



## Strategic Plan

The mission of Sigma Tau Delta is to

- confer distinction for high achievement in English language and literature in undergraduate, graduate, and professional studies;
- provide through its local chapters, cultural stimulation on college campuses and promote interest in literature and the English language in the surrounding communities;
- foster all aspects of the discipline of English, including literature, language, and writing;
- promote exemplary character and good fellowship among its members;
- exhibit high standards of academic excellence;
- serve society by fostering literacy.

To accomplish that mission we propose to

- A. Advance the study of English;
- B. Improve and increase recognition of Sigma Tau Delta;
- C. Promote active, ethical, and socially responsible chapters, members, and leaders;
- D. Continue to develop and refine an organizational structure and an administrative structure that implement, support, and maintain the mission.

Strategies for developing each of the above:

### **A. Advance the study of English.**

#### **Goal A.1: Enhance the Society's signature programs, maximizing efficiency, economy, impact, and participation.**

(1) Convention:

- Expand the convention strand devoted to roundtables, workshops, and speakers which focus on career options available to students graduating with degrees in English and related disciplines;
- Develop and promote Wednesday night events especially to encourage early arrivals and encourage attendance at *Rectangle* and open readings;
- Purchase equipment and software to make it possible for all Central Office staff and workers to easily handle credit card purchases;
- Using post convention survey attendance data, establish recommendations for speaker selection, looking to a reasonable balance of international and regional authors, in order to increase attendance for speakers and make the best use of funds;
- Continue to use and improve the established online submission and session scheduling system to allow for efficient collection and evaluation of submissions, prompt notification of authors, and efficient planning of convention sessions and program;
- To reduce the work load of convention chairs and to increase the pool of potential future convention chairs, encourage convention chairs to delegate convention planning and organization tasks and to involve non-Board members and/or prospective or future convention chairs whenever possible;
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the use of the common reader in connection with the convention, develop more convention sessions and presentations on the common reader, and seek additional methods to publicize the common reader.

(2) Scholarships and internships:

- Continue to use and improve the STARS online system for efficient collecting and evaluating of applications;
- Consider ways to increase efficiency of the scholarship judging process in order to decrease the work load of the chair of the Scholarship Committee.
- Develop additional opportunities, e.g. possible internships in publishing, education, and the not-for-profit sector; “reading” grants; writing fellowships; scholarships.

(3) Publications:

- Modify and improve the online system for efficient collecting and evaluating of submissions;
- Continue to evaluate current publications and policies, including considering costs and potential benefits/drawbacks of electronic publication; possibilities for increasing acceptance rates in the journals; shifting journals to focus more on undergraduate work;
- Include more discipline-specific content in Society publications and/or on the website;
- Evaluate the use and effectiveness of online media (e.g. blogs, podcasts, Twitter) and social networking sites to disseminate information and foster discussion of matters pertinent to the Society. Possibilities include
  - Replacing regional print journals with online journals;
  - Developing a virtual convention experience;
  - Creating an alumni e-zine;
- Develop strategies to increase the effectiveness of social media for disseminating information and engaging members in discussions.

(4) National English Honor Society:

- Develop summer workshops for student members and Sponsors;
- Develop suggestions for collaborations between Sigma Kappa Delta and NEHS, and between Sigma Tau Delta and NEHS, and post those suggestions on the websites.

**Goal A.2: Provide increased support for chapter activities.**

- Develop strategies to increase participation in the common reader program, such as increased coverage in the publications and website, discussion questions and materials to support reading groups, and complementary activity and service project suggestions;
- Develop strategies for Sponsors to promote the common reader, including offering suggestions for classroom use of the common readers one year before the convention;
- Investigate the possibilities of seeking grant funding to support a traveling speaker series;
- Develop models for online chapters which could be used by online universities and by any chapter in order to enhance membership and fellowship among members;
- Increase suggestions for chapter activities and support posted on the website, and consider ways to make the website materials more easily accessible to users.

**B. Improve and increase recognition of Sigma Tau Delta.**

**Goal B.1: Recruit and retain individual members.**

- Use various Society media to expand awareness among Sponsors and members that non-English majors are eligible for membership;
- Develop for Sponsors a web-based resource of answers to commonly asked questions, such as how to identify potential members, officially enroll new members, organize

activities, promote individual member involvement on campus, etc.;

- Develop for Sponsors promotional materials (i.e. PowerPoint presentations, sample book marks promoting the Society) for class visits.
- Consider the means to develop an early-contact program with freshmen and sophomores, including ways Sponsors could initiate this on campus levels;
- Work with Sigma Kappa Delta to ensure that their members are aware of Sigma Tau Delta, the mission and services, and the website, including how to use that website to discover whether a particular school has a chapter and the contact information for its sponsor;
- Develop strategies to bridge the two-year gap between NEHS membership and eligibility for Sigma Tau Delta membership. Such strategies might include
  - Assess recognition of Sigma Tau Delta's name and identity among NEHS members and develop methods to increase that recognition if necessary;
  - Develop methods to maintain contact with NEHS members after graduation.

#### **Goal B.2: Increase recognition of Sigma Tau Delta and NEHS.**

- Promote chapter recognition and reputation on campuses by developing for Sponsors public relation and marketing materials to promote the Society;
- Add material to website on how to promote one's chapter's activities and accomplishments (for instance, how to write a press release and sample press releases for campus and community newspapers);
- Develop a system of email letters of congratulations to go to campus deans and department heads to acknowledge members who receive scholarships, internships, convention awards, or publication in any of the Society's journals;
- Develop a system of email letters of appreciation to go to campus deans and department heads to acknowledge award and major anniversaries of Sponsors and to announce election and appointment of Sponsors to any Society office or committee.

### **C. Promote active, ethical, and socially responsible chapters, members, and leaders.**

#### **Goal C.1: Enhance the quality of leadership at all levels of Sigma Tau Delta.**

- Enhance and expand current leadership workshops at the annual convention, such as providing activities that facilitate networking, outreach and building communities beyond individual chapter groups, and potentially offering regionally based leadership workshops;
- Develop easily accessible online manual for Faculty Sponsors;
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the position of appointed Alumni Representative on the Board and revise the responsibilities, duties, and description of the position as needed; develop a manual for the position.
- Develop specific goals for the role of alumni in the Society, including a clear definition of what the phrase "members for life" means;
- Assess current manuals for student leadership for any needed additions or revisions;
- Create ways to encourage more direct and regular contact between chapter leadership and SAs, SRs, and Regents, such as a listserve of chapter officers, a schedule for email communication, or specific discussion threads on social media.
- Utilize publications and website to provide leadership training for chapter officers;
- Six months before convention, publicize position openings, identify outstanding chapter leaders and Sponsors, and make direct contact with them inviting them to apply for positions of leadership;

- Increase regular convention sessions on administrative issues, such as chapter activities, publications, leadership training for Faculty Advisors and chapter officers, public relations, recruitment, alumni, chapter record keeping, awards, marketing, member retention, meeting planning;
- Cultivate and nurture current and future Board members:
  - Invite potential Board members to committee/Board meetings and the Sponsor reception;
  - Develop and publish online a realistic description of the duties and expectations of all Board members, how they and the Society benefit from their service, and how the Central Office can offer support;
  - Provide an online manual for Regents;
  - Design panels and workshops for Chapter Sponsors and actively recruit Sponsors to participate;
  - Develop a plan for training and recruiting leadership, particularly in the High Plains and Far Western Regions;
  - Invite Sponsors who attend convention to participate on committees;

**Goal C.2: Promote ethical and social responsibility among Sigma Tau Delta membership.**

- Develop a website page highlighting the ethical and social responsibilities of all Society members and link to specific web pages for projects that demonstrate those responsibilities;
- Give greater presence on the website and in the newsletter to service projects, including not only chapter service projects but also individual service by alumni and student members;
- Consider developing an annual national service project and explore other possible national efforts involving cooperation among Sigma Tau Delta, NEHS, and Sigma Kappa Delta;
- Use website and newsletter to explore complexities of ethical issues in the field, such as technological and cultural challenges to traditional understandings of plagiarism and copyright, and working with gender/cultural differences;
- Set an example by continuing to “go green” through moving communications to electronic forms and making other environmentally sound changes;
- Offer more convention sessions in using English skills working (volunteer or paid) for non-profit organizations, for civic engagement, and for community service.

**D. Continue to develop and refine an organizational and administrative structure that implements, supports, and maintains the mission.**

**Goal D.1: Promote effective operations and cooperative endeavors among various levels of the Sigma Tau Delta organization.**

- Encourage collaborations among Sigma Tau Delta (including Alumni Epsilon), Sigma Kappa Delta, and National English Honor Society chapters;
- Continue to assess international component;
- Provide increased support for committee work:
  - Schedule President/committee chair contacts;
  - Schedule committee chair/member contacts;
  - President and committee chairs collaborate to create clear set of yearly charges

- and realistic deadlines to accomplish objectives;
- Define clearly the Regent, SA, and SR chain, with scheduled and specified appropriate contact plans for each;
- Encourage greater committee participation by non-board members:
- Encourage Regents to identify Sponsors in their region to ask to serve on committees;
- Institute a bi-annual assessment of Strategic Plan by the President Elect in his/her second year in the position;
- Continue to refine the guidelines for convention planning and implementation: task responsibilities and timetables, budget guidelines (especially for speakers' fees and expenses), and a template for scheduling convention activities.

**Goal D.2: Improve communications and record-keeping with the goal of eventually being able to contact individual members.**

- Develop a broadcast email system at the international, regional, and local levels making it possible for Regents or Central Office to communicate with selected groups (for example: regional Sponsors, chapter officers, members in a region);
- Continue to develop ways to link our software systems so that membership and chapter data in Write Away! could be used to create an email database of officers and members for the use of regional officers;
- Create online alumni database that could be used (with permission) to direct chapters toward alumni in their area willing to speak or provide other resources;
- Evaluate the redesigned chapter reports to assess usefulness and integration with Write Away!, and replicate the process for NEHS;
- Continue to move essential Central Office and print media archives to digital formats, providing funding for temporary clerical assistance as needed;
- Assess the launch of the HTML new member letter system, and continue to work toward direct communication with all Society members;
- Add membership enrollment database system for NEHS.

**Goal D.3: Continue to assess efficiency of Sigma Tau Delta's administrative, organizational, and financial structure to support, maintain, and implement the mission.**

- Conduct a comparative study of other honor societies to determine in so far as possible how we compare in terms of numbers of members, staff, office accommodations, budget, scholarships, other membership benefits, marketing, and growth;
- Evaluate rate of growth and marketing efforts;
- Assess efficiency of on-line retail system;
- Continue to evaluate clerical staffing needs related to NEHS growth;
- Upgrade Central Office equipment, furnishings, and software as needed;
- Evaluate the existing succession plan to provide for an orderly transition in the event of the retirement from Sigma Tau Delta of the Executive Director or NEHS Director or the retirement from Northern Illinois of the Executive Director;
- Assess Senior Web Facilitator position and Web Facilitator position and consider possible additions as the Society moves to greater and greater use of electronic communication, web applications, and online Society management;
- Evaluate the Project Coordinator position and revise position description to match existing and/or future duties;

- Assess website structure and organization for usability and efficiency with an eye to making it easier for Sponsors, alumni, and members to access online information.

**Goal D.4: Clarify language in the Society's Constitution and Bylaws concerning NEHS and alumni and graduate members.**

- Revise language in Article IX to include online chapters;
- Add language in Article IX to include relationship with NEHS;
- Clarify graduate membership requirement of "6 semester hours of graduate work or the equivalent" (Article IX, I, 2);
- Clarify language so that individuals who fit into more than one membership category can claim the benefits of only one membership category at a time (faculty membership OR alumni membership OR graduate membership) (i.e. alumni who are part-time graduate students and/or part-time teaching faculty at a college or university);
- Clarify alumni membership (Article IX, II, 3) including defining the phrase "members for life" and considering the rights, benefits, and obligations of alumni;
- Revise wording of rights of faculty members (Article IX, II, 2) to "present on panels, moderate sessions and participate as invited guests at the convention" to read as follows: "present on *roundtables*, moderate sessions. . . .";
- Revise other language which is outdated, ambiguous, or unclear.

**Goal D.5: Maintain financial security.**

- Develop a long range financial plan that allows the Society to look toward its future needs (administrative staffing and any further office space changes) and its desire to expand certain areas of its services to members (such as scholarships and internships);
- Continue to pursue convention sponsorships;
- Continue to pursue partnerships.

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