

08/22/22

Greetings, Board attendees!

In a few weeks, we will converge on the Sheraton Denver Downtown Hotel, eager for our work as a Board to take shape. As Board President, I will have the pleasure of welcoming you to, or back to, meeting in person. But even before we attend and in my role as Interim Executive Director, allow me to provide more information about our upcoming meeting.

#### Board materials available online

Most of the following materials are attached; all will soon be available at

<https://english.org/board/>:

- a copy of this letter,
- the Fall Board Meeting overview and agenda (attached),
- a detailed schedule of committee meetings (attached),
- the updated travel policy (attached),
- the reimbursement form (attached),
- the Board report template (attached),
- an up-to-date list of committee membership and charges,
- Board attendees' travel plans, and
- the [travel tips linked here](#).

If you have not done so, please read this last document—Immediate Past President Diane Steinberg's expert tips for travel—first. Much of the information Diane includes is specific to Denver; she may save you steps and frustration, as well as ensuring we use the Society's funds wisely.

#### Travel policies and information

Speaking of the judicious use of funds, the Executive Committee and Central Office have worked together to streamline the Sigma Tau Delta Travel Policy (see attached). The most significant revision is the move to a per diem for meals and incidentals; our Denver per diem will be **\$64**, adjusted for two meals per day, since our rooms all have access to the Sheraton Club (a concierge perk), which offers us breakfast each morning. While still (*always*) cognizant of ourselves as stewards of student-generated funds, this shift to a per diem eases the reporting burden on travelers and the reimbursement frustrations for CO staff members.

As you gear up for our Fall Board Meeting, please remember several key details:

- Jeannine Szostak, Director of Society Operations, has secured your hotel room and worked with you on any specific requests you entered into the survey you took.
- When student leaders and other affiliates submit Board reports, they are welcome to request per diem funds, which we will make available to you upon arrival after you check into the hotel. Again, see the Travel Policy for details about what a per diem is intended to cover—from incidentals like \$5 a day for housekeeping to that afternoon coffee pick-me-up from Starbucks and from the take-out lunch in your room to the sit-down meal student leaders enjoy while exploring Denver.

#### Written board reports

As I reminded you in early August, **Board reports** from individuals and from committee chairs must be emailed to Jeannine Szostak by **Monday, August 29**. You should use the attached template for submission. Because all reports will have been submitted in writing and read by all members before we arrive in Denver, you will not repeat, read, summarize, or highlight your written report at the actual Board meeting. Instead, you may respond to any questions or comments about your written report. Questions are welcomed from voting and non-voting board members. During the Board meeting, you will also give a verbal report on any additional work you do or announcements from your Region and/or hotel between your written submission and the day of the Board meeting.

#### Masks recommended

Safety precautions deserve their own place and extra emphasis in this letter. While we will continue to monitor COVID conditions in Denver, the current positivity rate is very low. Of course, some of us come from areas where COVID cases are running rampant. Others of us are immunocompromised or take care of relatives who are at high risk for COVID or other illnesses. And most of us will have traveled through airports, train stations, and other crowded spaces on our way to Denver.

With these travel risks and the case fluctuations between locations in mind, we will **expect** all Board attendees to mask during travel—particularly in airports, on shuttles, on trains, or in other public, confined spaces. We also **recommend** masking at the Board and committee meetings. Some people still are not eating in public or crowded spaces; those Board attendees may choose to take food to their rooms or to eat only in outside spaces in Denver. We ask that you respond with kindness and respect to anyone who chooses to eat separately or to mask in public spaces.

And, of course: do not attend the Fall Board Meeting if you are having symptoms or test positive for COVID!

You already know that the work of Sigma Tau Delta and NEHS is bigger than a single meeting or committee. As we gather together in Denver this September, though, we forge new, stronger bonds with our Board colleagues. Most importantly, getting together reminds us just how much our work—in Denver and beyond—shapes the future of the Society.

Be well, and see you soon!  
Shannin Schroeder, Board President &  
Interim Executive Director