

#### Information Letter #14

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: 24 March 2008

#### Statement by Dean of College of Geosciences Björn Kjerfve Four Year Review, April 2008

On 15 August 2004, I began my service as Dean of the College of Geosciences. Previously, I had been Professor of Marine and Geological Sciences at the University of South Carolina and for the past 4 years the Director of the Marine Science Program. In coming to TAMU, it became my responsibility to implement the four Vision 2020 imperatives (elevate the faculty, enhance the graduate/undergraduate experience, upgrade facilities, and expand diversity). The Reinvestment and ODASES faculty hiring programs were well defined but needed to be implemented. TAMU had just won the 10-year Integrated Ocean Drilling Program (IODP) contract, which became my responsibility to oversee together with the Scientific Ocean Drilling Vessel (SODV) contract. I view my responsibilities to provide short and long-term vision for the College; serve as the voice for Geosciences; improve the image of the College, departments, programs, and faculty; and enhance the educational experiences and learning outcomes of all students. This requires good collaboration with the Provost and my fellow deans on academic, research, and policy issues.

#### Mission for the College of Geosciences

- Encourage and sustain excellence in the Geosciences by balancing scholarship, cutting-edge research, innovative teaching, student mentoring, and quality service.
- Develop a holistic approach for understanding earth systems through broad interdisciplinary research and education in the Geosciences.
- Train globally-aware Geosciences leaders for science, government, and industry through traditional education offerings and innovative research-based learning, learning communities, international exposure, and diverse cross-cultural experiences.

#### Duties of the Dean of Geosciences

The Dean of the College of Geosciences works with a large number of stakeholders, including the higher administration, deans, faculty and staff of the departments and research units, students, former students, national scientific organizations, and the public. With a commitment to shared governance, the President and Provost have placed great emphasis on the role of the deans, working with them as a 'board of directors' for academic affairs of the University. As dean, specific duties include:

- Supervise College planning; construct College budgets, including prioritization of department needs; seek requisite funds from TAMU's state budget; and allocate funds among the departments and research units of the College.
- Coordinate the search for and recommend appointment of department heads and research directors; oversee faculty recruitment and development including working with department heads on salary administration, promotion, and tenure.
- Coordinate and oversee major research programs and centers such as IODP, Geochemical and Environmental Research Group (GERG), and the Texas Sea Grant Program.
- Promote and reward teaching and research excellence among the faculty.

- Consult with the Provost concerning academic issues and budgets; oversee teaching, research and administrative functions within the College, and delegate responsibilities to appropriate staff members.
- Actively participate with the College Development Officer in fund-raising efforts.

#### Major Goals and Challenges for the Next 4 Years

- Secure \$25 to \$30M in a private donation to name the College of Geosciences; work actively to increase gifts and endowments and to prioritize raising the funds for 50 new endowed graduate fellowships to promote and sustain true excellence in the College; and also to retain top faculty.
- Continue to oversee IODP and SODV; and help craft an intelligent solution to mitigate decreasing funding from NSF in collaboration with the NSF and the JOI Alliance partners (LDEO/Columbia University, Coalition for Ocean Leadership Inc.) to recruit commercial partners for the world's largest ocean research program.
- Develop learning communities in small class settings for all incoming freshmen and transfer students, increase the number of honors courses, establish faculty-student engagement and mentoring activities through the development of small freshmen classes and/or seminars throughout the College, and reward excellence in teaching.
- Expand off-campus opportunities for Geosciences majors by offering formal internships, cooperative programs, study-abroad programs, and summer field experiences (e.g. Galapagos, Costa Rica, Antigua, the US west and southwest, and elsewhere).
- Improve the quality of graduate students by raising the level of scholarships and fellowships, while increasing the number of graduate students beyond 300 by encouraging increased research funding.
- Work to increase funding of salaries for faculty, staff, and students as a means of recruiting, retaining, and rewarding excellence; potentially via a 'bonus' system or endowments for top performance.
- Work actively with the College recruiter, advisors, and search committees to add innovative programs to promote diversity.

#### College Administrative Accomplishments

- Hired 33 new faculty members, including 7 women, 2 Hispanics, and 1 African-American, into the College as Reinvestment, ODASES, replacement, or research faculty, and have helped provide funding for salaries, startups, equipment matching, laboratory facilities, positions for trailing spouses, and assisted departments to recruit, reward, and retain outstanding faculty, staff, and students; the College now has the largest number of tenured/tenure-track faculty ever (110), a net growth of 18% in the past 4 years.
- Hired outstanding new department heads in ATMO (Bowman), GEPL (Kronenberg), and OCNG (Chapman), and reappointed successful department head in GEOG (Sherman).
- Hired an outstanding Director of GERG (Guinasso).
- Hired the Associate Dean for Research (Cifuentes), Associate Dean for Academic Affairs (Tchakerian), established the position of Assistant Dean for Finance and Administration (Mills), and hired the Acting Associate Dean for Research (Grossman) to replace the Acting Vice Provost (Cifuentes).
- Hired new College of Geosciences IT Director (Rosser), Facilities Coordinator (Reap), Senior Academic Adviser (Russell), Communications Coordinator (Trono), Web Developer (Rumford), Business Coordinator (Beal), Development/Administrative Assistant (Rodriguez), and Recruitment Officer (Weatherford), and worked with the A&M Foundation to hire a new Director of Development for the College (Barron).
- Hired an outstanding Interim Director for the Environmental Programs in Geosciences (Millington).
- Expanded enrollment in the Environmental Programs in Geosciences from 60 to 90 majors; developed bylaws, an expanded curriculum, and a student organization; allocated space for the programs; and established a position for a permanent director.
- Provided continuous oversight for IODP, coordinating with the JOI Alliance (i.e. TAMU, LDEO/Columbia University, and the Coalition for Ocean Leadership Inc.) in an environment where NSF funding is drastically decreasing and TAMU has been challenged by NSF to find commercial partners for 33% of program operations and funding.
- Provided oversight of the SODV refurbishing project at a Singapore shipyard to enhance the capabilities of the IODP ocean drilling vessel.
- Encouraged faculty research productivity and grant funding. In the past 4 years, the annual research expenditures have increased from \$14.5M (2004) to \$18.0M (2007), a 23.9% increase, not including IODP. The ODP, IODP, and SODV expenditures were an additional \$56.1M in FY07.
- Reestablished the College of Geosciences' external Development Council in 2007; actively supported the revitalization of both the GEPL and OCNG Development Councils, in 2006 and 2007, respectively.
- Prioritized and raised funds for the College, working with the Director of Development and the A&M Foundation. During the past 4 years, we have increased our endowed scholarships from 25 to 43, endowed chairs from 9 to 11, and endowed professorships from 8 to 9 (plus 2 more as planned gifts). While the book value of endowments increased from \$15.8M to \$17.7M, a 12% increase, the overall College increase in endowment book value, cash balances, and bequests was 30%.

- Augmented the undergraduate enrollment in the College by 7% from 457 to 490 and SCH's from 24,912 to 26,320 during the past 4 years (based on fall enrollments).
- Doubled the number of Honors courses offered in the College during the past 4 years.
- Lowered all undergraduate College degree requirements from 128 to 120 SCH's as mandated by the Texas Legislature.
- Implemented the unfortunate decommission of R/V Gyre, the OCNG research vessel for 32 years in 2005, and simultaneously restructured the OCNG administrative and Marine Operations staff; R/V Gyre was sold for \$1.1M, and funds are set aside for a new OCNG vessel/infrastructure facility.
- Oversaw and tracked some 40+ College facilities/construction projects, either completed or in progress, for a total cost of \$10.3 million from a combination of CBE Reinvestment funds, College funds, and private contributions. Projects include construction of the \$1.94 million Radiogenic Laboratory (to be completed April 2008), and renovation of the 12th floor of O&M, numerous faculty laboratories in the O&M and Halbouty buildings, and the Dean's office complex.
- Reestablished and redesigned the annual publication Geoconnections – including a new logo - as a means of highlighting College activities and faculty successes to alumni, donors, and the public.
- Undertook a complete overhaul of all web sites in the College and its units, creating a consistent look and feel, and implementing Joomla content management system, to allow easy updating and revisions; to date, we have launched new sites for the College (Nov 2007), Environmental Programs in Geosciences (Dec 2007), GEOG (Jan 2008), and OCNG (March 2008), with GEPL and ATMO still to be completed.
- Met regularly with the College Executive Committee (the College deans, department heads, and unit directors) and the Geosciences Faculty Advisory Committee (GFAC) to ensure shared governance. My door is open for meetings with faculty, staff, and students to discuss and resolve issues.
- Developed a regular (typically every 6 weeks) Information Letter, sent by email to all College personnel to ensure timely and factual dissemination of College news, policies, and highlights.

#### Accomplishments and Activities at the University Level

- Participated in the academic development of TAMU-Q (Texas A&M at Qatar), helping to maintain teaching Geology faculty in support of four engineering degrees at TAMU-Q.
- Served as an Advisory Board member for the Texas A&M University Mexico Center in Mexico City, with annual visits to the Center.
- Helped establish an academic/research relationship with leading universities in China; have twice visited universities in Beijing, Shanghai, Qingdao, and Xiamen with oceanography/geosciences excellence; have hosted three presidential-level delegations from Chinese universities; am currently working with OCNG to establish a joint Ph.D. degree in Oceanography between TAMU and Ocean University of China (OUC, Qingdao); supported a round table at the Oct 2007 China-US Relations Conference on Development, Energy and Security in Washington, DC.
- Worked with the OVPR to secure funding for the new TAMU 640-processor IBM p5-575+ cluster 4 tera flop super computer, 2006.
- Collaborated with International Programs and the College of Architecture to establish the Casa Verde TAMU educational facility in Costa Rica to the benefit of GEOG and the Environmental Programs in Geosciences.
- Served on the Advisory Board of the Harte Research Institute at TAMU-CC as the TAMU member representative since 2004.
- Served as the Lead Dean for the Texas A&M University-wide 'Water Management and Hydrological Sciences Program', and am providing leadership and financial support for the program.
- Served as a participating Dean in helping establish a shared Ph.D. program in Marine Biology between TAMU, TAMU-G, and TAMU-CC. The degree plan will be presented to the Board of Regents and the Texas Coordinating Board in April 2008.
- Chaired the Search Committee for the Dean of the College of Education and Human Development, helping to hire Dr. Doug Palmer in 2006.
- Chaired the Search Committee for the Dean of the College of Architecture, spring 2008 (replacing Dr. Elsa Murano as chair of the search committee).
- Member of the Council on Built Environment (CBE), a committee for shared governance to advise the President and the Provost on the campus built environment in support of Vision 2020 goals and the core missions of teaching and research, 2004.
- Member of the Research Environment Council (REC), a committee for shared governance to advise the President and the Provost on all aspects of research in support of Vision 2020 goals; have developed policies for the new life sciences building, research commercialization, and research administration; 2004-present.
- Member of the Education Environment Council (EEC), a committee for shared governance to provide the President and Provost with thoughtful, cohesive, coordinated action plans for the campus' academic community; developed a new policy on distance education, and recommendations for implementation of the Murano report; 2007-present.

- Member of the Committee on Implementation of the Recommendations Made by the Task Force on Enhancing the Undergraduate Experience, resulting in the “Murano Report”, 2005.

#### National Activities on Behalf of TAMU

- Served as the TAMU representative to the Coalition for Ocean Leadership (and participated in the process to merge JOI and CORE into Coalition for Ocean Leadership); serve as a member of the Membership Committee, 2007-present.
- Served as the TAMU representative and governor on the board of the Consortium for Ocean Research and Education (CORE) 2004-2007.
- Served as the TAMU representative and governor on the board of the Joint Oceanographic Institutions (JOI) 2004-2007; and the TAMU representative to IODP-MI, the international component of IODP/JOI responsible for linking with consortia in Japan, Europe and elsewhere, 2004-present.
- Served as a TAMU member representative to the University Corporation for Atmospheric Research (UCAR), 2007-present.
- Served as the TAMU representative to the National Council for Science and the Environment (NCSE), 2004-present.
- Served as a TAMU representative to the Council for Environmental Deans and Directors (CEDD), 2004-present.

#### Research Accomplishments and Student Mentoring

(Details are posted on-line at:

[http://geosci.tamu.edu/index.php?pid=167&option=com\\_content&task=view&id=249&Itemid=115](http://geosci.tamu.edu/index.php?pid=167&option=com_content&task=view&id=249&Itemid=115).)

- Co-published 12 research articles (11 journal papers, 1 book chapter), and have 3 additional articles in press or submitted, during my term as Dean of the College of Geosciences, 2004-present.
- Serve as Principal Investigator on a \$30.25 million, 6-year (2007-2012) research contract negotiated with Sir R. Allen Stanford, Integrated Ecological Assessment of Antigua and Barbuda: Identification of Management Options, on behalf of Texas A&M University with the participation of approximately 25 co-principal faculty investigators. The program funds 20 GAR's, brings in full institutional overhead, and is coordinated with RSMAS at the University of Miami, the beneficiary of a similar research contract. To date, this contract has brought in \$4.4 million to TAMU, including total IDC expenditures of \$975K. Although the future of this contract remains uncertain, it has so far been financially and scientifically worthwhile. I am also one of 4 co-Pi's on the \$6M, 5-year (2006-2010) UNU/INWEH Strategic Management of Marine Ecosystems in Nakheel project in Dubai, UAE.
- Serve as the major professor of one OCNG Ph.D. student (Israel Medina) with anticipated graduation in August 2008; served as the major professor for one Ph.D. student (Geórgenes Cavalcante), who successfully defended his Ph.D. dissertation in Environmental Geosciences at Universidade Federal Fluminense (Brazil) in 2007, including a 1.5-year stay as a “sandwich” student in OCNG/TAMU 2006-2007; serve on two OCNG MS student committees, and employ two research assistants.

#### College Tenure and Promotion Guidelines

The College of Geosciences' Guidelines for Managing Tenure and Promotion were revised and approved as of 15 February 2008. In this document, the College augments and clarifies the procedures in University Rule 12.01.99.M2. This document is posted on the College website at <http://geosciences.tamu.edu/files/tenure.pdf>. Links to other relevant College and University policies are also provided on the College website under Geosciences/Policies & Committees.

#### Annual Promotion & Tenure Summary Meeting

Karan Watson, Dean of Faculties and Associate Provost, will host the annual P&T summary meeting from 2 to 4 p.m. on Tuesday 25 March in 501 Rudder, and also from 2 to 4 p.m. on Wednesday 26 March in 301 Rudder. These meetings will give the academic community the opportunity to hear a brief overview of the P&T cases for this past year, general concerns about dossiers, and provide suggestions for improvements to the process. You are encouraged to attend this meeting. Feel free to contact Dr. Watson's office (845-4274) if you have any questions or concerns.

#### School of Rock 2008

The School of Rock teacher research experience will be held 6-14 July 2008, at IODP's Gulf Coast Repository where approximately 60 miles of ocean cores can be viewed and studied. The theme of this year's program is “Using Ocean Cores to Explore Past Climate Change.” Only 12 spots are available for K-12, informal, and undergraduate educators. For those unfamiliar with the program, the School of Rock provides participants daily opportunities to conduct hands-on analyses of sediment and hard-rock cores with scientists and technicians who specialize in IODP research. The workshop also provides educators time to brainstorm with each other and our scientists to plan classroom activities based on their new knowledge and research. Fact sheets and applications are available at <http://www.deepearthacademy.org>. For

additional information, contact either Sharon Cooper, Assistant Education Director, Deep Earth Academy, (202) 787-1632 or email [scooper@oceanleadership.org](mailto:scooper@oceanleadership.org); or Leslie Peart, Education Director; Deep Earth Academy, (202) 787-1603 or email [lpeart@oceanleadership.org](mailto:lpeart@oceanleadership.org).

### **Stay Up-to-Date on College News**

Keep current with news in the College. An RSS feed has been added to the News listing on the College website at <http://geosciences.tamu.edu/>. Subscribe to have College news delivered to your inbox every time items are posted to the site. To subscribe, just click on the RSS feed icon next to the "Latest News" heading on the home page. For more information, contact web developer Jennifer Rumford at [jrumford@tamu.edu](mailto:jrumford@tamu.edu).

### **Posthumous Degree Granted for Craig Logan Lessar**

The Faculty Senate Executive Committee has approved a request from the College to award a Bachelor of Science degree in Geography to Craig Logan Lessar posthumously. Craig died in October of natural causes while working to complete his degree. Pending final approval by President Elsa Murano, Craig will be awarded a Posthumous B.S. degree at the May 2008 graduation ceremony.

### **College Unveils New Oceanography Department Website**

The College launched a new website for Oceanography last week. The Oceanography website is the second department website redesigned by our web development team this year. The new site offers visitors a vibrant upgrade over the previous design and simplifies navigation. One new feature is a student spotlight section recognizing students for their accomplishments. Other features include extensive research pages and updated facilities and outreach pages. The goal is to create a site that meets the needs of both internal and external users. Since the new site is built in content management software, Oceanography faculty and graduate students will be able to update their profile pages, ensuring that the information is always up-to-date. We are working within the University's web style guidelines to create a College website that is user-friendly, cohesive, and encompasses all departments and programs while complimenting the design of the Texas A&M University website. Visit the new Department of Oceanography website at <http://ocean.tamu.edu>.