



## NORTH-CENTRAL SECTION THE GEOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF AMERICA

Report to Council, Presented October 2020  
Fiscal Year July 2019 – June 2020

### Action Item to Council:

In late 2018, the GSA Sections started the process of standardizing the format of section Bylaws. The North-Central Section Management Board recommends approval of the attached Bylaws revision. There are no substantive changes, only reformatting and aligning of the Bylaws with current practices.

This revision was submitted to section membership for vote during September; 247 members voted – 231 for, 1 against, and 12 abstained.

### Summary, the State of the Section:

Membership in the North-Central Section stood at 3,001 voting members of the Section as of December 2019. The Section is the fourth largest of the six GSA Sections.

### 2020-2021 Management Board:

Douglas R. Gouzie, Chair, Missouri State University

Kevin L. Mickus, Vice-Chair, Missouri State University

Karen B. Gran, Past Chair, University of Minnesota Duluth

Harry M. Jol, Past Vice-Chair, University of Wisconsin - Eau Claire

B. Brandon Curry, Outgoing Member at Large 2017-2020, Illinois State Geological Survey

Lucas K. Zoet, Member at Large 2018-2021, University of Wisconsin – Madison

Michael B. Wolf, Member at Large 2019-2022, Augustana College

Melinda C. Higley, Incoming Member at Large 2020-2023, Calvin University

Collin Roland, Student Representative, 2019-2021 University of Wisconsin - Madison

Robert T. Goldman, Representative to GPPC, 2019-2023, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

## Financial Summary

### Section Operating Account

The financial security of the Section remains strong despite the global Covid-19 pandemic that dominated the last half of the fiscal year. The spring meeting generally generates the largest chunk of income for the section, but there was no income from the 2020 spring meeting 'in Duluth' that went virtual. Due to very careful attention paid by GSA staff and the local committee to deadlines triggering the venue and other contracted costs, there were only very minor expenses of \$520. See the table in **Scientific Meetings Program** section below for detail on net income returned to the Section.

The operating account balance at the beginning of FY2020 was **\$82,234**. Total section **revenue was \$14,637 (\$49,508 last year)**, including section dues, investment/dividend income, and transfers from GSAF/GSA, and **expenses were \$21,888 (\$68,104 last year)**, including minor meeting expenses, grants and awards, travel, and transfers to the Section endowment held by the GSA Foundation. At the end of FY2020 the **operating account balance was \$74,983**. The intention is always to have assets to cover the cost of one typical-sized Section meeting plus operating costs, and of providing stability and ensuring continuity of Section activities. Support for student programs comprises the vast majority of all expenditures (other than, generally spring meeting costs) of the Section.

The Section has allocated up to \$17,600 for FY2021 in Section funds to be used for:

- Student travel grants – up to \$8,000, which is then increased by partial match from GSAF. [With no travel to a Montreal Annual Meeting, less than the allocated amount will be disbursed for the spring section meeting planned for April.]
- Student paper awards – up to \$2,000
- Undergraduate research grants – up to \$2,100
- Support for *On to the Future*, up to \$1,500, and
- Support for GSA CARES, up to \$4000 [\$3,500 was transferred to GSA CARES].

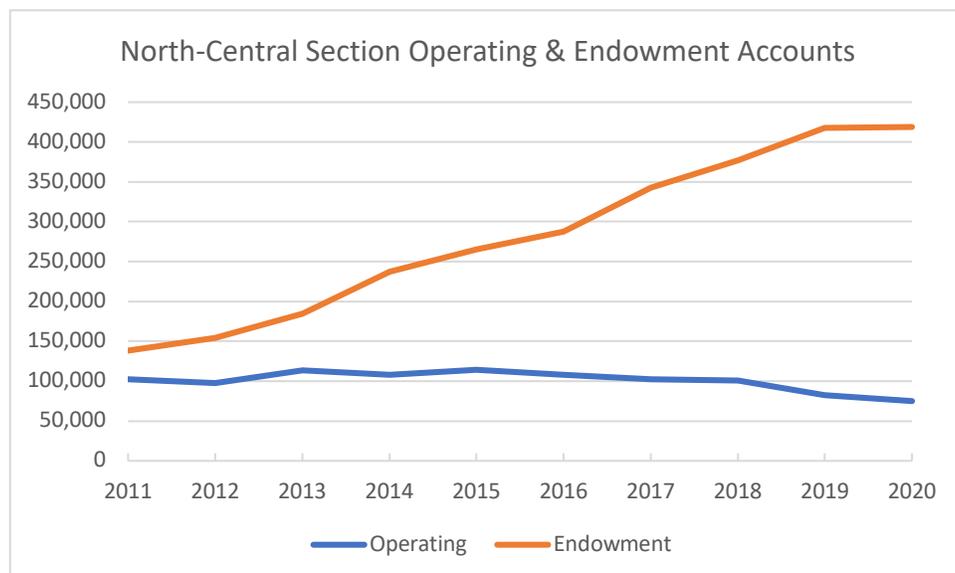
During the past few years, the section has supported a student with up to \$1,000 to attend Geosciences Congressional Visits Day, (Geo-CVD), but that funding was not needed in fall of 2020 as the event was virtual.

The dues income for the Section (\$2,997 in FY2020) covers the general operating costs of the Section but is not sufficient to support these programs; each section meeting is budgeted to return a minimum of \$14,000 net income to the section to accomplish this support. This, of course did not happen with the 2020 meeting, but other expenses were also reduced as noted above.

### **Section Endowment**

The Section has increased its endowment over the years. The Board made an initial pledge and payment of \$2,000 in 1996 to the North-Central Section Endowment Fund of the GSA Foundation (this Fund was referred to as the Second Century Fund in older North-Central reports to Council) with funds taken from the Section treasury (operating funds). The Management Board, at its annual meeting, has continued to approve a maximum continuing annual contribution to the Foundation. The funds from this Section endowment fund have been intended for student support. Because of the need to increase the financial stability of the Section, payments were not made over a number of years, and the amount of funds in the endowment remained very low.

Every year since 2011, a maximum contribution of \$20,000 has been approved for each fiscal year. The growth of the endowment can be seen below. In FY2019, \$20,000 was transferred into the endowment, and the funds had grown to \$417,649 by end of fiscal year. In FY2020, only \$5,000 was transferred into the endowment due to lack of meeting revenue. Covid-19 dropped the funds during the spring (\$378,685 at the end of March), but the endowment had rebounded to \$418,868 by end of fiscal year:



## Scientific Meetings Program:

**2020: The 54th Annual Meeting** was to be held May 18-19 in at the Duluth Entertainment Convention Center, Duluth, Minnesota. The following report, almost in its entirety, was supplied by Karen Gran, Chair.

*Although our biggest concern initially was the potential for weather problems in Duluth in May, we ended up with an unprecedented situation in spring 2020. With the pandemic, all section meetings after South-Central were cancelled. North-Central GSA was cancelled in-person on March 17<sup>th</sup>. After polling our presenters and session chairs, we decided to go forward with a revised virtual meeting. That decision was announced on April 17<sup>th</sup>.*

### **Prior to March 17<sup>th</sup>:**

- Abstracts submitted: 333 - 182 oral, 151 poster
- Final session count: 25 technical sessions with oral and/or poster components: 19 theme sessions and 6 discipline sessions
- Final schedule: 22 oral sessions (6 concurrent in AM, 5 concurrent in PM for each of 2 days) and 18 poster sessions (75 posters on Monday, 76 on Tuesday)
- Field trips: 12 field trips proposed. 1 cancelled before registration.
  - 3 before meeting; 3 during meeting; 5 after the meeting
- Short courses: 7 short courses proposed. 1 cancelled before registration.
- Sponsorship donations: \$8,900 with an additional ~\$2500 under discussion
- Exhibitors: 15 registered

*After the meeting was cancelled, all registrations, exhibitor fees, and sponsorship funds were refunded. Fortunately for the North-Central section, no costs were incurred for cancelled contracts, including the A/V contract, conference center contract, and hotel contracts. We incurred costs associated with production of the meeting program pdf (~\$500), but none were printed. GSA absorbed the costs of running the virtual meeting (Confex, etc.). We earned no money for the section, but we lost almost none.*

### **Virtual meeting:**

*The virtual meeting was run on the same dates as the original conference: May 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>, with technical sessions in the morning and student programming in the afternoon.*

- Abstracts presented: 134 presentations uploaded by end of the day on May 11<sup>th</sup> - 84 oral and 50 poster. At least a few more were added late due to technical problems during uploads.
- Sessions reorganized into 12 technical sessions. Two of those technical sessions actually had 2 back-to-back sessions with a change of moderators and theme half-way through, so technically we had 14 technical sessions. All sessions ran in the morning in a series of 6 GoToWebinar rooms.
- Oral presenters pre-recorded their talks (17 minutes). When presenters were able to attend, they got the standard time for Q&A after their presentations.
- Poster presenters created e-posters and pre-recorded a 3-minute lightning talk to accompany it. Posters were held in the same session as oral presentations. Posters were given a 5-minute time slot.
- Each session ended with an open discussion time block.
- At least two session chairs moderated each session, with 2 GSA staff assisting.
- Attendance records: Initial pull of data for Monday from GTW (these might be too high):
  - Session 1- 91 attendees
  - Session 2- 117 attendees
  - Session 3- 77 attendees
  - Session 4- 81 attendees
  - Session 5- 72 attendees
  - Session 6- 50 attendees
  - Pres Address- 144 attendees

- Attendance records on Tuesday as of 11:25am:
  - Session 1- 65
  - Session 2- 45
  - Session 3- 27
  - Session 4- 76
  - Session 5- 40
  - Session 6- 52
- Short course: 1 short course ran with 11 attendees on Monday afternoon
- Presidential address: Don Siegel gave GSA Presidential address at noon on Monday to 144 attendees.
- Student programming. Mentor programs are being run on both Monday and Tuesday, with a career workshop on each day following the mentor program. Student judging is occurring. An informal student gathering was held Monday evening after programming was done. Here is attendance for Monday's mentor session and career workshop:
  - Mentor Program - 47 students 6 mentors
  - Career Workshop - 94

**Notes on virtual meeting:**

*The program had to be completely reconfigured in a very short time, and many topical sessions with small #s of presentations had to be combined with other sessions to have a viable number of presentations for a session. We had a wonderful core of session chair volunteers who stuck with it to help run the meeting. A few sessions had last minute changes to ensure we had two moderators in each session who were available the whole time with reliable internet. There were quite a few technical challenges with presentation uploads that GSA spent the week fixing. I have also heard a few reports from people who did not receive GSA emails and thus missed links to submit.*

*I think there are a lot of lessons to be learned, particularly as a test case for a potential online fall meeting. Some of the challenges were unique to taking a program that was originally in person into an online format in the middle of a pandemic. Many people who originally hoped to present were unable to for a variety of reasons ranging from time constraints with no childcare to lack of access to labs needed to conduct the research. Without knowing ahead of time how many presenters we would have, we had to rapidly rearrange and rebuild the schedule days before the conference. We also ended up with some challenges involved with keeping the old schedule active (so that abstracts would remain in the Confex system), while changing the time of presentations. Some of these challenges would be avoided if an online meeting was planned from the start, and all of the presenters were expecting and anticipating an online forum in advance.*

*That being said, I think we pulled it off. Virtual North-Central GSA only happened due to an enormous effort by GSA, by session chair volunteers, by the technical committee, and by the presenters who were able to pull together recorded presentations a full week before the original deadline under challenging circumstances. Thanks to everyone for your hard work, flexibility, and creativity in making this happen!  
Karen Gran, Meeting and Section Chair*

In 1990, the North-Central Section Management Board initiated a long-range planning effort to enhance meeting quality and marketing, which has been successful, as in the recent years shown below.

Year	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Location and dates	24–25 April, Lincoln	19–20 May, Madison	18–19 April, Champaign	19–21 March, Pittsburgh, joint w/NE	6–17 April, Ames	25-27 March, Manhattan, joint w/SC & RM	18-19 May, Virtually 'from Duluth'
Attendance	402	705	619	1345	607	642	See report above
Net Income	\$15,885	\$27,278	\$21,072	\$19,031	\$11,518.	\$7,052	-\$520

**Future Meetings:** A 2021 meeting in Springfield, Missouri joint with the South-Central Section is confirmed, venues contracted, and local committees formed. A 2022 meeting hosted by the University of Cincinnati and joint with the Southeastern Section is organizing, and the 2023 meeting in Grand Rapids, Michigan hosted by Grand Valley State University has been approved:

Date	Location	Local Chair(s)	Joint with
18-20 April 2021	Springfield, MO	Doug Gouzie	SC
7-8 April 2022	Cincinnati, OH	Craig Dietsch	SE
2023	Grand Rapids, MI	Tara Kneeshaw	

**Professional Development/Awards/Membership and Student Involvement:**

The Section's primary Awards and Professional Development Programs are targeted to increase student involvement. Student attendance at Section meetings continues to be substantial and has increased during the last few years. Student attendance at meetings since 2009 has ranged from 43% (Branson 2010) to 56% (Pittsburgh 2017). Students composed about 53% of the attendees in Manhattan 2019.

**Travel Grants Program:**

The Section's travel grants support student attendance with the help of a \$4,500 match by the GSA Foundation. The Section voted in 2015 to increase the amount of operating funds to be disbursed for travel grants from \$6000 to \$8000. The funding also provides partial support to a student to represent the Section on the Student Advisory Council (SAC) and travel to the Annual Meeting. From 2014 through FY2017, the North-Central Section also supported the *On To the Future* program through the GSA Foundation with \$1,000 annually. The amount was increased to \$1,500 starting for FY2018.

For the 2019 Annual meeting in Phoenix, 92 students applied for travel grants and requested almost \$73,000.

- Eight applicants were not eligible, 84 were eligible and were awarded \$8,150 - five @ \$50, 74 @ \$100, and \$300 to support our Student Rep.
- Disbursed after the meeting was \$7,950, which left approximately \$5,800 for the Duluth meeting travel grants. \$3,525 was contributed by GSAF for the 50% match.

For the 2020 Section meeting in Duluth, five students applied for grants before the meeting was virtualized.

**Student Paper/Poster Awards:** The Section has increased maximum Student Oral Presentation/Poster Awards from \$400 in 1990 to \$2,000 at present. Sixteen students were awarded a total of \$2,000 for poster and oral presentations at the 2020 Duluth meeting – one first place (\$200) and three honorable mentions (\$100 each) in each category for undergraduates and graduates.

**Geoscience Congressional Visits Day:** In 2015, the Section first approved covering some costs, up to \$1,000, for a student to travel to Congressional Visits Day in September. This funding was continued for Geo-CVD 2019 for our fifth student to participate. A student was not selected for the 2020 virtual Geo-CVD.

**Mentor Programs and Career Planning:** The Roy J. Shlemon Mentor Program in Applied Geoscience and the John Mann Mentors in Applied Hydrogeology Program are provided through GSA headquarters at the Section Annual meetings, and in 2020 the mentor programs were held virtually both days, with Career workshops following.

**Research Grants Program:**

The Section initiated a competitive Research Grants Program for undergraduate student members in 1993. Grant application forms and procedures were developed and have been refined over time. The maximum amount of an individual grant was limited to \$300. Eleven grants were awarded in FY2011 for a total of \$2,100. In FY2012, four grants were awarded for a total of \$1,150; in FY2013, three grants were awarded totaling \$900. In FY2014, four grants were awarded totaling \$940. Though marketing was increased to build awareness of the grants, in

FY2015 four grants totaling \$980 were awarded. At the 2015 Section meeting, the Management Board approved increasing the maximum for each award from \$300 to \$500, while keeping the total available for grants at \$2100. In 2016 three students were awarded a total of \$1,080. 2017 saw \$2,000 awarded to six students. Last year \$2,100 was awarded to five students in varying amounts from \$100 to \$500. In spring of 2019, there were ten applications (!!!), but one declined due to other funding. \$2,000 was awarded to nine students in amounts varying from \$200 to \$350.

In spring of 2020 there were five applicants, but one belonged to the Northeastern Section and was passed there for consideration. \$500 grants were awarded to:

- John Pogalz, University of Wisconsin – Oshkosh
- Daniel Shi, University of Missouri
- Jessica Patrick, Miami University
- Adam Schmidt, University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee

Respectfully submitted,  
Nancy S. Williams, Executive Secretary, North-Central Section