

# **Geochemical Society**

## www.geochemsoc.org

#### **FROM THE PRESIDENT**



Sumit Chakraborty

I am honored to begin my term as President of the Geochemical Society. As Vice President, the period of which pretty much coincided with that of the pandemic, I was witness to the stewardship provided in very difficult times by Vickie Bennett as President and Roberta Rudnick as past President. I learned of the untiring work of Kevin Johnson and Mattie Burris that keeps the wheels of the society turning. They deserve a collective vote of thanks from all of us. As Roberta leaves the GS executive after six years, Vickie continues

as past President and Liz Sikes joins as Vice President – I look forward to working with them, the GS Board and office, and all of you.

It seems it was just the other day that I was at my first ever conference, seeing some of the people I had known only through print, getting to realize that these were real persons with highs and lows that shaped the topography of the social landscape of our community. And there I was in early 2020, all of a sudden in the position of helping to not only organize one of these, but pivoting quickly to shape what would become one of the first online conferences in our field - Goldschmidt 2020. A measure of the slope of that learning curve is perhaps this: the point of departure was learning new words and concepts such as "Zoom". The conference did succeed, but the mixed feedback raised many questions that have become better defined as we have had to deal with many more online events in the last two years of the pandemic. Now, as I begin my term as President, one of the main thoughts that occupies all our minds is the question: What are conferences of the future going to look like? This is certainly a topic that will occupy not just geochemists, but all academics, for the next few years to come.

My personal opinion is that hybrid conferences have come to stay. The fact that one can participate in a conference (or any other event) online when time and/or funds are tough to come by is a benefit for many that we are not going to do away with. Even if time and money were no constraints, carbon footprint is, and all of us need to act responsibly. At the same time, the limitations of online modes have also become apparent - the chance encounters that germinate new ideas, or just getting to know a person beyond a talk or a poster to understand their point of view better, are aspects that need to be sustained through in-person interactions. The cultural canvas does not transmit as well across computer screens. Going forward, each person would have to find the right balance of these for themselves. In doing so, I hope geochemists would act in awareness of their roles as global science citizens and ambassadors - in these times of political polarization that role is more significant than ever, discourses across geographic and cultural boundaries have never been as important in our lifetimes.

As a geochemist-petrologist, I find myself currently trying to locate my comfort zone in the ternary diagram with the apices "CO<sub>2</sub> footprint concerns" – "the benefits of face-to-face interactions across different scientific cultures, disciplines and upbringings" – "the need and opportunity to see different geological settings". It is a tough balancing act.

What occupies all of our minds right now of course is Goldschmidt 2022 in Honolulu. In that ternary diagram,  $CO_2$  footprint stands out as a major component for a conference on an island. Since dabbling in numerical modeling is one of the things I do, I had to run some crude models – just looking up the carbon costs of direct flights along great circles on the globe for the typical Goldschmidt attendee demography. The outcome was interesting. Carbon costs for Honolulu are on the higher end, but are not much different from costs on any other West

coast US location (recall that we have many attendees from east Asia)\*. If that were to be the only consideration, then one could optimize it for the attendee address profile and settle on a location, and stick with that every year. That is the pattern for many conferences, but it would mean a shift for Goldschmidts - this is something we, as a community, would have to consider in the coming years. Do we want people from certain parts of the world to always be traveling long distances if they want to have the benefit of in-person interactions? But then the other factors weigh in as well - Hawai'i offers an incredible array of opportunities for seeing features from volcanoes through coral reefs, and a trip where one combines that experience and education with a conference could be an optimized effort (a note: many field trips are on offer at the Honolulu conference). Coming out of a couple of years where we dissected the quality of indoor air circulation in different settings, I personally feel somewhat reassured that the conference is at the Hawai'i Convention Center with its many outdoor facilities where one can sit, have a coffee or a beer, and chat. While I would be delighted to see many of you there - after many months of confinement it would be nice to meet people off screen - if you are unable / unwilling to travel, efforts are on to make the online experience as complete as possible. One way or the other, I hope you will participate and carry on the discussion about the future form of our conferences. I look forward to hearing from you at president@geochemsoc.org.

> **Sumit Chakraborty** President, Geochemical Society 2022-23

A full-blown calculation of carbon costs takes into account many more factors – from nature of air conditioning at the conference centers to catering, actual travel routes and means of travel and so on.

#### GS OFFERS FREE GOLDSCHMIDT CONFERENCE REGISTRATION FOR SCIENTISTS IN LOW-INCOME COUNTRIES

Virtual and hybrid conferences present an opportunity to expand access to scientific meetings. This year, the Geochemical Society is



pleased to offer free remote registration to the Goldschmidt Conference for scientists in countries with low and lower-middle-income economies. Without travel and registration expenses as a potential barrier, we hope that this will allow more delegates in these countries to participate. Remote registration provides full access to oral sessions and posters via the conference website. This offer is open to both professionals and students in qualifying countries. For more information, visit https://2022.goldschmidt.info.

### **NEW MEMBERS JOIN GS BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Five new members joined the Geochemical Society's (GS) Board of Directors in January 2022. They represent the diverse fields of study and geographic distribution of the society's membership. Meet the entire board of directors at www.geochemsoc.org/board



**Elisabeth (Liz) Sikes** was elected to a two-year term as vice president. She is a professor of oceanography at Rutgers University (New Jersey, USA). She is a paleoceanographer and paleoclimatologist whose research seeks to understand the ocean's influence on the carbon cycle and climate. Her research interests range from investigating the Southern Ocean's multiple roles in controlling glacial climate cycles to modern carbon cycling in estuaries. She previously

served the GS as a board member, chair of the Organic Geochemistry Division, and as the founding chair of the Ethics Committee. She serves as co-chair of the Southern Ocean Regional Panel of CLIVAR (Climate and Ocean Variability, Predictability, and Change) and CliC (Climate and Cryosphere), which is a core program of the World Climate Research Programme. She is a member of the Southern Ocean Task Force for the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development. Following her term as vice president. Dr. Sikes will serve as president and then as past president.



**Christopher Junium** joined the board as the new chair of the Organic Geochemistry Division. He is an associate professor of geobiology, astrobiology, paleoclimate, paleoceanography at Syracuse University (New York, USA). A sedimentary and organic geochemist, he focuses on the redox evolution of the Earth, specializing in biogeochemical cycling. Dr. Junium uses a range of geochemical tools, but focuses on the stable isotopes of nitrogen, carbon, and sulfur, with a

particular interest in compound-specific, stable isotope techniques. His research interests span the spectrum of geologic time from the Archean to modern systems. Currently he is working primarily on the Cretaceous and Neoproterozoic with an eye toward understanding future global change.



Alexis Templeton was elected to a three-year term as a director from Region 1 (Canada and USA). She is a geochemist and geomicrobiologist at the University of Colorado at Boulder (USA). She utilizes spectroscopic, isotopic, and molecular tools to characterize the chemical and biological states of systems undergoing active water-rock interactions. Her research focuses on defining the role of microorganisms in transforming the aqueous and mineral chemistry of

rock-hosted ecosystems. She has previously been a member of the Geochemical Society Patterson Award and Endowed Biogeochemistry Lecture committees.



**Marly Babinski** was elected to a three-year term as a director from Region 3 (Africa, Asia, Australia, and Central/South America). She is an associate professor at the Department of Mineralogy and Geotectonics, Institute of Geosciences, University of São Paulo (Brazil). She uses traditional and non-traditional isotopes to determine the age of the rocks and unravel seawater changes along the Earth's evolution to track major changes in the atmosphere, hydro-

sphere, and lithosphere, and impacts on life evolution. More recently, she has explored the atmosphere pollution in megacities using isotope geochemistry, mainly applying Pb, Zn, and Cu isotopes. She is on the scientific committee of the Brazilian Geochemistry Society and member of the Brazilian Geology Society.



Allison Greaney was elected to a two-year term as an early career board member. She is a radiogeochemist at Oak Ridge National Laboratory (Tennessee, USA). She is involved in a variety of projects related to the nuclear fuel cycle and non-destructive assay of nuclear materials for safeguards purposes. She received her PhD in geochemistry in 2018 from the University of California at Santa Barbara (USA). Her doctoral research revolved around molybdenum and

other questionably chalcophile elements and their use as geochemical proxies for understanding how the composition of the continental crust and atmosphere have evolved over time. Dr. Greaney is the first person to hold the newly created early career board position.

#### **VOLUNTEER SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES**

The society's programs are driven by the efforts of hundreds of volunteers. Serving on a board, committee, or working group is a way to give back to the community and meet new colleagues. There are opportunities for scientists at every career stage, including students. Go to www. geochemsoc.org/get-involved to learn more.