



The Geological Society of America

Geoscience Education Division

Geoscience Education Division Winter Newsletter

<https://community.geosociety.org/geodivision/home>

GSA Geoscience Education Division Newsletter Table of Contents (Winter 2026)

Message from the Chair
Division Awards
Biggs Teaching Award Call for Nominations
GED Management Board Nominations
GSA Connects 2026
Upcoming GSA Sectional Meetings

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Dear GSA Geoscience Education Division members,

Happy New Year! On behalf of the Board of the Geoscience Education Division, I hope everyone had a wonderful holiday season! My name is Nick Soltis, and I am the current chair of the division. I am an assistant professor of Earth-space science at the University of Indianapolis and the Director of Environmental Programs there. We hope to use this newsletter to celebrate the recipients of Division awards this year and to alert you to upcoming opportunities.

It was wonderful to see many of you at GSA Connects 2025 in San Antonio! In the coming year, there are many opportunities to connect with colleagues in geoscience education, including upcoming regional meetings, the next GSA Connects in Denver and 2026, and NAGT's Earth Educators Rendezvous this July in Columbia, SC.

Thank you again for all of your continued support and membership. If there is any way that we can serve you better or if you have suggestions for the GED, such as content suggestions, please let us know (you can find our contact information on the GED website). The GED board and I are looking forward to seeing you in Denver this October or at upcoming regional meetings or EER!

Your 2026 GED Chair,
Nick Soltis, Ph.D.
Department of Physics and Earth-Space Science
University of Indianapolis

DIVISION AWARDS

The Biggs Earth Science Teaching Award will be awarded to Dr. Kelsey Bitting of Elon University. Dr. Bitting is an Assistant Professor of Environmental Studies at Elon University whose teaching invites students into inquiry-based fieldwork, community partnerships, and mindfulness practices to foster deep learning and personal growth. Her research explores how students develop agency and problem-solving skills, and how identity and experience shape student and faculty learning. Dr. Bitting has contributed extensively to the Teach the Earth collection and served in leadership roles, including Associate Editor of the Journal of Geoscience Education and Past President of the Geoscience Education Research Division of NAGT.

The ***Iris Moreno Totten Geoscience Education Research Award*** is chaired as a separate session at the annual meeting under the Iris Moreno Totten Research in Geoscience Education session. All students and early career presenters in the session will be eligible for the award. Having a dedicated session for the Totten award has significantly improved the efficiency of judging and awarding eligible talks. If you or your students are conducting geoscience education research, consider submitting an abstract to the session. And if you are interested in serving on the award committee as a judge during the session, please reach out to the GED board. The winner of the 2025 early career Totten award was Dr. Annie Klyce with her presentation titled “Student Recruitment into the Geosciences: Driving factors for Entrance and Continued Engagement in Geoscience Courses.” The winner of the 2025 student award was Grace Gasaway with her presentation titled “Framework for Measuring Service and Outreach Impact on Women’s Geoscience Identity and Retention.”

BIGGS AWARD CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

The Biggs Earth Science Teaching Award recognizes innovative and effective teaching in college-level earth science. Earth-science instructors and faculty members from any academic institution engaged in undergraduate education who have been teaching full time for 10 years or fewer are eligible (part-time teaching is not counted in the 10-years-or-fewer requirement).

Peer- and self-nominations are accepted for this award. Please consider nominating a colleague for the 2026 Biggs Award
Deadline: March 1, 2026

Application materials can be found at this link: [2026 Biggs Award Application](#)

MANAGEMENT BOARD NOMINATIONS

It is never too early to start thinking about serving as a member of the GSA Geoscience Education Board. Every year, the division accepts openings for the Second Vice Chair position as well as Student Representatives. This is a great opportunity for members to get involved in the work that we do! If you would like to apply to be included on the upcoming election ballot, please submit your [form of interest](#) for one of the following positions:

1. **SECOND VICE CHAIR** *will serve for one year, then rotate into the First Vice Chair position for one year, and then rotate into the Chair position for one year. The Chair will serve as Past Chair for a final year. **This is a four-year commitment!** The second vice*

chair serves as the chair of the Awards Committee, leads planning for the Educators Reception at the GSA annual meeting, and facilitates the awarding of student travel grants. The Second Vice Chair shall assume the duties of the Chair whenever the Chair and First Vice Chair are not available.

- 2. STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE** shall serve on the Iris Moreno Totten Education Research Award Committee under the direction of the Totten Committee Chair. Student reps shall represent GED on the GSA Student Advisory Council (SAC) and, to the best of their knowledge and abilities, represent the interests and concerns of GED student members to the management board.

Nominations will remain open through the end of July, and voting will occur in August. If you have any questions about serving on the GED, please don't hesitate to reach out to one of the current [board members](#).

GSA CONNECTS 2026 (i.e., The Annual Meeting)

The GSA Connects 2025 will be held October 11-14 in Denver, CO. Session proposals are due by the end of the day (11:59 PM Pacific Time) on February 17th. The call for proposals can be found [here](#).

UPCOMING GSA SECTIONAL MEETINGS

SECTION	MEETING LOCATION AND DATES
Cordilleran	Loreto, Baja California, México - 22-24 April, 2026
North-Central	Memphis, TN - 8-11 March, 2026 - Joint with South-Central and Southeastern
Northeastern	Hartford, CT 22-24 March, 2026
Rocky Mountain	Albuquerque, NW - 18-20 May, 2026
South-Central	Memphis, TN - 8-11 March, 2026 - Joint with North-Central and Southeastern
Southeastern	Memphis, TN - 8-11 March, 2026 -Joint with North-Central and South-Central