

2020 Annual report

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Executive Director

We all know that 2020 has been an unusual year for many reasons. We've faced challenges as individuals and as an organization, and I'm very proud of the way we have responded to those challenges, both how individuals have worked to support each other within and beyond the organization, and how the organization has been able to respond to support its members. The Executive Office and elected leadership have all been flexible and adaptive as the situation evolved, and generous with their time and goodwill under trying circumstances. Thank you.

Progress against goals

At the beginning of my term as Executive Director on Dec. 1, I laid out three overarching goals, and here I'll assess our progress against those goals.

- **Goal:** To increase transparency and awareness within the organization, including the value of member benefits.
 - **Expected indicators:** Increase in membership due to increased awareness of benefits, increased nominations for committees and leadership positions due to increased awareness of opportunities and process, increased requests for program sponsorship and collaborative efforts
 - **Progress:** Membership reached its highest total number (1711) since 2012, with the biggest growth in regular members and student members (see the membership report for more details). Currently have 17 nominations for committees (though it is difficult to gauge progress since this nomination process was not actively promoted in the past); leadership nominations have not yet begun. We have a steady stream of program sponsorship requests and have not yet analyzed these data for comparison with previous years.
 - **Ongoing work:** The Executive Office and ED will prepare an annual report that will be distributed to the membership in December, along with a member survey to better understand the needs, values, and interests of our members. In addition, new website functionality is being developed to allow members to join interest groups and more easily connect with other members.
- **Goal:** To build our capacity for funding and diversify our sources of income.
 - **Expected indicators:** NAGT as collaborating entity on proposals that support programs, new donation streams, new sources of income
 - **Progress:** NAGT was a partner on several proposals submitted and funded in 2020 that allowed us to develop new resources, provide professional development to our workshop leaders, and support our community in the transition to online teaching. We are currently partnering with Westchester Education on a proposal to OpenSciEd to develop freely available, NGSS-aligned, high school science curricula.
 - **Ongoing work:** We are preparing a new charge and tasks for a Development Committee that will include staff support to implement development campaigns. Creating an NAGT Fastlane account that would allow NAGT to submit proposals to NSF as a lead entity is a goal for the future.
- **Goal:** To develop new alliances within and beyond the geosciences.

- **Expected indicators:** New partnerships with organizations, additional collaborative efforts with current partners, attendance and/or exhibits at meetings other than GSA and AGU
- **Progress:** In a year of virtual meetings, we have the opportunity to attend and exhibit at meetings for a lower cost, allowing us to host a virtual booth at the NABG (National Association of Black Geoscientists) meeting. Although we missed the opportunity to host a booth at SACNAS, we will be holding a joint social event with them associated with the GSA and SACNAS meetings. We established a new partnership with CUAHSI and hosted a joint webinar series to highlight our resources for teaching about water to each others' membership. Although we are already an associated society of GSA, we established a new joint webinar series with them that built on the highly successful "Designing Remote Field Experiences" project.
- **Ongoing work:** Our work in this area is directly tied to our diversity goals. We seek to strengthen ties with SACNAS and NABG, and to develop a relationship with NAAEE.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion efforts

A combination of internal initiatives and external events prompted NAGT's efforts in diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI).

- A new, high-level DEI committee charged with facilitating the organization's efforts to achieve its goals related to diversity of its membership, leadership, committees, award winners, and participants in all events. The inaugural committee consists of seven members with a range of expertise in these areas, and helped us respond quickly to national events that challenged all organizations to examine their own practices. See the report from committee chair Laura Rademacher for their accomplishments thus far.
- The Early Career Workshop proposal was funded, which includes funds to support DEI training for ECW leaders and all workshop leaders within NAGT. A second proposal is currently under review with NSF to provide funding to integrate DEI components into the Traveling Workshops program materials. Together, these two efforts will significantly improve the preparedness of our workshop leaders to facilitate discussions about difficult issues in higher education and to support reform efforts.
- Our code of conduct, supported by our ethics policy, is available on our website and mentioned at the beginning of all NAGT events to establish inclusive practices that support equitable participation.

We are at the beginning of a long journey—a journey that is critical to the future of NAGT and to our community, and one that requires questioning long-held assumptions and practices. I feel we are walking in the right direction, and we have a long way to go.

Responding to COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on our organization and our membership. In collaboration with SERC, NAGT has responded in several ways to support our community:

- SERC staff led the effort to quickly assemble the set of resources [Teaching Geoscience Online](#) within Teach the Earth, and this has been broadly promoted by NAGT and SERC (see the website report for more details).

- The Webinar Committee put together and offered a set of webinars that addressed teaching online, starting with the [\(Suddenly\) Teaching Geoscience Online](#) webinar in the spring, which had over 800 registrants – by far our largest response. Additional webinars in the summer and fall highlighted specific resources and targeted different audiences (see the webinar committee report for more details).
- With RAPID funding from NSF, we developed a new reviewed collection in Teach the Earth called [Teaching with Online Field Experiences](#). The collection includes 60 activities with a relatively high proportion that reviewed as exemplary—likely a result of the community-driven process that led to the development and testing of many of the activities. Supporting resources include a set of learning outcomes, advice and strategies for teaching with online field experiences, and descriptions of different technologies that can be used to support online field experiences.
- Our first online Rendezvous was a success! (See the Rendezvous report for more details.) In addition to shifting the entire program from in-person to online, we were able to redesign some of the workshops to better align with the needs of participants. Given our success, the uncertainty around the spread of the virus over the next year, the nature of higher education budgets, and the ability of our community to travel, we made the decision early to offer Rendezvous 2021 as an online event as well.
- We are continuing to learn how our community is responding to this ongoing issue. NAGT is supporting and I am participating in a research project to assess the impact on instructors of the transition to teaching online. Ellen Altermatt at SERC is leading the data collection effort, and we hope to be able to learn more about how instructors respond to involuntary changes in teaching strategies to better support voluntary changes to stronger pedagogies. A proposal was submitted to NSF in August to further this research.

All of these responses highlight our strengths as an organization: we are nimble and responsive to current needs in the community, we have a deep and rich set of resources that can be repackaged with new ideas and content, and we are experienced in offering online activities and know what it takes to make these effective. All of the Executive Office staff have put in a tremendous amount of extra effort during this time to support our work.

Looking ahead: Preparing for strategic planning

NAGT has not gone through a strategic planning process in over ten years, and the organization has changed considerably since then. Over the next few months, we will begin the strategic planning process by conducting a member survey and gathering the documentation we need to support this process of reflection and looking forward. A current, robust strategic plan will outline goals in areas like reach, diversity, and impact of programming and allow us to set benchmarks against which we can measure our progress annually.