



FROM THE PRESIDENT



Laurie Reisberg

On behalf of the Geochemical Society (GS), I'd like to wish all of you a great start to the new year. After a period of transition and rebuilding in 2015—seamlessly overseen by former Presidents Barbara Sherwood Lollar and Rick Carlson, and marked by the move of the GS office from St. Louis (Missouri, USA) to Washington, DC (USA)—last year was a time of consolidation and renewed growth for the society. This was skillfully guided by Kevin Johnson, our new Chief Operating Officer, assisted by M.A. O'Donnell, our

Membership Coordinator. The main event of 2016, from the GS perspective, was, of course, the Goldschmidt conference in Yokohama (Japan). The conference was a great success, thanks largely to the tireless efforts of the Local Organizing Committee, chaired by Harue Masuda, and the Science Committee, chaired by Hisayoshi Yurimoto. Nearly 3,800 delegates attended, making this one of the largest Goldschmidt conferences ever. We were particularly pleased by the success of the programs aimed at young scientists. These included the popular mentoring program, which attracted hundreds of participants, the travel grants or waived registrations for ~140 students, and the new innovation of a full day of student-oriented lectures and workshops on the Sunday before the conference. We were also happy to see the extent to which the conference has grown thematically: it now encompasses a very large component of biogeochemistry, while reinvestigating the traditional themes of cosmochemistry and solid Earth evolution.

The continued and growing success of the Goldschmidt conference owes much to the close ties between the GS and its sister society, the European Association of Geochemistry (EAG). The GS and EAG take the lead in organizing the conference in alternate years, but we frequently communicate about ways in which the meeting could be improved. This allows each society to profit from the innovations and experience of the other, while maintaining the originality that comes from the yearly alternation of the organizational process. Nevertheless, the real key to

the success of the Goldschmidt conference is the enthusiasm and energy of the delegates and the volunteers who set the themes and run the sessions. Though certain regions are still under-represented, geochemists now come from all corners of the globe, reflecting the importance of geochemistry in today's world. The success of the Goldschmidt conference(s) testifies to the vigor of our field.

I find the vibrancy of today's geochemical community to be particularly heartening because we live in a time when scientific logic, and even scientific reality, is often called into question. I think what most attracted me, and I suspect many others, to science is that its goal is to uncover a physical reality that actually exists. The Earth is round; it is not flat. Water freezes at 0 °C; if salt is added, it freezes at a lower temperature. These are facts, not points of debate. Likewise, we cannot vote to overturn the laws of thermodynamics. The facts provided by careful observations, analyses and experiments form the basis for our understanding of the world. Geochemistry has a particularly important role to play here, because the facts that we provide have a bearing on so many of the challenges facing the world today, including the search for resources, environmental pollution, and, of course, climate change. But geochemistry is not solely of practical importance. We geochemists also provide factual information that can be used to help answer intrinsically fascinating questions related to how the Earth formed and evolved or to how life emerged. Ideologies come and go, but the information provided by geochemists and other Earth scientists gives us a solid basis for understanding how our planet functions. In today's context, the health and diversity of our increasingly international geochemical community is very encouraging.

Have an excellent new year.

Laurie Reisberg
President, Geochemical Society

GS INTRODUCTORY STUDENT MEMBERSHIPS

To increase student participation, the GS grants free memberships to students in countries that are under-represented in the society. This includes most countries in Africa, Asia (excluding China, Japan, and South Korea), and South America. Introductory Student Memberships offer benefits that include print and online subscriptions to *Elements*, the weekly *Geochemical News* e-mail, and discounted registration rates for the Goldschmidt Conference and other scientific meetings. More information is available at www.geochemsoc.org/programs/ism/.

Current Introductory Student Members come from Colombia, Ghana, India, Indonesia, Mexico and Nigeria. We want to expand this list to many more countries, so if you know students studying geochemistry, encourage them to join!

For students from countries not included in this program, membership is just \$15 for one year or \$25 for two years. Joining a professional society is a great way for students to expand their professional networks and learn about the latest happenings in the field.

MEETING ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

The Geochemical Society's Meeting Assistance Program (MAP) provides support for symposia or conferences related to geochemistry. All GS members are eligible to apply. Sponsorships provide \$2,000, and the society may award up to five per year. The GS Program Committee reviews applications twice a year, and the next deadline is 31 March 2017. For more information, visit: tinyurl.com/GeoChemMAP.

2016 MAP Sponsorships

Pan American Current Research on Fluid Inclusions (PACROFI) XIII Conference; 24-26 May 2016; Columbia, MO, USA

4th International Workshop on Highly Siderophile Element Geochemistry; 11-15 July 2016; Durham, UK

Meeting of Ethiopian Geochemistry Professionals to Establish a National Association; November 2016, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

RiMG: Measurements, Theories and Applications of Non-Traditional Stable Isotopes; 11-12 December 2016; San Francisco, CA, USA