Greetings,

I hope that all of you had a good holiday, and now that the holidays are over I am sure that you all have returned to work to a desk full of things to do. Things are no different here at the ESP National Office. Several deadlines are approaching and we don’t want anyone to miss out on the opportunity to take advantage of the member benefits offered by Epsilon Sigma Phi.

I am sending out this edition of the Communiqué that is longer than usual as well as earlier than usual because there are many important deadlines coming up very quickly. If I wait until the middle of January to send it (when it would normally be issued) there would not be enough time for everyone to get things in prior to the deadlines.

JCEP Early Bird Registration Due January 8th:
The deadline for Early Bird Registration for the JCEP Workshop (formerly the regional meetings), which will be held February 2-4, 2010, in Nashville, is Friday, January 8th. Currently registration is lagging behind the expected numbers for the meeting. If you are planning to attend the meeting either register online or have your registration postmarked by January 8th to save $50 over the regular registration fee.

VP Candidate Applications Due January 15th:
Every two years there is an opportunity to hand the reins of leadership to a new set of leaders in each of the four Extension regions. It is once again that time and we are looking for good people, whether annual members or life members, who would be willing to provide their skills and expertise to lead the “Extension Professionals’ Organization.” Serving as a regional vice president provides an excellent opportunity for leadership skill development, the opportunity to network with other Extension leaders from across the country and the opportunity to work with some of the greatest people in the country.

If you have never given any thought to serving on the national level of your professional organization, now is the time to do so. All it takes is a willingness to work together with a team of Extension professionals that are committed to Extension as a career and who have volunteered, much as we ask our clientele to volunteer their time and talents, to make our country, state and communities a better place to live, work and play.

To apply, go to the ESP website at http://forms.espnational.com and select the “Leadership” tab to complete the online application. Ask your chapter president and Extension Director for a Statement of Support that can be found and completed at the same location on the website. Make sure your dues are paid and you will be set to begin your adventure as a national officer. The deadline for the application and statements of support is January 15th, so don’t delay - start today!

Chapter Reports Due January 28th:
An important part of the JCEP meetings is chapter reports. We are requiring all chapter reports to be entered online at http://forms.espnational.com. Under the “Chapter Reports” tab, choose “Chapter Report for JCEP Meeting.” Make sure that your chapter’s information is readily available to share by completing the form. The website will be used to share the reports at the meeting, so you will not need to bring a paper copy. Please have your reports submitted by no later than January 28th.

Help Wanted!
The National Board is beginning the process of developing a Strategic Plan that will provide the guidelines for our organization for the next five years. We need your input! Please review the existing Strategic Plan (found on http://espnational.org, under “About Us”). Please send any comments or suggestions you have regarding our goals, objectives, action plan or activities for the next five years. It’s your organization. Here is your chance to help chart the course we will take in the future.
Membership Dues Due February 1st:
It is time for the submission of dues for the 2010 membership year and the deadline is quickly approaching. The due date for submission of dues is Monday, February 1st. This is an important date since the number of voting delegates is based on the number of members whose dues are paid by February 1st.

In addition to delegates, the eligibility of members for leadership positions, scholarships, mini-grants and recognition programs is based on dues being paid by the February 1st due date.

While the due date for membership dues is important for the reasons listed above, there are circumstances that make it difficult for states to meet the deadline. Some states are not able to meet annually or their meetings come after the due date. When that is the case, we continue to accept dues for the current membership year until September 1st. After September 1st dues received will be credited to the next membership year.

It is the responsibility of all of us in leadership positions to do our best to lead our organization in such a way that our members will feel that we are indeed a relevant organization that is worth the investment of their annual dues. The National Board is committed to leading a strong, professional development organization that aims to provide benefits to all of our members. As members, it is our responsibility to do our part to see that we take advantage of the opportunities being offered.

Scholarship Applications Due February 1st and March 1st:
The following scholarship applications are due no later than February 1st: Richard R. Angus Professional Development Scholarship, PILD Conference Scholarship and McKinney Public Issues Scholarship.

The Administrative Leadership Scholarship is due March 1st. All of the application are found at http://forms.espnational.com under the “Scholarships” Tab.

Recognition Applications:
Individual chapters establish the deadlines for submission for their recognition programs. Those recipients or nominees who are to be considered for regional and national recognition must be submitted by March 1. The chapters have the option of using the online forms or to use their own form for their chapter’s recognition events.

All recognition applications or nominations for national recognition must be submitted using the electronic forms found on the website at http://forms.espnational.com under the “National Recognition” Tab, or the “Chapter Recognition” Tab.

RFPs for PILD Due by February 15th:
Members considering attending PILD might want to consider submitting an RFP to present at the conference. There will be a registration fee awarded to the three top submissions. There may be up to 25 RFP’s accepted for presentation. For more information, see the details at http://www.jcep.org/JCEP_2010_PILD_APPL.htm. RFP’s must be submitted by February 15, 2010.

RFPs for National Conference Concurrent Sessions and Poster Session:
The website is now accepting RFPs for presentation during the Concurrent Sessions or at the poster session at National Conference in Jackson, Wyoming, October 12-16, 2010. Those chosen to make presentations during the Concurrent Sessions will receive a $200 stipend and up to 10 of the posters presentations may be selected to receive a $100 stipend. For more information, refer to the ESP website http://forms.espnational.com, and check under the “RFP” Tab.

Scholarships, Grants & Recognition Committee Survey
The Scholarships, Grants & Recognition Committee has prepared a survey to seek your input on how we can best meet the needs of our members. Please help the committee by taking five minutes to take the simple 20-question survey so that we can better serve you.