DIALOGUE

Jack Hess

Today's GSA: Membership and Partnership

Jack Hess, Executive Director, GSA

As I write this column, I have been at the helm of GSA for two months. What do I find? I find a Society and headquarters staff that has all the ingredients of a vibrant, growing organization that provides excellent service to its members and acts as a platform for geoscientists to be of service to society. Yes, we have our financial management challenges as described by GSA President Tony Naldrett in this column in February. We also have great opportunities to advance the science such as the journal aggregate described by Sharon Mosher in November and last month. The fundamental strength of GSA lies with you, GSA's members and your active participation in all aspects of Society business to meet GSA's mission.

The mission of GSA is to advance the geosciences, to enhance the growth of its members, and to promote the geosciences in the service of humankind. GSA's vision is to be a broad, unifying scientific society fostering the human quest for understanding Earth, planets and life; catalyzing new scientific ways of thinking about natural systems; and applying geoscience knowledge and insight to human needs and aspirations and stewardship of Earth.

It is you, the members of the Society, who provide both the reason for our existence and foundation upon which we build a viable and financially stable organization. I believe that one of the keys to the

future of GSA is the recruitment and retention of members. A growing membership base provides the resources (geoscientists and finances) to allow the Society to increase the vitality of our meetings and conferences, lead the way in innovative publishing and promote geoscience in the service of society. All of you can help grow our membership by encouraging other geoscientists to join and remain active members of GSA. Explain to them that they can advance their careers, their research, and their profession by belonging to GSA, the premier earth science society in the United States. You can also provide greatly needed support by volunteering to serve on GSA committees, in your Section, or with a Division.

A second key to GSA's future is to build strong and meaningful partnerships with other societies and organizations around the world. Together we must leverage our societies' and organizations' strengths for the greater good in meetings, publications, and education and outreach activities. GSA does not need to reinvent the wheel. Where other organizations are doing a great job, let us support them. In other cases, GSA will take the lead. A recent reorganization of headquarters staff places greater emphasis on strategic partnerships in this country and internationally.

As I look to the future, my vision for GSA is that it will be a strong, growing scientific and professional society serving the needs of members and will be a leader in developing society's understanding of the importance of the geosciences. My goals are to create an environment where the staff and Council can excel with appropriate resources provided for the advancement of the science, to develop strong and meaningful relationships with other societies and organizations around the world, and to facilitate GSA's role in the education of students, the public, and policy makers.

I am honored to be your new executive director. GSA has been my primary geoscience "home" ever since I joined as a graduate student many years ago. Over the years, I have participated in the Society's business through service on various committees and the Hydrogeology Division Management Board. I challenge you to join me in greater service to GSA and the broader geosciences community.

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website: www.mountain-press.com