

**National English Honor Society Director's Report**  
**Sigma Tau Delta Fall Board Meeting—September 2012**  
**Portland, Oregon**

Another active year is in full swing for the National English Honor Society (NEHS). We continue to look for ways to expand Society benefits not only for members and schools, but, given the work being done in service projects and activities, also for local communities. To date, we have 521 chapters of NEHS, up from 452 at this time last year, and have added 34 so far this year. Of those chapters, 416 (80%) are considered active; we continue to work on bringing inactive chapters back into the organization and may consider a type of re-chartering “amnesty” soon, offering to waive the chartering fee for those schools wishing to become active again.

In the first six months of 2012, we enrolled 8,643 new members. The annual report indicates that the average number of new inductees into chapter membership is 31-45, with 34% of our chapters reporting that number; the high point is more than 91 inductees (per chapter) in a year—6% of the chapters report adding that number to their ranks. We received annual reports from 241 chapters (58%). Other data of interest from the annual report:

- 51% of schools hold spring inductions while 36% hold fall inductions;
- 35% of our chapters maintain the NEHS constitutional requirement of a 3.0 GPA while the majority have raised the minimum academic expectation to a higher level;
- A good or excellent perception of NEHS in their schools is reported by 64% of the chapters; the other 36% have some image-burnishing to do!
- The Common Reader for 2011-2012, *Old School* by Tobias Wolfe, was used by 90 chapters last year, a big improvement from previous years. We received 67 scholarship essays this spring, another doubling of participation from the previous year. The Common Reader for 2012-2013 is *The Tortilla Curtain* by T.C. Boyle;
- Notable activities in which chapters have engaged, excerpted from the annual reports:
  - “The NEHS members completed 55 holiday themed booklets which were included in food boxes distributed throughout the Chicago area. We also submitted power points to E-Luminate.org and sent them off to Africa.” (Mother McAuley High School, Chicago, IL);
  - “We raised nearly \$9000 that we donated to a school in Zambia. We held class competitions to raise money. We needed \$3500 to pay the school fee for 30 boys to go to school in Zambia, and the additional funds we raised paid for a cooking station in the school. One of the English teachers in our school has a connection with this school in Zambia--she has volunteered at this school during her summer breaks, and so she knew that this school was suffering financially to continue to provide schooling for all the local boys. Not only did students contribute for the class competition, but many of their parents gave additional contributions to the foundation.” (Chatfield Senior High School, Littleton, CO);
  - “We implemented a school-wide ‘Read a Million’ contest inviting students to read one million words or more. The winner read 4.7 million words and we presented her with an Amazon Kindle.” (New Rochelle High School, New Rochelle, NY).

We will be asking the  $\Sigma\Delta$  Board of Directors for approval to expand the NEHS-funded portion of scholarships from \$11,000 to \$17,000. Additionally, we will be offering a new summer learning stipend for juniors in 2013. A new initiative this fall will be the Intellectual Freedom Challenge Essay Competition, bringing the vision of Bob Crafton to fruition. Sophomores and juniors will be invited to write rationales for oft-challenged books. Participating students will receive gift certificates from Better World Books and their schools will receive intellectual freedom texts published by National Council of Teachers of English. Students writing the best essays will be awarded monetary prizes named the Crafton Awards; furthermore, essays accepted by NCTE and to be used in their rationale files to support schools and teachers, will be given additional awards.

We are working with the National Science and Technology Education Partnership (NSTEP) to begin a writing tutorial program for underprivileged students. NEHS was approached by this organization over the summer to begin this effort, which parallels a partnership NSTEP has with Mu Alpha Theta, the mathematics honor society, which provides math tutors. We will work on a pilot project this fall.

We also announce the beginning of the new NEHS blog, *The NEHS Museletter*, which premiered in September. With the cooperation of Advisory Council members and at the suggestion of the  $\Sigma\Delta$  student leadership group, we will launch the NEHS Student Leadership Council, whose voices will appear in the blog throughout the year.

**Respectfully submitted: Dave Wendelin, NEHS Director**