

Information Letter #6

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: 5 January 2007

I would like to wish all of you a very Happy New Year and all of the best of professional successes as well as good health and happiness in 2007. Since the College of Geosciences Information Letter #5, Dr. Robert Gates has resigned as the President of Texas A&M University to assume the position as Secretary of Defense of the United States, and Dr. Eddie J. Davis has been appointed by the Chancellor, Dr. Michael McGee, with the approval of the Board of Regents, to serve as the Interim President of Texas A&M University. In a letter to the Aggie Family on 19 December, Dr. Davis outlined his priorities in dealing with challenges ahead and stated "As Dr. Gates moves on to infinitely more difficult and challenging responsibilities at the national and international level, we are obligated to stay the course and make the key tactical and strategic decisions necessary to ensure we do not become diverted from the targets set out during the last four years..."

Thus, there are no changes with respect to the faculty reinvestment program, nor in our responsibility (i) "to increase the diversity of our student body and our faculty and staff and improve the campus climate to enhance the experiences of all" and (ii) to focus on "the key follow-on efforts to improve our undergraduate and graduate programs, particularly in the implementation of the University Studies curriculum and in creating the proper incentives for recruiting the very best graduate students."

I welcome you back from the Holiday break and am looking forward to working with you during the new year.

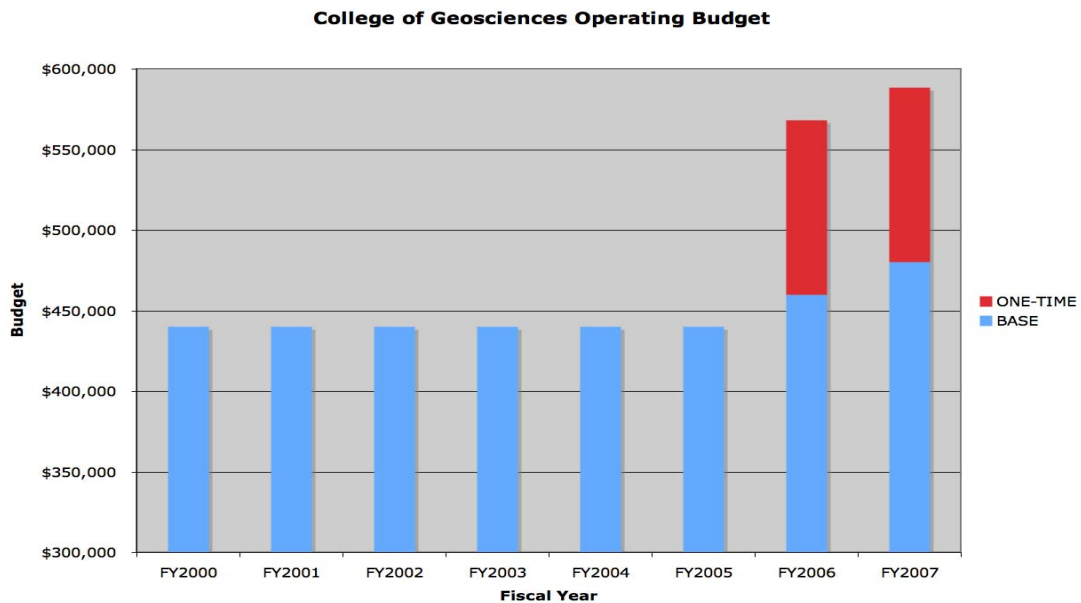
Director of Environmental Programs in the College of Geosciences

Effective 1 January 2007, Dr. Andrew Millington has been appointed as the Interim Director of Environmental Programs (EPC) in the College of Geosciences. He will work closely with the Environmental Programs Committee, comprising representatives of the environmental faculty in each department. The committee membership is Dr. Sarah Bednarz (Geography), Dr. Don Collins (Atmospheric Sciences), Dr. Jennifer McGuire (Geology and Geophysics) and Dr. Bob Stewart (Oceanography). Dr. Millington and the EPC will then coordinate their activities with Dr. Vatche Tchakerian, Associate Dean for Academic Affairs. Dr. Millington will chair the committee. In the near future, the committee will evaluate the curricula of the Environmental Geosciences and Environmental Studies degrees, identify areas of concentration for the new University Studies degree, establish a list of environmental faculty across the College, and work on strategies to enhance the environmental programs within the college. Environmental Programs in the College of Geosciences is a proven growth area.

Distribution of Operational Funds to the Departments

Some 95% of the budget the College of Geosciences receives from the University General Fund (E&G Budget) in September every year is locked up for faculty and staff salaries, including the merit increases for the year and any salary adjustments. The total amount received for FY07 was ~\$12M. The Dean's Office allocates a portion of this budget to the academic departments in the form of operational funds.

The departmental operational budget allocations were for several years flat at \$440,000 per year. We have managed to raise this allocation the past two years that I have had the opportunity to influence the budget decisions, first to \$460,000 last year, and this year by allocating \$480,000 for operational expenses in the departments. This is shown in blue in the graph below.



To give the departments more fiscal flexibility, the University has additionally provided to the Colleges a temporary "one-time" operational allocation. This one-time allocation (divided into two fiscal year allocations) for operational expenses in the College of Geosciences was \$118,264 in FY06 and also \$118,264 in FY07. At this point it is doubtful that a one-time allocation can be expected in future years. The one-time operational allocation is shown in red in the graph above.

To make certain that operational funds are distributed fairly and reasonably between the four academic departments, the College uses a 100% objective distribution formula, which was discussed and adopted by the College Executive Committee in 2005, and has remained the same since. After considerable scenario modeling, we decided to weigh teaching and research equally, 40% each, since each activity has an approximately equal impact on the College budget. Recognizing that departments with a larger faculty need more operational funds, 20% of the operational funds are distributed based on the number of FTE faculty in the department.

In assigning the 40% teaching weight, the College uses SCH's as an objective proxy to assess teaching production. Since the budget each year needs to be allocated in the beginning of the fiscal year, we calculated the SCH's based on the previous academic year. SCH's are a better teaching proxy than WSCH's (as shown in the Information Letter #3) and are more important for the allocation of the E&G budget to the Colleges as compared to the WSCH's. Moreover, departments already receive credit for graduate students taking highly-weighted courses in the allocation of GAT and GANT funds.

The proxy used to calculate the 40% research weight is equally based on the number of GAR's on extramural grants (average between snapshots in February 2006 and October 2006) and the amount of IDC generated on grants and contracts. These two measures are proxies, which fairly capture research excellence by the departments.

The allocation of bulk operational budgets to the academic departments for FY 2007, both recurring and one-time allocations, are shown in the two tables below along with all supporting numbers and assumptions.

College of Geosciences Operational Budget Allocations for FY 2007													
Total:		\$480,000											
		<u>Teaching:</u>				<u>Research:</u>							
	FTE	W (0.2)	Total SCHs	W (0.4)	Total IDC	W (0.2)	GARs *	GARs *	W (0.2)	Σ W	Total OPS	OPS	Chg OPS
DEPT	(09/06)		(FY 06)		(FY 05)		(10/06)	(02/06)			(FY 07)	(FY 06)	(FY07-FY06)
ATMO	19	0.211	4,488	0.092	\$465,727	0.428	36	33	0.493	0.263	\$126,397	\$107,055	\$19,342
GEOG	18	0.200	21,471	0.441	\$45,218	0.042	11	9	0.143	0.253	\$121,561	\$118,438	\$3,123
GEPL	27	0.300	15,085	0.310	\$103,559	0.095	6	13	0.136	0.230	\$110,449	\$108,280	\$2,169
OCNG	26	0.289	7,653	0.157	\$472,778	0.435	17	15	0.229	0.253	\$121,593	\$126,227	-\$4,633
Total	90	1.000	48,697	1.000	\$1,087,281	1.000	70	70	1.000	1.000	\$480,000	\$460,000	\$20,000
* on extramural grants and contracts													

College of Geosciences One-Time Operational Budget Allocations for FY 2007													
One-Time Total:		\$108,264 (\$118,264 - \$10,000 reserve)											
		<u>Teaching:</u>				<u>Research:</u>				One-Time			
	FTE	W (0.2)	Total SCHs	W (0.4)	Total IDC	W (0.2)	GARs *	GARs *	W (0.2)	Σ W	Total OPS	OPS	Chg OPS
DEPT	(09/06)		(FY 06)		(FY 05)		(10/06)	(02/06)			(FY07)	(FY 06)	(FY07-FY06)
ATMO	19	0.211	4,488	0.092	\$465,727	0.428	36	33	0.493	0.263	\$28,509	\$25,196	\$3,313
GEOG	18	0.200	21,471	0.441	\$45,218	0.042	11	9	0.143	0.253	\$27,418	\$27,875	-\$457
GEPL	27	0.300	15,085	0.310	\$103,559	0.095	6	13	0.136	0.230	\$24,912	\$25,484	-\$573
OCNG	26	0.289	7,653	0.157	\$472,778	0.435	17	15	0.229	0.253	\$27,425	\$29,708	-\$2,283
Total	90	1.000	48,697	1.000	\$1,087,281	1.000	70	70	1.000	1.000	\$108,264	\$108,264	\$0
* on extramural grants and contracts													

The distribution to the departments of both the (i) operational and the (ii) one-time supplement budgets were based on the objective criteria discussed, and the funds were transferred to the departments in October. The main conclusion is obvious: a department that generates large SCH's, brings in high IDC, and supports many GAR's on extramural funding receives a large operational budget allocation.

Distribution of Graduate Assistantship Funds

The allocation of graduate assistantship (GAT's and GANT's) funds in the College of Geosciences for FY 2007 also took place last fall. For the second year in a row, the allocations to the departments were done in accordance with objective criteria. The allocations are based on the number of designated laboratory sections taught in undergraduate classes with formal laboratory sections. The expectation is that each section has anywhere from 18 to 20 registered students, no less no more. The actual spreadsheets used to calculate the distribution of graduate assistants of both the recurring \$1,100,000 graduate assistant allocation and the one-time allocation of an extra \$60,000 for FY 2007 is shown below.

Calculation of Graduate Assistant Allocations for FY2007										
	Courses	Sections	Students	Stud/lab	Percent	Designated	Allocated	FY07	FY06	% Change
ATMO	6	24	589	24.5	0.093	\$0	\$98,556	\$98,556	\$88,218	11.72%
GEOG	10	64	1177	18.4	0.187	\$25,000	\$196,944	\$221,944	\$255,776	-13.23%
GEPL	21	189	3328	17.6	0.528	\$0	\$556,866	\$556,866	\$538,764	3.36%
OCNG	1	62	1211	19.5	0.192	\$0	\$202,634	\$202,634	\$197,243	2.73%
College (Reserve)						\$20,000		\$20,000	\$20,000	0.00%
	38	339	6305	18.6	1.000	\$45,000	\$1,055,000	\$1,100,000	\$1,100,000	0.00%

Notes: Total allocation to the College of Geosciences is \$1,100,000 for FY 2007
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 201 (653 students in 2 sections/semester); GEOG 202 (2065 students in 4 sections/semester);
GEOG 301 (884 students in 2 sections/semester); and GEOG 305 (814 students in 2 sections/semester)

One-Time Allocation FY2007						
Total	\$ 60,000					
	Courses	Sections	Students	Stud/lab	Percent	Allocated
ATMO	6	24	589	24.5	0.093	\$5,605
GEOG	10	64	1177	18.4	0.187	\$11,201
GEPL	21	189	3328	17.6	0.528	\$31,670
OCNG	1	62	1211	19.5	0.192	\$11,524
College (Reserve)						\$0
	38	339	6305	18.6	1.000	\$60,000

Transfer of the Department of Sponsored Research Grant Administration

Ms. K. Sue Redman, Senior Vice President and Chief Financial Officer, and Dr. Richard E. Ewing, Vice President for Research, announced in a joint memo on 24 October that in an effort to streamline and synergize sponsored grant administration, the Sponsored Research Contract Administration unit has been transferred from the Division of Finance to the Office of the Vice President for Research. The transfer was effective 1 September 2006. Project administration, sponsored contract compliance, and research reporting now fall within the purview of the research offices, along with proposal and other pre-award services. The Sponsored Research Contract Administration unit is led by Ms. Janet Killion, who reports to Ms. Carol Cantrell, Senior Associate Vice President for Research. Ms. Charlene Miller, formerly of the Texas A&M Research Foundation, will join the group in January and work directly for Ms. Cantrell. The University's central Contract Administration Department will remain the central repository for all contracts and agreements, and will be involved when research contracts that require review and/or approval by the Texas A&M University System Office of General Counsel and/or the Board of Regents.

Distinguished Professor Emeritus of Oceanography and Atmospheric Sciences

At the November-December (2006) meeting, the Texas A&M University Board of Regents accorded the rank of Distinguished Professor Emeritus of Oceanography and Atmospheric Sciences to Dr. Robert A. Duce, Dean of the College of Geosciences during the period 1991-1997, effective 2 December 2006.

Tuition and Fees

For your information, tuition and fees for an undergraduate student in the College of Geosciences taking up to 15 credit hours is currently \$5,880.54 for an in-state and \$10,451.00 for an out-of-state student.