College of Geosciences at Texas A&M University

Information Letter #9

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: 23 July 2007

The winds of change are continuing to blow during the summer and most significant for the College of Geosciences, Dr. Luis Cifuentes, Executive Associate Dean for Research, became the Interim Vice-Provost of Texas A&M University on 1 July. The University is in the midst of a series of administrative leadership transitions. Dr. Eddie J. Davis is doing an admirable job as Interim President, having spent a significant and very successful effort in State Legislature hearings and meetings in Austin during the recently concluded legislative session, which defined the budget allocations to Texas A&M and other universities and colleges in the state for the next biennium. At the same time, Dr. David Prior, the Executive Vice President and Provost and also the former Dean of the College of Geosciences, left Texas A&M University and assumed the position of Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs at the University of Texas System in Austin on 14 June. Dr. Jerry Strawser, Dean of the Mays Business School, was named and has assumed the position as Interim Provost of Texas A&M University. Dr. William Perry, former Vice Provost, left the university at the end of June to assume the position as President of Eastern Illinois University in Charleston, Illinois. The new leadership at Texas A&M University will potentially lead to new academic directions and priorities and could have far-reaching effects for all colleges and departments.

Cifuentes Named Interim Vice Provost of TAMU

Dr. Luis Cifuentes, Executive Associate Dean for Research, was nominated to become the Interim Vice Provost of Texas A&M University and assumed his new position on 1 July. Dr. Cifuentes, Professor of Oceanography, earned a Ph.D. degree in oceanography from the University of Delaware in 1987, a MS degree in marine studies from the University of Delaware in 1982, and a B.A. degree with honors in chemistry from Swarthmore College in 1978. After serving one year as a post-doctoral fellow at the Geophysical Laboratory in Washington, DC, Dr. Cifuentes began his faculty career in the Department of Oceanography at TAMU in 1988. He was promoted to Professor in 2000. Dr. Cifuentes is a chemical oceanographer and a marine stable isotope geochemist with research applications to organic cycling and ecology of marine ecosystems, estuaries, and the Gulf of Mexico. Dr. Cifuentes became Interim Associate Dean for Research in the College of Geosciences in 2003, and Executive Associate Dean for Research in 2004.

Grossman Named Acting Associate Dean for Research

Dr. Ethan L. Grossman, the Mollie B. and Richard A. Williford Professor in the Department of Geology & Geophysics, has been named Acting Executive Associate Dean and Associate Dean for Research in the College of Geosciences for a 1-year term, beginning on 1 August. Dr. Grossman is a stable isotope geochemist with research interests in earth system history, biogeochemistry and geomicrobiology of aquifer systems, and geoinformatics. He holds a B.S. degree in geology (magna cum laude) from the State University of New York at Albany, 1976, and a Ph.D. degree in geochemistry from the University of Southern California, 1982. Dr. Grossman, who joined the faculty at Texas A&M University in 1982 and was promoted to full professor in 1994, is a Fellow of the Geological Society of America and a widely published earth scientist with a solid record of graduate student and post-doc mentoring. Dr. Grossman will initially carry out the associate dean's functions from his faculty office in Halbouty during the remodeling of the Dean's office suite but will then relocate his administrative duties to the O&M building by early September.

Kronenberg Named GEPL Department Head

Dr. Andreas K. Kronenberg, the Ray C. Fish Professor of Geology and Geophysics, has been named the Head of the Department of Geology and Geophysics, effective 1 September. Dr. Kronenberg received his B.S. in geology (magna cum laude) from UCLA in 1977, M.S. in geology from Brown University in 1979, and Ph.D. degree in geology from Brown University in 1983. He joined the faculty at Texas A&M University in 1985 after a NRC post-doctoral fellowship at USGS in Menlo Park, CA, and was promoted to Professor of Geology and Geophysics in 1995. He has since 1989 been the associate director of the Center for Tectonophysics and the John W. Handin Laboratory for Experimental Rock Deformation, the centerpiece of the tectonophysics research program with a broad variety of experimental systems allowing studies of deformation and transport behavior of rock at physical and chemical states simulating surface to upper mantle conditions to provide research support, training, and mentoring of graduate students and post-doctoral fellows. Dr. Kronenberg's research focuses on understanding the fundamental physics and chemistry of crystal plasticity and the high temperature processes that accompany and assist inelastic deformation of rocks.

Chapman Named OCNG Department Head

Dr. Piers Chapman, a seagoing marine chemist, has been named the Head of the Department of Oceanography, the appointment beginning 1 October. Dr. Chapman earned a B.Sc. degree in chemistry from the University College of North Wales (Bangor, UK) in 1971 and a Ph.D. degree in marine biology from the same institution in 1974. Dr. Chapman is currently the Director of CREST at Louisiana State University, a NOAA-funded research consortium in coastal habitat restoration. He was a research scientist at the Sea Fisheries Research Institute in Cape Town (South Africa) 1977-1989, and served as the Director of the US WOCE (World Ocean Circulation Experiment) Office at TAMU, 1990-2002. Dr. Chapman's research focus has been the distribution of iodine, nutrients, oxygen, oil, and pollutants in seawater with special focus on upwelling areas.

Morse and Grossman Elected 2007 GSA Fellows

Dr. John W. Morse, OCNG, and Dr. Ethan L. Grossman, GEPL, were recently recognized by the Geological Society of America (GSA). They and another 46 geological scientists were elected as 2007 GSA Fellows and will be recognized at the 2007 GSA Annual Meeting Presidential Address & Awards Ceremony on Saturday 27 October at the Colorado Convention Center in Denver. We join in congratulating Drs. Morse and Grossman, our College of Geosciences 2007 GSA Fellows, for this high National recognition. Dr. Morse was cited for having "defined the field of physical chemistry of calcium carbonate in seawater and the controls on the carbonate composition depth in the ocean", and Dr. Grossman was cited for his contribution to "pioneering research in stable isotope geochemistry and its applications to paleoecology, aquifer, and groundwater chemistry and Late Paleozoic climate."

New Payroll Tax (ACAP)

Effective 1 September, all departmental payroll expenses will reflect a new "payroll tax", the Accrued Compensable Absences Payable (ACAP) Set Aside. The University has traditionally held a contingent liability exceeding $20M for employee accrued annual leave balances. Departments were individually responsible for any lump sum payments to employees leaving the university (resignation, retirement, death). Beginning with the first payroll calculations for FY08, TAMU will establish a service center account to process annual leave payments and the account will be funded through a payroll set-aside in a manner similar to workman's compensation insurance (WCI). The payroll set aside will be assessed for all leave eligible employees with a leave eligible status verification made on each payroll. Each and every departmental account on which payroll is charged will be subject to ACAP, including E&G and contract and grant accounts. The ACAP rate for FY08 will be 0.448%. Beginning in FY09, separate rates will be maintained for leave eligible faculty and staff.

Statement on Climate Change by ATMO Faculty

All tenured and tenure-track faculty of the Department of Atmospheric Sciences at Texas A&M recently added a statement to the departmental home page (http://www.met.tamu.edu/climatechange.php), agreeing with the recent reports of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), asserting that: (i) It is virtually certain that the climate is warming, and that it has warmed by about 0.7°C over the last 100 years; (ii) It is very likely that humans are responsible for most of the recent warming; (iii) If we do nothing to reduce our emissions of greenhouse gases, future warming will likely be at least 2°C over the next century; (iv) Such a climate change brings with it a risk of serious adverse impacts on our environment and society.

Centra Web Tool Offers Effective Collaboration Capability

Effective collaboration increases understanding, comprehension, and the likelihood that project teams will achieve success. In academic settings, several web-based collaboration tools, including Centra, are available to enhance discussion and deliver on-line courses when collaboration in the same physical space is not feasible. There exist numerous commercial and open source feature-rich internet communication tools, including InfoWorkSpace, Access Grid, VRVS, Skype, Acrobat Connect, GoToMeeting, and Centra. During the past couple of years, some TAMU organizations have been using Centra to deliver online classes and host virtual meetings. Centra enables clients to communicate via web camera, microphone, and web browser with relative ease, whether using PC's or Mac's. Moderators and instructors appreciate the ability to stream PowerPoint presentations, demonstrate desktop applications, use the whiteboard, stream camera video and audio conversations, give quizzes, answer questions, and use pointer devices to emphasize points of interest. Meetings and conferences take minutes to set up and account administration is a breeze. Those interested in learning more about Centra should contact Jim Rosser via email (jrosser@tamu.edu) for additional information. The College of Geosciences' Centra link is located at http://centra.tamu.edu/main/geos.

Centralization of IT Personnel/Services

As we have discussed on several occasions during the past year, all E&G-funded IT support personnel in the College of Geosciences will be moved into a restructured and centralized College of Geosciences Information Technology unit under the supervision of Jim Rosser, Director of Information Systems, effective 1 September. IT services will continue to be provided at both the department and college levels, and the changes should be transparent to faculty, staff, and student customers as they have been in GEPL since November 2006, when the IT personnel moved over. However, expectations are for IT services to be better and more responsive than before. Additional centralized server capacity has just arrived and is being configured in the new College of Geosciences data center in O&M B04, which is under construction and scheduled to be completed in 2008. The IT unit is also in the process of establishing a centralized help desk as well as addressing overall IT security issues, college hardware/software classroom instruction requirements, video conferencing capability, and other computing needs.

Facilities Update

The College of Geosciences has more than 25 ongoing facilities and construction projects funded either by CBE, Reinvestment, or private donations. Some are carried out by private contractors, some by Physical Plant. Across campus, many construction projects are unfortunately behind schedule. This is having an impact on the College of Geosciences, as GEOG is scheduled to occupy 4000 ft^2 in CSA, and Sea Grant is slated to move into GERG West but cannot move because the current occupants are unable to vacate owing to campus building delays. Other impacted College projects are a 3-month delay in the OCNG renovation on the fourth floor of O&M, a 45-day delay in the GEOG's renovation of the 7th floor of O&M, and the ATMO remodeling of the 12th floor in O&M pending design decisions. But the news is not all bad. Some projects in the College are nearing completion.

A number of Reinvestment projects are moving forward. Most significant of these is (i) the Halbouty Radiogenic Lab construction, which is also the most and costly College facilities projects – it is finally moving forward; QuadTex has been selected as the contractor; Construction will begin in August, will be scheduled to avoid conflicts with fall classes in Room 101; and the Lab is anticipated to be completed in April 2008. Other projects include: (ii) O&M 406A and 408, assigned to OCNG new hire Dr. Matthew Schmidt, are approximately 70% complete and will be finished before his arrival in August; (iii) O&M Rooms 707-711 (GEOG) are expected to be completed in October; (iv) O&M 12th floor (ATMO) has approved by CBE for rerouting of the hood exhaust to reduce the roar in the east chase, which should abate the noise after 34 years (or select another noise-reduction solution presently being investigated by TEES' Energy Systems Laboratory); ATMO is reviewing floor plans to utilize the east wall for faculty/student occupation instead of storage; this project is scheduled to begin in October and be completed in February 2008; (v) plans for the Teague 002A and 002C (GEOG) renovation have been approved, and the project and will be completed by mid-August, leaving time for equipment testing and faculty orientation before classes start.

As a match to NSF for the IODP project and support of the ODASES faculty, TAMU upgraded IODP storage and lab functions. This project was completed ahead of schedule in June.

There are a number of additional facilities projects in the College of Geosciences besides the Reinvestment projects, including: (i) Renovation of Halbouty Rooms 368A and 370 for a new faculty member, Dr. Michael Tice. Room 368A will be restored as a cold room, and cabinetry from 328 will be recycled into 370 as a new island work bench. Completion is projected for 1 September. (ii) Work on the Ross Street utility upgrade has reached the front doors of Halbouty, and two entrances are currently blocked. Physical Plant will remove the large rocks from the plant beds before construction in that area proceeds. (iii) O&M is undergoing a "building commissioning" process that will identify and, ideally, correct air

conditioning deficiencies. This study is being conducted by TEES' Energy Systems Laboratory in conjunction with TAMU's Energy Management Office. (iv) The O&M restrooms, Rooms 107 and 108, will be upgraded before fall semester to meet ADA standards, resulting in a few weeks when both restrooms will be closed; (v) Renovation of O&M Room 206 to become the new TTVN room is underway and will be completed in early August; and (vi) Renovation of the College of Geosciences Dean's Office suite began on 1 June with minimal disruption to classes on the first and second floors. Completion of the project is schedule for end of August. In the meantime, the personnel in the Dean's Office have been relocated per below.

Temporary Relocation of College Personnel

Because of the ongoing renovations on the second floor of O&M, the Dean's Office staff have relocated their offices until the end of August, when they move into the remodeled space in the southwestern side of the second floor of the O&M building. Their temporary offices are:

Barron	213D
Kjerfve	207
Grossman	210 Halbouty
Reap	716
Rodriguez	213D
Rosser	702B
Russell	803G
Tchakerian	803E
Toon	208
Weatherford	803G

The College mail box is located in O&M 209. All telephone numbers remain the same as before. The financial offices of the College have not been displaced.

Geosciences 2007 Comparative Objective Performance Metrics

The Dean's Office is regularly asked to provide performance data for the departments in the College. For the fourth year, we have developed a summary of objective performance metrics to enable the academic departments to assess their status and progress in several teaching and research categories. The FY07 summary of the performance metrics is attached to this information letter. These objective measures serve as the basis for the allocation of graduate teaching assistants and departmental operational budgets and are therefore quite important.

In allocating GAT's and GANT's to the departments, the allocation was made proportional to the number of students in lab courses (which corresponds to SCH's in lab courses and approximately equals the number of lab sections). In FY07 the total allocation for GAT's and GANT's was $1.1 million. The amount was distributed with ATMO receiving 9.6%, GEOG 18.9%, GEPL 52.3%, and OCNG 19.2%. Each department sets its own graduate stipend rates.

In allocating operational budgets to the departments, teaching and research continue to be weighted equally. Teaching is weighted 40% as measured by SCH's (not by WSCH's since each department already has been rewarded for graduate students in the allocation of GAT and GANT funds). Research is weighted 40%. The research proxies are IDC returned (20%) and the number of GAR's on extramural grants and contracts (20%). These two research measures are used to capture research production objectively. The final 20% of the distribution of operational funds is proportional to the number of FTE faculty in the department, as a department with greater faculty needs more operational funds. The 2007 comparative objective performance metrics will continue to be studied and interpreted, and with a recognized need to include more subjective measures of faculty excellence in the metrics, such as national awards and measures of recognition and impact of scholarship and academic and research.

7/1/07

College of Geosciences
Department Comparison
Spring 2007

PERSONNEL	ATMO	GEOG	G&G	OCNG
Faculty (FTE= 9mos; 100%)				
Professors	6.5	6.3	16.0	17.0
Associate Professors	6.0	7.0	7.0	6.0
Assistant Professors	7.0	5.0	5.0	3.0
Lecturer	1.0	-	-	-
Total Budgeted Faculty	***20.5***	***18.3***	***28.0***	***26.0***
E&G Base Faculty Salaries	***$ 1,519,737***	***$ 1,258,020***	***$ 2,262,723***	***$ 2,110,991***
Temp Faculty (Lecturers/Visiting)	*0.25*	*4.25*	*0.50*	*0.00*
Staff (Head Count)				
E&G/Designated Fee	7.0	5.0	9.0	7.0
Research	15.0	-	-	16.0
Total Budgeted Staff	***22.0***	***5.0***	***9.0***	***23.0***
E&G Base Staff Salaries	***$ 218,970***	***$ 148,936***	***$ 300,245***	***$ 245,266***
Grad Assts (FTE= 9mos)				
E&G/Designated Fee (GAT's)	6.5	22.0	44.5	12.0
Research (GAR's)	53.0	13.0	13.0	20.0
Total FTE Grad Assts	***59.5***	***35.0***	***57.5***	***32.0***
Total E&G Base GAT Budget	***$ 88,218***	***$ 255,776***	***$ 538,764***	***$ 197,243***

ACADEMICS	ATMO	GEOG	G&G	OCNG	GEOS
Undergraduates	144	156	126	-	48
Graduate - Masters	34	32	45	35	
Graduate - PhD	28	29	37	33	
Total Majors (Fall 2006)	***206***	***217***	***208***	***68***	***48***
SCH (Spr06, Sum06, Fall06)	4,558	19,451	14,749	7,844	1
WSCH (Spr06, Sum06, Fall06)	**22,415**	**35,744**	**44,790**	**28,035**	**3**
WSCH/FTE Budgeted Faculty	1,093	1,953	1,600	1,078	
WSCH/FTE Faculty (incl temp)	1,080	1,585	1,572	1,078	
U/G Lab courses	8	11	21	2	1
U/G Lab sections	26	64	189	63	1
Lab course enrollment (Su05/Fa05/Sp06)	**612**	**1,192**	**3,345**	**1,232**	**20**
Avg GA stipend rate (base)	$ 1,700	$ 1,375	$ 1,350	$ 1,575	
Avg GA stipend rate (all rates)	$ 1,700	$ 1,375	$ 1,538	$ 1,825	
Bachelors Degrees Awarded	32	53	28		10
Masters Degrees Awarded	8	5	23	11	5
PhDs Degrees Awarded	5	3	5	3	
Total Degrees Awarded (FY 2006)	**45**	**61**	**56**	**14**	**15**

RESEARCH	ATMO	GEOG	G&G	OCNG
Research accounts (active - exp)				
TAMRF	54	14	19	79
TEES	23	9	8	21
TAMU (C/G only)	22	6	2	2
TAMU (consortia)	0	0	4	0
	99	***29***	***33***	***102***
Res Proposals Submitted (FY06)	**75.5**	**9.0**	**28.0**	**53.0**
Research Proposals Per Faculty FTE	**3.68**	**0.49**	**1.00**	**2.04**
Research Expenditures				
TAMRF (FY2006)	$ 3,271,539	$ 476,581	$ 749,478	$ 3,979,156
TEES (FY2006)	$ 182,406	$ 62,316	$ 226,283	$ 244,808
TAMU (FY2006 C/G only)	$ 780,824	$ 81,558	$ 50,783	$ 132,170
TAMU (FY2006 consortia)	$ -	$ -	$ 76,569	$ -
Total Research Expenditures	***$ 4,234,769***	***$ 620,454***	***$ 1,103,113***	***$ 4,356,134***
Research Exp Per Faculty FTE	**$206,574**	**$33,905**	**$39,397**	**$167,544**

7/1/07

College of Geosciences
Department Comparison
Spring 2007

	ATMO	GEOG	G&G	OCNG
Total IDC Expenditures				
TAMRF/TAMU (2006 IDC)	$ 826,945	$ 67,473	$ 203,532	$ 691,410
TEES (2006 IDC)	$ 19,034	$ 1,740	$ 91,573	$ 45,562
Total IDC	***$ 845,979***	***$ 69,213***	***$ 295,105***	***$ 736,972***
IDC Generated Per Faculty FTE	***$ 41,267***	***$ 3,782***	***$ 10,539***	***$ 28,345***
IDC Return to college				
TAMRF/TAMU (2006 IDC)	$ 274,631	$ 22,354	$ 67,430	$ 202,017
TEES (2006 IDC)	$ 903	$ 1,513	$ 12,930	$ 10,055
Total IDC Return	***$ 275,534***	***$ 23,867***	***$ 80,360***	***$ 212,072***
Returned IDC Per Faculty FTE	***$ 13,441***	***$ 1,304***	***$ 2,870***	***$ 8,157***
IDC Return allocated to department	***$ 197,219***	***$ 16,061***	***$ 53,556***	***$ 146,605***
Avg % Return of Research Exp	***6.51%***	***3.85%***	***7.28%***	***4.87%***
Avg % Return of TEES Exp	**0.50%**	**2.43%**	**5.71%**	**4.11%**
Avg % Ret of TAMRF/TAMU Exp	**6.78%**	**4.01%**	**7.69%**	**4.91%**

NOTES

FACULTY: -**Snapshot as of February 2007**
- Includes Sun (January arrival)
- Excludes full-time admin (Kennicutt, Fox, Baldauf, Cifuentes, Kjerfve, Tchakerian, Giardino, Prior)
- Includes Department Head as 1 FTE
  - **Faculty Salaries excludes all admin stipends & Dept Head summer salary**
  - **Faculty FTE and Fac Salaries includes** Waters @27% (GEOG), Nowlin @25% (OCNG); Wilheit @50% (ATMO)

STAFF **- Exclusive head count** (if part E&G/fees then not double counted in research)

GA's **- Calculated FTE for E&G** (based on budget/avg base stipend & 9 mos appts)
- GARs actual current factored for 9 mos FTE

ACADEMICS: - SCH info reflects funded SCH's and WSCH's w/teaching supplement for Sp06,Su06, & Fa06

RESEARCH PROPOSALS - ATMO .5 reflects joint proposal with another College unit

RESEARCH EXPENDITURES reflect expenditures in designated contract/grant research accts only (02-4XXXXX accounts)

IDC RETURN - reflects total IDC generated and IDC returned through College (I.e., not total IDC earned)
- TEES IDC return to College and allocation to department does not include TEES direct return to PI