# Spring 2020 Geological Society of Washington Membership Report

### GSW Council Meeting, 13 May 2020Membership Chair, Erik Hankin, ehankin@agu.org

# Overall MembershipThere are 229 paid members for the 2020 calendar year as of 13 May 2020. There are 47 members from 2019 who have yet to renew, yielding an 82% renewal rate – slightly lower than 2019’s renewal rate of 84% at this same time of year. Members from 2019 received three electronic renewal reminders and one paper renewal reminder.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Membership Type** | **Paid** | **Lapsed** | **New Members** |
| **MetroArea Members** | 157 | 34 | 4 |
| **NonMetroArea Members** | 51 | 5 | 0 |
| **Student Members** | 12 | 6 | 0 |
| **Early Career Members** | 9 | 2 | 2 |
| **Total** | 229 | 47 | 6 |

# New Membership

Fifteen individuals have applied for new membership with GSW as of 13 May 2020. Only six of these individuals have followed through with payment and are now members of GSW. This attrition rate is much higher than usual.

# Barriers to Membership

The need to have prospective members apply and then pay after hearing they were approved appears to be a significant barrier to entry. Not because applicants are being denied, but because usually about 20% of approved applicants do not follow through with payment (the rate is far higher this year).

The Council has discussed this topic at recent meetings, but there has not been a motion to amend our procedures for new membership.

# Member Value Proposition

While the two-step new member process could improve new member numbers, it does not solve the issue of member retention. Society membership value was limited before the current pandemic and subsequent shift to virtual meetings. Without the guilt of drinking for “free” and access to quality networking, the GeoCare insurance is the only true value of GSW membership at this time.

The virtual meetings do open up GSW to a potentially much larger audience and could be a way to bring in more nonmetro area members (a membership group that has declined at a much higher rate than other over the last decade).

It may be time to survey the membership to better understand why individuals join and remain members of GSW as well as what services they would like to see from the society that are currently not offered.