours must be dedicated to outreach. An outreach project is a nonprofit/non-chapter fundraising activity that benefits the campus or community.
4. The service project(s) must be completed by your chapter during the academic year (August 15th – May 15th). The Service Project form must be completed and submitted by May 31st to *even@sigmagammaepsilon.com*. If unable

to submit the Service Project form electronically, a printed version can be mail it to:

Dr. James C. Walters
National Secretary-Treasurer
Sigma Gamma Epsilon
Department of Earth Science
University of Northern Iowa
Cedar Falls, IA 50614-0335

Chapters are asked to submit photos of their service project along with their form(s) to *even@sigmagammaepsilon.com*.

2014 RECIPIENTS

Four chapters qualified for the 2014 Service Chapter Award:

Alpha Lambda, University of Texas at El Paso, Advisor Dr. Richard Langford;

Gamma Chi, Eastern Illinois University, Advisor Dr. Diane Burns;

Epsilon Eta, Radford University, Advisor Dr. Stephen Lenhart; and

Eta Epsilon, Southern Utah University, Advisor Dr. Jennifer Hargrave.

Each of these four chapters also qualified for the 2014 Sigma Gamma Epsilon Quality Chapter Award.

AWARD WINNING CHAPTERS' SERVICE PROJECTS

Alpha Lambda (University of Texas at El Paso) conducted two projects, Mt. Cristo Rey Service Project and Earth Science Day. Twenty members completed a total of 126.25 hours.

The Mount Cristo Rey Service Project consisted of a series of events held at a locally interesting geological area which was a beach during the Cretaceous period. In this area surrounding El Paso, dinosaur tracks have been exhumed after strata was uplifted and tilted by the intruding Cristo Rey laccolith (fig. 1). SGE members joined University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP) PhD candidate Eric Kappus in trail maintenance and two outreach events with local Girl Scout troops. SGE members guided local troops on a dinosaur track dig, teaching the girl scouts about trace fossil preservation and identification along with basic geologic concepts. The group also participated in their second annual Boy Scout day camp in June.

Earth Science Day is an annual event for the Geological Sciences Department at UTEP in which members set up various interactive booths and invite El Paso's youth to join them in a day of earth science education (fig. 2 and 3).

Members believe these activities helped youth participants gain knowledge of their geologically rich homeland as well as obtaining an understanding of basic Earth Science processes in a hands-on setting in the best classroom possible, Mother Nature.

Figure 1. Alpha Lambda members lead local Girl Scout troops on a dinosaur track dig at Mount Cristo Rey.

Figure 2. Alpha Lambda member Stephanie Ray teaches youth about P-waves and S-waves in UTEP's Kidd Seismic Observatory for Earth Day.

Figure 3. Alpha Lambda President Jacqueline Engel explains chemical and mechanical weathering.

Gamma Chi (Eastern Illinois University) conducted a series of seven service projects throughout the 2013-2014 academic year. For their first project, the chapter hosted the department colloquium series that brings speakers to campus to give Earth Science-related talks that are of interest to students, faculty and the general public. Gamma Chi applied for on-campus funding to pay for refreshments to host the guests. Members believe the speakers enrich the school and community by presenting information on a variety of topics intended to provoke the imagination and enlighten the listeners. Additionally, three of the events were co-sponsored with other departments on campus, promoting interdisciplinary interactions and development of professional collaborations. The refreshments provided by Gamma Chi enabled the department to have pre-talk receptions that engendered discussions amongst faculty, students, speakers and the general public. The food/drink helped to attract students to talks as well.

The second project was to provide emergency relief aid. On November 17th, a freak late season tornado demolished over a thousand homes in the town of Washington, IL with some families losing everything.

Gamma Chi immediately sent out a call for donations planning them to get there as soon as possible as sort of an emergency care package. Collection started on Tuesday and ended on noon Thursday. They gathered blankets, shoes, shirts, jeans, towels, baby clothes, underwear, bathrobes, canned goods and monetary donations ($200) and sent them to the city's impacted residents Friday morning. It helped out those in dire need, especially with the cold weather.

For Gamma Chi's third project, they created an Earth Week demonstration for the local public library to celebrate Earth Week. They hosted demonstrations on various topics for local school children. Because the theme of Earth Week was mapping, members had students find different stations on their own by using a map. Each of the four stations had a different learning activity: identifying minerals and matching them to everyday products in which they are used (e.g., fluorite - toothpaste), stratigraphy, making casts of fossils, and analyzing dinosaur track ways to determine how fast they ran/walked (fig. 4).

Gamma Chi believes this type of project helps educate the young in their community about science and the earth and increases public awareness of both their chapter and department in the community. In addition, it gave chapter members experience with giving demonstrations, talking to the public and teaching.

Six members donated 108 hours of service to Operation Gratitude, an organization that gathers items for the military and makes care packages for them. The chapter made 80 paracord bracelets, which are lengths of parachute cord made into snap-on bracelets that the individual can use if in an emergency situation. The cord is 8 feet in length when disassembled and can be used to make fishing line, tourniquets, tie downs, etc. The members also crocheted and knitted 18 scarves for the troops.

This project benefited the national community by providing our military with an emergency survival tool that could save their life or the lives of others. The scarves that they made helped the military folks feel a little less homesick by having something homemade to keep them warm. Additionally, the chapter included several handwritten notes with the scarves to help bolster the soldiers' spirits. The chapter was glad to be able to help those who are placing themselves in harm's way on our behalf.

Gamma Chi's department was contacted by a local junior high school and asked if they would be willing to send representatives to be participants in a career day that they were conducting. Two SGE members volunteered, and the chapter created a presentation on careers in the geosciences geared towards 15 and 16 year olds. In addition to the presentation, they created a fun, educational activity on minerals in society. The students were first shown a set of minerals and were asked to match the name of the sample (written on the board) with the specimen. After correct answers were given, a set of common household products were displayed and the students were asked to match the mineral to the product. There was a lot of interest in the geosciences and they were asked to repeat the session so that more students could be involved. A prize (a geode) was given to the winners of each session.

Figure 4. A Gamma Chi member explains how to make a make a fossil cast.

This project benefited the university by strengthening ties to the local community and helping to recruit future geology majors. It benefited the Jr. High School by increasing the variety of professions students could explore.

One member, Kara Baker, helped clean up the community by picking up discarded items in and around a small neighborhood. She disposed of the trash and recycled anything that was possible. This helped make an area of their community look better and diverted recyclable material from the trash.

Gamma Chi has been striving to establish an ongoing relationship with the local public library, which has a very large children's section. Seven members donated 70 hours to construct educational boards on individual dinosaurs as a fun learning tool for the youth. Six boards were constructed with each board consisting of the dinosaur's name and a series of three questions with four possible 'flap choices' for answers. A graphic depicting the animal was affixed to

the back. Each board had to be laid out accurately, the information researched and the flaps painted, shellacked and mounted onto the boards. These were meant to be durable after many hours of use, so acrylic was applied to all finished surfaces. The boards were presented to the library on Earth Day, April 22nd.

Figure 5. Gamma Chi member Rhyne Robertson shows a sample of the dinosaur educational boards the chapter constructed for the local library.

This project benefits the local community by providing children with a free learning tool through the local library. It helped the library because the chapter constructed them on their own with no expense to the library. It benefits Gamma Chi's university because it strengthened ties to the local community and raised awareness of the chapter and the school in the community in a positive way.

Epsilon Eta (Radford University) conducted seven service projects throughout the year. For one project, their SGE chapter sponsored a public showing of the award-winning film "Chasing Ice" which addresses global warming. Over 250 students and visitors attended the showing. Members

believe securing the theatre facility, creating and distributing advertising, and hosting the film was time well spent as this function academically supported the Department of Geology, Radford University, and the general public.

Members of Epsilon Eta hosted over 100 Jr. and Sr. high school students participating in the Blue Ridge Regional Science Fair. Members socialized with participants, answered their questions, escorted them to their judging sessions, set-up lunch and served them. This benefited the university by showing its commitment to science programs and served the community by encouraging science fair participation in the 9-12 grades throughout the region.

During the past academic year, Epsilon Eta President, Melissa Brett, volunteered 18 hours tutoring geology majors taking physics and calculus.
This action academically supported geology majors.

Throughout the year, 4 members of Epsilon Eta volunteered 96 hours to assist with the Radford University Day of Science Program. Approximately 6-8 times per semester, local schools, both public and private, sent their students to Radford University where they were presented a program from each science department. This included a planetarium show, a visit to the Museum of the Earth Sciences, a chemistry magic show, a physics magic show, a tour of the greenhouse, and a hands-on anthropology session. Approximately 3000 K-12 students participate in this program annually, providing a means of educational outreach for the science programs at Radford University.

Throughout the year, six Epsilon Eta members volunteered to produce polished cabochons and beaded earrings to sell in, and for the support of, the Museum of the Earth Sciences. A total of $500 was presented to the Museum of the Earth Sciences at the end of the year. This activity helped to financially support the museum.

Epsilon Eta Chapter and the Radford University Museum of the Earth Sciences co-sponsored six public lectures throughout the academic year. Visiting professionals spoke on a variety of earth science topics with audience sizes ranging from 50 to 200. Epsilon Eta members served as greeters and ushers in addition to hosting the guest speaker at dinner.
These lectures academically supplemented the university's science programs and provided free, informative science lectures for the general public.

For the past 15 years, Epsilon Eta Chapter has conducted an annual clean-up of a designated stretch of New River adjacent to the campus. The cleanup benefits the university by demonstrating its commitment to the community.

Eta Epsilon (Southern Utah University) chapter members started a geology club at a local elementary school. Six members met weekly in the spring and developed hands-on learning activities for the students volunteering a total of 77 hours. Activities included making and growing crystals, exploring a local stream and producing similar features in a water table, and planetary geology.

The geology club provided the elementary students with a unique

opportunity to learn more about geology and its connection to their surroundings. In addition, this project helped Eta Epsilon members to develop teaching materials and gain experience sharing it with students. Members hope they have helped participants develop a greater appreciation of geology.

Four Eta Epsilon members traveled to an area high school to participate in their Career Day where they presented information on geology career opportunities. This provided more career options to the high school students and served as a recruiting tool for Southern Utah University.

Three Eta Epsilon members visited a local middle school, volunteering 16 hours to teach about Pangea and plate tectonics. Providing hands-on activities helped the students learn about the Earth and its geologic processes. During one activity, members discussed how Antarctica had changed through time and the presence of volcanoes and fossil exploration in Antarctica.

Eta Epsilon chapter members met with the 4th grade science teachers at a local elementary school. The teachers asked them to provide a geology review for the students. They organized 4 stations: sedimentary rocks and soil, igneous rocks, metamorphic rocks, and fossils, focusing on the information included within the state standards. Approximately 50 students cycled through the stations. This rock review benefited the students by giving them a hands-on geology review.

The chapter cosponsored a showing of Switch, a film which explores alternative energy sources. This campus-wide event helped start a dialogue about energy sources and how we use them. Students outside of geology were given the opportunity to learn about the energy we use, where it comes from, and how we can better prepare for the future.

Members of Eta Epsilon participated with freshman move-in day, where different groups on campus help unload boxes and suitcases for incoming freshman moving into the dorms. The students and the parents were very grateful for this service and it helped build a sense of community to start the new school year.

The Children's Jubilee is a community event that brings art and science together. Eta Epsilon participated this year, with the theme "Silent Movies". First, children were able to learn about different black and white rocks and minerals. Then they made "flip-movies" of the rock cycle based on what they had learned. This was a great event for the community, bringing together artists and scientists to share experiences with local children. Not only did it provide a learning opportunity, but it exposed the children to new things helping to generate an interest in science.

Genevieve Kidman, Eta Epsilon chapter president, traveled to another area high school to participate in an outreach opportunity. She discussed career options with students, including her research in planetary geology, thus providing students with the options that a geology career has to offer and helping recruit future students for Southern Utah University.

QUALITY CHAPTER SERVICE PROJECTS

Gamma Sigma (University of Northern Iowa) and Eta Gamma (Weber State University) both completed service projects as a requirement for the 2014 Quality Chapter Award.

Gamma Sigma (University of Northern Iowa) participated in a Snapshot Water Quality Monitoring Event. Seven members volunteered 21 hours. Students went to various locations on Dry Run Creek in Cedar Falls, Iowa to test the quality of its water using IOWATER protocol. The snap shot event helps to locate problem areas and work towards improving water quality.

Eight members of Gamma Sigma Chapter volunteered 36 hours for Sunday at the Quarry, an opportunity for community members to visit a local quarry. The chapter participates every year to help teach families about the Earth and its resources. Members helped identify rocks and minerals, taught youth about Iowa's natural resources and answered questions. This day helps spark an interest in the Earth Sciences. By engaging youth in fun and educational activities, they hope to inspire them to one day become a scientist.

Eta Gamma (Weber State University) chapter coordinated and participated in a Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) Certification project on December 1, 2013. Seventeen members devoted 57 hours to this endeavor. During a recent event at the University of Utah, it was reported that a senior faculty member was catastrophically struck down during a class lecture by a massive heart attack. In that class there were two students who were certified in CPR. These two students successfully performed CPR, saving the professor's life. It was with great purpose and inspiration from this story that members of Eta Gamma created the Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation/First Aid Certification Project.

The chapter set a goal to certify all departmental faculties, SGE members, and Geology Club members by the conclusion of the second week of December, 2013. Twenty six of the possible 28 individuals were CPR/First Aid Certified resulting in a 93% overall success rate complemented with a 100% success rate for Eta Gamma Chapter. A total of 34 individuals were certified (8 faculty, 17 SGE members and 9 non members).

Eta Gamma members believe this project is valuable to the school, community and themselves. This project benefited the school by sending CPR and first aid certified individuals on annual field trips. Members believe that while certification cannot unequivocally ensure the safety or successful resuscitation of an injured person, the likelihood is greatly enhanced. In the community, members are now trained to respond to non-school related activities like car crashes and bike accidents. The students also noted that they live in a region prone to natural disasters and would be better able to assist should a disaster occur. Lastly, the members feel that having their certification may assist in searching for employment as many places require or prefer current CPR certification.

OTHER SERVICE PROJECTS

Epsilon Delta (Texas Christian University) chapter hosted two fall camping field trips to Turner Falls and Caddo Lake for members and Texas Christian University (TCU) students. The chapter also hosted a weekly video lecture series over various earth science topics such as "The Grand Canyon" which was open to all TCU students and faculty. Additionally, they hosted several professional lecture talks such as Dr. Bryer's "Large Scale Gas Plays" and Dr. Mayne's "They Come from Space" talks. Other educational events included setting up a booth with geology students to talk about hard rocks and helping host a Star Party exploring various constellations. Members helped raise money for breast cancer awareness by helping with the "penny for a cause" drive and hosting a canned food drive in December. Two more camping trips and a fossil hunting field trip were conducted in the spring as well as continuing the lecture series.