



PRESIDENT'S COLUMN: GOLDSCHMIDT RECAP AND LOOKING TO THE FUTURE



Roberta Rudnick

It was a pleasure to see so many friends at the Goldschmidt2018 Conference in Boston (Massachusetts, USA) this August and to witness first-hand the amazing breadth of science that is geochemistry. This meeting was the largest yet in North America, with >3,300 registered delegates. The Geochemical Society (GS) was able to provide a record number of grants to support the attendance of students and early career scientists from low to upper middle-income countries, as well as US-based students from underrepresented groups

and institutions (e.g. community colleges, four-year colleges, and non-PhD granting institutions). We are appreciative to the National Science Foundation, NASA, and Elsevier for financial support of these programs. Making each Goldschmidt conference accessible for the next generation of geochemists is a high priority for the society, and there are plans to continue these programs into the future – so please help us to spread the word!

The midday plenaries were a highlight of the meeting. They provided stimulating lectures on exoplanets, anthropogenic influences on oceanic oxygen levels, life at extremes within the oceanic crust, the origin of the gases in planets, and a mid-week lecture focusing on strategies to improve inclusiveness in our discipline. If you missed any of these lectures, you can view them on the Goldschmidt YouTube channel (<https://www.youtube.com/user/goldschmidtconf>), where you can also view the pop-up talks.

This year, for the first time, the society implemented a code of conduct for the meeting, which every registrant agreed to uphold. In addition, we had a team of 25 volunteers, led by Liz Sikes (Chair of the Ethics Committee), who underwent a half-day training on harassment and how to respond to it. These volunteers wore AMIGo (A More Inclusive Goldschmidt) ribbons on their badges and were on-call to handle complaints related to violations of the code of conduct. I am delighted to say that no such complaints were received. Let's hope that this is a sign for the future!

Unfortunately, this year there were also a rather large number of absentee delegates. While the reasons for cancellations varied, it seems that obtaining a visa proved more difficult this year. In response to this, the GS and the European Association of Geochemistry (EAG) have instituted a refund policy. Basically, refunds of paid registration (minus an administrative fee) may be provided in cases where visas were unable to be obtained, provided the delegate can demonstrate that they applied for the visa within a week of receiving confirmation of the acceptance of their abstract. Unfortunately, abstract fees cannot be refunded. It is hoped that this new policy will make it less difficult and less risky for foreign delegates to participate in future Goldschmidt meetings.

The GS has about \$2 million in assets that are held within an investment account, for which we hire an investment manager to maximize growth while minimizing risk. These assets play several roles for the society. First, they provide a 'buffer' in case of financial disaster; second, the income they generate helps to offset expenses associated with running the society. In the future, the society may also tap these funds to pay for new initiatives aimed at enriching a member's experience, following a strategic planning process (see more about this below). As we look towards the future, the Finance Committee of the GS has recommended to the Board of Directors that the GS allocate the assets to socially and environmentally responsible investments that reflect the values of the society. More information about this will be forthcoming in the annual report to members.

Lastly, I would like to let our members know that the Geochemical Society will be developing and implementing a strategic plan. Part of this process is to receive input from the membership: what is going well, what can be improved, and how the society can better support and benefit the membership. Please be on the lookout in the new year for a survey arriving in your inbox seeking your input.

We are always happy to hear from our members, so please don't hesitate to send me a message at the following e-mail address if you have ideas about the direction and role of our society: president@geochemsoc.org.

Wishing you all a festive holiday season and a prosperous New Year.

Roberta Rudnick, President, Geochemical Society

VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION

The Geochemical Society thrives thanks to the efforts of many dedicated volunteers. Our sincere gratitude goes to the following GS members whose board and committee terms conclude in 2018.

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