



Phi Sigma Tau National Alumni Chapter

Bulletin #52

November, 2019

Society News

With your copy of the journal, I have included an August Newsletter as well as the November Newsletter. Much of the August letter includes information supplied by chapters of their activity near the end of the last school year. The November letter contains reports of activities at the first of this school year. Usually, I have supplied some financial information in the Alumni Bulletins, and now that information will be in the August Newsletters so that all Phi Sigma Tau members and advisors will be able to see that. The Society continues to be in a solid financial position. The August report also has information about the Executive Council, notice of the retirement of long-time Council member, Dr. Anne Wiles, the election of the new Vice President, Dr. Charlie Huenemann, and the appointment of Dr. Dawn Hutchinson to the Council (Dr. Hutchinson was an Adjunct Council Member for several years).

During the 2018-2019 school year, Phi Sigma Tau chartered two new chapters, one at The University of Tennessee at Martin and one at Carnegie Mellon. Recently, however, we have revoked the charters of five chapters, the ones at Whittier College, The University of Massachusetts at Amherst, The College of St. Rose, Wheeling Jesuit University, and Tri-College University. We regret the revocations. Two were because the schools (Wheeling and St. Rose) had dropped their philosophy majors, and the others were for long-time inactivity and lack of interest on the part of the faculty. I have already heard from one other chapter where the school has dropped the major, and I suspect that we are going through a period when philosophy (and perhaps Humanities, in general) will be seen less favorably than before. Schools looking to cut programs often target the Humanities areas, but some of the problem, of course, comes from the low enrollments in these programs. Many of our chapters are at smaller schools that have small philosophy programs, so I would not be surprised to hear of more programs dropping their philosophy majors. We have revoked charters in the past because schools have dropped the philosophy major.

During the 2018-2019 school year, Phi Sigma Tau inducted 1241 new members. That is our fifth best year to date. Generally, we have inducted about 1225 new members each year, but in view of the cancellation of philosophy programs, we may see that our numbers gradually decline. We do have inquiries about new chapters, so there may be new

chapters replacing some of the revoked ones.

The Executive Council voted last summer to give a complimentary subscription to *Dialogue* to the libraries of all schools that have chapters of our Society. However, because of our staff limitations, subscriptions are only provided to schools where advisors provided the appropriate addresses; we do not have the staff to contact all libraries for addresses. Seventy-seven advisors provided me with addresses of their school libraries, and a list of addresses was quickly and easily assembled. The complimentary subscriptions will begin with this issue, the first of Volume 61. We are delighted to have the work of philosophy students more widely distributed, and we hope that this will encourage more students to submit work to the journal.

We are still an all-volunteer society, and we are still looking for new volunteers; the next few years will be crucial for Phi Sigma Tau. As our Society has continued to grow, the work has also increased. In addition, several members of the Executive Council are now well past the usual retirement age, and we need to consider a transition to younger National Officers. Particularly, we are looking to replace the President, Dr. Lee Rice, and the Executive Secretary, Dr. David Gibson. Dr. Rice has been associated with Phi Sigma Tau for more than 40 years, and Dr. Gibson has been Executive Secretary for fifteen years.

The **Annual Report for 2018-19** contains more detailed accountings of income, expenses, chapter activities, and PST projects. Any National Alumni Chapter member who would like to receive the report (available as an Adobe Acrobat email attachment) should contact the Executive Secretary.

The new version of the *PST Manual* is also available in Adobe format. The Adobe version now contains information which is up to date, as well as all printed forms, memos, history, chapter lists, an earlier copy of the Alumni Bulletin, and a newsletter. NAC members who wish to receive the *PST Manual* as an email attachment should drop me a brief email message ("send Manual" is fine).

Yours cordially,

David E. Gibson
Executive Secretary
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NAC Membership

Membership in the National Alumni Chapter continues to be five dollars per year for hard copy of Newsletters, the journal, and the Alumni Bulletin; we have no plans to increase that charge. However, members are also given the option of renewing **at no charge** for email delivery of material. We do plan to continue sending hard copies for the first year of membership in the National Alumni Chapter, and we will be happy to continue with hard copies for those who prefer that.

We will be able to contact you by email if you have given us your email address. However, we do not know when you move or change email addresses. Please let us know if your street address or email address changes so that we can update the PST files. We would like to be able to keep in contact with you. If you need to change an address, please feel free to contact us by email.

Email addresses for members who make them available are taken from both NAC renewal and registration forms. If you neglected to provide an email address [or registered using an earlier registration form which did not contain a space for email information] and would like to be on the NAC email distribution list, you need only drop me a message [david.gibson@pepperdine.edu] from your email account with the Subject Line: "ADD TO NAC EMAIL." **The NAC membership database (including email listings) is not given or sold to any other organization (educational or commercial).**

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DIALOGUE

This issue of *Dialogue* is the first of our 62nd volume. We hope that you enjoy the enclosed issue. Many thanks to those who are interested enough in philosophy to support us through their hard work, talent, and submissions.

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From the Executive Secretary

I would like to include a section in future Alumni Bulletins for recollections of Alumni Chapter members. In the past, I have included some of these. I know that many of you have had interesting experiences in your careers, whether those careers have been short or long; some of you have been Alumni Chapter members for years. Your study of and interest in philosophy may have affected your work in a variety of ways. Please consider sharing some of your experiences with others. Has philosophy been an asset to some of your work? Have you been able to solve some problem in part because of

learning to think philosophically? Or, you may have good memories of a favorite professor; I know I have wonderful memories of favorite students. Consider sharing those memories (or even quirks) with others. You may remember a favorite phrase or suggestion from a professor. Some special class experience! Some particularly enlightening reading! Some insight! Perhaps something really frustrating! See if others might have experienced something similar. And if you don't mind, perhaps I can include something in the Newsletters that might encourage current philosophy students. Please let me know.

And finally, a very Happy Thanksgiving to all of you. Thanks very much for your continued interest in philosophy and in Phi Sigma Tau. I hope you enjoy seeing what current students are thinking and writing about. And may some of the articles bring back fond memories of your time as a philosophy student. Best wishes.

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PST Executive Council Members

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