

Sigma Phi Omega

National Academic Honor and Professional Society in Gerontology



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Fall 2008

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Submit SPO news by:

- September 1, 2008
- December 1, 2008
- April 1, 2009

From the President

Janice I. Wassel, Ph.D., R.F.G

Participate in '08!

That is this year's theme for Sigma Phi Omega! For 28 years, Sigma Phi Omega has provided an important function in the academic and professional development of students and in networking with experts and specialists in the field of aging. The only national academic honor and professional society in gerontology, Sigma Phi Omega's real work is done at the local chapter level through activities and education. Many times membership in SPO has served to open the door to students in meeting professionals, providing educational services and outreach that might not have been possible otherwise.

Sigma Phi Omega's 2008 theme is **'Participate in '08!'** The SPO Board has identified several objectives to increase participation and service in '08. Here are a few.

Membership Drive: Dr. Debra Sheet, Past President, was instrumental in funding and designing of our new membership brochure. Thank you Dr. Sheets! Each chapter should have received their brochures but please let me know if you haven't. One simple request, please ask students to provide not only their university email but their personal email. We often inadvertently lose track of our student members after they graduate and no longer have access to their university email accounts.

A second objective in **'Participate in '08!'** is to locate lapsed members. Dr. Scott Wright has offered resources to update membership information so you may be hearing from his office. Thank you Dr. Wright!

Increase student and faculty **Participation in '08!** at the SPO student sessions at AGHE.



As the field of gerontology grows, so must Sigma Phi Omega in meeting the needs of its membership and the demands of an aging society. The past several years have been challenging for Sigma Phi Omega. I applaud Dr. Sheets and the board in their efforts to bring growth and strength to the organization. Personally, I wish to thank Dr. Sheets for her leadership as president these past two years. It has been a pleasure to work with her. Additionally, I would like to thank Dr. Rona Karasik, treasurer, for her diligence in reviewing 10 years of financial statements.

As current president of Sigma Phi Omega, I ask each of you to consider the benefits that membership in Sigma Phi Omega brings to you and the professionals in your area. Additionally, please share with me or any of the board members SPO's strengths and growth areas that we should consider. You may always email me at jiwassel@uncg.edu or call 336.256.1020.

'Participate in '08!'

SPO Chapter News From...

Gamma Kappa Chapter, California State Fullerton University, Fullerton, CA



Thursday April 17, 2008, the Gamma Kappa chapter of Sigma Phi Omega at Cal State Fullerton University had a representative from Sunrise Assisted Living as a guest speaker. Lynn Tigalo, Director of Community Relations at Sunrise of Fullerton California spoke to a group of gerontology students about career options, job opportunities, interviewing, and how to climb the corporate ladder. In addition, Lynn spoke to the students about the innovative ideas and techniques that Sunrise community's use to assist and improve the quality of life of their residents. After Lynn's presentation, several of the students and faculty had questions which Lynn was happy to answer. The Gamma Kappa chapter was very thankful to have a

gerontology professional speak to us and encourage us to continue in this rewarding field of gerontology. At a Cal State Fullerton 50th anniversary event on May 7, 2008, six former Gerontology graduates and Sigma Phi Omega members were honored with Leadership Awards. These included Kim Bailey, Mandy Houghtaling, Cheryl Meronk, Echo Chang, Jacque Lauder and Marcia Williams. Key note speakers at the event were Bob Blancato, Blancato & Associates, Washington, DC and Dr. Fernando Torres-Gil, Director, Center for Aging Policy at UCLA.

The Gamma Kappa chapter would also like to give a warm welcome to six new members who were initiated at our last meeting; Kimberly Jones, Ruth Ledesma, Michelle Yerke, Jessica Litchfield, Mary Catherine Childs and Jayr Villafuerte. We are very pleased and excited to have new members, welcome to the family!



Delta Gamma Chapter, University of North Carolina at Greensboro, Greensboro, NC

We have several new members to welcome into the Delta Gamma Chapter of Sigma Phi Omega. They are: Helen M. Mack, Lucy M. Clifford, Kim Parks, and Christina Kent Shaffer. We are accepting nominations for other new members to be inducted at a service and social in May 2008.

The Delta Gamma Chapter of SPO at UNC-Greensboro is enjoying a busy Spring 2008 semester. Chapter members organized an AARP Driver Safety class to benefit older drivers in our community. The two-day class, which was held on February 27 and 28, 2008 at a local retirement community, was presented by a trained AARP volunteer from our area. It was attended by 14 older drivers and our SPO members delighted in meeting the participants and providing a table full of tasty snacks to keep them going all day!

Delta Gamma Chapter President Catharine Sutherland represented our SPO chapter at the NCOA/ASA "Aging in America 2008" Conference in Washington, D.C., March 26-30, 2008. She will also present research at the annual North Carolina Association on Aging Conference in Atlantic Beach, N.C., in April. Delta Gamma member B. Burgin Ross will be attending the Southern Gerontological Society Annual Meeting April 17-20, 2008, in Atlanta, Ga., where she will participate in a poster session.

In April, SPO Delta Gamma members will play a vital behind-the-scenes role in UNCG's third annual Aging is Good Business Summit, which bridges the university's gerontology and MBA programs. Our team of dedicated volunteers will help prepare and break down event spaces, register attendees, assist exhibitors, and more! We consider this an excellent opportunity not only to advance knowledge and awareness of cutting-edge aging and business trends, but also to network with professionals from around the region, state, and nation.

"Careers in Aging Week" follows on the heels of our Aging is Good Business Summit in April. SPO members this year will create an innovative "Careers in Aging Week" display in the UNCG Library to educate students, professors, and the campus community about the wide range of professional opportunities available in the rapidly growing field of aging. SPO members will also sponsor a table in the Elliot University Center at certain times during the week to provide information (and lots of free candy) and talk with students about career prospects in one of the world's most rapidly growing job markets – aging!

UNCG's Delta Gamma Chapter will close the year by lacing up our walking shoes for Greensboro's 2008 Memory Walk in May. In addition to boosting awareness of rising numbers of adults and family caregivers facing the challenge of Alzheimer's disease worldwide, the event raises money and support for the Alzheimer's Association. SPO members will walk as a team wearing official UNCG Gerontology t-shirts. ~Submitted by Catharine Sutherland, dancingtree-syoga@yahoo.com

SPO Chapter News From...

Epsilon Eta Chapter, Simon Fraser University, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada

Graduate students and faculty in the Department of Gerontology at the Simon Fraser University (SFU) Vancouver campus chartered Epsilon Eta, the first Canadian chapter of Sigma Phi Omega, in September 2007. The chapter has already begun collaborating with several individuals and groups to promote studying and working in aging-related fields, including the Gerontology Graduate Student Caucus (GGC), the Gerontology Student Union (GSU) representing undergraduate and post-baccalaureate diploma students, the campus Student Representative of the Canadian Association on Gerontology - Association Canadienne de Gérontologie (CAG-ACG) Student Connection - Connexion Étudiante (SC-CÉ), and the local Gerontological Society of America (GSA) Emerging Scholar and Professional Organization (ESPO) Campus Ambassador. For example, Epsilon Eta members joined the Gerontology team in raising over \$1,000 for the Alzheimer Society of British Columbia by participating in the annual Walk for Memories in January.

Epsilon Eta also worked with all local supporters to coordinate the Gerontology Careers Night and Networking Wine and Cheese for the GSA and Association for Gerontology in Higher Education (AGHE) Careers in Aging Week. The Careers Night portion of the evening promoted Epsilon Eta and involved presentations by five featured speakers from the local community representing diverse aging-related career opportunities. The speakers, including graduates of the SFU Department of Gerontology, discussed their careers paths in gerontology and offered insights to students considering a career in aging. Promotional materials on career and volunteer opportunities in gerontology were made available to all attendees, including students from both SFU's Vancouver and Burnaby campuses. The presentations concluded with a question and answer period and were followed by a catered networking reception. This reception enabled students, alumni, faculty and other professional representatives from across the region to network and personally discuss employment and internship opportunities in the field of gerontology. These events were jointly sponsored by SFU Simon Fraser Student Society, Department of Gerontology, and GGC. ~ Submitted by Anthony Kupferschmidt, a_kupferschmidt@tricolour.queensu.ca

Gamma Omicron Chapter, University of Hawaii at Manoa, Manoa, HI



With the start of the New Year, the SPO-Gamma Omicron Chapter had been preparing for its 2nd Annual Careers in Aging Day, which was held on April 10, 2008 at the University of Hawaii at Manoa. We had a panel presentation of professionals from various disciplines in the aging field--Dr. Colette Browne from Social Work, Atty. James Pietsch from Law, Dr. Susan Chandler from Public Policy, Dr. Bruce Tamura from Medicine, and Jan Shishido from Kuakini Hospital's Geriatric Center. Our main presenter, Dr. Kathryn Braun from Public Health, discussed the pertinent need for gerontologists in our aging society. Our event was sponsored by Ha Kupuna (the National Resource Center for Native Hawaiian Elders), the

University of Hawaii School of Social Work, the University of Hawaii Center for Aging Research and Education, and AARP, who did a presentation on their Divided We Fail campaign. ~Submitted by Co-Presidents: Michelle Sagucio and Samantha Tsoi, 808-372-6712



Alpha Alpha Chapter, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, CA



The Beta Zeta Chapter at St. Cloud State University is growing. At our monthly meetings we continue to see a growing interest in both the Beta Zeta chapter of Sigma Phi Omega as well as our Gerontology club. We are drawing in students and professionals from many different disciplines including; gerontology, community development, nursing, social work, sociology and psychology. In the picture below you can see the people at one of our meetings -- and yes that is a chocolate fountain on the table!

Again this year we are selling t-shirts as one of our fundraisers to help defer some of the costs students incur to attend conferences (see picture below for t-shirt design). We find that selling the t-shirts for only \$16 each is a great balance between cost and raising money. The greatest part about selling the t-shirts with a positive aging message is that all of the proceeds go towards supporting a great cause, enabling the students to have a wonderful learning experience. For more information about our chapter and our t-shirts see our website at <http://www.stcloudstate.edu/gerontology/sigmaphiomega.asp> or you can contact our advisor Rona Karasik at karasik@stcloudstate.edu. ~Submitted by John Tasto, Stephanie Liesch, and Ai Takamatsu

Sigma Phi Omega Board of Directors Meeting

February 22, 2008 3:30– 5:00pm, Renaissance Harborplace, Baltimore, MD

MINUTES

Attendees: Debra Sheets, Jan Wassel, Rona Karasik, Scott Wright, Douglas Reed, Althea Taylor-Jones, Jennifer Kinney, Pam Brown (guest), Tony DiLorenzo.

Debra Sheets called the meeting was called to order at 3:30 pm.

The first item of business was introductions from all members in attendance.

It is noted that Tony DiLorenzo arrived to the meeting approx at 3:50pm due to being “held up” with a meeting with Marilyn Gugliucci (President -Elect of AGHE).

Debra Sheets then presented the President’s Report which primarily addressed the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Sigma Phi Omega (SPO) and the Association for Gerontology in Higher Education (AGHE). Debra informed the Board members that she had signed (on behalf of SPO) the contract with AGHE.

Debra Sheets then provided information about the role of SPO students at the AGHE conference and she indicated that 14 students were being identified as SPO representatives on the program.

Debra Sheets and Douglas Reed, along with other Board members then discussed the need to clarify the process by which student awards were determined. There was a discussion of the process, the deadlines, and the role of “authorship” for student papers. There was a stated need to “rethink” the deadline for SPO submissions from students for the AGHE conference. Douglas Reed presented the motion to synchronize the SPO deadline for abstracts to be the same as the stated AGHE deadline. The motion carried (passed) so that SPO call for papers deadline will be the same as the AGHE deadline. It was noted that the SPO Board would have to advance the new information to potential presenters as soon as possible because the “Call for Sessions” brochure was been published and is already available. In that Call for Sessions brochure the deadline for SPO papers is stated as Sept. 30, whereas in the general AGHE information it is listed as June 2, 2008. Finally, it was indicated and emphasized that students need to self-identify with SPO on all submissions to assure proper SPO identity with the papers submitted.

It was noted that there were no student papers submitted this year for consideration with the SPO President’s Award. It was stated that the Board members and all SPO members need to help encourage and support the advancement of manuscripts to be considered for the award.

Rona Karasik then presented the Treasurer's report, the 2008 budget, and the latest updates with the paperwork associated with the IRS. Rona advised the Board members of the latest developments with the completion of the necessary forms with IRS and noted that the I-99OPF forms need to be submitted each year. Rona presented the *revised* 2008 budget to the Board. Rona advised that there is a great need to “find out why member numbers do not seem to match up with new member revenues.” Other issues of concern were presented such as, the need to get an accurate inventory of both HONOR CORDS and PINS, which then brought up the issue of: How many should SPO buy for the near future? - How many to invest in? Douglas brought up the issue of the fact that many pins arrive as damaged due to the mailing process and that SPO/AGHE should look into a better delivery package to protect the pins. It was suggested and the Board gave approval to the notion that a line (or lines) be added to the SPO “new” info/application form that would include info and costs for purchasing honor cords and pins. ***In other words, the form should include that info directly in the application form.*** It was recommended that the current electronic version be modified to present that info ASAP. Rona then provided many ideas and suggestions for increasing the revenue for SPO. These ideas and suggestions center on several membership issues which will be outlined and detailed later in this report. Rona then presented information on debt repayment and stated that the 2008 budget does not take into account debt repayment to AGHE. Rona stated that it is important to begin to outline for a plan of repayment to AGHE.

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Scott then was asked to present the membership report. Based on the data given to him from Tony that same day, the membership report indicated:

Active regular members: 1392 (includes 90 new members and 148 renewals processed in 4th quarter of 2006).

Active life members: 195

Total Active members = 1587

Active Chapters = 82

Inactive chapters = 44

Scott requested that in order to fulfill the membership operations for SPO there would be the need to share and then use a dynamic and current list of all SPO members (active and inactive) in order to engage the strategic plans for contacting all members, especially the inactive members and chapters. There was consensus from the Board members that Scott should work with Tony to acquire the most current database in order to establish a communication link between the Board and SPO members (all categories). It was also recommended that the database be shared and updated between AGHE and SPO on a frequent basis to maintain the most current database on both sides.

Scott offered to assist and take the lead on several strategic items to increase membership given the condition of receiving and working the database. Please see detailed plans for increasing revenue and memberships on subsequent pages.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:00 pm.

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SPO Strategies for Recruitment, Publicity and Marketing: *plans to increase membership and revenue*

- Continued effort to reach out to colleges and universities with NO or INACTIVE SPO chapters.
 1. Janice Wassel and Burgin Ross have begun to create outreach activities.
 2. There is need to take gathered info and then integrate into existing database (e.g., missing data, incomplete data, incorrect data per member)
 3. Scott will follow-up with list of info gathered (so far) by Burgin and Janice and then weave into database (see minutes for database exchange between AGHE and SPO)

- Sustain efforts for chapter renewals (keep active status going)
- Increased awareness of Honor Cords and pins for SPO
- Increased awareness of graduation medals
- Increased effort to solicit and contract with advertising in SPO newsletter(s)

- Re-design of the AGHE/SPO web page for better navigation and easy access @ (<http://www.aghe.org/site/aghewebsite/section.php?id=7972>)

- I (Scott) do have one question and to help clear up confusion - why is there a web site (URL) for SPO @ <http://www.sigmaphiomega.net> which actually goes to (or there is a redirect to) Debra Sheets home page? and another at the AGHE site ? To me this is bound to be confusing for visitors who are searching and it creates overlap and redundancy. And when I try to pull up the URL for the application form via PDF there is no site or form? Perhaps we can take the PDF version and then after adding the lien for honor cords/pins/ and medals - we can then upload to AGHE web site too (or only?)

- Once this issue is resolved, I think it would be important for everyone in SPO to make sure that there is an active viable link to SPO on everyone's gerontology/aging program web site. In other words, is there a link on your website for SPO? If not - then try to get it there.

- I also think it is important to establish an active link and info connection with ESPO (via GSA) for SPO - web link etc. - but again - only after we resolve the current issue with linkable web sites for SPO.

Respectfully submitted,

Scott D. Wright

SPO Board of Directors 2007-2008

President

Dr. Jan Wassel
University of North Carolina,
Greensboro
(336) 256-1020 (Office)
jiwassel@uncg.edu

Treasurer

Dr. Rona Karasik
St. Cloud State University
(320) 308-5224 (Office)
karasik@stcloudstate.edu

Members-at-Large

Dr. Patricia Kricos
University of Florida
(352) 392-2116 (Office)
pkricos@geron.ufl.edu

Dr. Althea Taylor-Jones
Winston-Salem State University
(336) 750-2621 (Office)
taylorjones@wssu.edu

Dr. Douglas Reed
University of Central Oklahoma
(405) 974-5803 (Office)
dreed@ucok.edu

Administrative Director

Mr. Tony DiLorenzo
Sigma Phi Omega
202-289-9818 Ext. 126
adilorenzo@aghe.org

Secretary

Dr. Scott Wright
University of Utah
scott.wright@nurs.utah.edu

Newsletter Editor

Ms. Katie Young
Virginia Commonwealth University
(804) 828-1565 (Office)
youngka@vcu.edu

Be on the lookout for the upcoming Membership Drive!

**Information is coming your way please take the time to
promote your chapter and help increase membership.**

President's Award

Sigma Phi Omega's President's Award was initiated in 2005. The purpose of the President's Award is to recognize outstanding SPO student presentation submissions at the annual AGHE meeting.

The SPO President's Award is funded solely by donations from SPO members and other interested parties. We would like for the SPO President's Award to be offered for years to come, and would appreciate your generous donation toward recognizing outstanding, 'up-and-coming' students in gerontology. We need your support! We are recommending a \$25 donation in recognition of SPO's 25th anniversary, but will gladly accept any amount.

Sigma Phi Omega
1220 L Street NW, Suite 901
Washington, DC 20005-4018

Virginia Commonwealth University

Department of Gerontology

School of Allied Health Professions

PO Box 980228

Richmond, VA 23298

804-828-1565

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Send us your news!

We love to share your chapter news, pictures, ideas, and events. Please send your submissions to Newsletter Editor, Katie Young, at youngka@vcu.edu. Please include your chapter name, college or university, submitter's name, email, and phone.

Looking forward to hearing your news!

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