

Information Letter #10

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
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College of Geosciences Advisory Council

After a nine-year hiatus, the College of Geosciences has reestablished a college level Advisory Council. This was the first meeting of the College of Geosciences advisory council since 1998, when the late Michel Halbouty was chair. The six initial members who were invited and accepted to serve on the new Council are Bill Dark '54, Conroe, TX; Carlos Dengo MS, Ph.D. '78, Houston, TX; Richard Findley BS, MS '73, Billings, MT; Dan Allen Hughes '80, San Antonio, TX; Tom Kelly BS, MS '53, Seattle, WA; and Les Shepard Ph.D. '77, Albuquerque, NM. The Council convened for its inaugural meetings on 7-8 September before enjoying the President's pre-game Saturday buffet and watching the Aggies' triple over-time football win over Fresno State University. The two-day event included informative presentations by representatives from the four departments and three centers in the College as well as a State of the College assessment.

There are many benefits to the College in tapping into the experience, knowledge, network, and resources of the Council members. It is essential that the College of Geosciences is positioned to take optimum advantage of the keen public interest, awareness, and concern of issues focused on (1) energy resources, (2) sustainable environmental development, (3) climate change on regional and global scales, and (4) the health of the earth, oceans, atmosphere, and the human environment. In light of this focus on core elements represented by the College of Geosciences, the Council has been chartered to help with advice and development. The challenges put before the Council were received with enthusiasm, and it is our challenge and opportunity to take full advantage of the commitment by the Advisory Council members. The Council is expected to meet on campus twice annually. Diane Barron, Director of Development for the College of Geosciences, was instrumental in convening the College Advisory Council and has likewise been working to reestablish the advisory councils in GEPL and OCNG.

Geology & Geophysics Advisory Council

The Advisory Council for the Department of Geology & Geophysics, comprised of 18 distinguished alumni, each an industry leader, has met on numerous occasions during the past six months, most recently on 6-7 September. The members of the Council continue to give selflessly of their time and share their expertise and experience with the GEPL faculty in support of building a Geosciences community consistent with the traditions and standards of Texas A&M University. In May, a two-day offsite workshop with the G&G faculty was facilitated by ExxonMobil Vice President Carlos Dengo MS, Ph.D. '78. It led to definition of (1) core values and (2) a consensus objective to "*Build a Geosciences Community of students, staff and faculty who excel through collaborative pursuit in teaching and research.*" On 7 September, several short term goals were identified, and a long term focus articulated. It is believed that this new and exciting collaborative effort with industry will lead to timely resource opportunities for the GEPL faculty and students.

Oceanography Advisory Council

Diane Barron, Director of Development, has met with individuals representing the inactive Oceanography Advisory Council. The good news is that the majority of the members remain loyal and committed to reconvening. This will happen once the new OCNNG Department Head, Dr. Piers Chapman, has assumed his position on 1 October.

Jennifer McGuire Named Montague Scholar/Teacher

Dr. Jennifer McGuire, assistant professor of Geology & Geophysics, has been named a Montague Center for Teaching Excellence Scholar. The Montague-CTE Scholar program, named for founding donor Kenneth Montague '37, honors early-career excellence in undergraduate teaching at Texas A&M. The intent of the program is to recognize one tenure-track assistant professor in each college who has already demonstrated a commitment to, and potential for, excellence in undergraduate teaching. This award includes a \$5,000 grant to encourage further development of undergraduate teaching excellence. The scholars will be honored at a luncheon on 10 October in the Reed Arena Room 301A. Other 2007-2008 recipients are Dr. Amanda Stronza, College of Agriculture & Life Sciences; Dr. Yilmaz Hatipkarasulu, College of Architecture; Dr. Alina Sorescu, Mays Business School; Dr. Kimberly Vannest, College of Education and Human Development; Dr. Zoubeida Ounaies, Dwight Look College of Engineering; Dr. Kathryn Woodard, College of Liberal Arts; Dr. Alexei Safonov, College of Science; and Gladys Ko, College of Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences.

New Communications and Web Master Employees

In the past month, the College has hired Carol Trono as its Communications Coordinator to develop and implement a comprehensive and consistent communications plan for the College of Geosciences and its units. She earned a MA degree in journalism from Ohio State University in 1997. Further, Jennifer Rumford has been hired as the Web Developer for the College of Geosciences after having worked at IODP for 19 years. She will be coordinating and implementing a consistent look and function of the web offerings in the College and also help coordinate with the departments the development of their sites. Jennifer holds a MFA in writing from Goddard College, which she earned in 2006.

Code Maroon

The College of Geosciences would like to encourage all faculty, staff, and students to enroll in Code Maroon. This is the Texas A&M University emergency notification service, which has been established in the aftermath of the campus shooting last spring on the campus of Virginia Tech. Code Maroon gives TAMU the ability to communicate health and safety emergency information quickly by emails and text messages. By enrolling in Code Maroon, university officials can quickly pass on safety-related information to you, regardless of your location. Code Maroon is a free service to Texas A&M faculty, students and staff, but it requires enrollment. To enroll, log in to the Code Maroon site at <http://codemaroon.tamu.edu/> with your NetID and password and fill out the form with your information, including up to two cell phone numbers and two email addresses. Code Maroon is powered by e2Campus, a national mass notification solutions provider. Contact information you provide to the Code Maroon service will be used exclusively for delivering health and safety emergency information through e2Campus, which has a strict "zero spam" usage policy. Besides cell phone, pager and email, Code Maroon notifications can also be received and published to personalized home pages such as Google, AOL, and Yahoo or any RSS reader. To date, almost 30,000 individuals at Texas A&M University have signed up for Code Maroon.

Email Retention

Dr. Pierce E. Cantrell, Vice President and Associate Provost for Information Technology for at Texas A&M University, is the TAMU Chief Information Officer responsible for academic and administrative computing, computer networks, telecommunications, public television and radio, and the statewide data and videoconference network. Dr. Cantrell has advised that emails should not be retained any longer than absolutely necessary. As an example, NEO emails are unrecoverable after two weeks. The College of Geosciences advises its faculty, staff, and students to delete regularly old emails from their computers and computer accounts.

Faculty Workstation Program

The College of Geosciences has been allocated \$30,218 for FY08 for the University's Faculty Workstation Program. Initiated in 1996, the intent of the program is to assist faculty members in acquiring up-to-date computer workstations, approximately every four years. The Program requires a \$1 match for every \$3 provided by the University. Thus, the College is providing \$10,000 for FY08 matching funds for faculty members to purchase 20 new computers this year. Information and purchases will be coordinated through the academic departments during the first week of October.

Enrollment Update

Unofficial 12th class day data show that the total number of undergraduate majors in the College of Geosciences increased from 474 to 489 (+15) this fall. Most of the increase is due to new Geology freshmen and transfer students. The graduate enrollment in the College dropped slightly from 273 to 266 (-7). The table shows the breakdown of the Fall 2007 enrollment by departments.

Department	Undergraduate	M.S.	Ph.D.	Total
ATMO	140	28	24	192
ENGS*	51	0	0	51
GEOG**	141	23	35	199
GEPL	157	50	32	239
OCNG	0	39	35	74

* Preliminary numbers indicate 51 ENGS and 30 ENST majors for a total of 81 Environmental degree majors in the College. The ENST majors are included in the GEOG majors.

** The undergraduate GEOG totals include 106 GEOG + 30 ENST + 5 SPSG majors

Employment of Foreign Nationals

The Texas A&M System has revised Regulation 33.09.09, Employment of Foreign Nationals, effective 15 August 2007. The Regulation can be found at <http://tamus.edu/offices/policy/policies/pdf/33-99-09.pdf>. This revised regulation:

- Requires each System member to designate a human resources or other office to be responsible for the employment of foreign nationals.
- Authorizes IFSS to provide assistance to System members regarding immigration employment matters.
- Requires the head of the hiring department to obtain Dean's approval before making a contingent offer of employment to a foreign national and to contact the designated office after making a contingent offer.
- Requires the System member to pay for reasonable and relevant costs and fees, including outside counsel and attorney's fees, associated with filing petitions sponsoring foreign nationals for employment and/or permanent residency.
- Requires justification and establishes criteria for permanent residency sponsorship.
- Identifies temporary positions that may not be sponsored for permanent residency.

If you have questions, please direct these to IFSS at (979) 862-1719.

Facilities Report

A number of extensive renovation projects have been ongoing this past summer. Growth, expansion, and improving of facilities are needed and are usually welcome, but having to endure the dust, dirt, noise, and confusion during the construction phase can be rather taxing. The major Reinvestment projects are:

- O&M room 408: work to outfit Dr. Schmidt's lab with a new sink and countertop is underway.
- O&M rooms 707-711: work has begun to convert these rooms to GEOG faculty offices and labs.
- O&M 12th floor: a contractor has been selected; plans are being reviewed by the contractor, the architect, and Physical Plant, and will be presented for review/approval by ATMO. This job will be undertaken November 2007 - March 2008.
- Halbouty Radiogenic Lab: The contract has been signed by the President and the work is scheduled to commence in October. As much as possible, work will be scheduled to avoid conflict with classes in Room 101.
- Halbouty perchloric hood: the materials have arrived and work is proceeding. The current completion date is end of this month.
- Teague 002A and 002C computer teaching labs: all work has been completed and the computers installed in time for the classes to be held in these rooms.
- The major College non-Reinvestment projects are:
 - O&M second floor: the renovation of the College of Geosciences Dean's offices is now complete and the staff has reoccupied the space, albeit with temporary furniture in the offices.
 - O&M Building: automatic magnetic door locks have been installed on two of the entrances on the ground floor. Card readers are now in operation for all after-hours access by authorized personnel. Your TAMU ID card will allow entry to the building.

- Halbouty rooms 368A and 370: air-conditioning and plumbing supplies for Dr. Tice's cold-room and lab have been ordered. The anticipated completion date is early October.
- Halbouty water-proofing and drainage: Physical Plant has removed the plastic canopy and will replace the sidewalk along the east wall of the north extension of the old Halbouty. Water-proofing will be applied to the basement walls, and drainage will be improved throughout that area.
- Sea Grant: renovation plans are being finalized and work will start imminently at GERG West at 727 Graham Road. Sea Grant should be able to move into their new quarters over the Winter Holiday break.
- O&M "building recommissioning" survey: the survey team has reported its findings to TEES' Energy Systems Laboratory and TAMU's Energy Management Office. Necessary repairs to the air conditioning system will be determined based on that report.
- O&M restrooms 107 and 108: the restrooms were not upgraded to meet ADA standards in time for the fall semester. However, this upgrade is now scheduled for the Winter Holiday break. A new ADA-compliant drinking fountain has been installed in the west gallery.