

espconnection

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The Newsletter of Epsilon Sigma Phi

July/August 2010



Strategic Plan Developed

Sandy Corridon, National ESP President

The ESP National Board has just completed a new and simpler Strategic Plan to provide guidance for our organization for the next five years. The process for developing the new plan included gathering input from our membership and from chapter leadership.

One of the points that was raised during discussions with members was that while the old plan provided a well defined road map to follow, it was very unwieldy. The Board took that suggestion to heart. The new plan is much cleaner and easier to read and is a fraction of the length of the old one, and yet provides a good overview of the expectations for our organization for the next five years. If there is a downside, the new plan provides less direction for developing annual plans of work by the president and the national committees. On the other hand, the committees have more flexibility to develop plans of work that are clear, concise and tailored to meet the needs of the upcoming year.

Now that the plan has been developed, it is time for you, as members, to review the proposed plan to insure that there have been no key elements that were omitted. Any of you are invited to read the plan and make comments to the Board. To read the new plan go to the [ESP Website](#) and find the article about the Strategic Plan on the front page.

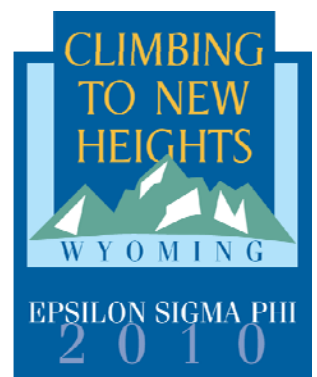
To share your comments on the proposed plan contact ESP National President Sandy Corridon at corridon@umd.edu or the ESP National Office at espoffice@espnational.org

Why Should You Attend the Epsilon Sigma Phi National Conference?

Marie Blythe, Professional Development Committee Member

Even though the Early Bird Registration deadline has passed, think about attending the ESP National Conference in Jackson, Wyoming, on October 12-15, 2010. If you have not decided if you will attend the conference, the following are good reasons to consider attending:

- *Expand your network – make new contacts and renew old acquaintances*
- *Update and add depth to your content (subject matter + process)*
- *Keynote speakers, concurrent sessions, poster sessions*
- *Learn more about your professional association*
- *Attend your regional meeting, committee meetings and the business meeting*
- *Celebrate individual, team and chapter recognition . . . gain ideas for next year!*
- *Travel opportunity – enjoy the sights around Jackson, Wyoming*
- *Including pre- and post-conference tours*



Come Join Us! Plan to pack your bags and head to Jackson, Wyoming, October 12-15, for the 2010 National ESP Conference hosted by the Western Region!

Members...Who Needs Them?

Jennifer Bridge, Alpha Kappa Chapter, Membership Recruitment and Retention Committee Member

In Extension, we track numbers, and the more the better! While we know quality is important, we need quantity! Quantity means more money, more ideas, and more people to share responsibilities! Epsilon Sigma Phi is no different... or is it? As chapters work to maintain membership numbers, we need to keep our mission in mind. Epsilon Sigma Phi is dedicated to fostering standards of excellence in the Extension System and developing the Extension profession and professional.

Most all state Extension systems are struggling with cutbacks. Our potential for members is dwindling with the loss of personnel. Budget cuts are occurring not only in Extension budgets but also in our personal finances due

to lack of raises, furloughs or cutbacks. Some members have made the decision not to invest in professional growth by not joining or rejoining ESP. While our membership numbers may decline, our membership quality does not need to decline.

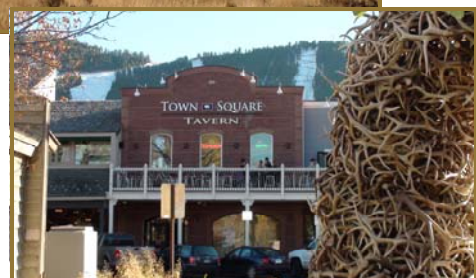
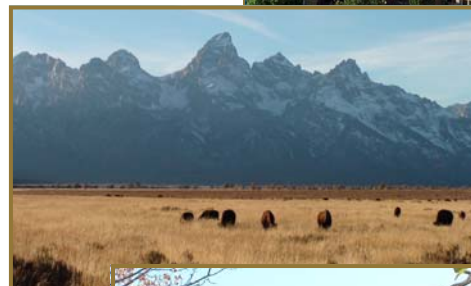
So how can you, as a current member, support ESP? Be active. Do more than just pay your dues. Serve on a committee or in a leadership role. Encourage and support fellow members as they serve in these capacities. Explore why you are a member by taking time to determine how you want to grow professionally through your investment. Be a positive influence on the Cooperative Extension System. Be more than a number. For more information on how you can be involved in ESP, explore our website at www.espnational.org.

National Conference Registration Going Well

Bob Ohlensehlen, National Executive Director

Registration for the National ESP Conference to be held in October in Jackson, Wyoming, is going well. Currently there are 184 members and guests registered for the conference. Even though the conference's Early Bird registration has closed, there is still plenty of time to register for the conference. Regular registration fee is \$475 and you can register at this price through September 15th. The fee changes to \$550 on September 16th, so register soon!

The tours are filling up with only a few places remaining on the Yellowstone Tour. There is plenty of room on the Grand Teton ½-day tour and the Fish Hatchery Tour on Friday afternoon. Many of our members are staying over and flying out on Saturday morning, so the Friday afternoon tour has several planning to attend. If you did not sign up for a tour you can still do so by editing your registration to add a tour. If you need to pay with a different credit card than you originally used, or if you need to pay by check, simply edit your registration and add the tour of your choice. Remember, the final day to sign up for tours is September 15th!



New Method of Submitting New Members Available

Bob Ohlenshlen, National Executive Director



In the past there have been some problems in getting new members on board as Annual Members in Epsilon Sigma Phi. The National

Office prepares the new member certificates for newly initiated members. The reason that the certificates are done here in the National Office instead of by simply using downloaded certificates is that each member is assigned a member number and we must have the address and emails to enable us to correspond with these new members.

In the National Office we take the management of our members and their records very seriously. When a new member is received by the National Office, we give the members their

numbers and enter their addresses and emails into our system. We would like to do that as soon as possible so that we can begin communicating with new members by providing notice of newsletters like the Communiqué which contains important deadline information and the *ESP Connection*, the ESP newsletter that is published six times per year. This past year we received several new members without addresses or emails. Failure to receive this information delays our ability to serve these new members.

Each year we have members who fail to renew their membership in our organization. It is our responsibility to see that it is not because we have not done our job in communicating with our members. There are many benefits of ESP membership, but if members are not aware of those benefits, are they really benefits?

The new procedure will be for Membership Chairs to enter new member information on the website under the "For More Information On" menu in the Membership and Recruitment heading. There you will find a link to the online form which asks for the information necessary to add a member to our membership database. Once the new member's information is entered the National Office receives a copy and the Membership Chair receives a copy of the information by email as well.

Hopefully this new system will serve two purposes - first, to speed up our connection with new members from the National Office, and second, to make the whole task easier for our chapter Membership Chairs. If you have questions or comments please contact Bob or Jeana at the ESP National Office.

Growing ESP Opportunities for Retirees

Michael McKinney, Member Recruitment and Retention Committee

The two recent ESP Family & Friends cruises to the Caribbean and the Panama Canal have been hugely successful. Now the Life Member/Retirees Ad Hoc Committee is looking at other travel opportunities for ESP members in 2011. They are currently looking at a Global Education Study Tour that would explore the culture, food, agriculture, religion, and educational systems of various global locations and still offer opportunities to photograph and visit famous sites in the host country. Dan James (TX) is organizing this opportunity for the committee. The study tour would include seven to ten days in a country and two to four days of travel. In some countries a weekend host family experience may be arranged. Possible locations are:

Country	Time of Year	Estimated Cost
Japan	Spring 2011 (Cherry blossoms)	
Japan	Fall 2011 (Fall foliage)	\$4,500.00
Australia	Mid-January to April 2011	\$4,500.00
Costa Rica	January to April 2011	\$3,500.00
Germany	Fall 2011	\$3,000.00
Greece	Spring through Fall 2011	\$3,000.00
Denmark	Late May through Sept. 2011	\$3,000.00
Poland	Summer 2011	\$3,000.00

Participation fee would include airfare from one U.S. city, international insurance, in-country lodging and tour and travel guide services. Life Members/Retirees will be surveyed by email and at the Conference in Jackson, WY, to determine level of interest and points of interest.

The National ESP Board recently appointed a group of Life Members to serve as an ad hoc committee, to draft a proposal that would create a standing committee for Life Members/Retirees. They are also looking at ways to expand communication between and among Life Members/Retirees and the ESP organization, as well as keeping everyone informed on issues relating to retirees. Life Members now make up over half of the ESP membership.

The Value of Cultural Immersion Experiences

Dan McGrath, Gamma Chapter - Oregon

The following article is written by Dan McGrath. Dan is a member of Gamma Chapter (Oregon) ESP, and a former national winner of the ESP International Service Award. After reading Dan's experience in Mexico, you will definitely want to pursue an international program adventure.

It was a real challenge preparing for a year sabbatical in southern Mexico. There were so many details (the house, the dog, bank accounts, what to bring, etc.). My wife and I began to hear all the stories about the dangers of Mexico and everything that can go wrong. My friend Brian, who has had significant experience in international assignments, encouraged me. He said, "Don't worry too much. Don't sweat the details. Just do it. You will have the experience of a lifetime." He was right. Having a deep language and cultural immersion experience was profound.

Oaxaca is four to six hours south of Mexico City. It is a high desert country in the central highlands at an elevation of about 5,000 feet. It is hot during the day, but the breeze comes up in the afternoon and it is cool enough for a sweater or light jacket at night. Water has always been precious there. I work in agriculture. We choose Oaxaca because it is one of the most indigenous and also one of the poorest of the 31 states that make up the United States of Mexico. About 45 percent of Oregon's farm workers come from the state of Oaxaca. We traveled to Oaxaca to learn a different perspective, from the other end of the migrant trail.



Living in Mexico was very different than vacationing or just traveling through. Setting up a house and living in a place for an extended period with limited language skills is a real challenge. Dealing with water (constantly running out, well, cistern, muddy, non potable, etc.), gas, electric, shopping for food, health sanitation, paying utility bills, dealing with title and car insurance in Spanish, hiring a lawyer to help us to get an extended visa—the list goes on. Add on to that the culture shock. It is crowded, colorful, noisy, dusty, friendly, endlessly strange and interesting. When you drop into another culture with limited language skills, it reduces you to a child-like status. I did not know how to do anything with confidence. So many times we had to depend on the kindness of strangers. I will never forget that.

After three months, we began to get our feet on the ground. We established daily rhythms of working, shopping,

getting exercise, staying healthy, feeding ourselves and running the house. I worked on a project with USAID. At first, I only understood about 20 percent of what was said at the weekly staff meetings. The year swept by. We made friends. We joined a Mexican dance troop and performed in the villages. We had a lifetime of experiences and challenges. We were surprised at how much and how quickly we fell in love with Mexico.

Suddenly, the year was over. We were back in Oregon, back in Corvallis. It was difficult to adjust to the streets that are so empty, clean, quiet and safe. We missed the excitement of the Mexican culture and the warmth of the people. The experience cracked our hearts open. We will never be the same—that is a good thing! If you have an opportunity to experience a cultural and language immersion, go for it. It will change your life.

Ordering ESP Supplies Online Now Available!

Bob Ohlensehlen, National Executive Director



Hopefully, ordering the ESP supplies that you need in your chapters just got easier. You are now able to order any of the ESP supplies we have available by going online to the [ESP Website](#). To order supplies, select either the "Resources" tab or the "Materials" tab on the ESP Homepage.

We are using a tool that should be familiar to most of you. We use a shopping cart program on the website to allow you as users to select one or more items in the desired quantity. The site has pictures of all of the items that we have for sale.

When you have selected everything that you need, you will then checkout. The current program is set up to require payment by checks. If there is enough interest, a second system that will allow us to take credit cards as payment will be put in place. Currently we are just doing payment by check since that seems to be the preferred method for chapters.

The Marketing Committee is always exploring what the needs of our members are for items to carry. If you have any ideas, please pass them along.



You Can't Win...

- If Extension Agents are usually in the office – they should get out more often.
- If they are out when you call – they aren't on the job.
- If they are at home at night – they are neglecting outside contacts.
- If they aren't at home at night – they are wasting time on frivolous things.
- If they agree with you – they lack originality and conviction.
- If they don't agree with you – they are ignorant.
- If they are too busy for casual talk – their jobs have gone to their heads.
- If they engage in casual talk – that's all they have to do.
- If they can't give you an immediate answer – they are incompetent.
- If they do give you an immediate answer – they don't think things through.
- If they appear cordial – they are playing politics.
- If they appear aloof – they should be trimmed down to size.
- If they have strong opinions – they are bullheaded.
- If they try to see both sides of the issue – they are pussyfooting.
- If they have been on the job a short time – they lack experience.
- If they have been on the job for a long time – they are in a rut.
- If they are well dressed – they think they are big shots.
- If they aren't well dressed - they are not proper representatives.
- If they take a vacation – they've been on one all year.

*Alana W. West, Cherokee County,
SC Extension Agent*

Important Dates Ahead – Mark Your Calendar!

AUGUST

- July/August Issue of *ESP Connection* posted on Website
- Collect final payments of 2010 ESP dues
- Registration available for 2010 ESP National Conference

SEPTEMBER

- Registration available for 2010 ESP National Conference

OCTOBER

- September/October Issue of *ESP Connection* distributed
- Distribution of 2011 Membership Renewal Information to Chapters
- October 12-15, 2010 ESP National Conference, Jackson Hole, WY
- Submit National Conference reimbursements for committee and voting delegates

NATIONAL ESP CONFERENCE DATES

- 2010 National ESP Conference, October 10-15, Jackson Hole, Wyoming
- 2011 National ESP Conference, October 9-13, Syracuse, New York
- 2012 National ESP Conference, October 6-9. Mobile, Alabama

Position Announcement

Assistantship in Technology Enhanced Instruction

Department of Agricultural Leadership, Education, & Communications
Texas A&M University
College Station, Texas 77843-2116

Position Description

Work with faculty member in designing and delivering Departmental programs and courses offered at a distance; develop instructional modules and reuseable learning objects; assist in the conduct and reporting of research; and carryout other duties as assigned.

Qualifications

Bachelor's and/or Master's degree in Agricultural Leadership/Education/Communications or closely related field; Knowledge and expertise in instructional design; Evidence of effective teaching and presentation skills; Self-starter with a positive attitude; Must be fully admissible to respective graduate program; Knowledge and expertise in using online technologies is preferred. (i.e., Blackboard/WebCT; audio/video software; Adobe software etc.)

Appointment and Starting Date

To be considered for the position, interested persons must make application to Texas A&M University's Department of Agricultural Leadership, Education, and Communications. Expected start date is January or as negotiated. Position is renewable each semester assuming satisfactory progress. Screening of applicants will begin immediately. The position includes a competitive salary, tuition, and benefits

Contact

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