



### 2020 National Convention in Albuquerque, New Mexico

#### *Changes to the Schedule*

As we gathered feedback from the 2019 convention in Cleveland, one thing became clear: the schedule of rushing to arrive for several hours of programming on Thursday evening, followed by a half-day of programming and then free time on Friday, makes the trip to the convention stressful for some of our chapters, particularly those traveling long distances. Considering this feedback, in addition to the rising costs of the equipment required to put on the Research & Creativity Forum, we decided to move poster presentations back to regular, timed presentation sessions for the 2020 convention. We used the extra time in Thursday evening's schedule to plan regional dessert socials so delegates can get to know each other before business meetings get started.

Feedback from past conventions also told us that our social event, Alpha Chi's Got Talent, needed some refreshing. The convention committee brainstormed ideas and decided to plan a Trivia Night that would be hosted by Levey Saintil. Many students expressed interest in this event, and Levey prepared a great slate of questions, prizes, and entertainment. We hope that this new event, coupled with the regional dessert socials, will promote networking between our delegates and help them get to know each other better at the beginning of the weekend before presentations and business begin.

We also planned a quiet room for use during convention sessions for delegates needing a quiet moment to focus, reflect, or recharge. To promote an atmosphere of reflection and relaxation, the room was to be set with soft seating and lighting, a soothing aroma diffuser, motivational cards to write on, and quiet music.

#### *Attendance*

301 delegates were registered to attend the 2020 convention, representing another consecutive year of declining registrations. 64 chapters registered to attend, with 162 students registered to make individual presentations. We had an impressive ten teams participate in the Collaborative Research Competition - our second-highest rate of participation since the competition began.

#### *Issues that Persist*

In the months leading up to the convention, I spoke with sponsors from several chapters that I determined might need encouragement or assistance with bringing a group to the convention in Albuquerque. While we did have a few chapters register to attend for the first time in several years, even more chapters fell into the category of unable to attend in 2020. Some do struggle with garnering student interest; however, more and more chapters are struggling to navigate the current trend of budget cuts on campuses across the country. This is an issue that will only increase in severity over the next few years, especially now that the COVID-19 pandemic has emerged as another disruptor to an already uncertain time in higher education.

## **Chapter Management System (CMS) Transition**

This summer we focused on completing the transition to the new Chapter Management System (CMS), which went live on September 9, 2019. This transition was extremely tumultuous, particularly during the fall 2019 semester as chapters began inviting students to membership. I appreciate the patience extended to the national office by our gracious chapter sponsors as we worked hard to mitigate the issues that arose. We faced many challenges, and I am so grateful to Levey and Melinda for going well beyond what was asked of them to help smooth things over as the fall progressed.

We have made many improvements to the CMS, but our work is nowhere near finished. We do not have faith in Virtual Atlantic's ability to finish the job correctly and are exploring what other options might look like.

## **ACHS Participation**

In February, I attended my first ACHS meeting in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. I attended several informative sessions, and especially enjoyed networking with and learning from professionals from other honor societies. I joined the Public Information Committee and look forward to working with them as I learn more about how ACHS functions.

## **Affinity Partnerships**

In late 2019 we were notified by Nationwide that they would be discontinuing their affinity partnerships as of 12/31/19. This is a disappointing loss of approximately \$65,000 in royalties per year. I am currently working with GEICO to secure them as a replacement so we can continue to provide a reliable discount on insurance for our members. While I don't think they'll exactly match what we were receiving previously from Nationwide, I do expect us to receive approximately \$50,000 per year in royalties if I am able to secure a contract.