

Information Letter #18

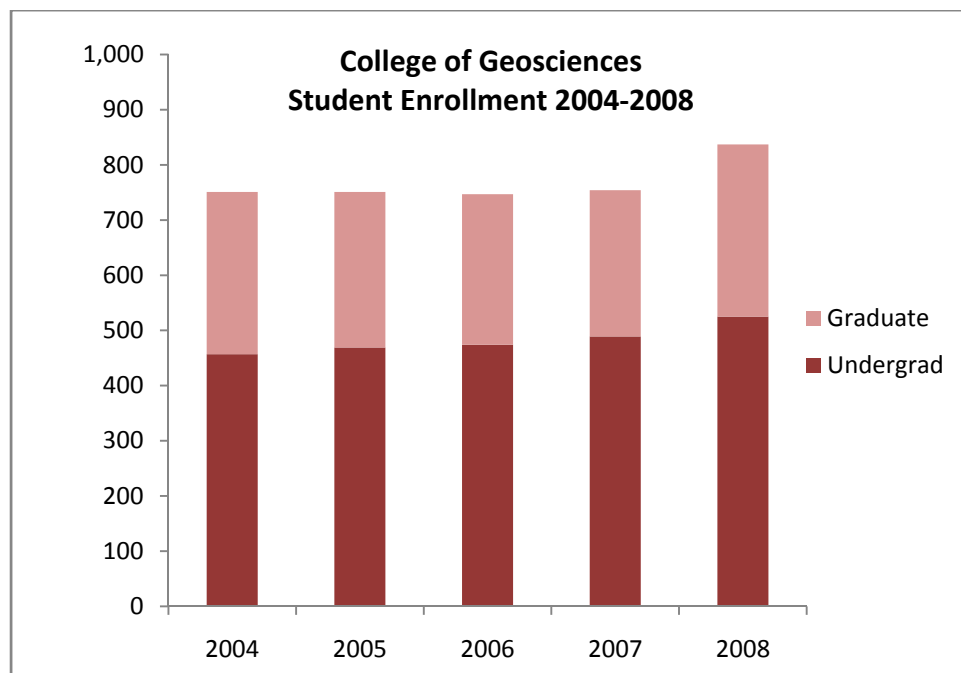
TO: Faculty and Staff of:
Department of Atmospheric Sciences
Department of Geology & Geophysics
Department of Geography
Department of Oceanography
Geochemical and Environmental Research Group
Integrated Ocean Drilling Program
Texas Sea Grant Office

FROM: Björn Kjerfve, Dean
College of Geosciences

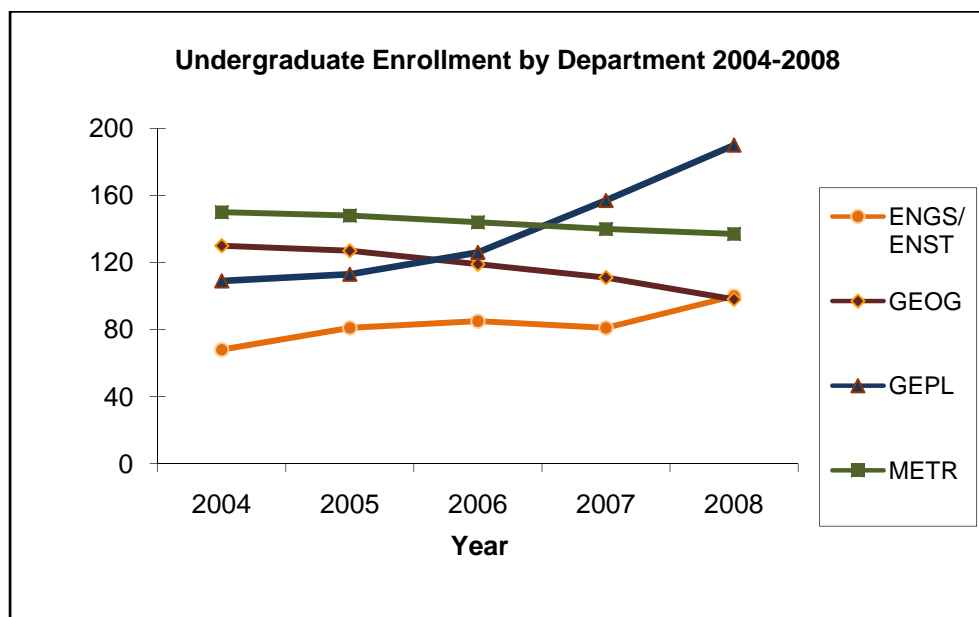
DATE: 9 October 2008

Enrollment Update

Based on preliminary 20th day class enrollment data, this is a record year for the College of Geosciences and for Texas A&M University. In Fall 2007, the College of Geosciences had 489 undergraduates and 265 graduate students for a total of 754 students. This fall, we have enrolled 837 students (525 undergraduates and 312 graduate students), 1.7 percent of the University's total enrollment of 48,036. This is an increase of 11 percent in one year, triple the University's average percent change of 3.2 percent.



Undergraduate enrollment by department for 2004-2008 shows variable trends across the College.



Overall, the population of both African Americans (1,413) and Hispanics (5,878) at Texas A&M grew this year to achieve pre-Hopwood levels of diversity. Approximately 12 percent of the TAMU student body is Hispanic; 3 percent is African American. In the College of Geosciences 68 students (8.1 percent) are Hispanic; 10 (1.2 percent) are African American. More than a sixth of our student body (16.8 percent) is International, nearly twice the campus average of 8.7 percent. University-wide the number of women attending the University continues to rise. Mirroring University trends, the number of women in the College is also growing, with 322 females this fall as compared to 284 in fall 2007.

The enrollment breakdown by department/program for 2008 is as follows:

Department	Undergraduate Students 2008 (2007)	MS Students 2008 (2007)	PhD Students 2008 (2007)	TOTAL 2008 (2007)
ATMO	137 (140)	26 (28)	26 (24)	189 (192)
GEOG	98 (112)	46* (21)	39* (35)	183* (168)
GEPL	190 (156)	66 (52)	30 (31)	286 (239)
OCNG	--	39 (38)	40 (36)	79 (74)
ENV PROGRAMS	100 (81)	--	--	100 (81)
TOTAL	525 (489)	177 (139)	135 (126)	837 (754)

* Includes Water Management & Hydrological Sciences

The College of Geosciences and the Academic Master Plan

Provost Jeffrey S. Vitter has initiated an Academic Master Plan process for Texas A&M University to develop a clear path for accomplishing the goals of Vision 2020. The details of the process are being developed and announced in stages. The process for the Research Roadmap has already begun.

In support of the Research Roadmap, the College is developing a research plan that identifies 3-5 multidisciplinary areas in which we can become a world leader. This effort on behalf of the College is being lead by John Nielsen-Gammon, Acting Executive Associate Dean and Associate Dean for

Research. The plan we submit will guide investment and faculty hiring for the next ten years and will prioritize the future research directions of the College.

Provost Vitter established a very short timeline for development of the College research plan. Our plan is due on 1 December 2008. Research theme ideas were gathered and evaluated in a College-wide meeting on 3 October. Drafting teams will identify the leading ideas and develop the College Research Plan. An Oversight Committee, with broad representation, will then evaluate the drafts and integrate the ideas into a coherent plan. Once all colleges have submitted their plans, the University will issue a call for White Papers to be developed for the Research Roadmap that are compatible with the college plans. You can monitor the progress of this effort at geosciences.tamu.edu/paper.

Distribution of Graduate Assistantship Funds for FY09

FY2009 graduate assistantship (GAT and GANT) funds have been allocated to departments based on the number of students enrolled in designated undergraduate laboratory courses. This year the College allocated a total of \$1.2M for graduate assistantships, an increase of \$100K over the FY2008 budget to fund the increase in the minimum GA stipend rate to \$1400/month (50%) as decided a year ago. The spreadsheet used to calculate the distribution of graduate assistantship funds is shown below.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
	# Lab Courses	# Lab Sections	# Lab Students	Avg # Students per Lab section	Unit % of Students	Designated Allocation	Formula Allocation	FY2009 Allocation	FY2008 Allocation	% Change from Prev Yr
ATMO	10	34	738	21.7	9.95%	\$ -	\$ 115,552	\$ 115,552	\$ 100,048	15.50%
GEOG	10	65	1333	20.5	17.98%	\$ 20,250	\$ 208,714	\$ 228,964	\$ 201,154	13.83%
GEPL	19	203	3726	18.4	50.25%	\$ -	\$ 583,397	\$ 583,397	\$ 554,019	5.30%
OCNG	2	84	1595	19.0	21.51%	\$ -	\$ 249,736	\$ 249,736	\$ 239,779	4.15%
GEOS	1	1	23	23.0	0.31%	\$ 6,750	\$ 3,601	\$ 10,351	\$ -	
CLGE(Res)						\$ 12,000	\$ -	\$ 12,000	\$ 5,000	
	42	387	7415	19.2	100.00%	\$ 39,000	\$ 1,161,000	\$ 1,200,000	\$ 1,100,000	9.09%

- Notes:**
- Total allocation to the College of Geosciences is \$1,200,000 for FY 2009
 - The ideal number of students per lab is no more than 20 and no less than 18
 - Designated \$'s are allocated as GANT support for large classes (more than 600 students/year) without labs, including: GEOG 202 (2546 students in 7-8 sections/semester); GEOG 301 (729 students in 2-3 sections/semester); and GEOG 305 (671 students in 2 sections/semester)
 - AND start-up \$\$ for GEOS 105 AND College reserve
 - Courses do not include 485's/489's
 - Department year end balances, if any, revert to College pool

New College Data Center Nears Completion

The College's new data center in the basement of the O&M building should be finished by the end of November. Alpha Building Corporation began construction on our new 1,000 ft² data center in June and is wrapping up the last few project milestones. The 22-rack data center will be supported by a dedicated chiller water plant, modular cooling system, enterprise level battery backup, upgraded power distribution system, remote environmental monitoring, high-speed network capability (gigabit Ethernet), and a test and maintenance facility.

Facilities Report

Some damage from Hurricane Ike occurred in Halbouty 320-333, the Williams Radiogenic Isotope Geosciences Laboratory. Fortunately, no major equipment was affected. The mass spec room had standing water, and the dressing room floor was damaged by water leaking from overhead. It is believed that rain entered the building through the half-finished roof, from under a west-facing window in the Level 10,000 lab, and from around the roof drains. Physical Plant will repair the flooring.

Hurricane Ike impacted some College projects as well due to Houston-Galveston contractors being unable to meet schedules and Physical Plant resources being diverted to accommodating Galveston faculty and students on campus.

O&M

- Room 104-106, and 109. Environmental Programs. Cost estimates are being prepared by Physical Plant. Projected move-in is during the semester break. Until then, Interim Director Andrew Millington and advisor Emily Dykes are in CSA 201.
- 4th floor lab cabinetry replacement. The work order was submitted to Physical Plant in September.
- Room 409. This renovation is expected to begin in October. The two students in this office will be relocated during the project.
- Room 702. Construction is proceeding as workers are available. The completion date is still mid-October.
- Room 714-716. Work is expected to begin in October.

Halbouty

- Roof. The hurricane delayed replacement of the roof by ~10 days, but work has resumed.
- Door Locks. Because the contractor misidentified several doors on the floor plan, building proctor Michael Hicks and facilities coordinator Maureen Reap met with them again to ensure that the correct doors receive the appropriate hardware. We do not yet have a confirmed start date.

Thomas Named Montague Scholar

Debbie Thomas, Assistant Professor in Oceanography, has been named a 2008-2009 Montague Scholar. The Montague-Center for Teaching Excellence Scholar program honors faculty at Texas A&M University by annually recognizing one tenure-track assistant professor in each college for early-career excellence in undergraduate teaching. Each Montague Scholar receives a \$5,000 grant. Debbie teaches both undergraduate and graduate level classes in Oceanography and is the faculty advisor for three PhD students, one Undergraduate Research Scholar, and six Environmental Geosciences majors.

Mathewson Receives First Karl and Ruth Terzaghi Outstanding Mentor Award

Chris Mathewson, a Regents Professor of Geology, has been named the first recipient of the Karl and Ruth Terzaghi Outstanding Mentor Award given by the Association of Environmental and Engineering Geologists (AEG). This international award was created to recognize outstanding mentors in both practice and academic careers. Chris was one of 26 nominees for the award and received a dozen letters of nomination from friends and former students.

Wilheit and Zhang Honored by the American Meteorological Society

Atmospheric Sciences Professor Tom Wilheit and Associate Professor Fuqing Zhang recently learned that they will receive awards at the 2009 American Meteorological Society annual meeting in January in Phoenix, Arizona. Tom will receive the Verner E. Suomi Award which recognizes highly significant technological achievement in the atmospheric and related sciences. The award is given in the form of a medallion and was created in honor of Dr. Verner E. Suomi, widely considered the father of satellite meteorology. Fuqing will be honored with the Clarence Leroy Meisinger Award which recognizes research achievements that are aerological in character and concern the observation, theory, and modeling of atmospheric motions on all scales. The award highlights young, promising atmospheric scientists who have shown outstanding ability in their careers.