

The Geologic Times



ESA Newsletter

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Edited by Sara Mana

ESA goes to Lancaster for NEGSA 2022

By Sara Mana, ESA Advisor

Every year the Earth Science Association organizes a student led trip to the North East Geological Society of America conference (NEGSA). In the past couple of years, due to COVID, these events have run virtually so it was a great pleasure to return in person this year. Seeing students flourish while attending this national conference is one of the highlights of being a faculty member of a department that offers students the opportunity to complete a senior research project as a capstone of their major. This year we were able to bring thirteen students with us: some seniors, some not; some geology majors, some not (Figure 1). Congratulations to all students that have attended, networked, and maybe even presented at NEGSA. May this be the first of many occasions in which you see the clear connection between your hard work as a student and the world out there with its many career paths and future possibilities. The articles in this ESA Newsletter represent the account of some of the participants.



Figure 1: Group Photo at NEGSA 2022. From Left to Right: Erin Fyfe, Kyle McCaffery, Lucas Connaster, Valerie Gaouette, Antonio Cali, Demitra McManus, Anton Haughton, Korina Rosario, Willow Rickertson, Kyra McKinley, Ava Kopellas, Emily Cote and Alan Aparicio-Beltran.

My NEGSA Experience

By Ava Kopellas, GLS major, class of 2022

Initially, I was extremely nervous for the NEGSA conference. I have always suffered from performance anxiety, regardless of who I am presenting to. I figured that if I grow short of breath, stumble over my words, and tremble during the routine presentations I give during Senior Research nearly every week, then NEGSA would be infinitely worse. However, to my surprise, it could not have gone better. Prior to the actual presentation, I had rehearsed and practiced my spiel with Sara, my Senior Research advisor. She had given me pointers regarding the flow of my presentation and reminded me of important key details that must be mentioned during my delivery. This short window of practice time helped me a great deal, it allowed me to formulate

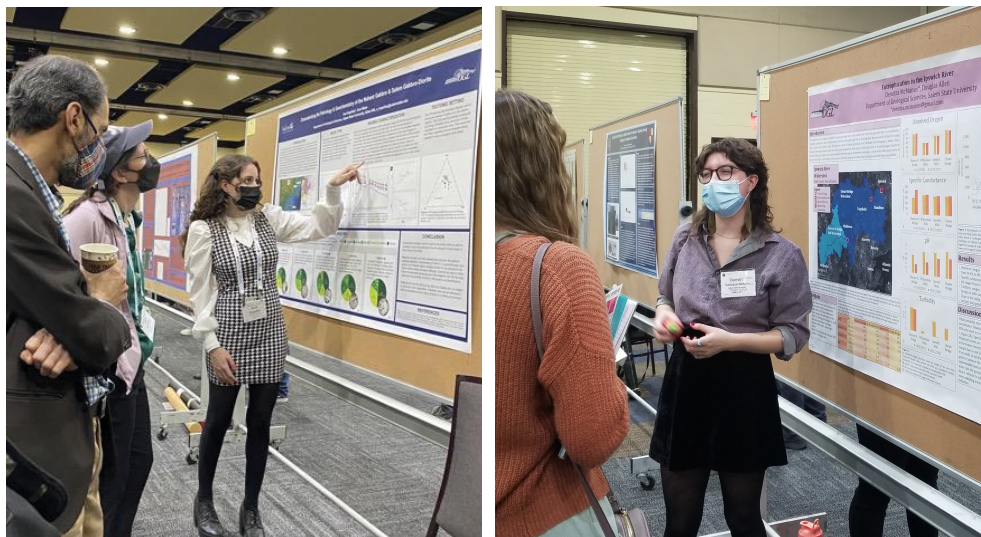


Figure 2. Pictures of GLS Senior Research students presenting their research work in a poster at NEGSA 2022. (Left: Ava; Right: Demitra)

my thoughts and create a more coherent presentation. Although, at the time, this brief coaching session did little to settle my nerves.

As I stood in front of my poster, I prepared myself to be bombarded with critiques and fastidious comments from professionals within this field. My poster was to be scrutinized and I myself would be embarrassed as my project was picked apart. To my relief, such patronizing criticisms never came. The comments were all very constructive, and those who were making these remarks seemed genuinely curious about the contents of my poster. I came to the conclusion that these geology experts were not here to belittle me. They understand that the vast majority of people presenting posters are undergraduate students, they do not expect you to have complete mastery over your subject. Thus, after coming to this realization and after giving my lecture to the first person who came to my poster, all of the ensuing conversations with other poster-goers became considerably easier. In fact, one of the gentlemen from the poster session went as far as to contact Sara via email in order to sing his praises of my project. I was astonished, to say the least.

In the end, I leave future NEGSA attendees with some advice. Do not be overly anxious about the presentation itself and instead enjoy your time at the conference and with your fellow students. Also, if you plan to buy rocks and minerals from the kiosk that will inevitably be there, wait until the last day to make your purchases. There will be plenty of rocks left, all of which will likely be half price or even free in some cases! Lastly, I want to thank my geology cohorts as I am proud to be a part of such a tightly knit group of majors. All of the support I received from you greatly helped me as I navigated through the various anxieties that I harbored for this trip!

A Non-Geologist Takes on NEGSA

By Willow Ricketson, business administration, class of 2022

Last month, I was given the opportunity to attend the annual NEGSA conference. This conference was held on March 19th, through March 22nd, in Lancaster, PA, and contents of the conference included the viewing of student research projects, networking events, and presentations of different research projects occurring within the past few years in the geologic field.

While it may seem as though this conference may be an event only for students majoring in geology, or those working in the field, it was open to anyone, and I actually attended as a business administration major.

I am a business administration major with a concentration in hospitality management. With my hospitality management concentration, I have been able to tour hotels, event halls, and private clubs as a part of the curriculum. However, I have not been able to experience a large-scale event in action. When I was told of the geology department's upcoming trip to the NEGSA conference, I expressed interest in going, and was met with open arms.

Attending this trip was a really great opportunity, and I am thankful that the geology department allowed it to be open for other students (me) to attend along with them. Going in initially, I thought it would be overwhelming whereas I am not a major, so I would not understand the research being presented. I then came to understand that for my presence at the conference, it was less about the research being presented, and more so about being at an event this large and witnessing/applying what I have learned in my hospitality classes over the past four years.

The NEGSA conference would be considered an exhibition, with it being a private event showcasing research projects to attendees. What stood out to me the most was the schedule. I have interned as an events manager in the past, so I know how difficult it is to create a schedule for an event, especially an event with multiple sessions occurring. The NEGSA schedule was created to break up sessions over the course of four days, with morning and afternoon sessions. The morning sessions consisted of student research poster presentations and some talks about research findings. The afternoon sessions also consisted of student research poster presentations and talks about research findings, but also networking events as well. All of these sessions were taking place in one location, the Marriott Hotel, and where they were taking place in that one hotel, majority of the hotel's conference rooms had to be reserved for the conference. Where there was a limited number of space reserved, conference rooms had multiple uses during the day, so the schedule needed to flow smoothly, and sessions needed to end on time so there would be no overlap. Overall, it was fascinating to witness the schedule in action, and the flow of the sessions.

The point of this reflection is to highlight the fact that these seemingly specific events are open to everyone, and anyone attending will still find purpose in being there. I attended a geology conference as a business major and was able to relate aspects of the conference to what I have been learning in class. There were also eye-opening presentations on extinction, climate change, and so much more regarding the world that we all live in, so even if the content cannot be related to academics, it can be related to life in general. Although you might not think so, there is endless knowledge where least expected, so I highly encourage everyone reading to take advantage of opportunities such as this one, even if on the surface it may not seem as if it applies to you.



Figure 3. Group photo.

Senior Research Experience

By Emily Cote, GLS major, class of 2022

Completing a research project and seeing it grow from start to finish is one of the most rewarding experiences I have had as a graduating senior at SSU. During your junior year, you can choose what types of projects you would be interested in and reach out to faculty within the department to see if it would be something you could do. Throughout the fall and possibly the spring semester you research your topic, collect data, and analyze the data with the help of an advisor. There are also many classes where you will present what you've done so far to your peers and professors in the department. This helps to build public speaking skills and obtain feedback on the work you've done so far.

After writing a report, you have the opportunity to present your research at the Northeastern section of the Geological Science of America (NEGSA) to other professionals and students. Most students choose to present a poster, but you could present at a talk if you really wanted to. Before this trip, I was nervous about the presentation portion. However, most people who go to the poster sessions are genuinely curious about your topic and want to help students with what they're studying. This was one of my favorite moments of the event because I was able to explain what I have been working on and received great feedback as to what could come next for my project.

NEGSA is also a great experience to network, and I would highly recommend taking advantage of the events that students can go to that allows them to talk to professionals. A couple of sessions I went to were a Q&A session about careers in geology and a luncheon mentor session where we were able to ask professionals questions in a smaller group. Throughout these sessions, students can learn about the many different disciplines in geology and gain a better idea on what would be interesting to study as a career.

Overall, Senior Research is a fulfilling course that not all undergraduate students have the opportunity to partake in. I have learned so much about conducting research, analyzing data, networking, public speaking, and gained many skills that I will carry into life after college.



Figure 4. Group photo during the Ice breaker event on Saturday March 19th.