

Sections Committee Annual Report
July, 2009

The Sections Committee charge is to identify and address issues and concerns of domestic sections and to help the sections operate more efficiently and economically. As this is principally a communications issue, the committee members conversed with each other throughout the year through e-mail, communicated during bi-monthly Section Presidents teleconferences and met together at the annual meeting in Denver on June 8th.

Continuing concerns of the committee include matching section problems with solutions, comparing how Sections run successful meetings, financing of the sections Imperial Barrel Award programs, continuing to resolve insurance needs, outreach to young professionals, membership marketing efforts within the sections, combining meeting/workshop efforts with the PTTC and relationships of the sections to the AAPG Global Corporate Structure initiative.

Other issues of interest include: determining how the sections are organized, the level of communication and cooperation between section leaders and affiliated societies within the section, as well as between section leaders and AAPG headquarters; the level of participation of national officers and candidates in annual section meetings; and the role that division councilors play in the sections, including participation on technical program committees for annual section meetings.

Improving communication between section leaders and the various levels of AAPG was determined to be critical issue that needs to be addressed further, especially in relation to the Global Corporate Structure discussions. Developing and circulating a key contact list of the various section leaders may serve to get the sections communicating more effectively among themselves, with headquarters and divisions and with the GCS committee.

The committee has maintained that a common and consistent model should be developed for section meetings, within which national officers, division presidents and officer candidates would be given the opportunity to be heard and interact with section members. As most section meetings are hosted and developed by local affiliated societies, this continues to be a challenge.

Engaging new members for the committee is also a challenge that must be met annually to maintain the strength and vibrancy of the committee.

Best practices

Over the past year, many new ideas have emerged from the monthly Section Presidents' teleconferences which qualify as "best practices".

1. Slide shows from each talk presented at the Section annual meeting have all been put on a Website linked to the Section's web page. This practice will continue for each future meeting to preserve the ideas and data. (Eastern Section)
2. The Section has started a new procedure whereby soon after the Section meeting, the outgoing convention chairs meet with the following year's chairs to recap the meeting and gain insights. (Rocky Mountain Section)
3. Include in Section annual meeting announcements and program information on any local safety concerns and emergency contact numbers. (Pacific Section)
4. Sections and AAPG HQ collaborate to fund the Rocks in Your Head program in area schools. If the Section wishes to support this program, then AAPG HQ will fund half of the cost.
5. Eastern Section Secretary, Greg Wrightstone has been making presentations to universities on what a geologist does. Wrightstone's presentation will be posted on the Eastern Section website for other Sections to use.
6. Section leaders provide input on ideas for hot topics in education that AAPG should be addressing. All ideas for education should be directed to Dr. Susan Nash at snash@aapg.org.

7. An Affiliated Society Survey form was developed for Sections to circulate and gather information about their affiliated societies. This tool is designed to enhance communication and services among societies, Sections and AAPG HQ. (Gulf Coast)
8. Recruit Affiliated Society and/or Section Editors to become AAPG members. Access to AAPG information will enhance their work as Editors by providing timely industry news and information.
9. Teacher of the Year – most Sections are actively engaged in identifying and nominating local outstanding teachers from the Sections and hold their own Teacher of the Year program in addition to nominating teachers for the national AAPG award. This initiative is seen as a positive step towards impacting the education system while ensuring that geoscience education is retained in the school curriculum.

Issues of concern:

- Will the Sections need to amend their Constitution and Bylaws to be in compliance with the proposed change in AAPG's corporate structure. (Pacific Section)
- Relationship of Sections to Regions in proposed change in AAPG's corporate structure – equivalent (ie. current) or 'sub-part' of regions (proposed?)
- Outreach to universities – Devise a system for "succession planning" to ensure that all AAPG Student Chapters remain vital from one year to the next as Student Chapter officers graduate.
- Write letters to State Regents for Higher Education to advocate for acceptance of Geology as a lab science for college admission. (Pacific)

The committee is very grateful to the headquarters staff, particularly Carol McGowen and Karin Alyea for their assistance in maintaining communications throughout the year.

Respectfully,
Jim McGay, Chairman
Larry Knauer, Vice-chairman

Committee members: Karen Blake, Danny Harrelson, Lee Higgins, Larry Knauer, Brian Lock, Jim McGay, Craig Reynolds.