

# *The Delta Kappa Gamma Bulletin* **Collegial Exchange**

2024 • Volume 91-2



## **Pursuing Our Vision with Passion and Purpose**

*Learning Styles: A Useful Myth*

*Five Concerts in Costa Rica*

*DKG Visionary Networks*

*Exchange Field Trips*

*Connections Across the Border*

## **Achievements vs. Accomplishments**

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# BUILDING OUR NEXT CENTURY TOGETHER

*In the Heart of  
New Orleans*

JULY 31 – AUGUST 2, 2025



**2025**

**DKG INTERNATIONAL  
CONFERENCE**

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The *Bulletin*, an official publication of The Delta Kappa Gamma Society International, promotes professional and personal growth of members through publication of their writings. Three online issues per year, subtitled *International Journal for Professional Educators*, focus on research-based and documented works—applied and data-based research, position papers, program descriptions, reviews of literature, and other articles on topics of interest to educators. Two print issues, subtitled *Collegial Exchange*, focus on articles based on practice and experience related to education, the Society, women, and children, as well as personal reflections and creative works.

Submissions to the *Bulletin*, a refereed publication, are reviewed by the Editorial Board and the Society editorial staff. Selection is based on relevance of the topics addressed, accuracy and validity, contribution to the professional literature, originality, quality of writing, and adherence to Submission Guidelines (see [www.dkg.org](http://www.dkg.org)). Editorial Board members evaluate each submission's focus, organization, development, readability, and relevance to the general audience of *Bulletin* readers. Due to the diversity of the *Bulletin* audience, material that expresses a gender, religious, political, or patriotic bias is not suitable for publication.

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# Call for Submissions

Members are encouraged to submit manuscripts for consideration by the *Bulletin* editorial board. *The Delta Kappa Gamma Bulletin: International Journal for Professional Educators* accepts submissions of action, qualitative, quantitative, and/or mixed methods research; reviews of literature; educational program descriptions; position papers and viewpoints; and book/technology reviews. *The Delta Kappa Gamma Bulletin: Collegial Exchange* accepts submissions relating to classroom and DKG practices and programs; viewpoints on current issues; reflections or anecdotes; biographies and interviews; and book and technology reviews.

Submissions should be focused, well organized, effectively developed, concise, and appropriate for *Bulletin* readers. The style should be direct, clear, readable, and free from gender, political, patriotic, or religious bias. For more detailed information, please refer to the Submission Guidelines and the Submission Grid included in each journal issue or at [www.dkg.org](http://www.dkg.org) via *MyDKG* > *Apply/Submit* tab.

Special Note: The *DKG Bulletin: International Journal for Professional Educators* no longer specifies themes for each issue. This change takes place in recognition of the breadth of educational roles of our members and the breadth of educational issues of importance to educators worldwide. In line with the Society's Mission, the overriding focus for *Journal* submissions is on articles related to professional and personal growth of educators and/or excellence in education. Deadlines are listed below.

***Collegial Exchange: 91-4; Print***  
(Postmark deadline is December 15, 2024)  
No designated theme

***Journal: 91-5; Online***  
(Postmark deadline is March 1, 2025)  
Topic of choice related to professional and personal growth of educators  
and/or excellence in education.

***Journal: 92-1; Online***  
(Postmark deadline is May 15, 2025)  
Topic of choice related to professional and personal growth of educators  
and/or excellence in education.

***Collegial Exchange: 92-2; Print***  
(Postmark deadline is August 1, 2025)  
No designated theme

***Journal: 92-3; Online***  
(Postmark deadline is October 1, 2025)  
Topic of choice related to professional and personal growth of educators  
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Submit all materials to:

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*Full Submission Guidelines and other resources are available at MyDKG > Apply/Submit on [www.dkg.org](http://www.dkg.org).*



# Of Passion and Purpose...

“Passion” is in fashion nowadays! Motivational speakers and personal development experts encourage listeners to “follow your passion”... some even going so far as to note that, as Mark Twain suggested long ago, if people pursue what they love, they will never work a day in their lives. Indeed, some attribute the rise in digital entrepreneurship—the evolution of countless “influencers” and promoters on social media—to what they are calling “the passion economy.” They point to “digital platforms emphasizing users’ individuality” and the fact that—in part because COVID-19 drove so much of life online—many nowadays earn by doing something they are passionate about rather than working to pursue passions in their free time [Passion.io, 2024]!

I would argue that educators—and particularly DKG members—are (although rarely entrepreneurial) among the original passion workers: choosing teaching not simply as a “job” but as a vocation or “calling” based on an innate desire to share their love of learning or of a subject; to nurture minds; and to shape the future. Founder Annie Webb Blanton, driven by her own passion to improve the status of women teachers, captured this mindset in the song that became the DKG anthem. She wrote of “women teachers, to the calling, firmly rally, never palling” —i.e., never giving up in their purposes—and urged that members be “forward moving ever.” And, as authors in this issue illustrate through their inspired and inspiring work, that passion for education and for DKG abides.

Appropriately, new International President (and 2024 International Achievement Award recipient) Dr. Beverly Hall-Maughan leads this issue urging members to pursue the Society’s Vision of “key women educators impacting education worldwide” *with passion and purpose*. As she discusses her own passion for DKG, Hall-Maughan challenges readers to consider the energy that they bring to their chapters and beyond... and, in linking passion and purpose, she also raises the “chicken and egg” dilemma of whether passion fuels purpose or purpose fuels passion! As a counterpoint to the emphasis on passion, in fact, American businessman and TV personality Mark Cuban (2012) has urged, “Don’t follow your passions; follow your effort. It will lead you to your passions and to success, however you define it.” Cuban believes that, as one works toward achieving a purpose, accomplishment fuels enjoyment that in turn leads to greater passion. In the context of DKG, as members pursue the seven Purposes and the ultimate purpose captured in the Mission to promote the professional and personal growth of women educators and excellence in education, their energy for the Society grows exponentially. Their focus on purpose fuels their passion.



Perhaps author Jack Canfield resolves this push/pull dilemma best when he writes, “Passion is about pursuing the things that make YOU happy, while purpose is using your unique talents and passions to make OTHER people happy” (2024). As articles in this issue illustrate, the beauty of membership in DKG is that the Society provides opportunities for both passion and purpose to expand within a structured, international network bound by the genuine spiritual fellowship of key women educators.

**Judy Merz, EdD**

**Editor**





# PURSuing OUR VISION WITH PASSION AND PURPOSE

By Dr. Beverly Hall-Maughan  
International President, 2024–2026

On July 13, 2024, at its International Convention in National Harbor, Maryland, The Delta Kappa Gamma Society International installed officers and other leaders for the 2024–2026 biennium. Here, we share the remarks presented by the incoming international president as inspiration for all members.

I am honored and thankful to have been elected as your 2024–2026 international president. I appreciate your trust and eagerly anticipate your continued support, encouragement, and inspiration.

To understand why DKG is so important to me, it is necessary to know a bit about my background. My father was in the military, so we moved frequently during my childhood. I was always the new girl who yearned to belong, to fit in, to be included, and to be connected. Moving from school to school, there was always something different about me, such as my accent, my hair, my clothes, and my beliefs. It wasn't



Dr. Beverly Hall-Maughan (*center*) stands with the rest of the newly inducted 2024–2026 officers.



# Features

until joining DKG that I found that sense of belonging and acceptance that I craved for so long. Wherever I go within DKG, I feel like I belong. I feel included. I feel welcome. I feel anywhere is home. In DKG, I am surrounded by a sense of connectivity, and my differences do not matter. Even if I am the new girl in the room, I don't stay that way for long. I take a breath and say to myself, "DKG has trained me to be a strong and confident woman," and I push myself out of the corner to join my DKG family—whom I just haven't met yet.

As your president, my vision is to emphasize that we are an organization of acceptance, love, and belonging, regardless of our differences. We are an inclusive organization, welcoming individuals regardless of their beliefs, dress, culture, values, position, or status in life. We warmly embrace all women educators. It's important to remember that, if we did not do so, we would essentially be rejecting them. And who are we to reject anyone? We need to emphasize the importance of the friendships and relationships we build within our Society. Our organization thrives on the strong bonds that members form with one another.

As your international president, I will lead this organization from my heart with *passion*. I want to highlight the importance of diversifying our membership strategies to incorporate new voices and skills into our decision-making processes. It's necessary to welcome non-traditional members and celebrate differences. We should embrace uniqueness as an advantage and believe that a membership consisting of individuals with varying perspectives can achieve more than a membership comprised of those who all think exactly alike.

In addition to leading with passion and inspiring members to become part of our DKG family, I want us to operate with intellect and convictions, driven by *purpose*. It is crucial to streamline and simplify our practices. Are we following certain procedures due to tradition—or because they truly benefit our organization? Although I value tradition as the bedrock of our Society, our very own DKG song urges us to seek and welcome change—to be "Forward Moving Ever." Are we truly committed to "moving forward?" We need to ask continuously: "Why?" and "Why not?" This will help us make decisions that benefit every member rather than just sticking to tradition for tradition's sake.

We must constantly bear in mind that DKG is **our** organization, and, as its members, we have a profound responsibility to participate actively in guiding and molding its development and direction. It is essential for each of us to play a significant part in shaping the future of our organization because if we do not, someone else will. As members, we must all become highly engaged at all levels of our Society, contributing our time, skills, and expertise to further its mission and vision. We must lead with unwavering determination, harnessing both passion and purpose.

I am thrilled to start this journey and assure you that I am dedicated to serving you and our organization to the best of my abilities. I know you will support and encourage me as together we move forward as Leading Women Educators Impacting Education Worldwide with *Passion* and *Purpose*.

**Dr. Beverly Hall-Maughan**, 2024–2026 International President, is a member of Alpha Rho Chapter in Tennessee State Organization, where she has served as recording secretary, first vice president, and president. At the international level, Hall-Maughan has been second vice president (2022–2024) and finance committee chair (2016–2018). She is a DKGIEF Founding Luminary, a graduate of the Society's Leadership Management Seminar, and a member of the National Association of Parliamentarians and the Association of School Business Officials. [beverlyh@dkg.org](mailto:beverlyh@dkg.org)





# Achievements Versus Accomplishments

By Dr. Beverly Hall-Maughan,  
2024 International Achievement Award Recipient

Each year, The Delta Kappa Gamma Society International recognizes one member for distinguished service to the Society. From recommendations submitted by members, chapters, or state organizations, the international executive board selects a member for this honor,

symbolized by a gold medallion presented to the recipient. We invited 2024 winner Dr. Beverly Hall-Maughan to share thoughts about DKG.



After being honored with the DKG International Achievement Award, I took time to ponder the differences between *achievement* and *accomplishment*. Are these two terms interchangeable, or do they have different connotations? While using the thesaurus tool in Microsoft Word, I noticed that both words are often used as synonyms for the other.

According to Merriam-Webster (2019), achievement is defined as a “result gained by effort” and accomplishment is defined as “the act of bringing to full success.” To break it down further, achieving means succeeding in something, obtaining a desired result, or winning, while accomplishing is about completing a task, objective, or goal.

Achievement involves a continuous process of growth and progress that often benefits oneself, whereas accomplishment is more about benefiting others and the world outside of oneself. Achievements tend to focus on personal or individual results, while accomplishments often involve shared achievements. Accomplishments lead to achievement, but do achievements lead to accomplishments?



Reflecting on my personal successes and milestones, my weight-loss journey stands out as a significant and ongoing achievement. I refer to it as an achievement because it is a continual process that primarily benefits me. This journey of self-improvement began on April 1, 2019, and requires dedication, perseverance, and strong focus. Each 10-pound milestone reached was an accomplishment within the overall weight-loss achievement. Every milestone and obstacle overcome contributes to my sense of personal fulfillment and motivates me to continue striving for a healthier and happier lifestyle.

As I contemplate the steps in my weight-loss journey, I realize that they are quite similar to those an organization might take in pursuit of its objectives.

1. **Admit.** It is crucial to admit that change is needed and be open to accepting it. This includes understanding the why or the underlying reasons for the desired change. In my case, I wanted to lose weight not just to improve my appearance and to feel better but primarily to attain a healthier lifestyle and to manage my blood sugar levels without medication. Once I admitted the necessity for a healthier lifestyle, the journey toward change began.
2. **Commit.** Commitment requires finding the internal drive and motivation needed to embrace an action plan. To fully commit, I held an in-depth discussion with my primary physician regarding my current health status and any potential risks associated with weight loss. Additionally, I dedicated time to thoroughly researching and evaluating a range of weight loss options available to me.
3. **Submit.** One must willingly submit to the necessary work and effort to define reachable and obtainable goals. This entailed developing a comprehensive weight-loss plan, setting specific and achievable weight targets, implementating a low-carb dietary regimen, engaging in moderate exercise, and scheduling regular quarterly lab work.
4. **Permit.** Changing one's mindset and permitting setbacks as a natural part of the process are essential. It is also important to understand that



setbacks do not equate to failure. I embraced a mindset of resilience, accepting setbacks as a natural part of my journey, even on days when I succumbed to the temptation of chocolate. I permitted the obstacles by examining the root causes to avoid future recurrences. Choosing to persist and approaching each day with renewed determination keeps me moving forward.

5. **Transmit.** Transmitting progress by having an accountability partner to help stay on track aids in maintaining motivation. It is also important to celebrate and share successes, as this reinforces commitment. In my weight-loss journey, my main support comes from my physician and husband. I also find it helpful to share my story with others as a way of transmitting and reinforcing my progress.





Achievements versus accomplishments? This introspection leads me to contemplate whether pursuits should be focused on individual achievements or towards collective accomplishments as a Society.

By applying the steps utilized in my weight-loss journey, DKG members can approach needed change to realize achievement and accomplishments within our organization.

**1. Admit.** In DKG, we have admitted that change is needed. For example, we need more members. But why? Because we need the numbers to survive—or because we want to support women educators? Our underlying reason should be nurturing and serving others and about the relationships we make. Our *why* should be about impacting education. We don't just

want more members for the sake of numbers; we want productive members who contribute positively to our organization and the world around us. We want members who are willing to share their skills and knowledge with others, who desire leadership roles, and who will serve as role models to aid in the development of our Society.

- 2. Commit.** The 2022–2024 Administrative Board demonstrated its commitment by contracting with our membership consultant, Avenue M Group, to provide a deep-dive study into our membership trends.
- 3. Submit.** We have submitted to start the work and effort necessary to define reachable and obtainable goals with the development of our Avenue M Implementation Plan. Furthermore, the Executive Board has approved the formation of the Visionary Network Ad Hoc Committee and Avenue M Task Force to continue the recommendations from the Avenue M Report.
- 4. Permit.** As revealed in the Avenue M Implementation Plan, we should continue to assess our strategies to explore the need for revision or refocus and permit modifications as necessary for improvement.
- 5. Transmit.** To continue our efforts, we should maintain and expand our marketing campaign, focusing on transmitting, promoting, and advocating for DKG. We should continually convey, transmit, and communicate the Vision and Mission of our organization. We need to share our DKG story with everyone.

Achievements versus accomplishments? In distinguishing between achievements and accomplishments, I believe that DKG should place greater importance on accomplishments. This entails directing our efforts toward creating tangible, positive effects on others and the world at large. Pursuing meaningful accomplishments requires a combination of two essential elements: passion and purpose. Passion, stemming from the heart, drives our emotional investment, while purpose, rooted in intellect, provides us with a clear direction and intention for our actions—as the Society seeks to accomplish its Vision of Leading Women Educators Impacting Education Worldwide.



# Learning Styles: A Useful Myth

By Jess L. Gregory

As an educator trained in the 1990s, I was coached to determine the learning style of each student and present materials in a way that aligned with the styles of the students in my class. I developed lesson plans that tapped into the multiple modalities and felt very good about my practice. I was challenged by a colleague—25 years later—who asserted that learning styles were a myth. I have come to accept that, although that may be true, learning styles are a useful myth.

An individual can measure their learning style preference using a quick inventory. Then, one can use that learning style to tailor resources and means of expression to match that learning style. Learning style theories and research have been published since the 1940s, with some of these publications asserting that catering to a verbal, visual, auditory, or kinesthetic style will improve outcomes for learners (Clinton-Lisell & Litzinger, 2024; Pashler et al., 2009). Wininger et al. (2019) found that 80% of textbooks used in educator-preparation programs included a discussion of learning styles, with one quarter recommending matching instruction to learning styles.

If learning styles are represented in 80% of these texts, what do I mean by saying that learning styles are a myth? First, the idea that our brains have one best way to learn does not have research support. Toppo (2019) asserted that, although the idea of learning styles

is “as popular as ever,” little empirical evidence exists

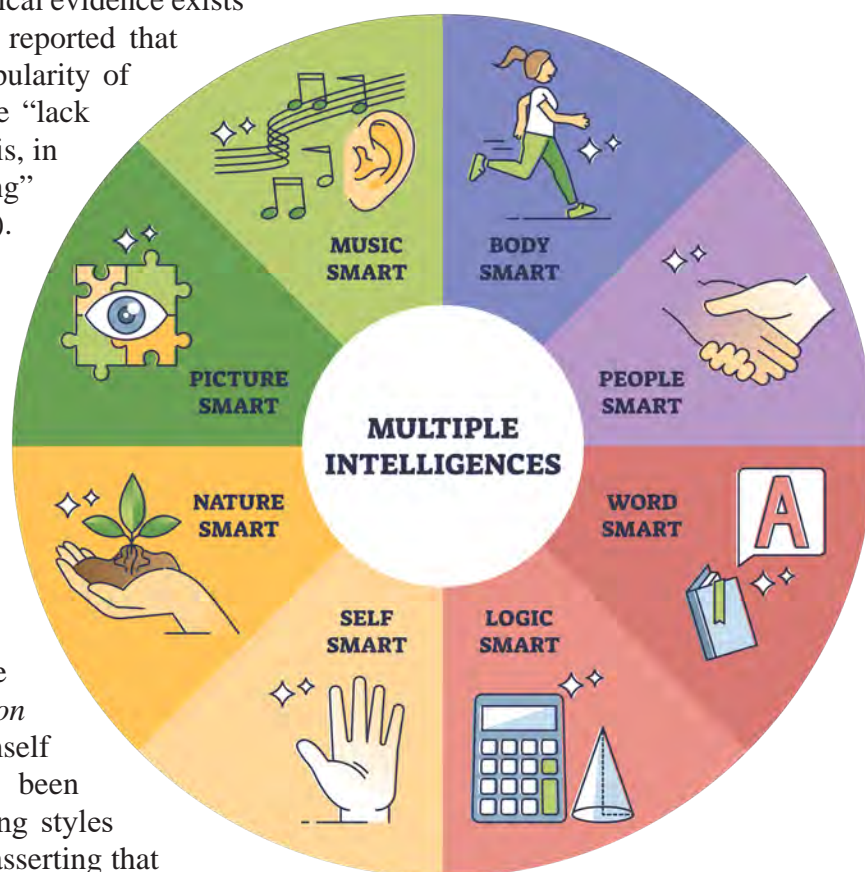
to support the idea. Others have reported that

the juxtaposition between the popularity of the learning style concept and the “lack of credible evidence for its utility is, in our opinion, striking and disturbing”

(Pashler et al., 2009, p. 117). Willingham (2018) affirmed that,

after reviewing the studies, no support exists to suggest “that participants learn better when new content fits their purported learning style” (p. 32).

Second, the more recent popularization of learning styles harkens back to Gardner’s (1983) theory of multiple intelligences. Although Gardner’s theory has a strong empirical base of evidence, in a 2013 *Washington Post* interview, Gardner himself lamented that his work has been erroneously conflated with learning styles (Strauss, 2013). Despite Gardner asserting that focus on learning styles is not an application of his work, other researchers have continued to publish that it is (Mahmood et al., 2022).



Gardner’s theory of multiple intelligences may be misapplied to learning styles.





The danger of the learning styles myth lies in this misapplication of multiple intelligences. When a learner believes that they can *only* process information presented visually because they are a “visual learner,” they create a deficit mindset. Counter to this limiting belief, the human brain holds the capacity to learn in a myriad of ways; to restrict the type of information received to only one modality undermines the brain’s natural capacity. Moreover, the limiting belief shifts the responsibility for learning away from the learner. If the learner does not grasp material immediately, the learning style myth allows that this could be because the educator did not present the information in the appropriate style, thereby absolving the learner of responsibility for engaging in learning. Although individuals certainly have preferences for how they like to receive information, that preference does not limit the brain’s natural capacity to learn from information in many forms.



If it is a myth, how can it really be useful? Deligiannidi and Howard-Jones (2015) reported that 97% of the educators whom they surveyed believe that teaching to learning styles is effective practice. Presenting material in multiple ways to support the varied students in their care helps students master content. Educators commonly use Gardner’s theory of multiple intelligences to differentiate lessons, but this is not the same as the myth of learning styles.

What is our way forward? Wininger et al. (2019) found that even with a paucity of evidence, half of the introduction-to-education texts they examined recommended matching instruction to learning style. Practicing educators can take the purported benefits of matching learning style and leave the deficit mindset behind by shifting the language they use. By keeping the idea of a preference at the forefront, learners and educators respect the brain’s capacity to learn in a myriad of ways while also recognizing that individuals have more or less comfort with the differing ways materials can be presented. This shift keeps the useful aspects of adapting lessons for learning style preferences and those that align with differentiating instruction; it also leans into developing learners’ awareness of their own natural capacity to learn in many ways.

By shifting our language to speak about our learning preferences, we dismiss the deficit view inherent in learning styles. By including multiple modalities in planning instruction (sometimes called pluralization), we honor the brain’s ability to learn and its natural desire for novelty. The individualization, or rather personalization, embedded in lesson planning also builds the student-teacher relationship as the instructor listens to a preference and uses the information in future planning. Together, these strategies embrace the positive aspects of learning style preferences and diminish the detractors. Maybe learning styles is a myth as my colleague suggested, but adapting lessons to present material in a variety of ways serves my students—so for me, it is a useful myth.

**Dr. Jess L. Gregory** is a member of Beta Chapter in Connecticut State Organization. After being a chemistry teacher in an urban school for a decade, she is a professor and Chair of the Educational Leadership and Policy Studies Department at Southern Connecticut State University, where she teaches educational leadership courses across both the sixth-year administrator certification and doctoral programs. Her greatest joy in work is helping students develop their potential as school leaders and researchers. [gregoryj2@southernct.edu](mailto:gregoryj2@southernct.edu)



# The Heart, the Passion, and the EFFORT of Community Building

By Assunta Anzalone Deliman

We often hear that “It’s the Season for Giving” during the months of Thanksgiving and Christmas. It is so easy to “round up” the price of an item purchased in a store and to donate change to a charity. It is easy to drop off clothing and get a receipt for tax purposes. Each of these donations is an easy, positive way to help others. However, the reality of community support outreaches the holiday season of giving. It is the internal pursuit to help others whenever help is needed. I am proud that Delta Kappa Gamma chapters like mine have leaders who brainstorm about the task, pull strength from their members, and complete the challenges of service to the community.

## One Chapter’s Example

The women educators of Alpha Nu Chapter in Pennsylvania State Organization support many community initiatives each month of the year. For example, a *Book and Blankie* project promotes literacy among new moms. The chapter gives selected hospitals gift bags filled with a handmade blanket and a book, and each new mom receives this colorful gift to create enthusiasm for reading to her young child. As another example, Alpha Nu’s grants-in-aid initiative supports women majoring in education. Scholarships are awarded to two graduates of a 2-year college who are continuing their education. The winners selected have shown a stellar work ethic and a sincere desire to become strong educators. Their application essays clearly define their love of teaching and financial challenges.



Our chapter also encourages young readers to become lifetime learners with the *Write, Read, Write* project. We choose a grade level each year in a selected school. Students in each class write letters to our members, sharing their interests and favorite genres for reading. After that, each member buys a book based on a student’s interest. A DKG sticker is placed on the back of the cover. The book is wrapped, and a personal note inside shares the giver’s love of reading. As a culminating activity, members go to the school and personally meet the students. We witness the joy on the young faces as they receive the book picked out just for them. Each student writes a thank-you note to the gift giver.

## Leading the Way to Giving

Team leadership and mentorship have brought powerful results for Alpha Nu’s former co-presidents, Kathy Simmons and Karen Fisher. Kathy inspires the type of leadership required to identify areas of need and to plan the best way to execute goals. Her continual energy and enthusiasm engage members to unify, brainstorm, and execute plans for initiatives. Her promotion of professional and personal growth is evident as our meetings begin with dozens of caring members carrying boxes and bags of materials





needed for all areas of giving. Kathy also fosters camaraderie outside our scheduled meetings. She enthusiastically encourages and joins book club meetings, Bucks County Playhouse shows, and cookie exchanges. Camaraderie encourages the engagement of ideas to support those less fortunate.

Karen simply gives her heart in all four seasons. Watching her lead ignites a spark throughout our membership. The depth and consistency of Karen's dedication to her community shines as a strong example of how to give of oneself to others. Through her acts of kindness, she educates others to the possibility of all types of generosity. Karen will never admit it, but what she does is the definition of the word "effort." Karen's weeks include myriad forms of selfless giving. When not gathering food for food banks, she is organizing, planning, and distributing products to targeted locations in the Philadelphia area.

Another example of Karen's altruism has been her desire for our chapter to support the Kin Wellness Center ([www.welcometokin.org](http://www.welcometokin.org)) in Furlong, Pennsylvania. The Center began with the wish of a cancer patient, Corinne Sikora, who imagined a place where patients could go to gather, to relax, and to feel whole again. The Kin Wellness Center was given the breath of life through the continuous effort of numerous local agencies. Each day, "behind the scenes" cancer support is in full gear. Cooking classes, yoga fitness, and therapeutic massage are only a small sampling of what is available at the center. Sikora passed away on November 5, 2022, but her unselfish wish will live on through passionate and continuous community efforts, including those of Alpha Nu.

Karen did not just read about the Center in an article and send a check. She visited the location and talked to the management. She ascertained what was needed, and she congregated her Alpha Nu community. She displayed a poster indicating what items were needed, as well as pictures of sample bags that she had created. The process continued as our chapter members gathered the supplies needed. Karen and Barb Tantala, another member, delivered more than 50 comfort bags to the Kin Wellness Center. Each comfort bag included materials that would provide relaxation: fuzzy socks, Chapstick, mints, candy, hand sanitizer, and so forth. This civic initiative continues throughout the year.



*Pilsen Pals - Czech Republic ©  
Photograph by Cathy Tenney, Ohio;  
Spring 2024 Art Gallery*

## Impact

When I reflect on all the effort Karen gives in support of her community and the passionate work of Alpha Nu Chapter, my thoughts bring to light all the "behind the scenes" actions of selfless people who never get acknowledged. These include the people who pick up the donations that are casually put in storage containers outside churches and other drop-off locations and the people who set aside time in their busy lives to give their best to those less fortunate.

The heart and the passion of giving lives in all of us. It is not easy. It takes unwavering effort, as evident in all the people "behind the scenes." I am proud to be in The Delta Kappa Gamma Society International with its Mission of promoting professional and personal growth of women educators and excellence in education. Without question, Alpha Nu Chapter is a group of strong, smart women with a sincere mission to execute community support with grace and generosity. I hope many chapters share Alpha Nu's purpose: not simply to be "seen" but also to be "heard" through work for the community.

**Assunta Anzalone Deliman, MEd**, is a retired reading specialist, English teacher, and adjunct professor at Rider University. She has taken the lead on communications for Alpha Nu Chapter in Pennsylvania State Organization for the past 2 years. [adeliman3@gmail.com](mailto:adeliman3@gmail.com)



# DKGNext 2023: Reflections at the 2024 International Convention

Since 2015, DKGNext has brought members together to collaborate and gain insight into issues within the organization. Approximately 45–50 emerging female leaders have participated, exploring topics such as leadership, belonging, retention, and advancement. At the 2024 International Convention in National Harbor, Maryland, International President (2022–2024) Dr. Debbie LeBlanc asked members of the 2023 DKGNext group to explore key DKG leadership concepts as inspirations at each of the General Sessions. Here, we share their reflections.

## Connectivity

*Cindy Dixon, Beta Chapter, Alabama State Organization, delivered these comments on Tuesday, July 9, at the Opening Meeting, which featured the presentation of the flags of member countries.*

I am honored to speak about a topic that bridges the past, present, and future: the **connectivity** between Delta Kappa Gamma International and flags.

As we know, flags are more than just pieces of cloth. They are powerful symbols, embodying a people's history, struggles, and aspirations. They wave in triumph and resilience, reminding us of our collective identity and shared dreams. Similarly, DKG International women embody resilience, dedication, and the pursuit of knowledge and equality. We women are the flag bearers of education, unfurling the banners of enlightenment and progress in every corner of the globe.

Just as each flag has its unique design and significance, DKG women bring our unique perspectives and strengths. Consider the flag of the United States, with its stars representing unity among the 50 states, or the flag of Canada, whose red maple leaf represents many things, including unity and cultural heritage, and thus symbolizes the convergence of different cultures. We work in diverse environments but share a common goal: illuminating minds and fostering a more educated society.



Flags of DKG's 17 countries are mustered backstage for presentation at the 2024 International Convention.

Flags inspire pride and patriotism, and they remind us of our duties to our nations. Similarly, DKG women inspire hope and aspiration, reminding us of our responsibilities to the **next** generation. We are the architects of our future, building bridges of understanding, determination, cooperation, and knowledge.

DKG International women form a global network in today's interconnected world, transcending borders and flags. We collaborate, share ideas, and support each other. This solidarity and cooperation are crucial as we face global challenges that know no boundaries, such as poverty, inequality, and equal access to education for all.

The flags of nations and DKG International women are deeply interconnected in their



symbolism and impact. Both are bearers of identity while maintaining unity. As we look forward to the future achievements of women educators, let us also recognize the global tapestry that we weave—a tapestry that is as diverse and beautiful as our flags. Together, they flutter in the winds of hope, leading us toward a brighter, more educated, and equitable world.

## Advocacy

**Lisa Cox, Mu Chapter, Iowa**, greeted members at the 8:00 a.m. General Meeting II on Wednesday, July 10. Voting for elected leaders and voting for proposed amendments were on the agenda in the coming hours and days.

Hello, my early morning friends. It's so inspiring to see you passionate people show up today! As I gaze out into the room, I spy strong women ready to unite with mutual respect and purpose for the maintenance and well-being of DKG. THIS is exciting and powerful!



**Lively Lisa Cox urges members at an early morning meeting to pursue advocacy.**

Why? Because a convention only happens every 2 years, and it highlights the process of advocacy in action. Advocacy is any action that speakers in favor of, recommends, or argues for a cause...that supports or defends or pleads on behalf of others.

So, here's the thing: There is no monopoly on advocacy. Anyone can do it. And everyone in this room has experience at it. As women, we stand up as advocates when we address bullying, we use person-first language, we push for better curriculum, and we set the bar higher. We are advocates when we walk alongside loved ones dealing with medical situations and, lastly, when we vote.

As we gather this week, near our nation's capital, it is imperative that we pause and embrace our purpose—or our 7 Purposes...that we advocate for DKG to keep our Society relevant, vital, and sustainable...that we stand up for the Society that we want...that we give voice and support to what we value. This is our moment to step up to the vote.

There will be five general meetings that need our vote every single time. Remember, advocacy isn't just about grand gestures.

It's in the everyday actions, the conversations we have, the examples we set, the small stands we take. Each act, no matter how small, ripples outward, inspiring others.

Let's make these next 4 days count. Show up, stand up, and step up to the vote. For, in the words of June Jordan, poet, teacher, and activist, "We are the ones we have been waiting for."

## Integrity

**Connie Marr, Alpha Theta Chapter, Pennsylvania State Organization**, addressed the assembly at General Meeting III in the afternoon of Wednesday, July 10, as presentation of Proposed Amendments continued.

What is the definition that first pops into your mind as you hear the word "integrity"? If you are like me, you think of morals and ethics...making the right decision even when others are not...things we need to be encouraging and developing in our students and modeling for the next generation of educators.

I find another definition of integrity applicable and interesting in our situation. Integrity also means the quality or condition of being whole or undivided and having completeness. The meaning of being whole or undivided and having completeness has a great deal of impact for DKG as a Society.

What factors are you considering as you make decisions on how you will vote on each issue that comes before us in the next few days? Will your decisions be based on *what is best for me*, *what is best*





**Connie Marr explores the many facets of integrity--crucial to any leader!**

*for my chapter, and what is best for my region, or are your decisions based on what is best for our organization as a whole?*

We are approaching our 100-year anniversary. In the year 2124, will the members be able to look back to our vision and realize that we looked at the issues, searched our hearts with integrity, focused on the vision, and ensured the future of DKG through our actions?

“Be progressive. Keep up with the moving world while not discarding what in the old has value. But don’t cling to the old when its worth has passed. Don’t be a person so set in your views that nothing can change you.”

We obviously know these are the words of Annie Webb Blanton, but I would add that we must be the person with the integrity and foresight to see the need to change and to embrace the change no matter how hard that process may be.

In the coming days, search your hearts, understand the issues, and vote with the integrity that will propel DKG into the next 100 years.

## Unity

**Erin Retallack, Beta Chapter, Alberta, Canada, inspired members on Thursday, July 11, at General Meeting IV, which featured the induction of International Honorary Members Justice Beverley McLachlin of Toronto, Canada, and Tsipi Ben-Haim of New York, New York.**

For me, being part of a whole is comforting. Standing alone and struggling alone can be isolating. As educators, I think we can all relate to this...but we also know we have many communities to lean on.

Eight years ago, I was contacted by Beta Chapter in Calgary to be one of their Support for Early-career Educator candidates. When I walked into their Christmas party and saw all the gifts for my classroom and felt support from all the members, I felt encouraged. Three years ago, I joined that chapter and felt a bond among the members that reflected our common goals.

I quickly realized that being part of Delta Kappa Gamma is being part of a much larger community. DKG unites many educators from many countries. But I’ve noticed our stories unite us. While attending the conference in Finland last year, I heard about educational issues that were very similar to ones we have in Canada. Sitting around the table in Austin with DKGNext, we all connected over stories of our local chapters and our experiences in the classroom.

Education is universal. We all have common issues and common goals. The women who started Delta Kappa Gamma were fierce advocates for education and female educators. They saw a need to unite to bring about change in society. The changes they fought for would not only benefit children and teachers but also create a more equitable society.

To quote Desmond Tutu, “My humanity is bound up in yours, for we can only be human together.” Uniting together can be healing, but it’s also a call to action. We need each other to achieve our goals; our community is empowering. Let’s be human together and move forward into the challenges and celebrations of the future.



**Canadian member Erin Retallack illustrates the community of DKG with colleagues in 17 countries.**



## Stewardship

*Abby Deming, Kappa Beta Chapter, California State Organization, greeted members at General Meeting V on Friday, July 12, as the work of the convention moved forward toward the closing days.*

Today, I want to speak to you about a cornerstone of our organization and our profession: stewardship. As dedicated members of DKG, we are entrusted with a profound responsibility to steward knowledge, mentorship, and leadership in our communities and beyond.

Stewardship in DKG goes beyond the classroom; it encompasses our role as advocates for education and champions of lifelong learning. Each of us plays a pivotal role in shaping the educational landscape, influencing policies, and empowering educators around the world. Through our commitment to professional development, advocacy, and mentorship, we not only enhance our own skills but uplift those around us, ensuring every educator has the support and resources needed to thrive.

As women educators, we understand the transformative power of education. We see firsthand how knowledge can ignite curiosity, empower individuals, and break down barriers. Our stewardship involves creating inclusive learning environments where diversity is celebrated and every voice is heard. It's about fostering a culture of respect, empathy, and collaboration among students, colleagues, and the community.

Moreover, stewardship in DKG means embracing leadership roles that drive positive change. Whether serving on committees, organizing events, or mentoring new members, each of us contributes uniquely to the collective strength of our organization. By sharing our expertise, experiences, and passion for education, we inspire others to join us in advancing the Mission of DKG and shaping the future of education worldwide.

Stewardship also entails nurturing the next generation of educators and leaders. Through mentorship programs, scholarships, and professional development initiatives, we invest in the growth and success of future educators, ensuring a pipeline of talented individuals who are equipped to meet the evolving needs of our educational systems.

As we reflect on the importance of stewardship in DKG, let us reaffirm our commitment to excellence, integrity, and service. Let us continue to champion the values of scholarship, leadership, and sisterhood that define our organization. Together, we have the power to inspire, innovate, and lead by example, creating a legacy of impact that transcends generations.

In conclusion, I challenge each of you to embrace your roles as stewards of education and leaders within DKG. Let us continue to collaborate, advocate, and empower others with the same passion and dedication that brought us to this esteemed organization. Together, let us shape a future where education is a beacon of hope, opportunity, and empowerment for all.

Thank you for your unwavering commitment to stewardship and for the incredible impact you make every day as women educators and members of DKG.



**Executive Director Nita Scott and International President (2022–2024) Dr. Debbie LeBlanc surround DKGNext members with support!**



# Five Concerts in Costa Rica

By Claire G. Smith

In southwest Washington State, just north of Portland, Oregon, is the mid-sized city of Vancouver. In 2023, the city's Vancouver Master Chorale (VMC; [vancouvermasterchorale.org](http://vancouvermasterchorale.org)) auditioned with the Costa Rican International Choral Festival for Peace ([choralfestcostarica.org](http://choralfestcostarica.org)) and was accepted as a participating choir. And so, in summer 2024, 40 of us flew to Costa Rica. We performed five concerts, sharing stages with choirs, dancers, and instrumentalists from other nations. We walked in a Parade for Peace. An international *maestro* gave two vocal music workshops. The Festival organizers arranged trips in the capital city of San José and to nearby towns of Pocora, Cartago, and Orosí. Pre- and post-Festival excursions were available to the jungle area of Tortuguero on the Caribbean coast and to the central Arenal Volcano National Park. We delighted in scenery, wildlife, and the food. But the trip was far more than a vacation. For this DKG teacher, the experience afforded personal and professional growth of the highest caliber.

*What exactly did I do and learn? What lessons did the trip provide for me to grow as an educator and DKG member? What recommendations from my own growth could I offer the Society as DKG seeks to provide personal and professional development for its members?*



Arenal Volcano looms in the early afternoon.  
Photo by the author.

## Our Program and Itinerary

As a participating choir, VMC prepared a short repertoire of a cappella songs in English. The six works were intended to showcase the best music of our homeland. At least one selection had to be specifically about peace. For this, the director chose *Earth Song*, words and music by contemporary American composer Frank Ticheli. Our other works included two traditional spirituals: *Down to the River to Pray*, arrangement by Philip Lawson, and the Jester Hairston arrangement of *Elijah Rock*. We also performed two 19th-century traditional songs: *Ev'ry Time I Feel the Spirit*, with arrangement by William Dawson, and *Hark I Hear the Harps Eternal*, arranged by one of America's greatest female composers, Alice Parker. Rounding out our program was the Kentucky folk song, *Bright Morning Stars*, arranged by Jay Althouse.

VMC also rehearsed two peace songs that were to be sung by the massed choirs at the final gala concert. The first was a processional chant in Latin: *Et in terra pax hominibus* [And on earth, peace to mankind], with words from liturgical sources and music by the contemporary Spanish composer, Javier Busto. The final peace song was a four-part canon in Spanish: *Unidos por la paz* [United for peace], with words and music by the North American composer, David Bridges. This selection was to include audience participation.

VMC performed in five very different locales, giving us access to a wide variety of audiences with our message of peace. The inaugural concert featured three participating choirs and was held in the capital, San José, in a reception hall in the Legislative Building (*Salón de Expresidentes de la Asamblea Legislativa de Costa Rica*). This *Salón* is known for its portraits of former presidents, from the time





of Independence to the present day. On the second day, we traveled to Limón Province and gave two concerts, one at an elementary school and one at EARTH University (*Escuela de Agricultura de la Región Tropical Húmeda—Agricultural School of the Humid Tropical Region*). At both locations we shared the stages with student groups. On the third day, four participating choirs gave a community concert in *Iglesia La Soledad*, a historical church in San José. For the final gala concert, all ten participating choirs traveled to Barva, in Heredia Province, to perform at a convention center (*Centro de Convenciones De Lo Alto*).

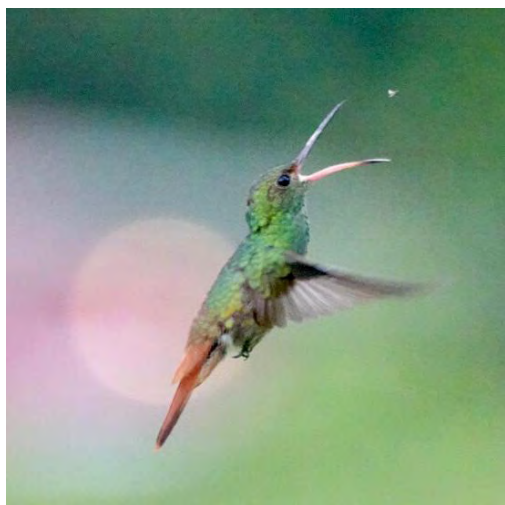
## Lesson #1: Networking Across Cultures

Participating in the Festival was an outstanding opportunity for cultural networking. In addition to facilitating friendships with several Costa Rican chamber choirs, the Festival brought the Vancouver group into contact with dancers, musicians, and storytellers from Ecuador, Guatemala, Israel, Paraguay, Puerto Rico, Rwanda, and Zambia. We got to know our fellow musicians well. Some of the stories from Israel and Africa were very sad. To our surprise, one choral group was composed entirely of medical practitioners. We exchanged ideas and enjoyed each other's company. Particularly warming was the welcome from the school children as they shared their country projects with us and begged to be in photos. At each concert venue, the hospitality of the host group was gracious and memorable and included plates of tropical fruit and cups of delicious Costa Rican coffee.

But we were not together by mere chance. There was a purpose to our being in Costa Rica at the same time: music-making in the cause of world peace. Peace featured in every aspect of the Festival, from the banners and our souvenir scarves to the programs. Government officials and representatives of the Costa Rican music community gave speeches on peace at the inaugural concert. In Limón Province, VMC and the Puerto Rican group joined forces to lead a Parade for Peace, ending in spontaneous song inside the parish church. At the elementary school, the children shared their peace projects, and the staff spoke on peace education and equity initiatives in the schools.

## Recommendation #1:

*DKG exists in 17 countries and thus the Society provides an outstanding opportunity for members to get to know those from a different country, culture, and language. This acquaintance can be virtual or even in person. But, the most meaningful way to meet up is when there is a joint purpose for our meeting—when the various individuals, committees, or even whole state organizations are working on the same project, task, or idea.*



**Dinner on the go:** A Costa Rican *colibrí* snaps an insect in flight. Photo courtesy of choir member Charlie Zhang.

## Lesson #2: Discovering a Different School System

There were several teachers in the Vancouver group, and our highlight was the concert at the elementary school. We could hear the children cheering as our bus arrived. We were welcomed by dancers in traditional costumes, and we entered the gym through a reception line of the smallest children. First on the program was the student dance troupe. Then a student ensemble sang, accompanied by a teacher. VMC presented four songs from our repertoire. At the end we heard *¡Otra! ¡Otra!* [a Spanish way to request an encore. Literally = *Another* (song)] , and so we sang a fifth piece.

After school was dismissed, the principal led us on an extensive tour of the school. We admired the new gym, the



# Personal Reflection/Anecdote

open-air covered cafeteria, the covered walkways, the murals, and the hydroponic gardens tended by the students. A teacher spoke about the school system and her philosophy of language teaching. The principal talked about equity and peace in the curriculum. We met four teachers drafting an individualized education program for a student of concern.

Similarly fascinating for the teachers in the group was the concert at the university. EARTH is a private college, specializing in the agronomy of tropical regions. There are many international students, predominantly from Africa and from other Latin American nations. We admired the extensive agricultural grounds, the college buildings, and the cafeteria service! Interacting with student leaders and with the other performers gave us a clear picture of the high standards of scholarship at this institution.



The author interacts with children at the school concert. Photo courtesy of choir member Charlie Zhang.

## Recommendation #2

*When DKG members travel internationally, learning about the host country's educational system and visits to schools and colleges are of supreme interest. Field trips to educational institutions could be attached to each conference and convention. Comparative descriptions of educational systems would be outstanding material for the Society's publications.*

### Lesson #3: Using One's Spanish in a New Way

Prior to leaving Vancouver, the VMC leaders had asked me to prepare, in Spanish, a speech about the chorale and our songs. My preparation included a children's version for the school concert and a poetic translation into Spanish of the *Earth Song* lyrics. I had expected that I would use plenty of Spanish in hotels and restaurants, in chatting with the other choirs, and in translating for my fellow singers. But on this trip, I ended up using my Spanish in new and unexpected ways. Never before had I given a speech in Spanish in front of government officials and diplomats! Never before had I interacted in Spanish with an entire school body at once! Never before had I been called upon to interpret during a music workshop held in Spanish! What an opportunity this was for me—professional and personal growth rolled into one.

## Recommendation #3

*DKG has English as its lingua franca, and this will probably always be the case. But we have such an opportunity for everyone, regardless of mother tongue, to learn from and enjoy other languages represented in the Society. Not only would this show honor and regard for ALL members' languages, but it would be a growth opportunity for any individual member so inclined. Please, let's do more in and with ALL languages represented in the Society.*



## Lesson #4: Becoming More Musical

The Festival provided two workshop sessions with an international *maestro*, one exclusively for VMC and one for the combined choirs. This training taught us to incorporate percussion sounds, specifically Latin rhythms, and movement into our singing. It opened a whole new dimension of musicality for me.

### Recommendation #4

*The best workshops, seminars, and training sessions are ones that afford the participant a whole NEW way of doing or being.*

The five concerts in Costa Rica allowed us to work alongside other cultures, to share our national music and our talents, and to learn before returning home. Yes, we had a good time . . . it was definitely *pura vida* [a very common expression in Costa Rica, meaning *pure life*. The author's preferred translation is: *Isn't life great?*].

But when travel can also be an exercise in reflection, summarizing what one personally has learned and how one's various skill sets have developed, then that travel becomes true personal and/or professional development. The ideas garnered can be generalized to other situations. Costa Rica had been wonderful for me; it led to unimagined personal growth and, in addition, gave me professional development ideas to share with DKG!



A Costa Rican toucan surveys his kingdom. Photo courtesy of choir member Charlie Zhang.

**Dr. Claire G. Smith** is a member of Mu Chapter in Washington State Organization (WSO). Following a three-decade career teaching Spanish, German, and ESL, Smith keeps busy in retirement by coaching languages, singing in the Vancouver Master Chorale, and serving as secretary of the WSO Executive Committee. [clairegsmith@outlook.com](mailto:clairegsmith@outlook.com)





# DKG Visionary Networks: Connecting Members and Adding Value to Membership

By Janis Antonek and Becky Riebeling



Co-facilitators Becky Riebeling (left) and Janis Antonek (right) share ideas at the 2024 International Convention.

As an organization, DKG has a goal to recruit key women educators as early in their career as possible and to retain them as active members as long as they are physically able to attend meetings—after which they are encouraged to remain members with “reserve” status. This longevity of membership creates a dual profile of members: women who are professionally active and those who are retired. Meeting the needs and interests of both cohorts can be challenging for the organization.

In November 2023, The Delta Kappa Gamma Society International (DKG) released the *Avenue M Implementation Research Report*. DKG is committed to recruiting, engaging, and retaining members and, like many professional organizations today, is struggling with retention in particular. The report, developed by the 2022–2024 Administrative Board, provides an action plan to address recruitment, engagement, and retention. Phase 1 of the plan began January 2024 and included a component to develop “thinking groups,” initially called “DKG Masterminds: A Visionary Network.” Two

types of Visionary Networks were conceptualized: one focusing on a professional topic and the second focusing on personal enrichment. The professional pilot network was focused on “K-2 literacy.” The personal enrichment pilot network was focused on “cell phone photography.” The Visionary Networks, with professional and personal enrichment strands, are one approach to providing engagement options for DKG members at varying stages in their personal and professional lives.

Both cohorts hosted an initial meeting for their respective network participants and then were charged with hosting at least four virtual meetings between April and June 2024. Prior to the initial meetings, facilitators received a profile of participants for their network, noting state organization membership, status (active or reserve), and experience with the topic. In the initial online meeting, facilitators and participants established group norms, meeting times, and format for content delivery. The online format made it possible for members from any DKG chapter to participate. Herein, as co-facilitators of The Cell Phone Photography Network, we reflect on our experience in this pilot program.





## The DKG Cell Phone Photography Visionary Network (Photography Network)

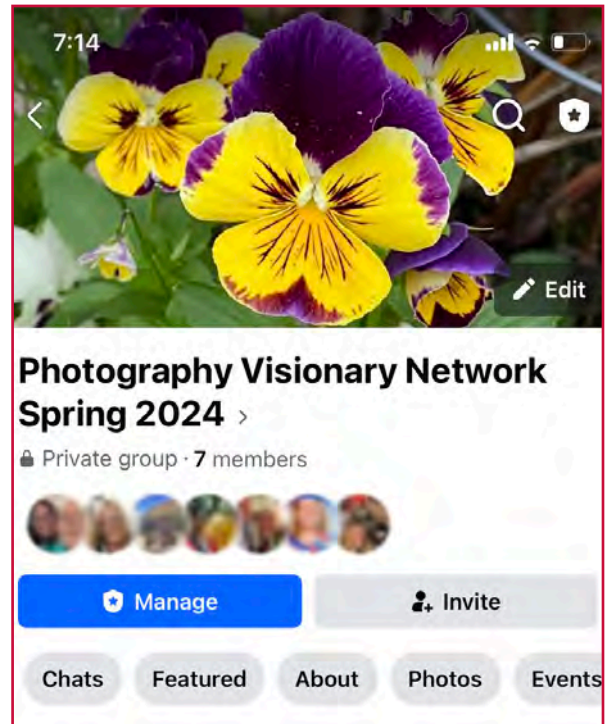
The pilot group for the Photography Network consisted of six DKG members from two countries (Canada and the United States) and representing six chapters within five state organizations (Alberta, Tennessee, North Carolina, California, and Virginia). Four of the participants were professionally active, and two were retired. Experience levels with digital photography ranged from inexperienced to comfortable to very experienced. Five participants used iPhones and one an iPad for their photography.

The photography group decided on four meeting dates, based on availability of members. Zoom was the platform of choice. The group decided to meet for an hour—with a “hard stop” at 1 hour 15 minutes if we needed extra time to finish a discussion. We initially tried to share photos through Google Slides but ultimately found that a private Facebook group for our Photography Network worked best. We selected a private Facebook group because we did not want non-participants sharing photos and commenting.

During the online Zoom sessions, participants shared their photos with the group, provided feedback on each other’s photos, and shared material for expanding our knowledge of cell phone photography. Between these live, online sessions, we maintained communication through email, with reminders sent out by Becky, who also provided the Zoom links.

In June 2024, we both provided feedback to DKG International Second Vice President (2022–2024) Connie Rensink regarding our thoughts on the Visionary Network pilot, with special emphasis on our experience and suggestions for future offerings. In July, four of the six participants met in person at the 2024 International Convention in National Harbor, Maryland. Inspired by the professional friendships, resulting camaraderie, and gratitude for this opportunity, we decided to write an article about our experience so that other DKG members could learn about the initiative and so we might help generate interest in the networks.

For the purpose of this article, we each first independently responded to seven mutually agreed upon questions (see below); then read the other facilitator’s responses; and finally, collaborated on a discussion and conclusion.



The private Facebook group of the pilot Photography Visionary Network is still active.

### 1. Why do you think you were selected to be a co-facilitator? Why did you decide to serve as a co-facilitator? Did you have any concerns about serving as a co-facilitator? Do you suggest continuing to use co-facilitators?

**Janis:** I think I was chosen because I am extroverted, have presented at many conferences, and have taught every grade level from kindergarten to doctoral candidates. I actively post on social media, even on the North Carolina State Organization DKG page, and have been a chapter president. Also, I am a “self-dubbed” urban street photographer and photojournalist. For 16 years, I have posted a feel-good photo a day, with accompanying information about Greensboro, North Carolina. I decided



# Personal Reflection/Anecdote

to serve as a co-facilitator because I love photography and could talk about it all day. My concern was having the time to commit to the initiative because I am still teaching. Also, I am a self-taught photographer and by no means an expert. My equipment is minimal these days—just my iPhone. I no longer use my Nikon.

Having co-facilitators is ideal, especially when they have different strengths. Also, if one facilitator has a conflict, the session can continue. As it turns out, we were both in attendance at every session. Perhaps because she is a music teacher, Becky is keenly aware of time and timing. She is very linear, and I am more holistic, creative, and global in my thinking. Being a Mac user in a PC-oriented school district, I don't always trust my tech skills. Becky's agreeing to run the Zoom assuaged my tech concerns. From my point of view, we were perfect together.

**Becky:** I think I was selected as a co-facilitator because I am well documented as a cell phone photographer on social media. I post pictures often on my Facebook page, as well as on DKG pages and groups. Others use my photos from group trips and DKG events when they post about their own experiences at these events. Additionally, I have had photos accepted to the DKG International and Virginia State Organization Fine Arts Galleries. Finally, I think my time with DKG has proven my desire to be involved and my willingness to lead or facilitate activities. I chose to serve as a facilitator for those same reasons—desire to be involved and a love of photography. There are always concerns when one takes on something new—time, skill level, will it go as planned, how will the group gel, and so forth. I had concerns but felt I'd be ok. And honestly, the commitment was only four sessions. That's very doable!

## 2. Did you have a clear understanding of the goals of the network before beginning?

**Janis:** I thought I did after attending training. However, I only had a cursory knowledge of the Avenue M Report and how the Visionary Networks fit in. I didn't realize our network was not in the professional thread but fell into the personal category. However, I had a clear understanding of the guidelines for our sessions. I was thinking participants would want tips on getting better







photos to document their chapters' activities.

**Becky:** I thought I had a very clear understanding of the goals of the network before beginning. I attended the training and asked questions. I thought I knew how it would go down. I knew we were a pilot program and followed the plan for the first meeting as presented in our training.

### 3. How did the network evolve over the course of the 4 weeks?

**Janis:** We saw that each participant had a different skill set. As opposed to being expert teacher leaders of this network, we were indeed facilitators. Over the weeks, we took advantage of other participants' expertise. Several members led sessions. We became more conversant, getting to know each other over the weeks. We were inspired to take and share photos, which we did regularly on our Facebook group.

**Becky:** I thought I had a clear understanding of the model, and then we got into it with all the members. WOW! What I expected and what we got was quite different. As a group, we came up with themes and skills for each session. Different members stepped up to the plate to present on the weekly skills and themes. Members shared pictures that went along with the themes and skills during the week on the private Facebook group. Members were also engaged when commenting on shared pictures between sessions. A myriad of ideas came out for additional skills and themes. Sessions were fantastic. Comments were kind and helpful. All members participated and discussed 4–6 photos they selected to meet the theme of that session. Time was taken to teach the next skill. I loved how EVERYONE participated, and everyone took ownership over the learning of the entire group. I think we all learned something. It was amazing!

### 4. Are you satisfied with the Visionary Network model used in the pilot? Would you change anything? Would you facilitate a group again? Would you participate in a group without being a facilitator?

**Janis:** I am very satisfied with the model. I think the synchronous format added value. Because we were able to meet live, we engaged with each other in a way that we would not have if we had just shared photos online. Also, I would love to participate in a group related to a topic of interest or one where I felt I could grow—as a facilitator or as a participant.

I like the idea that people opt in. I think the groups could benefit from having a suggested skill level or general level of expertise.



# Personal Reflection/Anecdote

For example, as a language teacher, I could teach Spanish; however, the satisfaction of participants would likely be highest if participants knew the targeted proficiency level of the course. This should be determined before people decide to opt in. I think you could have “courses” offered at the state or even chapter level. That might help with growing local leaders. This being said, however, I was ready to spread my wings and meet DKG members from elsewhere, too.

**Becky:** I would be thrilled to facilitate another group, but I also hope to stay connected with my original pilot group as well. Having four of us at National Harbor was fantastic! Our private Facebook group is still going strong with excellent pictures shared by our members. I would also like to join another group on another topic as a participant and not as a facilitator. I don’t think it really matters if I am a facilitator or not. I learned so much from the pilot group, I know I will learn from any role in another group.

I liked the model as it was created for our pilot group. I think we could have had more members. I think more time with the group and more time between sessions would be nice. But it really depends on the needs of each group. We had a time crunch due to completing our sessions in time to give feedback to the international leaders at DKG.



**Architectural close-up by Becky Riebeling:**  
*photo originally shared during Visionary  
Network sessions.*

## 5. What would you tell DKG members about the experience to get them to be involved?

**Janis:** I would tell members to sign up and participate. The more I participate in DKG, the more I get out of the organization. Participation in the Visionary Networks is very low stakes. At least in our group, it wasn’t an issue if one hadn’t done the “homework.” The networks are a great opportunity to meet people from other chapters, states, and countries and to become more invested in DKG.

**Becky:** JUST DO IT! We join DKG for member value. The Visionary Networks provide member value. I learned so much that I use day to day with my photography. And this concept of sharing and networking is not limited to photography or to K-2 literacy. The opportunities are endless. Topics could be anything. There will be something for everyone. The sky is truly the limit. Visionary Networks also build relationships and connect members across state and country lines. After becoming a DKG member, many of us say that relationships are a big reason we love DKG. A network provides that connection where we may not have it otherwise. Not everyone attends our conventions. The Visionary Networks connect anyone who wishes for that connection.

## 6. Were there any unanticipated benefits of your participation?

**Janis:** As it turns out, four of the six participants attended the 2024 International Convention in National Harbor, Maryland. The 2024 convention was my first, and, in addition to the four attendees





Janis Antonek's students post-Ramadan 2024: photo originally shared during Visionary Network sessions.

from my chapter (Beta Delta) and 31 from North Carolina (Eta State), I now had friends from Canada, Tennessee, and Virginia. Also, I hadn't anticipated learning as much about photography as I did. I was reminded, not unlike what occurs in our own classrooms, the teacher is not always the expert. Especially in DKG, as key women educators, we are not blank slates. We all have tremendous skill sets, with depth and breadth of knowledge in many areas. We really need to bill leaders as facilitators. This might help those who are hesitant to make the commitment.

**Becky:** I feel more connected with the group than I expected in just four sessions. I think the private Facebook group really helped with that—as did meeting some of the members at convention. Writing this article? I hadn't

expected THAT benefit. But more than anything—I cherish how much I learned from my fellow participants! I thought I was pretty experienced, but there is always more to learn.

## 7. Did the photography pilot Visionary Network help with recruiting, engaging, and retaining members? Explain.

**Janis:** This session did not help with recruiting; however, in the future, if these network opportunities are regularized, they will be a great selling point for enticing key women educators to join. The networks definitely add a level of engagement. From planning, implementing, and participating in the sessions, in addition to other DKG responsibilities, this was the most engaged I have ever been with DKG. With respect to retaining, when members realize all the possibilities for enrichment, I think it will help with retaining members. Also, the dual format of more professionally oriented and more personally oriented provides something for both working and retired educators.

**Becky:** Recruiting—not yet, but I think it will. I'm waiting for International to roll out to use it to recruit members. Engaging and retaining—it certainly has ME excited and engaged. And it excites others who have been asking me questions about how they can be involved.



(Left to right) Eileen Carter, Becky Riebeling, Lesley McDevitt, and Janis Antonek enjoy the 2024 International Convention.





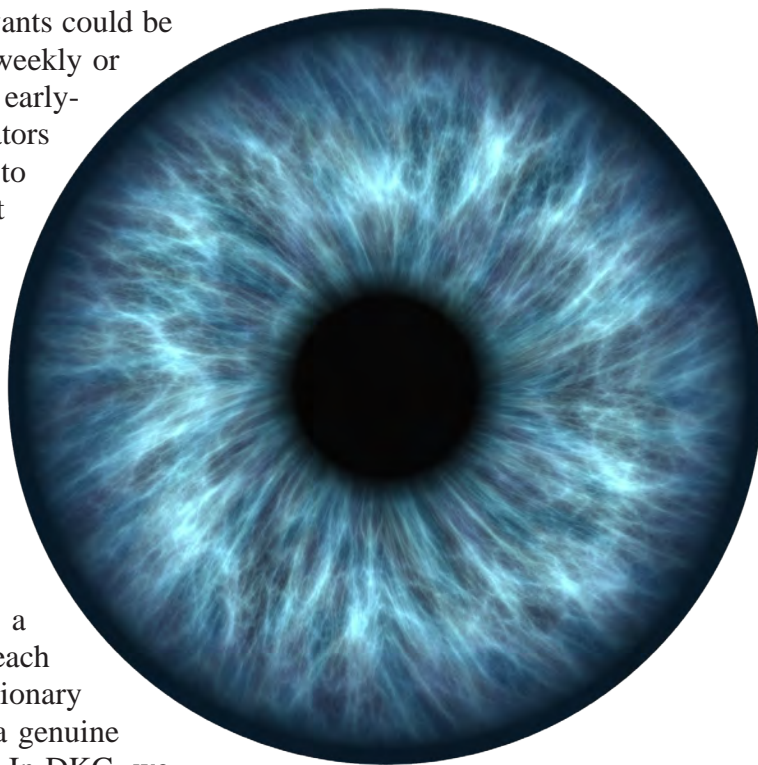
## Discussion

Our reflection and feedback are remarkably similar and favorable. We both want to continue our involvement in this initiative—as facilitators and as participants. Through participation in the Photography Visionary Network, we saw firsthand that DKG members have tremendous breadth and depth of knowledge. We saw how uniting around a common topic helped us build relationships and enhance our own photography skills. Although participation certainly involves a time commitment, when the facilitators know the topic, preparation is minimal. Also, having participants share their expertise distributes the labor and draws on the knowledge of others. This feature of shared expertise made our Visionary Network even greater. We argue that this aspect of the networks should be encouraged. The Visionary Networks provide DKG members with meaningful leadership opportunities.

## Conclusion

Visionary Networks is an idea whose time has come. As DKG looks to recruit, engage, and retain members, Visionary Networks are a fabulous way to do that. We all want value-added activities. What can add more value than an activity individual members select based on their own needs and wants? Those needs and wants could be professional or personal. Sessions could meet weekly or less often. Professional topics can range from early-career educators paired with experienced educators to teaching Spanish in elementary schools to groups of college students sharing as they get ready to student-teach in music. Professional topics could include anything we teach our students. Personal growth topics could be photography, training for a 5K or other distances, lowering your A1C, learning a skill like crocheting or knitting, practicing a second language, reading/book groups, world travel, or even cooking. Options are truly endless and will be based on what members want and are prepared to share with other members.

In DKG, we value relationships. By using a cohort model, where participants get to know each other over the duration of the interaction, Visionary Networks can unite educators of the world in a genuine fellowship. Technology makes it easy to do so. In DKG, we believe in lifelong learning and stimulating the professional and personal growth of members. Visionary Networks provide one way to stimulate that growth. Members just need to reach out and take the opportunity. We did. And we both agree we are better for it.



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# What are DKG Visionary Networks?

In 2023, the 2022–2024 DKG Administrative Board contracted with outside consultant The Avenue M Group to “complete a deep-dive analysis into our membership and to study trends that show why members are dropping, who are the educators who don’t join DKG in the first place, and other points of analysis that can help us meet the goal to be relevant, vital, and sustainable as a valuable organization for women educators” (*DKG NEWS*, Jan/Feb 2023, Vol 80-1, p. 2). The Board received Avenue M’s research report in September 2023; discussed the report at its November 2023 meeting; and developed an implementation plan released to members on November 11, 2023.

Among the recommendations put forth by the Administrative Board was exploration of opportunities for developing thinking groups, ultimately to be called “A Visionary Network.” A DKG Visionary Networks Planning Group included Connie Rensink, Dr. Teresa Cowan, Dr. Beverly Hall-Maughan, Susan Perkins, Bev Mantey Van Cronkhite, and Dr. Debbie LeBlanc. They reviewed results from the Avenue M Phase 1 survey to determine topics in which members might be interested. The two topics selected were early childhood literacy strategies (professional growth) and cell phone photography (personal growth).

Having a short time frame to complete a pilot and wanting to keep pilot groups small, this planning group reached out to people in their personal networks who they thought would be interested in each of these topics. Their goal was to have 6–8 members in each group. When members responded with interest, they were sent further details of the dates and pilot plan. Once they verified their commitment, they were assigned to the group. Next, the planning group identified one facilitator for the literacy group and two facilitators for the photography group.

Rensink and Cowan conducted an orientation for the group facilitators. The focus of that meeting was to explain the nature of the pilot program and to share ideas for structure and meeting topics or purposes. The emphasis was on learning together instead of creating a product.

The core ideas for starting a Visionary Network Group included:

1. Create a tentative purpose—tentative in that it should evolve as the group finds its cohesiveness.
2. Cultivate potential members: Create a quality group with a common purpose.
3. Solidify your purpose: At the first group meeting, present the tentative purpose statement to the group and allow member input. Accept, adjust, or amend as needed. Confirm member commitment to the big purpose. Total buy-in by all involved is critical to the group’s success.
4. Select a platform: Find, adopt, and utilize a platform that the group agrees upon that will be the group’s working space for discussions, communications, and so forth.
5. Set your group norms.
6. Decide on meeting logistics—frequency, meeting dates, times, and length of meeting.

A Visionary Network Task Force is now in place for the 2024–2026 biennium and is being chaired by Cowan. Watch the DKG website and other communications media for further details as the Network evolves!

*J. Merz, Editor*



# The Rose Bowl

By Alejandrina Mata Segreda

The bronze bowl that we use for red roses in our activities returned to my hands after the last activity of my chapter. When we elect chapter leaders, we give the new ones the assets of the organization, including the bowl. Now, after many years, I have it in my house, and when I went to remove the already withered flower arrangement, I found an opaque bowl without the characteristic bronze color. Worse yet, I remembered that the bowl had the DKG insignia on it...but now I could not find it. Examining it carefully, I realized the bowl had been spray-painted gold and remembered the moment when we had no time to clean it properly and decided to hide the passage of time with fresh color.

I decided to clean the bowl so that it would be “the same again.” I went to the town hardware store and asked Don Tino, the expert, if he had an abrasive liquid to remove paint. “What do you want it for?” he asked me, and I explained that it was to remove gold paint from a bronze bowl. “Here,” he told me. “Use thinner and nothing else; wipe it with a cloth gently but constantly. If you use another product, you will damage it.”

So, I went home with half a liter of thinner and started the task. The gold paint, upon contact with this liquid, turned like a black paste (*Oh my goodness, I made things worse!*). But, after I rubbed the bowl for a while, the paste disappeared, and the bronze began to emerge. My hands were burning, but I continued because I saw that the bowl, in some way, was reborn. Then I applied bronze cleaning paste and, after 2 hours of work, I had the old bowl in my hands. Like new? No, the time and service that it has given to my chapter for more than 4 decades had left their mark. But best of all was that one could now see the Delta Kappa Gamma insignia!

As I cleaned the bowl, I considered it as a metaphor. I thought about my own chapter and others throughout DKG...about the time and effort required to do things better, about the importance of not hiding what we don’t like but facing it and solving it—sometimes asking for expert help, sometimes finding solutions among ourselves. Without a doubt, we would enjoy greater benefits despite the time invested in the task.



*This article continues on page 31 with a translation to Spanish.*





# El Tazón de Rosas

El tazón de bronce que utilizamos para las rosas rojas en nuestras actividades regresó a mis manos después de la última actividad del capítulo. Cuando elegimos nuevas líderes de capítulo les entregamos los bienes de la organización, entre ellos el tazón. Ahora, después de muchos años, lo tengo en mi casa y cuando fui a quitarle el arreglo floral ya marchito me encuentro con un tazón opaco y sin el color característico del bronce. Peor aún, recordaba que el tazón tenía las insignias de DKG, pero ahora no las encontraba. Al examinarlo con cuidado, me di cuenta de que había sido pintado con spray dorado y recordé el día en que no teníamos tiempo de limpiarlo como debe ser y decidimos esconder el *paso del tiempo* con un nuevo color.

Decidí limpiarlo para que volviera “a ser el mismo”. Me fui a la ferretería del pueblo y le pregunté a don Tino, el experto, si tenía un líquido abrasivo para quitar pintura. “¿Para qué lo quiere?”, me preguntó y le expliqué que para quitarle pintura dorada a un tazón de bronce. “Tome”, me dijo, “use thinner y nada más, páselo con un pañito suave pero constantemente. Si utiliza otro producto lo va a dañar.”

Así es que me fui para la casa con medio litro de thinner y empecé la tarea. La pintura dorada, al contacto con este líquido, se tornó como una pasta negra (¡Estoy haciendo la torta más grande!). Pero pase que pase el pañito, la pasta iba desapareciendo y empezaba a surgir el bronce. Me ardían las manos, pero seguía porque veía que el tazón, de alguna manera, renacía. Luego le apliqué una pasta para limpiar bronce y después de 2 horas de trabajo, tuve entre mis manos el viejo tazón. ¿Cómo nuevo? No, ya el tiempo y el servicio que había prestado desde hace más de 4 décadas al capítulo, habían dejado su huella. ¡Pero lo mejor de todo es que ahora se pueden ver las insignias de Delta Kappa Gamma!

Mientras limpiaba el tazón, la situación me sugirió una metáfora. Pensaba en mi propio capítulo y en otros a lo largo y ancho de DKG: en el tiempo y esfuerzo requerido para hacer mejor las cosas, en la importancia de no esconder lo que no nos gusta sino enfrentarlo y resolverlo - a veces pidiendo ayuda experta, a veces encontrando soluciones entre nosotras mismas. Sin duda gozaríamos de mayores beneficios a pesar del tiempo invertido en la tarea.



*Just Peachy © Painting/Pastel by Judy O'Brien, Iowa; Spring 2024 Art Gallery*

*Note: The author assumes all responsibility for translation of this article to Spanish.*

**Dr. Alejandrina Mata Segreda** is a member of Beta Chapter in Costa Rica State Organization. She served as Area Representative Latin America (2022–2024) and is currently chairing the 2024–2026 DKG Bylaws Revision Task Force. [Alejandrinamatasegreda25@gmail.com](mailto:Alejandrinamatasegreda25@gmail.com)



# DKG Ignite: *Leaders Empowering Leaders* 2024

By Wendy Hacke



International Leadership Development/  
Golden Gift Chair Candi Martin (right)  
embraces the author at *Ignite*!

To commemorate Delta Kappa Gamma's 50th anniversary, the Society established the International Golden Gift Fund in 1979. *Ignite: Leaders Empowering Leaders Program* is a leadership management seminar conducted at and in conjunction with the University of Texas McCombs School of Business in Austin. The program is currently offered every even year, usually in July, to DKG members throughout the Society.

The International Leadership Development/Golden Gift Fund Committee works to provide a program to build extensive networks internationally while fostering relationships that can lead to collaboration among diverse state organizations. Opportunities for mentorship are extensive and are what drew me to apply to the Class of 2024 *Ignite* Seminar. I have wanted to participate in the *Ignite* program since the early-2000s; therefore, I was overjoyed when I got the congratulations letter in January 2024 and learned that I was one of just 20 women selected out of a significant number of applicants to participate in this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity!

The Austin School of Business offers multi-faceted skills development that addresses both professional and personal growth. This year's cohort heard several outstanding speakers who are leaders in their fields. Topics ranging from nutrition to physical/mental well-being and self-care were presented by Dr. Art Markman, Dr. Becca North, Dr. Katie Pritchette, Dr. Dixie Stanforth, and Professor Katie Lower. Leadership speakers—Dr. Melissa Murphey, Dr. John Daily, Dr. Randy Wilt, Dr. Kristie Loescher, Dr. Doug Dierking, Dr. Richard Grant, and Dr. Gaylan Paulson—presented topics such as advocacy, negotiations, conflict management, effective leadership styles/personality types, and the influences of such types on leadership.

Highlights for me were professional growth and personal development. As a DKG member with 7 years' experience in public school and university administration, I considered myself adept at presentations, conflict management, and organizational leadership. What I learned through participation in the various scholarly presentations was that I had more to learn. For instance, during the lecture on presentations, the speaker pointed out that “the more you say, the less I hear”—so I need to keep what I say clear and focused. I also learned that the best way to focus on the audience and learning is to use active listening to talk *with* and not *at* participants. Another example of learning more came through the lectures on Myers-Briggs Type Indicator. Understanding the framework helped me see how I can build better relationships and achieve my goals faster because I have stronger tools to use for conflict management and organizational leadership. Participating in this year's *Ignite* seminar helped me hone current skills and add many new skills that will enhance my course presentations, provide leadership in my department, and build stronger organizational relationships as an adjunct professor and Teacher Education Associate at my university.



Also, my personal development was enhanced in self-care and wellness. I will use the lessons/strategies I learned about these topics to make me a better leader. Finally, I am now able to help two family members and students who struggle to see failure as an opportunity.

Just as important as the skills I gained were the bonds I forged with DKG colleagues from various state organizations, including Estonia and the Netherlands. We all gained knowledge and inspiration from the sessions and speakers, but we also made some happy memories and forged new friendships as we shared meals; a visit to the Ann W. Richards Congress Avenue Bridge, which hosts the largest urban bat colony in the world; and late-night gab sessions in the dormitory lounge. We also got to know Dasha Khalizova, Senior Program Coordinator for Custom Programs, and Courtney Link, Director of Custom Programs for Texas Executive Education. They were a delight to know, and their efforts to make our *Ignite* seminar a success were invaluable. Finally, both Candi Martin, International Leadership Development/Golden Gift Chair (recently installed as DKG International First Vice President) and Dr. Debbie LeBlanc, 2022–2024 International President (now Immediate Past President) shared meals with us and presented at our graduation ceremony. Getting to know all these women and share amazing experiences with them was the highlight of my *Ignite* experience.

I am deeply appreciative of the opportunity I received that has fostered my growth as a leader within DKG and my university as well as provided the chance to grow personally. It truly was a once-in-a-lifetime experience that I will always treasure. I encourage members to look at the criteria (DKG experiences, professional goal and plan of action for the future, and the challenges faced) and consider applying to DKG *Ignite*! It will IGNITE YOUR LEADERSHIP FUTURE!



**Author Hacke celebrates leadership learning with fellow *Ignite* participant Dr. Diane Anderson, president of Gamma Alpha Chapter, treasurer of Tennessee State Organization, and newly elected member of the International Finance Committee!**

*DKG Ignite is supported by the Golden Gift fund, which is one of the nine funds managed by the DKG International Educators Foundation (DKGIEF). Each fund is dedicated to various initiatives, but all align with the overall mission of DKGIEF (refer to pages 50–51).*

**Dr. Wendy Hacke**, a retired special education teacher and administrator, is a member of Beta Beta Chapter in Oregon State Organization. She has served her current chapter as corresponding secretary (2022–2024) and is now chapter co-president (2024–2026) as well as vice president (2023–2025) of the state organization. [wdhacke57dkg@gmail.com](mailto:wdhacke57dkg@gmail.com)





# First in Leadership, First in Service: Edith Warren, “Education’s Friend Indeed”

By Kaye Dotson and Phyllis Broughton

One of the benefits of DKG membership is being able to meet and work with inspiring leaders. This article celebrates one such woman, who strongly promoted the need to serve and the need to take part—especially by exercising one’s right to vote and serving politically. Edith Warren would encourage all to take part in whatever capacity possible.



Edith Warren was a beloved and respected charter member of Beta Upsilon Chapter in Region 1 of North Carolina State Organization. When Warren accepted membership in Delta Kappa Gamma in 1966, she made a lifelong commitment to the cause of advancing women educators and leaders—a commitment that she would fully fulfill. She was a visionary, tenacious, energetic leader who continuously inspired her colleagues across the state. During her lifetime, Warren epitomized a passionate commitment to public education and to public service. Warren advised members of her Beta Upsilon chapter to “give something back to the community.” She also advised new and future leaders to have “an open mind, an open heart, and to look for opportunities to serve.” She died November 11, 2023, at the age of 86, leaving a legacy of dedication to education and service to one’s community.

Warren was the “first” to hold many roles during her time of service. She became the first woman to serve as a full-time principal in Pitt County Schools, Greenville, North Carolina. She was the first woman elected to the Pitt County Board of Commissioners and the first woman elected to represent District 8 in the North Carolina House of Representatives, where she served 14 years before her retirement in 2012.

Warren fully embraced opportunities for service: from teaching, to administration, to the legislature. She taught first grade initially, then earned a master’s degree and became an elementary school principal at Sam Bundy School in Farmville, North Carolina. She worked on the local level in her classroom and later in her school district as an administrator. Upon retirement from teaching and administration, Warren continued to serve in government. Warren realized that much of what impacted schools and education happened in the government beyond those entities. She knew teachers and students needed a strong advocate in this governing arena to bring attention to key education issues, and she knew she was the woman for the job. She served first as a county commissioner, then filled a seat in the general assembly. Her example serves to provide a blueprint for other women who might wish to continue service, using the skills and knowledge they have to reach the ends they deem important.



Warren performed many services during her lifetime, but her time serving as an American Democratic member of the North Carolina General Assembly, representing the state's 8th House district from 1999 until 2012, afforded her the greatest opportunity to have a far-reaching impact on the students and educators in the state of North Carolina—an impact that extended beyond the confines of any one school or school district. Warren's service also allowed her to be a strong advocate for those in higher education, the East Carolina Heart Institute, and the East Carolina University School of Dental Medicine.

In a study of former presidents of Beta Upsilon Chapter, Broughton and Dotson (2021) conducted interviews. Warren was the first former president interviewed for this study. Warren served as chapter president from 1978–1980. When asked what she would advise women educators to do today, she commented, not surprisingly, about political involvement: “I would advise the next generation of leaders to participate. Step up to the plate. Stretch your wings. Be confident. Share with others. Be open, transparent, bare your soul. I saw the importance of legislature. Be politically involved.” She commented that putting herself in leadership positions was her particular opportunity to give something back to the community.

Two of the tenets Warren most strongly promoted were the need to serve and the need to take part, especially regarding exercising one's right to vote and serving in political office. She maintained that each person deserved the right to be heard—which can best be accomplished through the vote and service within the political machine. Cathy Warren said her mother advocated “to have a voice, you have to vote” (Livingston, 2023). This legacy is one that must be honored by educators diligently in every election cycle to allow them to advocate for themselves, their students, and education in general. Never has this been more important than the current time as citizens face growing inequalities, global pandemics, digital transformation, and so many other challenges. Educators must make their voices heard both nationally and locally at every opportunity they are offered. Warren realized this need and rose to the challenge. DKG members today should do no less.







“Register to vote, then do it” are the last words in Warren’s obituary (Livington, 2023). As educators, DKG members can honor these words. We can do our part as women educators to honor Warren and other passionate, informed educators by remaining committed to the best possible education for all students and voting to ensure positive outcomes. Edith Warren followed her own advice, and her example indicates the results of doing so. Her example as an educator and a woman of political service encourages women educators everywhere to dare to step up and not only vote but also take office and lead in the political process.

Educators who actively participated in recent elections reflected Warren’s commitment to ensuring every voice is heard and every vote is counted. Women fought hard for the right to vote and to take on leadership roles, inspiring others to do the same. By following Warren’s vision and wisdom, women today can continue to be politically involved, championing the rights they fought for and driving meaningful change in their communities and beyond.

To find out more about this amazing leader and member of Delta Kappa Gamma, please visit the Manuscript Collection #1385 at East Carolina University’s Joyner Library in Greenville, North Carolina, or access files at <https://digital.lib.ecu.edu/special/ead/findingaids/1385>. There, readers and researchers will have access to her time as the representative for the 8th District (composed of Martin County and part of Pitt County) in the North Carolina House of Representatives (January 1, 1999–January 1, 2013). Included in this collection are six binders related to her political career containing correspondence, photographs, speeches, committee material, clippings, campaign ephemera, and materials related to the “Fried Chicken Caucuses” held 2001–2007. Edith Warren’s oral history interviews, August 8, 2020, and September 26, 2020, are also available through East Carolina University Joyner Library Digital Collections.



*Alter Ego © Painting/Pastel by Melissa Hackett, Ohio; Spring 2024 Art Gallery*

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# Exchange Field Trips

By Valerie Vinnard

Field trips enhance student learning, boost confidence, improve social skills, provide cultural enrichment, and improve academic performance. Field trips also allow students to collaborate with their peers, explore new environments, make connections, problem solve, and develop trust and empathy. As a music educator, I enjoy taking students on educational and enriching field trips such as singing at the local convalescent hospital, at the Museum of Latin American Art, and at the office of the mayor of Long Beach. One field trip that I particularly enjoy having students experience is a collegiate choral music exchange field trip. I have taken several groups to Cal State Long Beach over the years. Thanks to a grant from the RuMBa Foundation of Long Beach, my fifth-grade chorus students from Birney Elementary School and I recently participated in a first-time choral music exchange field trip at Long Beach City College (LBCC).



Grade 5 students from Birney perform at LBCC.

## Long Beach City College Field Trip

The event began as we were greeted at the school bus by our host, Dr. Andrea Calderwood, who serves as the advanced vocal jazz choir director at LBCC. She took us on a brief tour of the campus and directed us to lunch tables where we dined and enjoyed the college campus atmosphere. Students were mesmerized by the size of the campus and were in awe as each college student passed. Some of our fifth graders even complimented the college students' hair and attire, engaging freely with them. Students were also enthralled while watching a skateboarder performing tricks for them and had fun giving him "high fives."



Birney students pose in front of the inspiring LBCC mural.

After lunch, we enjoyed taking a group photo at LBCC's iconic M Building mural, "Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow." On March 13, 2024, artist Paul Botello spoke at the unveiling of this first mural on campus, noting it commemorates his vision of inclusivity, community, and diversity. According to Botello, "'Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow' represents all of the academic disciplines offered at LBCC, the idea that 'your voice matters,' and how every aspect of campus life and individuality is embraced and included" (Doherty, 2024, para. 5). Harmoniously, Botello's vision also coincides with our Long Beach Unified School District goals of celebrating student inclusivity, community, and diversity.

After the photo opportunity, we were guided on a brief tour of the music department, and then we came to our final destination, which was the advanced vocal jazz studies music room. Prior to the event, Dr. Calderwood had stated that one of her current college students, Evan, was looking forward to seeing me as I had been his vocal music/chorus teacher when he was in elementary school!

### Choral Music Exchange Event

As the exchange event got under way, I was happy to see Evan when he walked in! What a nice reunion! I have supported him by attending a couple of his high school musicals, but I had not seen him in 2 years. He is now graduating from LBCC with an AA degree. He told me that he is going to continue with his studies in musical theater! Evan's success is not surprising as, according to officials from Americans for the Arts (2024), "low-income students [who] are highly engaged in the arts are twice as likely to graduate college as their peers with no arts education" (para. 3).

As the college students continued to trickle in, I played vocal warm-ups on the grand piano for our Birney Grade 5 students. While we sang, the college students joined us as they were getting themselves settled into rehearsal and setting up their microphone equipment. Nine college singers were in attendance



Vinnard conducts warm-up session for LBCC and Birney groups.



Ember, Evan, and Jaime reunite with their former music teacher.

that day. The two choirs warmed up their voices together, sang songs for one another, and performed a combined song. Our Birney students also were enriched by the beautiful choral jazz music sung by the college students; they enjoyed not only unforgettable layered harmonies but also elegant vocal improvisational solos.

One unexpected surprise was I had not just one former elementary student in this college choir but three: Evan, Ember, and Jaime! With 54 elementary and 6 K–8 schools, Long Beach Unified School District is one of the largest districts in the state of California. It is amazing that I have had so many students enjoy music so much in elementary school that they continued their interest in music to middle school, high school, and now college choir and beyond!

### Benefits and Gains from the Choral Music Exchange

At the end of the event, we took a celebratory group photo. The entire event was a community-building experience for all in attendance. It was enriching for the Birney students: partaking in activities at an institution of higher learning, working with college singers and a college professor, and participating in advanced vocal jazz choral techniques. For the college students, it was sweet for them to see students where they had once been—in elementary school chorus—and now to be inspiring younger kids. For the teachers, it was nice to work together, collaborate collectively for their students, and build friendships.





Both choirs also benefitted from singing songs slated for their upcoming spring performances. Our Birney elementary students sang songs from the spring chorus packet that was to be performed for parents and the entire school in an outdoor concert by the large tree on campus. These young students got to practice their songs in unison and in harmony in front of a kind and empathic audience that cheered them on. Due to this, student confidence was increased, and we had a beautiful and successful spring concert about which students felt very proud. This in turn, led to higher academic performance.

**Students from Birney Elementary and Long Beach Community College join for a combined photo.**

exchange field trip event, students got to explore new environments, made connections, and collaborated not only with their peers but also with college students and a college professor. Students also developed trust and empathy with one another and their teachers and broadened their perspectives. The event also boosted students' confidence, improved their social skills, and was culturally enriching.

I believe that teachers should take students on field trips at least once a year if possible. Furthermore, for teachers who are a little bit shy about taking youngsters outside of the school, virtual field trips are an excellent option. Virtual field trips allow teachers to take students on a journey to learn more about the world around them—while not having to secure grants for busing and travel. Such trips can also allow students to interact with the virtual world, giving them a sense of autonomy navigating at a pace that is comfortable. Whether literal or virtual, field trips provide students with unique and unforgettable experiences and an enthusiasm for learning that they would not normally receive in the general classroom setting.



**Current Birney Grade 4 students are joining chorus after being inspired by the Grade 5 students!**

**Valerie Vinnard, MM**, is a National Board Certified Teacher, two-time Grammy Music Educator Award Nominee, California Music Educator Association (CMEA) Award winner, and nominee for the Ernest R. Yee Illuminating Culture Award. She is a Long Beach Unified School District Teacher of the Year nominee, two-time winner of California State Organization Professional Service Award, past president of Delta Epsilon Chapter, and current member of Eta Chapter—both in Long Beach in California State Organization. Vinnard utilizes her art—writing, photography, and singing—to promote the benefits of music education in schools. [VVinnard@lbschools.net](mailto:VVinnard@lbschools.net)





# Helping Members to See the Impact of SEE

by Lori Richardson Morphey

In June 2024, I used Lego blocks to represent the hours and donations that the members of Oklahoma State Organization donated toward the Support for Early-career Educators (SEE) project. This strategy is shared here as just one way to help members realize and visualize the impact of their efforts in SEE.

As the first vice president of the state organization, one of my tasks was to gather the SEE information from the chapter presidents. Consequently, I emailed two forms to the chapter presidents to keep track of their dollars and hours, respectively. Oklahoma currently has 25 chapters with 410 members. As the reports were submitted, the numbers for support of SEE started to climb.

The goal of the international project of SEE is to assist young educators over the 7-year hump—to avoid risking the loss of another educator. Wanting to give the members a visual representation at the state organization's conference, I saw Legos as building blocks—representing veteran teachers as a solid foundation of help for our early educators. So, that sealed it...Legos would be the visual representation.



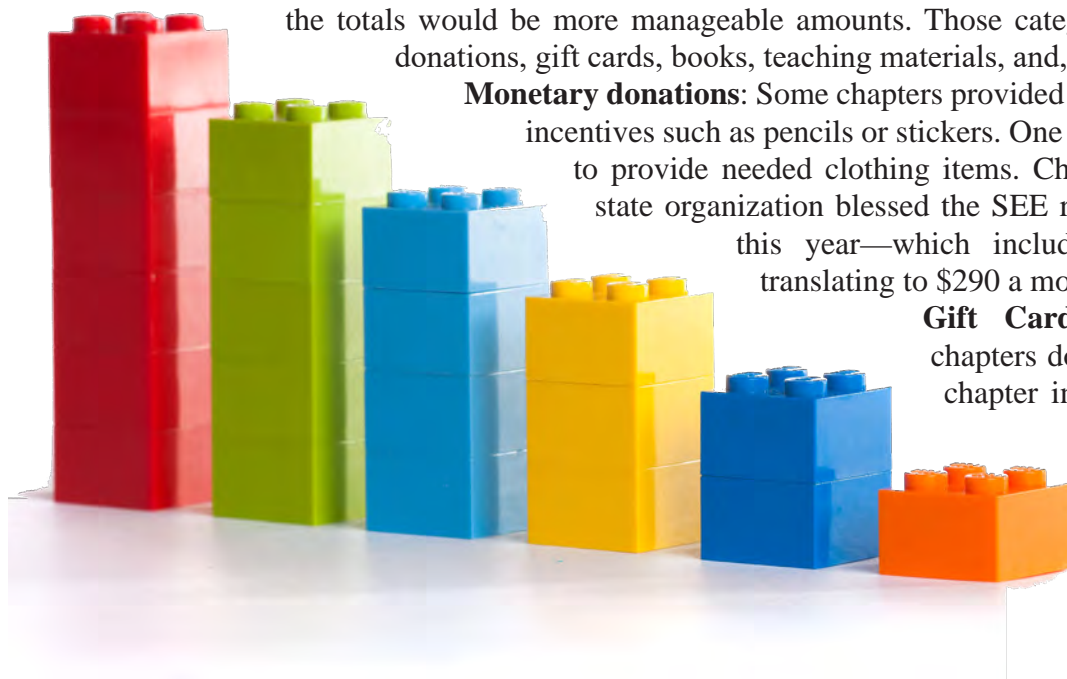
Jo Yandell and Dacia Hudelson help create the Lego visual for SEE as Lori Richardson Morphey shares the statistics!

## Donations

In preparation for the display, I did two things. First, I counted out Legos to match the dollars or hours donated—using a 1 to 10 ratio. For example, for a monetary donation of \$2,900, I literally counted out 290 Legos and put them in a bag. Next, I divided the donations into categories so that the totals would be more manageable amounts. Those categories were monetary donations, gift cards, books, teaching materials, and, finally, other.

**Monetary donations:** Some chapters provided monies to buy student incentives such as pencils or stickers. One chapter donated funds to provide needed clothing items. Chapters throughout the state organization blessed the SEE recipients with \$2,900 this year—which included just 10 months, translating to \$290 a month.

**Gift Cards:** I found several chapters donated gift cards. One chapter in northern Oklahoma, Delta, provided these cards to use at a school's Book Fair. This way, the teachers could





select books of their choice. The Yukon chapter provided gift cards to be placed in gift bags for the attendees at their “Beginning of the Year Breakfast.” Gift cards were a convenient way to assist teachers financially because they could select the items they needed most. The total amount donated via gift cards was \$2,185.

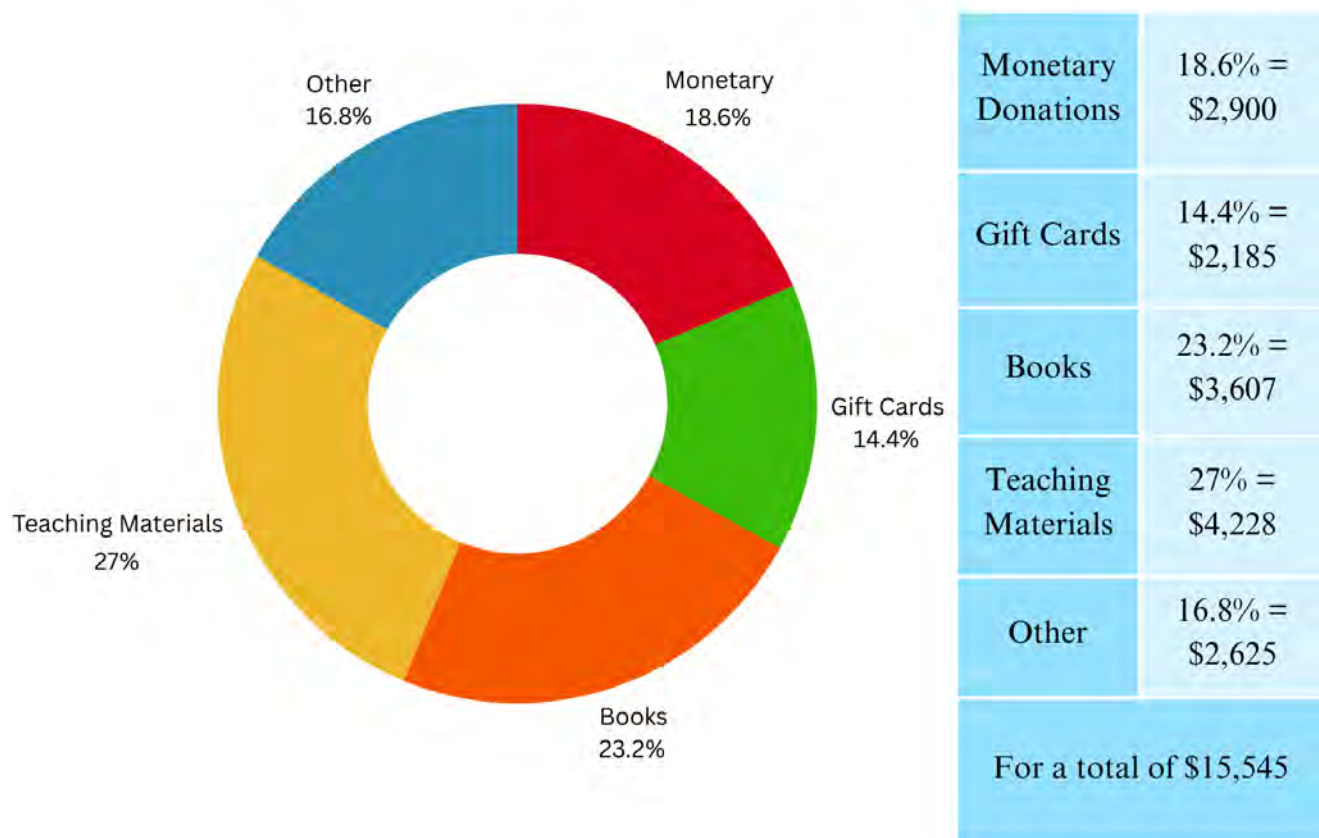
**Books:** Dozens and dozens of books were purchased for students and teachers. At Bodine Elementary in Oklahoma City, funds were used to help build first-year teachers’ classroom libraries that allowed children to select a book of their choice during free time. In the eastern part of the state, Gamma Beta provided more than 200 books for the first graders in Tahlequah. Teachers love their books. It seems the giving of books is valued by Oklahomans, as the value reported for the books donated was \$3,607.

**Classroom Materials:** Sometimes teachers simply need items for their classrooms. These might be special ingredients for a science experiment or colored cardstock for Mother’s Day cards. Members in Oklahoma also stepped up with items to help decorate beginning teachers’ classrooms. I have shopped at possibly every teacher store in the state and have always found special items that will assist classroom instruction or possibly ease a day’s work. The total amount donated for materials was \$4,228.

**Other:** This is an interesting, catch-all category—but also perhaps the most heartfelt. Alpha Iota provided holiday gift baskets for their young educators. Beta Iota created a Shakespeare Scholarship so that their educators could attend a workshop on the bard. This catch-all category was not shortchanged, as \$2,625 was donated under the “other” title.

As I read the numbers of dollars donated to the members present, helpers poured the bagged Legos into a clear container. The applause from the audience grew.

## OSU Donations for Teachers – SEE





## Hours Spent Helping

The next category was very impressive. It was to demonstrate the hours spent helping. Every Lego block represented 10 hours of help. This category was divided into mentoring, physical classroom help, volunteer work, and other.

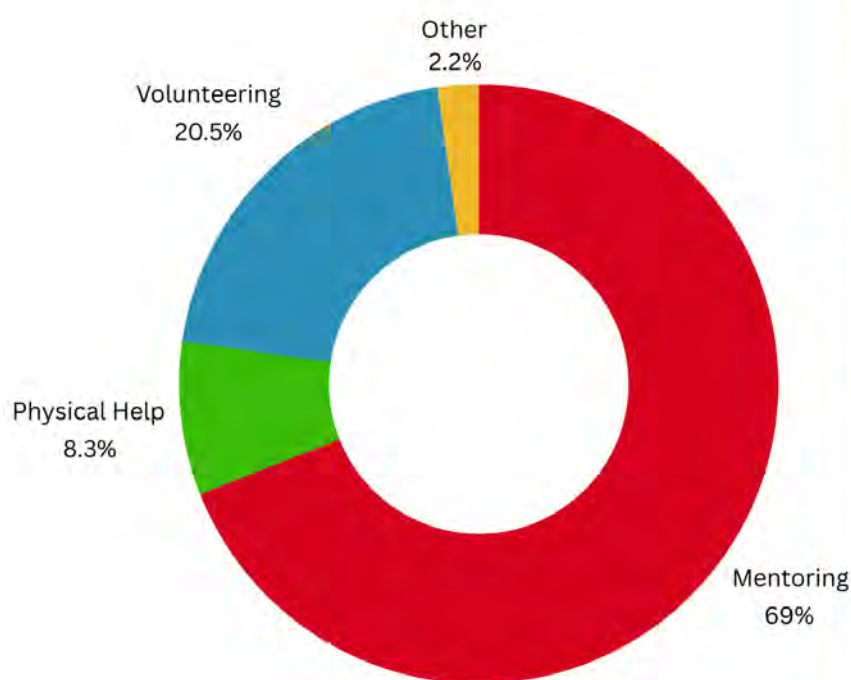
Members clocked 5,177 hours in helping, guiding, coaching, and supporting SEE women. Such mentoring was represented by 518 Lego blocks.

The next category was physical classroom help. I thought this should be separated by actual physical labor, such as moving furniture, assembling bulletin boards, or laminating items. Oklahoma DKG women clocked 628 hours toward these endeavors.

Volunteer work was the next category. The helpers were very flexible; they might start the day coaching little ones on their letter sounds or organizing papers—depending on the needs of the teacher. Women in Beta Beta were volunteering as library aides for a new media specialist. Members from Beta Lambda volunteered, as reported by one helper, “anywhere they needed me.”

The final category of “other” included such help as working in an after-school program or assisting a teacher in implementing the new reading series. I also included here the hours of Alpha Iota helping to guide a student teacher.

## OSO Hours Spent Helping – SEE



Mentoring Hours	69% = 5,177 hours
Physical Help Hours	8.3% = 628 hours
Volunteer Hours	20.5% = 1,539 hours
Other Hours	2.2% = 149
For a total of 7,493 Hours	





### Grand Totals

Finally, I was ready to announce the grand totals. The I could sense the excitement in the audience. The grand and the total number of hours spent was 7,493. If minimum wage for 2024 is \$7.25, the donated time

I am very proud of the job Oklahoma educators our early-career educators...and eager to see Organization educators help again next year. shortage of teachers, it is imperative that all to help early-career educators—and that we “see” the results of our work in the SEE

Legos were filling the container, and total for dollars spent was \$15,545, one considers that Oklahoma’s could be valued at \$54,324.25! did this past year to help how the Oklahoma State During this time of a members in DKG step up find simple ways to help everyone initiative!



**Lori Richardson Morpew**, a member of Alpha Chapter, is a past state president of Oklahoma State Organization and currently serves as its first vice president. Morpew retired from Oklahoma City Public Schools after 32 years and now works as a Writing Consultant for the district, sharing and modeling the writing process with teachers and students. [lorijrichardsonm@gmail.com](mailto:lorijrichardsonm@gmail.com)

## MAKE A DIFFERENCE TODAY

In this issue of DKG’s *Collegial Exchange*, the DKG International Educators Foundation (DKGIEF) is providing a contribution envelope for your use in donating to your favorite initiative: Cornet Professional Development Awards, Educational Projects, Educators Award, Emergency Fund, Eunah Temple Holden Leadership, Golden Gift, International Speakers, Scholarship, and World Fellowship.

DKGIEF supports the philanthropic work of the Society through scholarships, grants, and awards to members and non-members. Please consider mailing a donation in the provided envelope or submitting contributions online (see the envelope for details). Your donation is “giving to educate the world.”



Or scan the QR code to donate online



DKG  
International  
Educators  
Foundation



# DKG Connections Across the Border

By Dianne Caron and Priscilla McFarland

Delta Kappa Gamma organizations in the state of Maine, located in the northeastern corner of the United States, and the province of New Brunswick, Canada, which borders Maine on its north and east, have a unique relationship. Decades before Avenue M's recommendation that DKG should "create and promote opportunities to connect locally and globally" (Jacobs et al., 2023, p. 39), chapters in Maine and New Brunswick were meeting and sharing programs on a regular basis. These women were embodying the first of The Delta Kappa Gamma Society International's seven Purposes, "To unite women educators of the world in a genuine spiritual fellowship" ("Purposes," 2024). Provincial and state organizations in New Brunswick in Canada and Maine in the United States have embodied these themes of connecting and fellowship since the early 1960s through their annual gatherings that have alternated between venues in each country.

The original cross-border meetings were held during luncheons and continued to 2018. Each meeting featured a guest speaker or tour. For example, in 1962, Lambda Chapter, located in Maine's easternmost county that borders New Brunswick, hosted members from New Brunswick in Calais, Maine, for lunch and a talk on "Human Relations." In 1978, the two groups met in St. Stephen, New Brunswick, where a member of Lambda, Marion Bagley, delivered a presentation on "The Impact of TV Violence on Youth," and, in 1987, the two groups met on Campobello Island. The island is located off the southern coast of New Brunswick and is connected to Lubec, Maine, by a bridge. The attendees toured the Roosevelt Cottage, the summer home of past U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt. In 1998, a luncheon was held in Milltown, New Brunswick, across the border from Calais, Maine. The speaker's topic was "The Importance of Humor in our Lives."

The New Brunswick-Maine connection gradually expanded from the original annual luncheon meetings to include participation in other events. Over the years, New Brunswick members would attend some of Maine's statewide meetings, such as the "Stretch Your Teaching" professional development



Members from Maine and New Brunswick gather for the 2019 cross-border conference.





workshop, fall conferences, and state conventions. Eight New Brunswick women attended Maine State Organization's 75th Anniversary Celebration at their spring convention in 2018. The two groups have exchanged newsletters. In recent years, members from both organizations have attended each other's virtual presentations on educational topics. Friendships have been renewed at international conferences and conventions. Some members stay in contact with their cross-border friends through emails, Facebook, and occasional phone calls. Maine's Elaine Hendrickson shared:

...I became acquainted with Marjorie Sinclair, Dianne Caron, and Roberte Melanson, NB President [in Austin.] ... Marjorie has remained a friend via email and Facebook. Marjorie came to an event I hosted, a tour of the Katahdin Woods and Waters Monument, to show it off to others. She brought her brother George with her. I will occasionally get a note from her.

Dianne Caron, current state organization president of New Brunswick, remembers a special friend:

I have fond memories of Mabel Desmond, who taught school in Aroostook County, Maine. Mabel was also an adjunct professor at the University of Maine in Presque Isle, was later appointed to the Maine State Board of Education, and served four terms in the Maine House of Representatives. After retiring, Mabel moved to Fredericton, New Brunswick. She remained a member of DKG Maine, but she attended some of our meetings and our cross-border conferences.

The idea of a reimagination of the cross-border meetings on a broader scale came into fruition after discussions among members at the 2018 International Convention in Austin, Texas. "We spent a lot of time in communication that year leading up to the 2019 cross-border event," declared Hendrickson. Thus, the cross-border meeting concept morphed from an annual, single-afternoon meeting between one Maine chapter and the New Brunswick members into a biennial, overnight weekend event. This new model involved Maine chapters across the state getting together with New Brunswick chapters. A Cornetet Award from DKGIEF—received and appreciated by Caron of New Brunswick—helped finance the 2019 gathering.

### DKG New Brunswick Cross-Border Conference: October 5–6, 2019

In October 2019, on a bright day displaying a natural tapestry of brilliant hues of red, yellow, and orange, 40 DKG members, half from New Brunswick and half from Maine, embarked on their "Stepping Back in Time: Reliving History" weekend. After a lunch meeting, the attendees and Betty Rose, who is from the province of Alberta and was then the Area Representative Canada, headed to Kings Landing, a captivating, interactive, living-history village outside Fredericton, the capital city of New Brunswick, which is located 60 miles east of the Maine and New Brunswick border. Participants relived New Brunswick history through stories from their guides and friendly citizens performing enactments of various chores of times past throughout the village.

History indeed came alive! A one-room schoolhouse with a strict teacher and students reciting their lessons in unison, a working farm with livestock, a sawmill, a furnished cabin, and a



A bit of nostalgia: Members enjoyed seeing this re-created schoolroom at the School Days Museum in Fredericton.





wagon ride were just some of the many highlights. Maine's Rena Kearney recalled that she had often brought her fourth and fifth graders for field trips to Kings Landing from their school in northern Maine. Joan Somerville of New Brunswick observed:

My best memory of the Kings Landing conference was the large number of Maine sisters who attended the event. It was memorable in that we were able to resume our cross-border tradition after COVID and to experience the impact of personal growth and commitment to the Purposes of Delta Kappa Gamma.

The evening was spent at the Fredericton Inn, the lodgings for the night. A delicious dinner, engaging speakers, and wonderful conversations among members from both countries were relished by all. Attendees enjoyed the presentation by the first guest speaker, Jacques Poitras, CBC political reporter and author of five nonfiction books, including *Imaginary Line: Life on an Unfinished Border* (Poitras, 2011). He presented the fascinating history involving changes in the boundary of New Brunswick and Maine. The border between Maine and New Brunswick was not settled until the Webster-Ashburton Treaty was signed in 1842. Hendrickson, Maine State President in 2019, recalls that she was privileged to sit next to Poitras:

We talked about the connection between Maine and New Brunswick. Living in Aroostook County, I have heard many people, including Rena Kearney, say they were going to visit friends "over home."

When the Webster-Ashburton Treaty was agreed to, determining the border between the United States and Canada, many families found themselves in "different countries."

The second speaker, Anne Mitton, a DKG colleague from Beta Chapter, Fredericton, shared "Reflections of New Brunswick," highlighting her own humorous personal experiences relating to New Brunswick inventions and historical "firsts."

The professional development session involved all DKG members in small-group discussions on mutually relevant topics, such as membership, member participation, leadership, mentorship, and fundraising. The insights gained and shared were valuable sources of information and suggestions that group members took back to their respective chapters.

Sunday morning featured a visit to the School Days Museum in Fredericton. Highlights included a replica of an early 20th-century one-room schoolhouse complete with the rules on the board, recordings of interviews from past provincial educators, and displays of early textbooks, historic classroom materials, and various educational artifacts. A New Brunswick teacher commented that she had a teacher who wore the same outfit that was on display in the museum classroom, and a Maine member recalled that she had taught from the home economics textbook that was exhibited. Participants enjoyed reliving memories of their past educational experiences by traveling back to a time when they and their predecessors were taught. This museum experience enriched the participants' belief that, as Robert Penn Warren, American poet and novelist, stated, "History cannot give us a program for the future, but it can give us a fuller understanding of ourselves, and of our common humanity, so that we can better face the future" (Warren, 1946).



**Maine State Organization President Priscilla McFarland and New Brunswick State Organization President Dianne Caron reach across borders in 2023!**



## DKG Maine Cross-Border Conference: September 23–24, 2023

After the successful gathering in Fredericton, the plan was to alternate between New Brunswick and Maine venues every other year and to continue the 2-day format. Unfortunately, COVID interrupted Maine's plan to host the cross-border weekend in 2021. However, Maine members hosted a successful event in Columbia Falls, located in far eastern Maine, in the fall of 2023. The "Connecting Across the DKG Maine-New Brunswick Border in 'Sunrise County' of Downeast Maine" event was held at the headquarters of Wreaths Across America, where members toured three memorable sites: the Veterans' Museum, the Hospitality House for Gold Star families, and the neighboring historic Ruggles House Museum.

Attendees were treated to a delightful, enlightening tour of the 1,800 square foot museum by a knowledgeable guide, Nancy Willey, a 92-year-old DKG member, retired teacher, and museum volunteer. She shared several fascinating stories about the military exhibits to honor veterans who had fought for their country's freedom. The treasures included military uniforms, helmets, personal awards, and relevant memorabilia. A room-sized diorama of soldiers camping on a sandy beach in Vietnam evoked a realization of the hardships experienced by these heroes. The museum was meaningful to members from both countries because their veterans served during the same wars.

The heart-warming Hospitality House honors Gold Star Military Families and veterans by allowing them to stay there at no cost. Participants were impressed by the rooms, each decorated in the period of a different war era and dedicated to a particular veteran.

Later, those in attendance were treated to a guided tour of The Ruggles House, a Federal-style home built in 1820, where members and descendants of the Ruggles family lived for 100 years. This historic site features a beautiful flying staircase, and the building is a showcase of historic furnishings and antiques. Over the years, it has been restored and preserved by volunteers and by the last resident, Mary Ruggles Chandler, who was the first woman pharmacist in the state of Maine. She maintained an herb garden on the property from which she concocted various medicinal tinctures. Much like the Founders of DKG, she was a woman ahead of her time.

Before dinner, the cross-border group had a bus tour of Balsam Valley, a 48,000-acre tree farm known as the "Tip Land." This site was so named because the act of harvesting balsam fir branches for wreath-making is known as "tipping." The Worcester family has farmed balsam for years, cultivating and tending acres of forest land to make wreaths. Morrill Worcester began the program called "Wreaths Across America" when his company had a surplus of wreaths. He decided to take them to Arlington National Cemetery, near the U.S. capital, Washington, DC, to put on soldiers' graves. What once was a strictly for-profit business known as Worcester Wreath Company has transitioned to a supplier of wreaths that are now placed before Christmas each year on the graves of American veterans across the United States to honor fallen soldiers and any who served.

Family members and friends of veterans may purchase dog tags engraved with loved ones' names and military information and tie them to the branches of trees in the Tip Land to honor their service. The name of the loved one is always announced prior to the placement of the tag. Veterans and family members



**Maine State Organization's Past State President Mary Hyland introduces speaker Dr. Lace Marie Brogden at the 2023 conference.**



Nancy Willey, DKG member and volunteer, guides participants at the Veterans' Museum.

are welcome to visit their memorial tree any time. Eight Maine DKG members placed dog tags for their families' veterans in a solemn, emotional ceremony during the group's tour.

Balsam Valley also features a non-denominational chapel, an amphitheater for live performances, and Veterans' Memorial Park, which is dedicated by the Worcester Family to honor all American veterans. One interesting stop as the group toured the Tip Land was the Tiger Flight Memorial, a monument built to honor 93 members of the All-Special Forces Unit who went missing during the Vietnam War when their plane, Tiger Flight 739, disappeared on a top-secret mission for the U.S. Army. When the Worcester family learned that the names of these soldiers had been

omitted from the Vietnam Wall in Washington, DC, because they had not died in active combat, they built a monument with each name engraved on a plaque as a tribute. The site even includes a monument dedicated to a horse that helped transport the caskets of soldiers on their way for burial at Arlington National Cemetery.

At dinner, Dr. Lace Marie Brogden, a DKG member and Dean of Education at St. Francis Xavier University in Antigonish, Nova Scotia, provided an inspirational talk about glass ceilings and women in leadership. After dinner, members had the opportunity to participate in making wreaths with fresh balsam tips. The wreaths were given as door prizes to be placed with respect upon the headstones of veterans in various communities.

Before everyone departed on Sunday morning, they met to reflect on the weekend and to discuss common issues such as membership recruitment and retention, collegiate membership, and the challenges of meeting when chapter members live hours apart. This time for reflection provided a satisfying end to an inspirational weekend featuring participation in activities, sharing of DKG concerns, and valued friendship—three strong components of the conference.

## Final Thoughts

All the participants agree that our cross-border events have significant value. Maine's Donna Kennison remarked, "The meetings help us stay connected and are a great way to share our similarities and differences." Rena Kearney of Maine noted, "Cross-border meetings are a wonderful time to see new places, meet new friends, and renew old friendships. We are so lucky to live close to the Canadian border." New Brunswick's Marjorie Sinclair, Area Representative Canada from 2020–2024, expressed the feelings of many participants when she reflected:

Cross-border meetings are a great way to meet members in another state. Maine has so many more chapters and members than New Brunswick. They have lots of ideas of how to support their members or to attract new members to DKG. It also helps us learn about the geography of the various areas. Even though we are right next door, we still have different cultures and ways of looking at life. This is an international organization, and by having cross-border meetings, we are really paying homage to the word *international*.

Joan Somerville, former president of New Brunswick State Organization noted, "Our cross-border meetings are always uplifting and exemplify the value of DKG and its power to unite women across borders. I would not wish to see them discontinued."





In conclusion, DKG neighboring members of New Brunswick, Canada, and Maine, United States—two countries sharing one border—have joined in fellowship and learning for more than 60 years, and we are looking forward to future cross-border conferences. State organizations and chapters that are not as fortunate to share an international border have many other options to build relationships with other DKG groups, both close to home and more distant.

Opportunities abound for making connections. Chapters could visit each other through Zoom or Google Meet and share newsletters, Facebook pages, pen pal letters, and emails. If chapters are geographically close, they could team up for outings, such as hikes, museum visits, and cultural festivals.

At the 2024 International Convention in National Harbor, Maryland, state organization presidents from Vermont, New Hampshire, and Maine met and discussed a mutual desire to collaborate on future events, such as professional development opportunities. The three women arranged to meet at a lakeside home in New Hampshire in the fall of 2024 to generate ideas and plans for prospective shared undertakings.

Some state organizations have welcomed chapters and members in other states and countries to join their Zoom presentations. All state organizations in Canada have made their presentations on professional or personal development topics available to members across Canada and the United States. In February 2024, New Brunswick opened their Zoom program about slavery in the northeast to their DKG neighbors. In January 2024, Canada, Europe, and Alaska state organizations held a virtual “Cultural Exchange” meeting. Members from 10 countries shared information about their respective cultures and highlighted Delta Kappa Gamma accomplishments in their communities. This virtual gathering linked members globally and was an enlightening experience for all.

Forging connections with other chapters, state organizations, and members from different countries could add an enriching and stimulating dimension to your DKG involvement. You and your chapter members or state officers might generate a list of potential DKG alliances with whom you would enjoy building relationships. Start reaching out to one or more presidents and make plans to get together. Don’t miss out on this rewarding opportunity!



**“In 2018, in Austin, Texas, DKG groups from Maine and New Brunswick met to discuss having cross-border weekend meetings. The idea soon blossomed! What a great association!” (Elaine Hendrickson)**

**Dianne Caron** has been a member of Beta Chapter of New Brunswick State Organization in Canada since 1994. She served as state organization president 2007–2009 and is now serving again from 2023–2025. During her career, she taught at various levels and continued as an elementary school administrator. After retiring, she wrote her memoir, “Tenderness and Tolerance,” and enjoys traveling and “family time.” [dicaron47@gmail.com](mailto:dicaron47@gmail.com)

**Priscilla McFarland** spent 39 years teaching in the elementary grades. She has been a member of Theta Chapter for 15 years and is currently president of Maine State Organization. She is kept busy in retirement with plays and concerts, the Retired Teachers’ Association, genealogy, and friends. [pmcfarland1227@gmail.com](mailto:pmcfarland1227@gmail.com)

# 2020–2023 DKGIEF Impact Report

**Mission:** “The DKG International Educators Foundation supports effective educational projects, the educational and charitable activities of the Society, and professional growth of educators worldwide.”

**Vision:** “Giving to Educate the World”

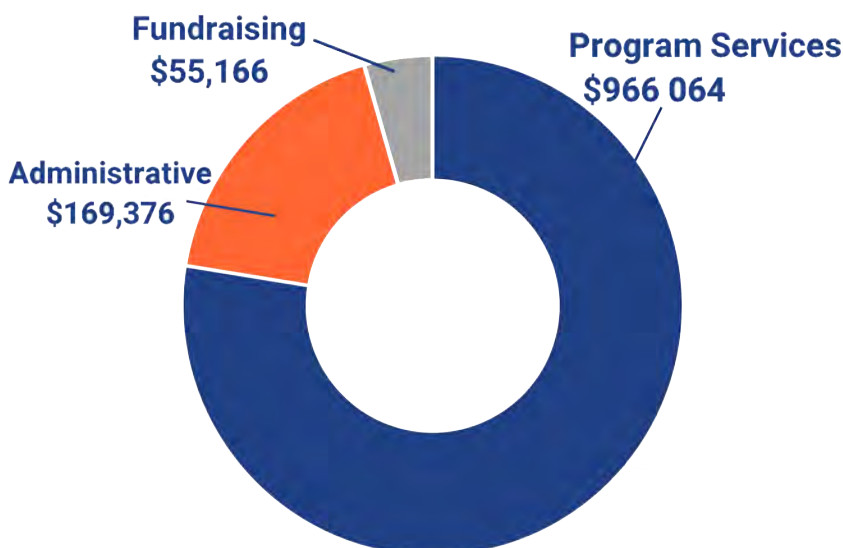
In 2020, the DKG Supporting Corporation and the Educational Foundation merged, creating the DKG International Educators Foundation (DKGIEF). DKGIEF enhances the Society’s educational and charitable giving and gives donors one place to support DKG’s philanthropic work. The merger simplified the recording, accounting, and reporting of the Society’s financial operations while maintaining transparency in the flow of contributions into the Foundation and distributions to educators worldwide.

The inaugural DKGIEF Impact Report (July 1, 2020, to June 30, 2023) provides donors and members with a compilation of the Foundation’s work and the stories of recipients during its fledgling years of operation. The report results from collaboration between DKGIEF, Society committees, and Headquarters staff.

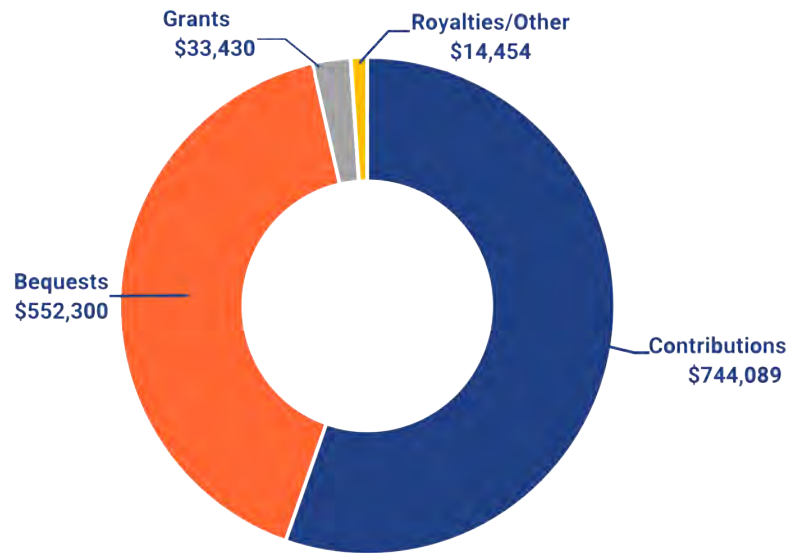
The DKGIEF Strategic Plan guided the development of the 2023 Impact Report. The report includes recipient stories, which increase the Foundation’s visibility and awareness. The numbers shared for each managed fund present the systems for transparent, responsible, and efficient financial stewardship. The donor recognition page allows the Foundation to recognize members, businesses, and other community members who supported DKGIEF with donations. Quotes from these donors help to educate and engage other potential donors.

Nine DKGIEF-managed funds are supported by donations, royalties, grants, and bequests that continue the work of the Foundation. The Foundation’s financial data present total revenue and expenses from 2020–2023, including during COVID.

## Total Expenses



## Total Revenue



**Total Assets July 1, 2020**

**\$5,966,175**

**Total Assets June 30, 2023**

**\$6,531,430**

The DKGIEF Impact Report data clearly show that contributions are essential to continuing the Foundation's work. From every dollar donated, 86 cents go directly to programs managed by DKGIEF. As we approach the end of 2024, consider making a tax-deductible donation to DKGIEF. Use the DKGIEF Contribution Envelope included in this issue to mail a donation, or go to the DKGIEF [Ways to Contribute](#) page to make an online contribution.

As DKGIEF continues to promote intercultural understanding, encourage improvement in education, and support the professional development of educators worldwide, its directors are proud to share our successes. The full report is available on the [DKGIEF web page](#) or by scanning the QR code. As you review the Impact Report, the DKGIEF Directors hope you will see how our work fulfills the DKG Vision: "Leading Women Educators Impacting Education Worldwide." We are committed to continuous improvement and look forward to sharing more successes in the future.



**Scan the QR Code to access the 2020-2023 DKGIEF Impact Report NOW!**



# Three Powerful Avenues for Members' Expression/Publication

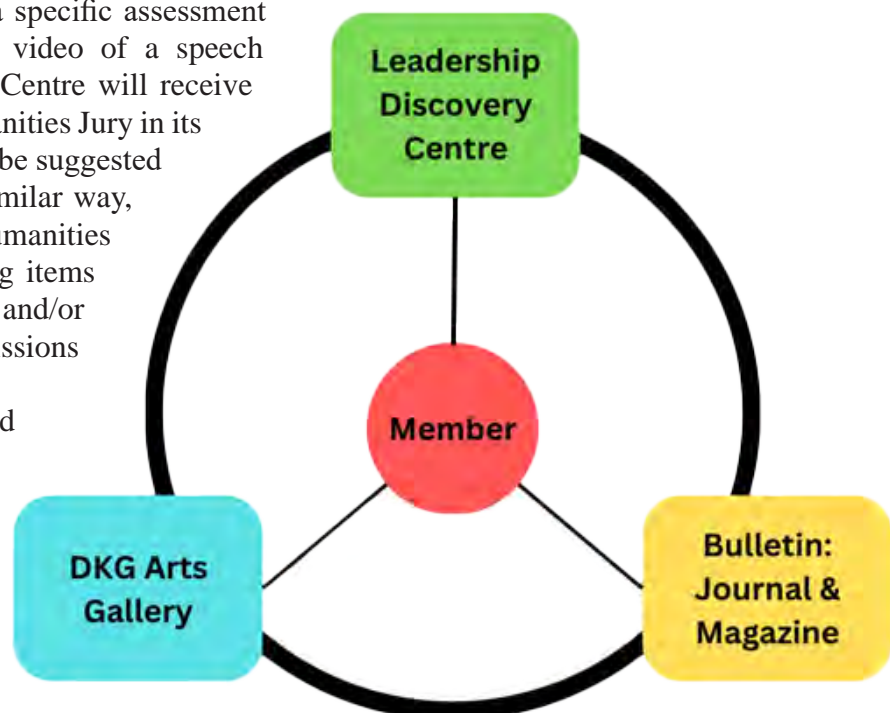
The exceptional talents, knowledge, and experience of Delta Kappa Gamma members are among the Society's most important resources as our key women educators seek to foster professional and personal growth, promote excellence in education, and make an impact worldwide. With the recent introduction of the Leadership Discovery Centre, DKG now has a powerful troika of avenues for members to share their expertise and inspire others: the Centre; the *Bulletin* publication (journal and magazine formats); and the Arts Gallery.

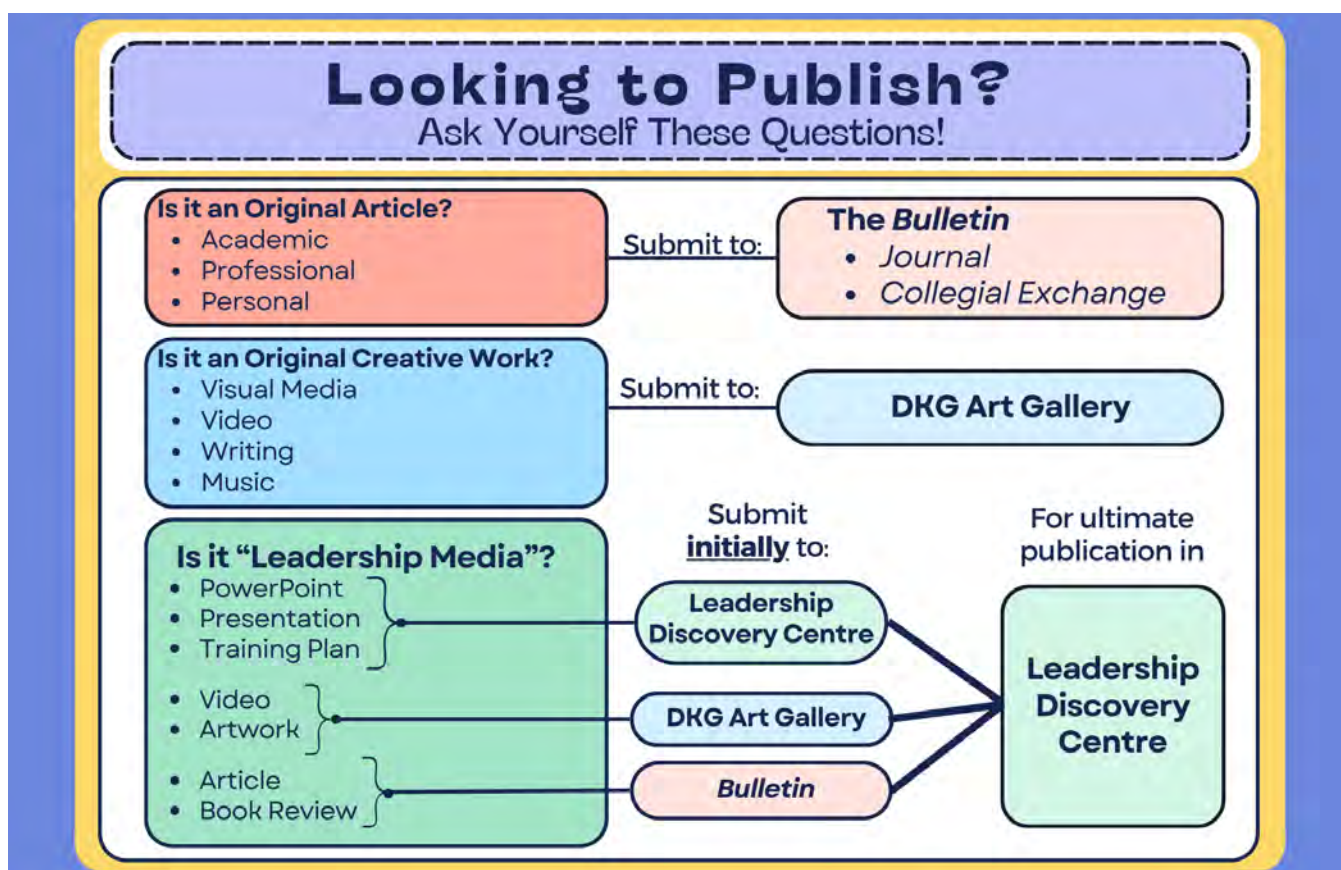
In its 91st year of publication, the *Bulletin* publishes original academic **articles** in its journal format (subtitled *International Journal for Professional Educators*) and more personal and practical articles in its magazine format (subtitled *Collegial Exchange*). Established in 2010, the Arts Gallery features members' **works in visual media, videos, writing, and music**. Launched in late 2022 and now formalized with committee direction as of the 2024 International Convention, the Leadership Discovery Centre encourages members to submit "**leadership media**"—videos, PowerPoint presentations, training plans, articles, and book reviews—to promote exploration of leadership topics.

Because some submission categories overlap, members who wish to be published via any of these three venues should consider the emphasis of each when making a submission. Note, however, that the chair of the new committee for the Centre, the chair of the jury for the Gallery, and the editor of the *Bulletin* are committed to collaboration to showcase members' contributions. This means that the three entities will direct and redirect submissions as needed to ensure that the integrity/quality of each avenue is maintained.

For example, an original article regarding leadership submitted to the Centre will be forwarded for primary review by the Editorial Board for the *Bulletin* (either format) and subsequently may become part of the resources in the Centre based on a specific assessment of its relevance to leadership. A video of a speech about leadership submitted to the Centre will receive primary review by the Arts & Humanities Jury in its filmmaking category and may then be suggested for inclusion in the Centre. In a similar way, the Editorial Board and Arts & Humanities Jury will alert the Centre regarding items that may be pertinent to its goals and/or suggest that members reframe submissions to align with the Centre's focus.

Members' talents, knowledge, and experience—a powerful three-fold gift to the profession—have three powerful avenues for expression!





To submit:

Go to [dkg.org](http://dkg.org) > MyDKG > Apply Submit

### ***Bulletin: Journal and Magazine***

Submissions for the *Bulletin* are accepted at any time. However, deadlines for specific formats are as follows:

*Bulletin Collegial Exchange* Deadline(s):

August 1  
December 15

*Bulletin Journal* Deadline(s):

March 1  
May 15  
October 1

### ***Arts & Humanities Gallery***

Submissions for the DKG Art Gallery are accepted in two periods:

January 1 – February 15 for Spring Gallery  
August 15 – September 15 for Fall Gallery

### ***Leadership Discovery Centre***

Submissions of presentations, tools, media, etc. for the Leadership Discovery Centre are currently accepted at any time. However, review and scoring windows open on the following dates for submissions received in the interim:

January 10

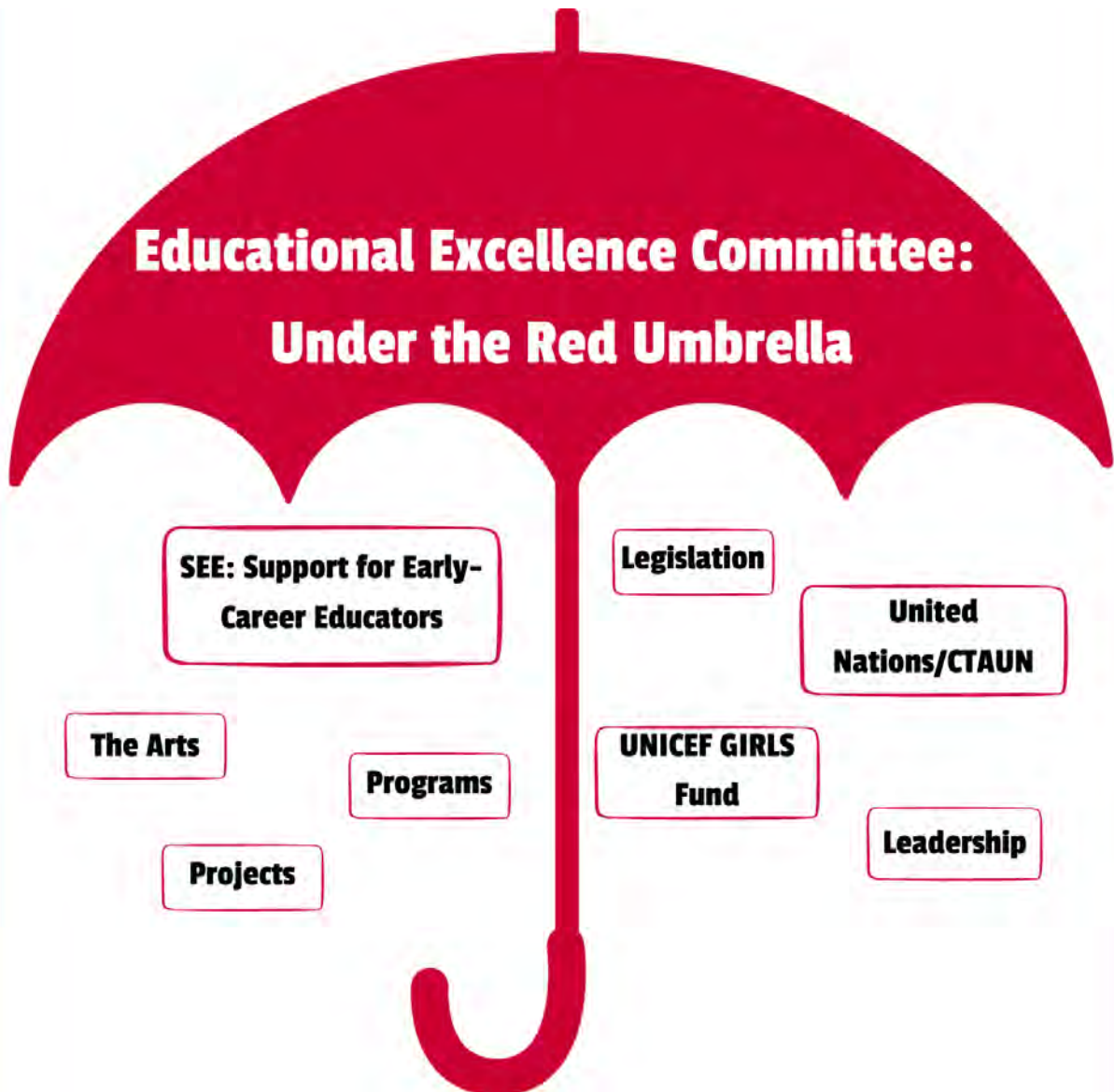
May 10

August 10

The Centre also accepts submissions for upcoming virtual webinars, workshops, seminars, panel discussions, programs, or other virtual activities. Virtual events should be submitted at least 10 business days prior to the event to allow for sufficient time for website posting and registration.



## Under the Red Umbrella: Defining and Promoting Educational Excellence



During the 2022–2024 biennium, the Educational Excellence Committee (EEC) adopted the use of the red umbrella as a symbol for covering the varied focus areas of EEC. Committee members expressed the need to provide information about EEC that would broaden members’ understanding of what was under the red umbrella. As was evident in our work with members at the state organization and chapter levels, some of the focus areas—such as the international projects and programs of work—were understood to be a part of EEC. What was not clear were the other focus areas under the umbrella.

When working to define and describe EEC at the 2023 leadership training session for state organization EEC chairs, the following ideas were collected:





1. EEC is how you keep members engaged.
2. EEC is looking for opportunities to improve education.
3. EEC supports or provides the overall picture of our DKG work needed to reach focus area goals.
4. EEC supports our seven Purposes.
5. EEC helps members move beyond superficial support of teachers by expecting real change that speaks to educational excellence.
6. EEC involves finding engaging projects and programs—presenters, activities—to engage members and/or serve the community.

Keeping these ideas in mind, the remainder of this article provides clarity to the various focus areas of EEC and possible opportunities to apply these focus areas of EEC in state organizations and chapters.

### International Projects: UNICEF/USA — Schools for Africa — GIRLS

UNICEF USA has discontinued the Schools for Africa project and recommended several projects as possible replacements. At the 2024 International Convention, members approved “Girls Initiative to Revitalize Learning and Success” (GIRLS) as the new DKG international project. This program focuses on goals similar to those targeted by Schools for Africa, specifically access to quality education for children, with a focus on girls, orphans, and other vulnerable youngsters.

For historical perspective, Schools for Africa became the Society’s first official international project in 2010. At that time, a partnership was established with UNICEF/USA. DKG members at all levels of the Society embraced this project with a multitude of programs and projects aimed at support. During its tenure, members donated more than \$600,000 to Schools for Africa.



State organization and chapter EECs should consider these opportunities:

1. Educate members about this project, emphasizing global awareness.
2. Implement motivational strategies:
  - Direct members to the DKG website for information.
  - Include information in chapter and state organization newsletters.
  - Create a global awareness committee that can share information briefly at each meeting.
  - Partner with local organizations that are involved in global projects.
  - Invite educators who have taught in other countries of the world and/or local community members who have traveled to other countries of the world to speak on relevant topics, such as:
    - » education in Africa and other needy countries of the world;
    - » need for clean water and wells;
    - » building of schools.
3. Solicit donations and conduct fundraisers:
  - Implement Change for Change—collect at chapter or state organization meetings.
  - Try “Tens for Teachers”—collect dimes at chapter meetings.
  - Play games that collect money to donate—Left, Right, Center; Bingo (Bingo cards can feature information on global awareness).



- Create a Progressive Potluck that features foods from a designated country; members pay for each course as they go and learn more about that country.
- Designate sales of a specific product/project to be sent to UNICEF/USA.
- Conduct a Silent Auction of craft items.

## Support for Early-career Educators (SEE)

In order to share the DKG vision of *Leading Women Educators Impacting Education Worldwide* and strengthen our Society, the EEC established Supporting Early-career Educators (SEE) as the second international project during the 2012 International Convention in New York City. Members are all familiar with the statistics for retention of early-career educators. So many leave the profession after only a few years, and DKG members have an opportunity to provide the guidance needed to stop the exodus. Do not forget about student teachers from local colleges and universities, too.

SEE encourages members/chapters to be creative in support of early-career educators with a variety of strategies, such as:

- giving support with visits, emails, texts, and phone calls;
- helping with lesson plans and resources such as classroom mini-grants;
- offering advice on topics such as classroom management, parent-teacher relations, curriculum integration, and assessment;
- providing support in appropriate and practical ways, which could include classroom volunteering or mentoring.

## United Nations/CTAUN

DKG became a non-governmental organization (NGO) in 1995. Starting in 1997, Anne-Marie Carlson of The Delta Kappa Gamma Society International formed a team of volunteer experts to enable educators to develop new and better ways of teaching about the United Nations (UN) and its civil society partners. The Committee on Teaching about the UN (CTAUN) provides a resource center that brings together materials developed throughout the UN System and makes available exemplary materials used by governments and NGOs, teachers, and curriculum specialists. CTAUN presents an Excellence in Education Award to recognize teachers' work to help students find ways to learn about the goals and work of the UN.



Opportunities to promote this component of EEC include:

1. Award a grant for a member to attend a CTAUN conference; she will later report at a chapter or state organization meeting.
2. Inform educators about UN/CTAUN resources:
  - Assist teachers in finding information on website;
  - Send a CTAUN newsletter (link on DKG website) to chapter members.
3. Inform members about the DKG/UN relationship:
  - Present a program/workshop at a chapter meeting and/or state organization conference/convention;
  - Include an article about the UN in publications.



## Programs

The Successful Chapter Practices model (The Delta Kappa Gamma Society International, 2015), which was based on a 2008 International Chapter Survey of more than 1,200 chapters, identified practices common in successful chapters. In relation to programs, the survey specified that “successful chapters have a wide variety of high-quality, interesting programs and speakers, including programs that highlight community initiatives and those that use members’ talents/expertise” (p. 67).

General advice on programs includes the following:

1. Survey chapter members for program interests.
2. Use your own members as presenters—they possess a wealth of talent and expertise.
3. Plan programs that attract all ages.
4. Arrange to give credits for state accreditation for keeping license current.
5. Arrange for college/university credits.
6. Combine with another chapter in your city/state or across states for a program via Zoom.
7. At the state organization level, invite a speaker through the International Speakers Fund (state organization presidents arrange this opportunity).

Programs with a personal focus can include wellness, creativity, and information on a variety of topics.

Those with a professional focus can include:

- education/school issues;
- World Fellowship information (consider making arrangements to hear from a World Fellowship recipient);
- local authors discussing the writing/publishing process;
- recipients of local grants-in-aid or scholarships talking about their use of funds;
- a focus on the 17 countries of DKG to learn more about local customs, geographic areas, and the educational systems.

## Projects

State organizations and chapters support a myriad of projects beyond the two international initiatives. These projects aim to promote educational excellence and support global awareness through collaboration worldwide. Many of the project ideas center on contributions to local organizations. Check in your area to find which of these have the greatest needs. Consider these opportunities:

1. Provide assistance to agencies or groups:
  - contributions to “closets” for items for children in need at schools (could be clothing, food, etc.);
  - donations of female personal hygiene items to middle and high schools;
  - collections of toiletries for homeless shelters;
  - gathering of clothing items for shelters (socks, gloves, coats, underwear, etc.).
2. Focus on books:
  - to be donated to Habitat for Humanity to fill the bookshelves of new homes;
  - to be placed in doctor’s offices;
  - to be placed in hospital waiting rooms;
  - to develop classroom libraries, especially for early-career educators.







3. Collect items from members:
  - fleece blankets for hospitals or police stations;
  - bags for children's hospitals: crayons, coloring books, sketch books;
  - stuffed animals to shelters.
4. Support/adopt a school or classroom based on collected wish lists.

## Legislation

EEC encourages DKG members to be active in promoting legislation on educational issues on the local, state, provincial, and federal levels. To enable DKG members the opportunity to network with others regarding educational issues in their country, each DKG member is a member of a forum unit determined by her region or area. Because of the Society's international makeup, four different forums are available for members, each with time at conventions/conferences to discuss problems and concerns as well as conduct small-group discussions.

One common element among the different forums is the use of guest speakers who address current issues. However, the focus areas vary greatly from region to region. Here is a look at the four different forums and how they are structured.



- US Forum: Supports non-partisan federal legislation in the interest of education and women educators. An additional resource is the *US Forum Connection*, a newsletter that informs DKG members of current legislative issues and business associated with the US Forum. Find this newsletter on the DKG website under the US Forum link.
- Canadian Forum: Works to study and promote awareness of educational issues on the local, regional, and interprovincial level. An educational project is supported in each biennium.
- Latin American Forum: Provides an assembly for an open discussion on topics of common concern, all in Spanish.
- European Forum: Provides an opportunity to discuss issues of educational importance and to find a way to turn goals into action. The forum allows members to share their expertise in educational hot topics. The forum publishes an online newsletter: *Euforia*. A link is available on the DKG forum page, under European Forum, Publication.

Opportunities for state organizations and chapters working to promote legislative efforts can include:

- providing a Legislative Day at the state or provincial capital;
- inviting speakers (such as a school board member, legislator, or representative from the League of Women Voters) to attend a DKG meeting;
- attending local candidate forums to educate oneself about issues and candidates;
- having a member report on current issues at each chapter meeting;
- including legislative updates in newsletters;
- honoring legislators who support educators (conferences and conventions are ideal settings);



- attending the forums (Canadian, European, Latin American, US) at international conventions and conferences;
- using the forum resources found on the DKG website;
- attending the DKG National Legislative Seminar in Washington, DC.

## Leadership

Per the DKG Strategic Plan, one of the focus areas of EEC is to empower members to take leadership roles. Often, members fail to see the leadership potential within them. All members should be encouraged to step up as leaders at the chapter, state organization, and international levels. The DKG website offers a vast resource of ideas including a Leadership Discovery Centre that can be utilized by leaders at all levels.

To support leadership development, chapters and state organizations have many options:

1. Include breakout sessions on leadership at state conventions.
2. Provide training biennially for incoming chapter officers (and allow each chapter to send one member who is not an officer).
3. Encourage state organization officers to communicate regularly with their respective officers at the chapter level.
4. Have officers at the chapter and state organization levels provide mentorship to their incoming counterparts.
5. Use offerings related to state organization conventions:
  - offer incentives for chapters to attend;
  - use funds (from endowments, grants, etc.) that have been earmarked to pay registration fees;
  - recognize first-time attendees by hosting a social time or meal just for them or by providing prizes and raffles;
  - open local homes to host a member or two to save on hotel fees;
  - solicit business sponsors to help defray costs.
6. Hold monthly leadership-network Zoom meetings on specific topics of interest.
7. Have a member volunteer to share information at meetings on current articles, blogs, podcasts, webinars, and books pertinent to leadership development.
8. Develop newsletters that recommend current articles, blogs, podcasts, webinars, and books pertinent to leadership development.



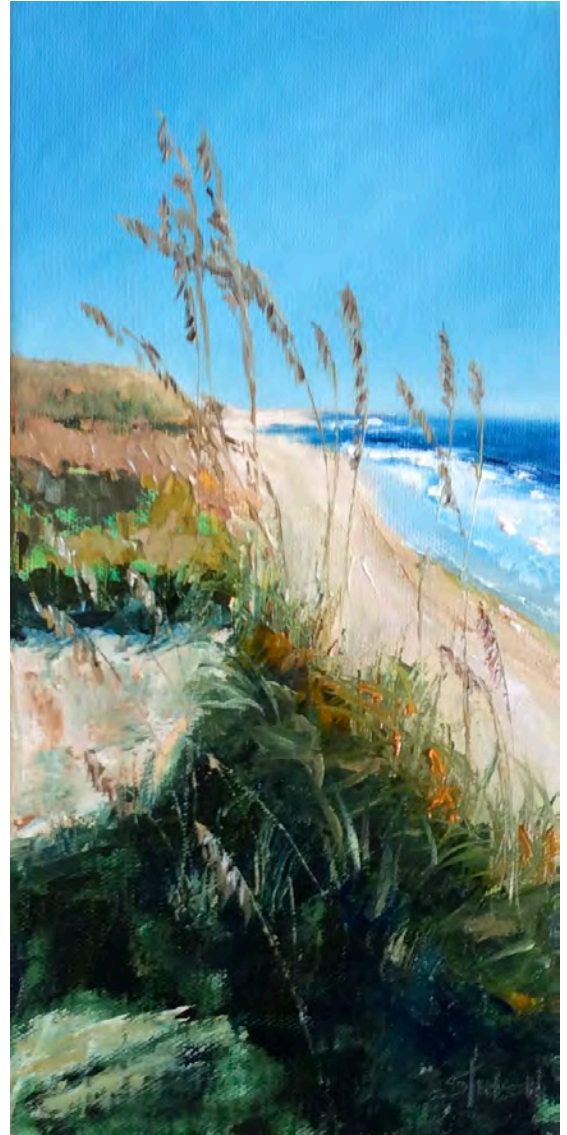


## The Arts

EEC promotes a focus on the arts at international conventions and conferences and at state organization conventions. Members' artistic contributions through music, the spoken word, and visual displays are highlighted.

Promote the arts at chapter and state organization levels by

- exploring the DKG Art Gallery on the website at a meeting;
- encouraging members to submit art for the DKG Art Gallery;
- holding a Creative Arts Retreat where members spend time engaged in various projects related to a variety of art forms (a number of state organizations hold such retreats, which are sometimes available to members outside the state);
- having an arts display at state conventions;
- raffling or having a silent auction of items artists want to donate—being sure to check the laws of the specific state, province, and/or country as they relate to raffles and relevant taxes;
- including music at all meetings;
- inviting artists to speak at chapter and state organization events;
- asking chapters to craft centerpieces for state organization conferences/conventions;
- encouraging members to take classes to learn new crafts/arts and then showcasing their items at the end of the class;
- highlighting talents at conferences/conventions;
- inviting performance groups to chapter and state organization meetings/conventions;
- sponsoring an essay contest for middle/high school students and inviting top winners to a meeting to read their works;
- conducting field trips to museums, galleries, and theaters.



*Guardians of the Dunes© Painting/Pastel by  
Debra Stinson, North Carolina;  
Spring 2024 Art Gallery*

## Conclusion

The Educational Excellence Committee's red umbrella brings unity and clarification to educational excellence. As related by a participant at the 2023 leadership training session for state organization EEC chairs, the focus areas of educational excellence "are relevant to all educators, including early educators, current educators, retired educators, and collegiate education students." By considering the many opportunities suggested in this article, chapters and state organizations can raise their red umbrellas high in recognizing and connecting the focus areas of educational excellence.





# The ABCs of INC— Who, What, and How: The Work of the International Nominating Committee

The challenge of identifying key leaders is ongoing in Delta Kappa Gamma. Just as members celebrate and welcome one new set of officers, processes begin to fall into place for identifying the next set of leaders at the international level. For this reason, the work of the International Nominating Committee (INC) is not only ongoing but also significant.

The INC consists of two elected members from each region (EU, NE, NW, SE, SW), forming a committee of 10 members elected by the membership. Each biennium, one member from each region is elected to serve for a 4-year term, thus creating a committee of new and returning members. The international president appoints one of the continuing members as chair for the biennium. The duties of the INC are outlined in the Society's governing documents. Herein, you will find information that should help to clarify the **Actions**, **Business**, and **Charge** given to the INC members through DKG governing documents.

## Actions:

- In odd-numbered years, typically in May, the official application form for international positions, the endorsement form, and the INC rubric are posted on the DKG website.
- Only DKG members are eligible to apply, and applications must be received by the posted deadline.
- Completed official applications and endorsement forms are sent electronically to International Headquarters as directed on the application.
- Applications and endorsements received by the deadline are sent electronically from Headquarters to the INC chair.
- The INC chair forwards applications and endorsements to each committee member.
- Each committee member reviews each of the applications *independently* using the published rubric.
- The committee meets in executive session in the fall, usually October, of odd-numbered years to review and recommend a proposed slate of nominees.
- Discussions and deliberations are held only at the in-person INC meeting.





# Nominations

- All INC members are required to sign the DKG Committee Member Agreement. This document outlines the rules and expectations for committee members, including roles, fiduciary responsibilities, conflict of interest guidelines, confidentiality requirements, DKG Code of Ethics, DKG Bylaws and Policies, and other relevant rules and expectations. This agreement is reinforced with all members before each meeting. Absolutely no discussions about applicants or applications are permitted at any time except during face-to-face deliberations.



*Bald Eagle at Oatland Island Wildlife Center ©  
Photograph by Michele Contala, New Jersey;  
Spring 2024 Art Gallery*

## Business Basics:

- The duties of the INC are outlined in *Article VIII Sec 7.b* of the *DKG Constitution*.
- The committee is charged with following the eligibility, qualifications, and guidelines for electing nominees as per *ISR 8.72*.
- The *DKG Constitution*, *International Standing Rules*, and *Guidelines and Policies & Procedures (GAPP)* outline the responsibilities and actions of the International Nominating Committee.
- All forms, including the *DKG Code of Ethics*, are posted on the DKG website: [dkg.org/DKGSi](http://dkg.org/DKGSi).
- All applications, endorsements, rubrics, and notes are securely stored in a digital vault for 2 years before being permanently deleted.

## Charge and Communications:

- Before the start of the INC face-to-face executive session, the international president meets with the INC members and provides the charge “to present at least one name for each position of an individual who as per the *DKG Constitution* will provide outstanding leadership for that position.”
- All nominations are reviewed in private until consensus is reached on a slate of nominees.
- As per *ISR 8.72.g.(3)*, the INC may ask an applicant to consider serving in a position other than that stated on the application.
- While the INC is still in executive session:
  - » a phone call is made to each nominee for verbal confirmation of acceptance of the position to have her name placed on the slate of nominees, and
  - » each applicant not selected for the slate is emailed a letter of encouragement to reapply in the future.
- Once all nominees have confirmed acceptance of the nomination, the proposed slate of nominees is emailed to the international president.
- The slate of nominees is posted in the January/February *DKG NEWS*.
- The INC presents its report of nominees for elective positions of the Society to the international convention as per *DKG Constitution Article VIII, Sec.B.7.b.(3)*.



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