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Sigma Gamma Epsilon chapter and student awards for academic year 2023-2024

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NEWS UPDATE

Sigma Gamma Epsilon chapter and student awards for academic year 2023-2024

Lee S. Potter*

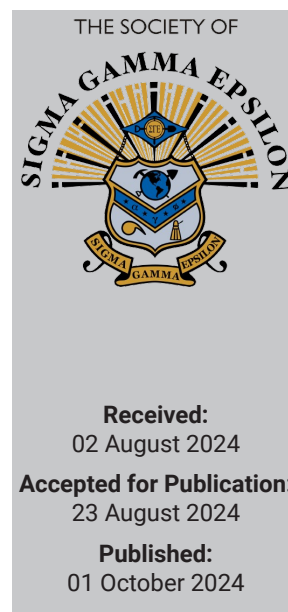
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ABSTRACT

The Society of Sigma Gamma Epsilon (SGE) encourages efforts to broaden the education and impact of its members through community outreach. In academic year 2023–2024, four awards were given at the chapter level: The Chapter Service Award to Gamma Sigma and Gamma Chi; and The James C. Walters Quality Chapter Award to Gamma Sigma and Gamma Chi. Individual merit was recognized through the W. A. Tarr awards given to twenty-nine members by their respective chapters. Two awards, the Austin A. Sartin and Charles J. Mankin Outstanding Poster Awards, were given to three students for merit in scientific communication at the 35th Annual SGE Student Poster Session at the Geological Society of America annual meeting in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, on October 16, 2023.

KEYWORDS

Sigma Gamma Epsilon, SGE, Service Award, Quality Chapter Award, W. A. Tarr Award, Outstanding poster award, Austin A. Sartin Award, Charles J. Mankin Award, annual student poster session



INTRODUCTION

Sigma Gamma Epsilon (SGE), the honor society in the Earth Sciences, provides awards to honor outstanding achievements by our chapters and our members. For Academic Year 2023–2024, The National Council is pleased to announce the SGE chapters that have qualified for the Chapter Service Award and the J. C. Walters Quality Chapter Award (formerly the Quality Chapter Award). The Council also announces twenty-nine individual members that were awarded the W. A. Tarr Award at their respective chapters as outstanding students in the Earth Sciences. Finally, the results of the 35th Annual Student Poster Session at GSA Connects, Pittsburgh, 2023 are discussed including the two Outstanding Poster Awards (Austin A. Sartin and Charles J. Mankin Awards). The National Council invites all active chapters to submit applications for the Chapter Service Award, The James C. Walters Quality Chapter Award, and to nominate a worthy member for the W. A. Tarr Award.

CHAPTER SERVICE AWARD

The Society of Sigma Gamma Epsilon values the engagement of its members in the educational enterprise, both for their betterment and for improving understanding and impact of Earth Science in the broader community. To that end, members are expected to help with service projects in their departments, schools, and community. The SGE Chapter Service Award is presented to chapters that exhibit exemplary service to their communities. Required service hours are based on the number of active members in the Fall semester and an average of six hours must be documented per Award Year. For 2023–2024, two chapters, the Gamma Sigma Chapter at the University of Northern Iowa and the Gamma Chi Chapter at Eastern Illinois University, demonstrated their commitment to engagement with the campus and broader community. Numerous activities were described in each chapter's application.

Gamma Sigma had ten specific activities in three broad

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categories. Members helped improve the environment directly with assistance in prairie restoration and burning, cleaning various hike and bike trails in the area, and participation in the Iowa Department of Natural Resources Frog and Toad Day, an assessment of numbers and habitat for these amphibians. Members helped educate the public through assistance at Sunday at the Quarry Open House, continued operation of an Earth Science Halloween House for children, and answering questions from guests at weekly observatory and planetarium shows. Peers were educated through open labs and tutoring for several classes, and various departmental majors were promoted through the "Majors in Minutes" activity.

Gamma Chi continued environmental improvement



FIGURE 1: Fall 2023 Adopt-a-Highway crew (Photo: Gamma Chi Chapter).



FIGURE 2: Two Gamma Chi members have collected hefty bags of trash (Photo: Gamma Chi Chapter).



FIGURE 3: Members of the Gamma Chi Chapter pose during an Adopt-a-Highway event in Spring 2024 (Photo: Gamma Chi Chapter).



FIGURE 4: Students and the public view the solar eclipse at the Lincoln Log Cabin Historical Site, April 8, 2024 (Photo: Gamma Chi Chapter).

by cleaning up their assigned Adopt-a-Highway section in both Fall and Spring (FIGURES 1 TO 3). Members provided education opportunities to the public about the total solar eclipse in April 2024 at a satellite viewing location the Lincoln Log Cabin Historical Site. Visitors were able to view the eclipse through special glasses, telescope projection, and "pegboard" (FIGURES 4 AND 5). Departmental interaction was fostered through a Halloween Pumpkin Carving contest, and a sample of entries is provided (FIGURES 6 TO 8). This is a subset of activities that supported engagement and education.

Both chapters reported combined volunteer hours that were greater than the 6-hour average per member minimum. This award is acknowledged with a certificate and monetary



FIGURE 5: A telescope is employed to safely project an image of the solar eclipse (Photo: Gamma Chi Chapter).



FIGURE 7: Students hard at work gutting pumpkins for the Gamma Chi Pumpkin Carving Contest (Photo: Gamma Chi Chapter).



FIGURE 6: Students hard at work carving pumpkins for the Gamma Chi Pumpkin Carving Contest (Photo: Gamma Chi Chapter).

FIGURE 8: Some handywork from the Gamma Chi Pumpkin Carving Contest (Photo: Gamma Chi Chapter).

award. The National Council extends its congratulations to Gamma Sigma and Gamma Chi for their efforts.

JAMES C. WALTERS QUALITY CHAPTER AWARD

At the 2022 Biennial Convention, delegates voted unanimously to rename the Quality Chapter Award as the James C. Walters Quality Chapter Award. Details of Dr. Walters’s long affiliation with SGE are highlighted in Ford and Potter (2024). To qualify for this award, Chapters must regularly report returning and new members, list officers, award the W. A. Tarr award to an exceptional student, and provide at least two hours service to the community per member each academic year. Two chapters applied for the award in Spring 2024 and met the qualifications for the award. They are Gamma Sigma (University of Northern Iowa) and Gamma Chi (Eastern Illinois University). These chapters demonstrate the qualities described above and received a certificate and monetary award. Details of the

service component for each chapter are noted under the Chapter Service Award above.

The National Council extends congratulations to these chapters for their work to exemplify the reporting and service that defines a quality chapter, and to increase their departments’ visibility in the community at large through education and service.

W. A. TARR AWARDS

The W. A. Tarr Award was established in March of 1949, to distinguish exceptional students in the Earth sciences. Twenty-nine students received the Tarr Award during the 2023–2024 academic year (TABLE 1). Qualifying Criteria for this award is defined by the following:

“Any student in the Earth Sciences and an active member of the Society of Sigma Gamma Epsilon at a school with an active chapter of the Society is

TABLE 1: W. A. Tarr Awardees for academic year 2023-2024 listed by chapter and school.

Name	Chapter	University
Oluwafemi Salami	Eta	Missouri Univ. of Science & Technology
Mackenzie L. Choffel	Chi	University of Kentucky
Megan Humphrey	Alpha Kappa	Johns Hopkins University
Isaiah McKinney	Alpha Mu	Virginia Tech
Ryan E. Haag	Alpha Chi	The University of Alabama
Caitlin E. LaBonte	Gamma Zeta	Kent State University
Kathryn Mudica	Gamma Lambda	Indiana State University
Kelly Biscoglia	Gamma Sigma	University of Northern Iowa
Melanie Ertons	Gamma Phi	Stephen F. Austin State University
Lex Watts	Gamma Chi	Eastern Illinois University
Jake Swartz	Delta Beta	Auburn University
Natalie Tolls	Delta Theta	Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute
Audrey Davis	Delta Xi	Trinity University
Lauren Bryan	Delta Omicron	Hope College
Emily Siedel	Delta Tau	Slippery Rock University of Pennsylvania
Aaliyah Knight	Delta Psi	Western Illinois University
Alexis Christopher	Epsilon Zeta	Midwestern University
Liam Rogers	Epsilon Sigma	University of North Carolina at Charlotte
Even Cizler	Zeta Zeta	College of Charleston
Natalie Hudson	Eta Alpha	University of Tennessee at Martin
Erik Larsen	Eta Gamma	Weber State University
Danielle E. Tryon	Eta Lambda	Susquehanna University

Continued...

TABLE 1 (Continued): W. A. Tarr Awardees for academic year 2023-2024 listed by chapter and school.

Name	Chapter	University
Kathleen R. Farr	Eta Nu	James Madison University
Marissa Pickett	Eta Sigma	Middle Tennessee State University
Hunter G. Mason	Eta Phi	Northern Illinois University
Noelle Kidd	Theta Xi	Allegheny College
Matthew Levy	Theta Sigma	University of Arkansas at Little Rock
Baylee MacBeth	Theta Chi	Georgia Institute of Technology
Annie Kennedy	Iota Gamma	Sewanee: The University of the South

eligible to receive the Award. An active chapter is one which submits annually the members form with appropriate dues by November 1. The recipient of the Award must be majoring as an undergraduate or be a graduate student in some phase of the Earth Sciences, (e.g., Geology, Metallurgy, Mining, Petroleum or Geological Engineering, Ceramics, Geophysics, Hydrology, Oceanography, Environmental Sciences). The Award preferably should be granted to a graduating senior or graduate student. (It is not contemplated that the Award will be made more than once to the same person).”

Scholarship is the essential basis of the Award, but personality, leadership, contribution to the school, and ability to get along with people are worthy of consideration. The selection of the student to receive the Award shall be made by a committee consisting of members of the Active Chapter and three faculty members—two of whom shall be members of the Society. The Faculty Advisor, in conjunction with the chapter, shall set up the method of selecting the Award Committee.

35TH ANNUAL STUDENT POSTER SESSION,
GEOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF AMERICA ANNUAL
MEETING AND OUTSTANDING POSTER AWARDS

The Society again hosted its annual Student Poster Session at the Geological Society of America annual meeting (GSA Connects 2023, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania) on Monday, October 16 from 8:30 to 11:00 AM. This is the 35th consecutive annual venue for student work at GSA. The session was sponsored by SGE, and by GSA Quaternary Geology and Geomorphology Division and GSA Limnogeology Division. Judging for the two Best Poster Awards was completed by National Officers Richard L. Ford, Steve Bennett, Diane Burns, Claire Marshall, and Alexander Stewart. Following

recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic slowdowns, abstract submissions rebounded, with sixty-three abstracts accepted.

Judges awarded the two Best Poster awards to the authors of two posters. Each award included a certificate and monetary award. Complete abstracts and author information for the sixty-three papers are provided by Beason (2024), as well as published as Geological Society of America Abstracts with Programs. Vol 55, No. 6. The National Council thanks all the authors for communicating their research at this venue and congratulates the winners of the Outstanding Poster awards.

The Austin A. Sartin Award

The 2023 Austin A. Sartin Award was awarded jointly to **Kathleen Farr** and **Michael Buchanan**, two members of the Eta Nu Chapter at James Madison University in Harrisonburg, Virginia (FIGURE 9). Kathleen and Michael were co-authors on a poster presentation that reported on the use of a variety of data sets to produce a 1:24,000-scale geologic map of the southern half of the 7.5-minute Rawley Springs Quadrangle in western Virginia. The detailed mapping increased knowledge of the North Mountain thrust fault system and the fluvial geomorphology of the region. Their abstract is found online at: <https://gsa.confex.com/gsa/2023AM/meetingapp.cgi/Paper/394003>.

The Charles J. Mankin Award

The 2023 Charles J. Mankin Award was awarded to **E Vigil**, a member of Theta Omega Chapter at Tennessee Tech in Cookeville, Tennessee (FIGURE 10). E was a co-author on a poster presentation that reported on the analysis of insect herbivory on fossil leaves from the Claiborne Formation (Middle Eocene) of Kentucky. The amount and diversity of insect damage were shown to be positively correlated with changes in the partial pressure of CO2 and temperature, thus



FIGURE 9: Austin A. Sartin Award Winners Kathleen Farr (left) and Michael Buchanan (right) receive certificates from SGE President Steve Bennett (L.S. Potter photo).

providing an analog for the consequences of future climate change. Their abstract is found online at <https://gsa.confex.com/gsa/2023AM/meetingapp.cgi/Paper/394978>.

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FIGURE 10: Charles J. Mankin Award winner E K Vigil receives the award from Steve Bennett (L.S. Potter photo).

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