The 2020-2021 school year was a unique year similar to the one preceding it. With COVID-19 still limiting a majority of in-person activities, EMU’s AIPG Student Chapter focused on having an active club through online meetings, regular emails announcing scholarships and job postings, as well as providing educational assistance through tutor sessions. These activities and various others were conducted by the Chapter’s Officers: Karlee Foster, President; Morgen Bergen, Vice President; Casey Field, Treasurer; Lily Marone, Secretary; Colin O’Neil, Member at Large. Officers also had aid from faculty sponsor Dr. Chris Gellasch. Elections were held at the beginning of April with the following people listed as the new officers for the 2021-2022 school year: Morgen Bergen, President; Karlee Foster, Vice President; Casey Field, Treasurer; Colin O’Neil, Secretary; Amanda Wagonsomer, Member at Large. Our newest EMU Chapter officers are eager for the upcoming year with the hope of conducting more in-person activities.

Unfortunately, this year was another remote one with the pandemic still undergoing meaning all meetings had to be held remotely. Online meetings were arranged once a month over zoom. The decision to change the reoccurrence of meetings from biweekly to monthly was made after talking with students. Without being able to meet on campus and participate in hands on activities, most felt meetings did not need to be as frequent. Most meetings ran for roughly an hour with meetings including a guest speaker lasting for as long as two hours. The number of attendance for the meetings were not as high compared to in-person meetings pre-COVID. The pandemic also made recruitment difficult since most interactions between the club and students occur on campus. Normally our chapter would seek out members at university events such as Eagle Fest and Winter Fest; however, this year was limited. Faculty advisors and upperclassmen encouraged underclassmen to join EMU’s AIPG Student Chapter and GeoClub through communication in the classroom (including online formats). With this we were able to recruit three new members.

As previously mentioned, all activities were held online either through Zoom or Microsoft Teams. The overall theme for this academic school year was ‘Meeting with Professionals.’ EMU kicked started this series which is now an AIPG organized event. These insightful meetings consisted of a professional in the field geology, or related to it, giving a presentation on their work. Four of these meetings were organized during the school period, three of them coordinated by our chapter’s president, Karlee Foster. The first consisted of Dr. Michael Velbel from Michigan State University presenting on the subject he teaches, planetary geology. A representative from Waste Management, Kathleen Klein, was the second guest speaker who educated students on landfills, how they are made, the geology features, environmental affects, etc. The last EMU professional meeting was with hydrogeologists Sarah Holmstrom and Katy Reminga from TRC Companies. The two professionals detailed their experience working for a consulting company and the type of work they perform on a day-to-day basis.

Other activities included attending AIPG events. Students were encouraged to participate in annual meetings with one example being the AIPG/MAEP meeting which was hosted by EMU last fall on Zoom. During this meeting, a video tour was given Eastern’s renovations and additions the Science Complex and other geology facilities on campus. Following the tour, an exciting game of jeopardy was played with students versing professionals. The main event consisted of a talk given by our own faulty sponsor, Dr. Gellasch. Although Eastern was looking forward to hosting the joint event in-person ( and show off our remodeled buildings), we were enthusiastic to host one of the first virtual meetings. Overall, the night was very successful and a model for future meetings.

The second semester was a another busy one with the club’s main focus on offering more tutoring sessions for lower classmen. In the past, sessions would be held once a week on campus where any geology or earth science student could seek assistance with their courses. With the outbreak of the pandemic, the structure of tutoring had to be modified. To best serve the students, officers reached out to professors to coordinate study nights around their exams. This type of organization allowed the tutors to personalize sessions based on the course. Although attendance was still not as high compared to past years, we still received positive feedback about the sessions and may include more online formats in the future.

In addition to rebooting tutoring sessions, the second semester also focused on fundraising. Last year’s officers designed and order new t-shirts for the club; we were finally able to acquire the shirts in early 2021. Advertisement began by announcing the apparel to students followed by alumni. Sales from the shirts increased the sale of other EMU geology merchandise including hats, patches, and even selling out of water bottles. Plan for next year’s fundraising has already begun as the new officers are eager to broaden the amount of apparel. We are also eager to attend the next rock and mineral show where various types of minerals and fossils can be sold for fundraising.

Addition to raising money, EMU’s Student Chapter was also able to offer two $500 scholarships for summer geology related activities. These include hydrogeology and geology field camps, certifications such as HAZWOPER, technical training, etc. Eastern’s Department of Geography and Geology offered an additional $500 scholarship. The winners of the geology field experience fund include members Rabia Azam, Collin Bogoski, and Shawn Steckenfinger. Our student chapter is grateful to be able to offer this scholarship every year to students and look forward to aiding future students to come.

Last notes to address include our Vice President, Morgen Bergen, winning a grant through the Summer 2021 Undergraduate Research Stimulus Program Award. A number of our members presented their undergraduate research during EMU’s Undergraduate Symposium including our President, Karlee Foster and Vice President, Morgen Bergen, Joel Harris, Ken Ferrell, and Collin Bogoski. The symposium was the first virtual one and we are happing students were given the opportunity to demonstrate findings with others in a professional setting. It was events like these kept students engaged and involved with professionals in the field of geology during a time where we can go out in the field. We are grateful for these connections and opportunities provided through our AIPG Student Chapter.