



Sigma Phi Omega

**National Academic Honor and
Professional Society in Gerontology**

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From the President Rona J. Karasik, PhD



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My fellow SPO members:

I write this final *"From the President"* letter with pride, anticipation, and a touch of sadness. I have been so pleased to serve as your president these past two years and I look forward to working with incoming President Mary Ligon as she brings new ideas and energy to the SPO leadership team. In addition to welcoming Mary (who has served this past year as President-Elect, and before that as Member at Large), I am also pleased to welcome our new National Newsletter Editor, Krystal Culler. Krystal is collaborating with current Newsletter Editor Candace Brown on this newsletter, and then will be taking the helm fully for our next issue this spring. Many thanks to both Candace who has served us so well and to Krystal for taking on this important position!

Spring will also bring other new faces to our leadership team. Chapter advisors, watch for your ballots (due out in January) for the upcoming elections for our new Secretary, Member at Large, and Student Representative. Be sure to review the candidate biographies available in this issue! As a (soon to be) Past President, Past Treasurer, and Past Member at Large, I can tell you from experience that serving on the National Board is extremely rewarding. I encourage all of you to consider running for office in the future. Because of staggered terms, elections are held every year!

Thank you both to the SPO Board who have helped make my term fulfilling and fruitful, as well as to all of you who are the reason Sigma Phi Omega exists! Throughout my term, I have been privileged to hear about the various activities our chapters and individual members undertake – ranging from service-learning and fundraising walks to community service projects and research. I want to encourage you all to keep sharing your successes with us through e-mails to spopresident@hotmail.com and to our newsletter editor SPOnewsletter@sigmaphiomega.org. Deadlines for newsletter submissions are April 1, September 1 and December 1. You can also stay in touch via our SPO Facebook page <http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=110110235014> and our website www.sigmaphiomega.org.

Finally, I want to invite you to attend our Annual SPO events at AGHE! Sigma Phi Omega will be hosting two student paper sessions at AGHE -- Friday, February 24, 2012 from 3-5pm and Saturday, February 24 from 10-11:30am. The Friday session will also include our annual business meeting where new board members will be inducted and the SPO presidential paper award winner will be announced. A delicious reception will follow!

I look forward to seeing you in February!

~Rona

Rona J. Karasik, PhD

SPOPresident@SigmaPhiOmega.org

ΣΦΩ Chapter News

Beta Zeta Chapter, St. Cloud State University

The Beta Zeta Chapter of Sigma Phi Omega at St. Cloud University has been off to a busy start this year! In early fall we held our annual board member elections. The new Sigma Phi Omega officers are: President Emily Muellenbach, Vice President Laura Steinhoff, Secretary Brittany Lechner and Treasurer Jenny Writz. Once the new officers were in place,



the activities began. In September, the members of our chapter participated in the St. Cloud Walk to End Alzheimer's and raised money to help fight this disease, further research, and raise awareness. The Beta Zeta Chapter also hosted two colloquiums this semester, the first on Fall Prevention and the second on Alzheimer's disease. Also this semester, Beta Zeta members Phyllis Greenberg, PhD (Associate Professor Gerontology) and Masters students Hannah Nordell and Paula Woischke collaborated with the Minnesota Gerontological Society and the Center on Aging in a webinar that focused on Sex and Aging. This webinar tackled this "uncomfortable" topic by discussing older adults' need for intimate contact, safe sex, physiological changes, medications, and why it is important to talk about this issue.

It was a very successful webinar and many tuned in to listen. This semester has been full of exciting events for us, and we are currently in the process of planning some opportunities to volunteer in our community and are excited about what the future will bring for our chapter. ~Submitted by Jennifer Writz wrje1001@stcloudstate.edu

Upsilon Chapter, University of South Florida

The mission of Upsilon Chapter at the University of South Florida this Fall of 2011 was simple- to brighten the days of as many older adults as possible in whatever small way that it can. The members of our chapter began the semester by initiating a fundraiser at Kalesia tea lounge, naturally naming the project "Brighten My Day." If customers at the tea lounge donated a dollar or more toward our cause, they received a sticker to place on the counter of the tea lounge that says they donated. The club is going to use the money to buy individual potted flowers to give to residents in assisted living facilities. Also in attempts to brighten the days of older adults, the club created Halloween cards that the members of the club dressed up and distributed at the Ascentia Health and Rehab center. For the Thanksgiving holiday, our club created "pine cone turkeys" that we distributed at John Knox Village of Tampa. Our club is still accepting members through blackboard at the University of South Florida. We are currently planning on volunteering at the senior citizen ball that USF hosts every February. As part of the School of Aging Studies and Florida Policy Exchange Center on Aging's Distinguished Lecture Series, SPO members are invited to attend the December distinguished lecture by Dr. Vincent Mor from Brown University entitled, "The Impact of State and Federal Policies on Hospitalizations and Re-hospitalizations from the Nursing Home." Mor has been the Principle Investigator on over 30 NIH funded grants and was one of the authors of the Congressional mandated Minimum Data Set.

~Submitted by Cassandra Koehn ckoehn@mail.usf.edu

Gamma Psi Chapter, University of North Carolina-Charlotte

The Gamma Psi Chapter of Sigma Phi Omega at the University of North Carolina Charlotte has had a very productive fall semester. We participated in a Trash & Treasure yard sale to raise money for a local senior center and a Reverse Trick or Treat with a nearby assisted living community. We also represented the Gerontology Program at campus open houses and community conferences. The highlight of our fall, however, has been participating in the Walk to End Alzheimer's. We raised nearly \$1000 and had 20 participants at this annual event. We are happy to report that our chapter is growing in numbers and making a positive impact on campus and in the local community.

~Submitted by Cynthia Hancock chancock@uncc.edu



Delta Rho Chapter, Towson University

Delta Rho raised money and held a Bake Sale at Towson University in which all the proceeds were donated to *The Walk to End Alzheimer's*. The walk was held on October 29th at Oregon Ridge Park.

~Submitted by Dr. Emiko Takagi etakagi@towson.edu



ANNOUNCEMENTS

St. Cloud State University (St. Cloud, MN)



Minor, Masters and Graduate Certificate in Gerontology – *Education for Life!*

The Gerontology Program at St. Cloud State University offers personalized attention and a range of academic and applied opportunities to provide students with an integrated perspective on aging. The program offers a Gerontology Minor, Master of Science in Gerontology, and a Graduate Certificate in Gerontology. Students can take a range of courses focusing on Dementia, Diversity, Health, Housing, Policy and Women. New courses include Global Aging and Elder Law. You can enroll in one of our 3 degree programs or take a course for professional/personal enhancement. Students have the opportunity to work with community partners and other academic disciplines. A Master of Science and Graduate Certificate in Gerontology prepares graduates to assume professional leadership roles in the delivery of service to older people and their support networks, in the planning and administration of services, and in the training and instruction of service providers.

Visit us at our website: www.stcloudstate.edu/gerontology.
St. Cloud State University Gerontology Program – *Education for Life!*

For more information:

Dr. Phyllis A. Greenberg (Gerontology Graduate Coordinator) pagreenberg@stcloudstate.edu

Dr. Rona J. Karasik (Gerontology Program Director) karasik@stcloudstate.edu

Welcome new Newsletter Editor, Krystal Culler!!!

2012 Board of Directors Nominees

Secretary

Phyllis Cummins, ABD, MS, MBA

I am honored to be nominated for the position of secretary for Sigma Phi Omega. I have personally benefited SPO's support of student scholars through mentoring provided by experienced faculty members and senior gerontology students. As a third year doctoral student at Miami University, I have found networking and information sharing at professional conferences to be important to my academic progress and success. My networking with scholars at AGHE's conference earlier this year played an important role in the selection of my dissertation topic. I would like to become more actively involved in SPO at a national level so I can play a role in encouraging and mentoring gerontology students in programs at various levels. As secretary and a member of SPO's board, I will "pay it forward" by acting as resource to other students.

Diane Martin, PhD

Sigma Phi Omega (SPO) is dedicated to recognizing meritorious national accomplishments, both academically and professionally. Recognizing students and professionals as exceptional representatives of their discipline and professions will attract the best and brightest to best meet the needs and wants of our older adult population. If elected to the national leadership team, I will continue on the SPO tradition of supporting the individual chapters in building a strong network through recognition of the best the field has to offer its community. In the past these recognitions have taken the form of awards for research and civic engagement. However, funds for these awards and the development of new initiatives are sorely lacking. Therefore, to assist SPO in truly advancing the field, I would also like to work to identify new sponsors at the national level to provide the necessary funding to support the initiatives of SPO.

Student Representative

Nicole Dawson, PT student rep.

I would like to be considered for the open board position of Student Representative for Sigma Phi Omega, which is a pivotal position responsible for coordination between the AGHE Student Committee and GSA's ESPO. As a student, I am enrolled as a second year doctoral student in the Adult Development & Aging Program at Cleveland State University & the University of Akron. I am currently the secretary of Gerontology Association and Chapter President for SPO at the University of Akron. Professionally, I have been a Physical Therapist for over 9 years with several years of experience working with older adults. In the past year and a half, I have been able to attend several gerontology conferences and would be honored to assist new as well as current students in becoming more involved to enhance their educational and professional development.

Member at Large

Cynthia Hancock, PhD

I have co-advised our local Gamma Psi chapter of Sigma Phi Omega for five years. I have witnessed the value a strong chapter can bring to both students and the community. I hope to help local chapters to further develop strong links between educators, students, alumni and professionals in the field of gerontology – particularly the latter who may be unaware that SPO membership is available to them. I believe that together we can better serve the needs of older adults through service, professional development, and strong networks.

Amanda Peeples, MA

I would like to be included for consideration as a new Member at Large. I have been a member of Sigma Phi Omega since 2009, and for the past two years I have served as President of my local chapter, Delta Lambda. As Chapter President I organized numerous outings and events for our members, including volunteer opportunities as well as a tour of a local CCRC. I am currently serving as an executive member to assist and guide the new group of officers as they take over the leadership of our chapter this year. I look forward to the opportunity to enhance my SPO experience as I transition from being a chapter President to holding a national SPO position. I am committed to research and education in aging, and believe I would make an excellent addition to the Board of Directors. As Member at Large, I hope to contribute to the society through serving on various committees and tasks as needed.

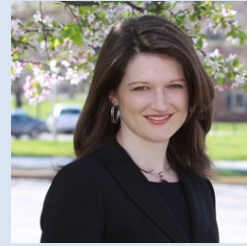
Board of Directors 2011-2012



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Student Representative
Amanda Sokan, LL.B., MHA



Newsletter Editor
Candace Brown, MAG, M.Ed.

Members At Large



Harvey Sterns, Ph.D.



Kelly Fitzgerald, Ph.D.



Katie Ehlman, Ph.D.

SPO REMINDERS

Membership Reminders!!

Please send us your updated contact information when it changes. We enjoy staying in contact with you! Also, SPO is looking for past members whose contact information and dues are not updated. If you are aware that SPO does not have your current contact information, please contact Lori Kerr with updated information at spomembership@yahoo.com.

Once we have your updated information, be sure to filter your email to allow emails from SPOmembership@yahoo.com and SPOmailings@yahoo.com. Filtering helps SPO work more efficiently as we will not need to ask permission for email to be sent to members, specifically. Many emails are sent from the mass email database and when the request does not work, members are unable to receive email updates.

Society Medals & Honor Cords!



Remember, cords and medals are available any time of the year. You'll want to wear them with your cap and gown! Medals are embossed in blue and gold with the SPO emblem. Honor cords are two-cord sets in the Society's colors of blue and gold. Buy yours now for only \$15.00 each plus shipping. If you or your chapter purchase 10 or more, you'll get a 10% discount. You can mix your order to include both medals and cords. Shipping is \$3.00 for the first item with additional shipping \$1.00 per item. No credit cards accepted.

Send Us Your News!

We love to share your chapter news, pictures, ideas, and events. Please send your submissions to the newsletter editor, Candace Brown, at SPONewsletter@sigmaphiomega.org. Please include your chapter name, college or university, submitter's name, email, and phone. Looking forward to hearing your chapter news!

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University of Colorado-Colorado Springs
UCCS Gerontology Center
1434 N. Hancock Pkwy
Colorado Springs, CO 80903
(719) 667-0187

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