



SIGMA TAU DELTA

INTERNATIONAL ENGLISH HONOR SOCIETY

THE SOUTHWESTERN

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SOUTHWESTERN
REGIONAL
NEWSLETTER

GREETINGS FROM YOUR NEW STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE, HANNAH STEWART

My name is Hannah Stewart. This year, at the 2008 International Convention, I was graciously elected to be the new Student Representative for the Southwestern Region, along with Kyle Baker, who was elected as the new Associate Student Representative. I am deeply honored by this great privilege, and I will do my best faithfully represent our exemplary society. One of my duties as Student Representative (SR) is to compile two newsletters for our region. These newsletters, including the one you are presently reading, will keep you up-to-date and informed on all the goings-on at Sigma Tau Delta. These newsletters should also serve to keep us in close contact with one another. I am eager to take on this responsibility.

Let me tell you a little about myself: I am and English major at Wayland Baptist University, specializing in young adult literature. Wayland is located in the small town of Plainview, Texas, whose name really does describe the landscape. The people are kind, generous and know how to take things slow. When I am not in class or studying, I am usually reading. I find great joy in reading, and I read obscene amount of literature. Most weekends, I drive to Lubbock, a large city about an hour away, to spend time with my family, particularly my little cousin who likes astronauts and eating sand.

I have high hopes for our region this year, the highest of which is a goal to have a regional conference. I am currently working with the newly elected Regent, Christopher Flynn, to put this plan into action. After speaking with many regional members, I realize that many students do not have the time to go to the

International Conference, but still have a great desire to be involved in Sigma Tau Delta events. I would like to offer our region the opportunity to take on a more active role in $\Sigma\tau\Delta$ by gathering together in Austin for a regional conference in the fall of 2008. As this time approaches, I will give you more information on dates and available activities. We will have many exciting opportunities, one of which will be a workshop one how to submit a piece for the International Conference of 2009 in Minneapolis, MN.

I would also like to see a greater contribution from Southwestern chapters in the Fall Regional Newsletter. I would like to give students and faculty alike the opportunity to be published in our fall regional newsletter. Please submit your pieces to me in the Fall and, together with ASR Kyle Baker and Regent Chris Flynn, your piece will be reviewed for publication.

Finally, I would like to say that I am here to serve. I believe that it is my responsibility to give you every opportunity to achieve success, while you are a member of the grandest of all English honor societies, Sigma Tau Delta. If you have any suggestions, comments, fun ideas, or simply would like to stay in touch, email me at Siren1034@gmail.com.

I am looking forward to working with all of you in the year to come! Have a fabulous summer!

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Hannah Stewart is a Junior at Wayland Baptist University. She is the President of the Eta Theta Chapter of $\Sigma\tau\Delta$





The New Sigma Tau Delta Logo

As you know, the Greek letters that compose our society's name, *Sigma, Tau, and Delta*, signify our society's commitment to the goals of service, truth, and design. Recently, at our

2008 convention in Louisville, the society unveiled a revamped seal for our organization. While some might think this is simply cosmetic maintenance to our logo, it recently occurred to me that the presence of a new logo affords each chapter with an opportunity to evaluate our own commitment to those values.

Service is a key element of our society and revivifying our commitment to that value is critically important to not only your local chapter's continued development, but also to the development of your own individual self. Every chapter in our organization exists within a local context of geography, demographics, and prevailing conditions. Essentially, this means that each chapter has a unique opportunity to extend to our own communities the benefits of our commitment to service. Our organization, more than many others, has an air of academic prestige that grants us exceptional opportunities to render service to our communities through the sharing of knowledge, learning materials, or as a forum for free and open literary expression. In your local area, there are people that are illiterate that desperately need your confidence as intelligent and well-read students. Local institutions in your area are always open to the donation of resources like books, academic materials, and other sources of information. More impressively, our organization can provide a welcoming environment for people who want to learn about poetry and prose, but are put off by a sense of anti-intellectualism. In the coming year, each chapter can 'dream big' and commit themselves to exemplifying Sigma Tau Delta's dedication to service. I certainly challenge you to do so.

Truth is at once one of the most self-evident and elusive elements in the human experience. At times, what appears to be true seems incontrovertible and unquestionable. However, in many other situations, one must analyze the spaces between perception and reality in order to discover truth, if it is even possible to be known. These experiences are broad and vague, to be sure. Every human can relate to the dilemma of seeking truth where truth is obfuscated by circumstance and device. As students of written artistic expression, we have a profound appreciation for the value of truth. Our academic discipline calls for us to examine issues that are no longer contemporary and discover the underlying

meanings that are still potent and viable. As the next year unfolds, each of us should look to ourselves to become reacquainted with our wondrous relationship to the pursuit of truth, especially as it applies to chapter activities. At the convention, several intelligent ideas were exchanged regarding strategies to transform local chapter meetings into vital and active moments to examine truth, be it in the form of academic discussion or the reading of an individual's highly personal poetic expressions. I personally invite you to explore what your chapter is doing to affirm our commitment to the pursuit of truth and if necessary, alter your strategies to ensure that this challenge is being met.

How then, one might ask, does 'design' factor into Sigma Tau Delta's core principles. Design, from one perspective, might be an organized effort to achieve a goal. From another perspective, design might imply the study of the structures in which truth appears. Still to others, design signifies intention and the enactment of one's will. Whatever definition you apply to the principle, the notion of intentional organization guides our academic and literary pursuits. When we examine poems, we explore the construction of the poem as well as its content. Perhaps this is why slam poetry is such an inspiring form of expression. By nature, its design implores you to look more intently at the issues on display in the powerful words of the poet. Organizationally, each chapter uses principles of design to guide chapter growth and development, as well as to retain continued interest in the subjects we enjoy. Our lives are guided and structured by design, much to our benefit. Even the most anti-establishment individuals would agree that having a 'method to one's madness' displays our intellectual progress as humans. In your local chapter and school, design surrounds you and binds your academic pursuits into a fruitful direction.

Throughout the upcoming months, we could certainly improve our local chapters by recognizing the unifying effect that design has on the way we live, study, and express ourselves.

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The New Sigma Tau Delta Logo Cont.

In closing, I would like to invite you to visit Sigma Tau Delta's website, www.english.org, and take a look at the new logo for our honor society. Let the core principles displayed there guide you to a fresh evaluation of what goals are being pursued in your own local chapter. Clearly, with a renewed commitment to these values, our society can do nothing but continue to prosper in the months and years ahead.

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Kyle Baker

Kyle Baker - Associate Student Representative

University of Oklahoma, Norman Campus

Kyle Baker is the new Associate Student Representative for the Southwestern Region. A 2008 graduate of the University of Oklahoma, Kyle will attend Graduate School at OU, where he plans to complete his Doctorate in American Literature, with an emphasis in Early Modernist Novels and the Harlem Renaissance. He is also very excited about having the opportunity to teach two sections of Freshman Composition, beginning in Fall 2008. His favorite novel is *Invisible Man*, by fellow Oklahoman Ralph Ellison and his favorite poet is T.S. Eliot. Kyle is currently the Vice-President of the Alpha Theta Psi chapter of Sigma Tau Delta. Kyle is the father of two daughters and is originally from Bartlesville,

OK. He now resides in Oklahoma City, OK, where he spends what little free time he has crossing off items on an endless list of honey-do's and preventing his English springer spaniel from destroying the backyard.



Kyle Baker, Graduate Student at the University of Oklahoma

Greetings, Southwest! From Micah Hicks

Greetings, Southwest!

Though I'm from your region, it seems like we haven't yet been properly introduced. I currently live in Magnolia, Arkansas and am a Senior at Southern Arkansas University, majoring in English. I live in a duplex off-campus and have painted poetry onto the walls of my room. Right now, I work in the writing center at my school and pick up the occasional bread writing, but one day I hope to make a living exclusively from my fiction.

As I'm the Senior Student Advisor, I'm really excited about this next year with Sigma Tau Delta. I haven't had much time to talk to my new SR's and ASR's, but I can already tell that they are going to be a great group to work with. My goals for this coming year are—not surprisingly—to get ready for the convention in Minneapolis. Aside from that, we're working on some very interesting things right now. Since one of the big things at this spring's board meeting was the issue of branding and a possible logo change for our organization, I'm asking every region to include in its newsletter at least one article devoted to interpreting or commenting on our three symbols: star, torch, and pen. There has also been a lot of talk concerning regional journals and other publications, so I would like to create an online resource of some kind to offer tips in the creation and management of these. Now, for the first time ever, our

group of student leaders is working with the new



Micah Hicks, senior at Southern Arkansas University

Alumni Representative, Dan Hardy, and we're hoping that some Alumni projects can come out of that. Also, this year Stephanie Schiefelbein—the Junior SA—will be organizing the book drive for Minneapolis. All in all, it's looking like an ambitious year!

My personal goals for the next year are no less lofty. Last December, I applied to six of the top MFA programs in fiction writing. This time around, I was not accepted, but I'm not giving up. The competition is very fierce, most of the time hundreds of applicants for as few as four fiction spots. I'm going to spend the summer working on a stronger portfolio to try again for the same programs and others, and at the same time I'll be trying to complete my first novel. As far as summer jobs go, right now I'm considering working with a traveling carnival (research for a short story collection), but I don't know if that idea is going to go anywhere or not.

It looks like it's shaping up to be a very busy, but very fun, next year with Sigma Tau Delta. I can't wait to see you all in Minneapolis!

Micah Dean Hicks, SA

Christopher Flynn, Southwest Regent

I'm happy to have this opportunity to introduce myself to the Southwestern Region. My name is Christopher Flynn, and I'm the new Southwest Regent. I return to the Sigma Tau Delta Board of Directors eight years after last serving as a student advisor. I teach at St. Edward's University in Austin, Texas, served as SA when I was a Ph.D. student at UCLA, and before that was the Far West Student Representative.

I am originally from New York, the city an undergraduate professor of mine at Indiana University used to call "The Cultural Capital of the Western World." I'm not sure about that, but it was a fascinating place to start. Born in Brooklyn and raised in Queens and New Jersey, I studied music before deciding on an academic career. My trombone playing took me to The Juilliard School and Indiana University, where I received my undergraduate degree. From there I went on to work as a journalist for several years. In the late 1990s I decided to head back to school for graduate work. I got an M.A. in English from California State Polytechnic University, Pomona, and then received my Ph.D. in 2002 from UCLA.

I served as sponsor of the Sigma Tau Delta chapter at the University of Nebraska at Omaha from 2002-04, and have been sponsor of the chapter at St. Edward's for the

past three years. This year my first book, *Americans in British Literature, 1770-1832*, was published. My research has focused mostly on 18th-century and Romantic British literature. I also write poetry and have published creative nonfiction.

When not working, I can usually be found on a bicycle. I have been competing in triathlons and bicycle races for several years now, and am the adviser of St. Edward's University's cycling team.

I'm happy to have the opportunity to serve as your regent, and look forward to our tentatively but hopefully planned Regional Conference here in Austin in the Fall, where we'll work with you to help you prepare proposals and give confident presentations. It's going to be a great year and I'm looking forward to being part of it with all of you. My email is christof@stedwards.edu. I can be reached that way, or at

St. Edward's University,
Austin, TX 78704.



Dr. Flynn is an Assistant Professor for St. Edwards University

Greetings from Wisconsin

My name is Stephanie Schiefelbein and I am the new Student Advisor from the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire. Micah Hicks is my partner in crime, the senior Student Advisor. As Student Advisors, it is our job to represent the student members of $\Sigma\tau\Delta$ on the national Board of Directors. With more than 8,000 students inducted into Sigma Tau Delta annually it's a lot of students to represent, so we do this with the help of the Regional Student Representatives and Associate Representatives who do their best to represent the students in their region. But in order for these regional representatives to better represent you, I encourage all of you to get more involved at the regional or even the national level. This upcoming year I challenge all of you to participate in a regional or national convention. Last March, the International Convention took place in Louisville, Kentucky. It was my first time attending a National Convention and it definitely a worthwhile experience. I met students from all across the United States, heard outstanding fiction and scholarly essays, and had the experience reading my own paper at a

session. There was a leadership workshop, guest authors, a bad poetry contest and a closing banquet. Attending the convention made me realize all the opportunities available for students in $\Sigma\tau\Delta$ and it made getting involved at the national level a less daunting experience. All members of Sigma Tau Delta are welcome to submit their creative works and essays to be read at the convention. Entire chapters can also submit panel proposals. Accepted works are eligible for several cash awards that are announced at the closing banquet. Scholarships, for which all members are able to apply, are also announced at the convention. Minneapolis, Minnesota is the destination for the National Convention in March of 2009. Born and raised in Minnesota, I promise you that it will be a worthwhile experience. Once again, I encourage all of you to submit your essays, panel proposals and creative works to the convention, apply for our abundance of scholarships and other opportunities, attend the National Convention in March 2009 and get more involved! Thanks!

Stephanie Schiefelbein
Student Advisor
University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire

