



Advancing Excellence

Update from the Development & Alumni Office at The University of Texas at Austin's Jackson School of Geosciences - No. 10, Summer 2013

SPECIAL EDITION



Alumni and Friends of the Jackson School,

This year marks an important milestone in our history, as we celebrate 125 years of geosciences at The University of Texas at Austin. We truly have come a long way since the School of Geology was first formed in 1888. We'll be celebrating this legacy September 14 on campus, in conjunction with our annual tailgate party. I hope many of you can join us.

As rich and interesting as our history has been, we remain fully focused on the future and our vision of becoming the nation's preeminent geoscience program. Your contributions continue to help us reach our goals.

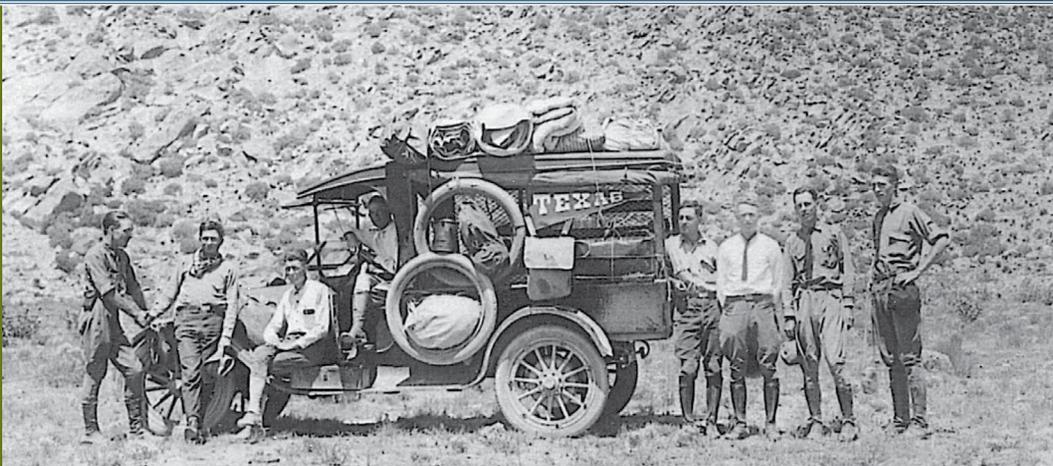
As one of the largest academic geoscience communities in the world, we are able to undertake ambitious projects that reinforce our leadership, like the GeoFORCE outreach program. Another of these major initiatives is our Rapid Response research program, which sends scientists to the scenes of geohazards (like Hurricane Sandy) quickly enough to measure impacts before they vanish.

These projects rely on nimble, flexible funding models. To support them, we are pursuing an endowment for Rapid Response, as you can read about in this issue. We also continue to benefit greatly from your support for outstanding undergraduate education and field experiences, two other areas where the Jackson School is a national leader. Your contributions to these efforts are vital.

It was great to see many of you at our All-Alumni Reunion this spring. For those who could not make it, I hope you can reconnect with the JSG community at one of the fall association meetings, or better yet, at the September 14 tailgate and 125th anniversary celebration.

Warmly,

Sharon Mosher, Dean



UT Austin geology students conduct field research circa 1920

A Legacy Worth Celebrating

Okay, it's quiz time. How old is the oldest academic geoscience program in Texas?

Need a hint? It's older than the Ford Model T and the Wright Brothers airplane. It was already well established before the Texas fight song, the longhorn mascot, and the orange and white school colors. It's even older than the University of Texas football team.

If you guessed "older than dirt," you're almost right. The UT School of Geology was formed in 1888, at a time when the university itself was just five years old and housed mostly in one building. For its first 13 years, the university had only one geology teacher. Early research focused primarily on field mapping and fossil collecting, generally within Texas.

We, and the university, have come a long way since then. The Jackson School of Geosciences now has 58 faculty members and 90 research scientists. Our graduate program is ranked third in the country in geology and ninth in the earth sciences. Our research, which spans the breadth and depth of the geosciences, has gone global.

Much of that success has grown from seeds planted by generations of alumni and friends. **As we celebrate our 125th anniversary, we'd like to thank you for your support.**

We hope you'll reconnect and celebrate with us in the coming months through special campus and web-based events. To find out more, check out the Jackson School website: www.jsg.utexas.edu

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

JACKSON

SCHOOL OF GEOSCIENCES

Student-Focused Efforts Yield Results

Over the past 125 years, students have been at the heart of the UT Austin geosciences program. More recently, in 2007, the Jackson School launched a strategic plan that set the goal of “attracting the best and brightest students and creating a comprehensive approach to education that promotes student success.” At the core of this plan was the effort to build a tight-knit community that would help students, faculty, researchers and staff achieve their best.

Community and the Holland Family Student Center

The Holland Family Student Center, opened in summer 2012, is the physical embodiment of the Jackson School’s community-building efforts. If you visit on any day of the school year, you’ll see students meeting in study groups, visiting with faculty members and doing homework.

“For me and many of my classmates, the student center feels like home,” says graduate student Brandon Okafor. “It’s a place where we can study, socialize and get help from tutors and advisors.”

In addition to enhancing traditional activities, such as freshman and graduate student orientations, master’s thesis day, academic advising and career services, the student center has also enabled new initiatives. This year, student advisors kicked off the first annual fall Freshman Challenge, which provides new students with rewards in exchange for completing various enrichment activities, like meeting with tutors, attending the career fair, talking to faculty members and attending student organization meetings. About 70 percent of freshmen competed in the challenge, and the top two participants won free textbooks for the following semester.

The student center also offers a platform for a new Jackson School tradition – Study Palooza. Held at the end of fall and spring semesters prior to final exams, these all-day events provide students with a festive group study space and access to tutors and impromptu study groups. Drawing between 60 and 80 attendees per session, Study Palooza enables students to learn from each other and better prepare for exams.

“The students who started last fall were the first to come in with the new student center—it’s all they’ve known,” says Nicole Evans, assistant dean for student affairs and administration, who has worked in the Jackson School since 2007. “They’re the most tightknit and confident group of students I’ve seen.”



The new Holland Family Student Center offers Jackson School students the chance to connect and study with each other.



The Freshman Neo-Geo Field Trip is helping community-building efforts for students.

Measuring Impact

Jackson School community-building, as in the Holland Family Student Center, is part of a long-term initiative. Since implementing our strategic plan in 2007, we have launched various programs to promote student success. We created undergraduate recruiting and merit-based scholarships, as well as prestigious graduate fellowships to attract and keep the best and brightest. We raised our admissions standards. We created a two-day field event called The Neo-Geo Trip, or TNT, to help incoming freshmen bond with each other and get their bearings within the school.

Additionally, we began offering free tutoring in math, physics, chemistry and related fields critical to student success in the geosciences. We created the Undergraduate Honors Research Program, in which students conduct research projects with faculty and research scientists, write and defend a thesis, and visit geological sites with top faculty. We hired 20 new faculty members, broadening the scope of courses offered and student research opportunities.

And the academic needle is moving. From fall 2007 to fall 2012, average undergraduate GPAs rose from 2.75 to 3.10.

“Building a cohesive community at the Jackson School means that students feel more connected to their studies, their professors and advisors and, ultimately, each other. As our students become more involved in the school, we continue to see increased academic performance,” says Sharon Mosher, dean.

Continued Investment

Despite recent successes, our work is far from over. As we strive to become the number one geoscience program in the world, we must continue to further support our students and future leaders.

Undergraduate GPAs are on the rise, which increases the need for more merit-based scholarship funds. Awarded in recognition of outstanding academic achievement and progress toward a degree program, these scholarships ensure that accessibility to a Jackson School education is based on personal accomplishment.

Additionally, we continue to seek funding to attract and retain high-caliber graduate students through Prestigious Graduate Fellowships. This program enables graduate students to receive financial support over the entire course of their Jackson School academic careers, helping the school to remain competitive with other graduate programs and further our reputation as a top-tier research institution.

We also need funding in order to update lab space, conference rooms and other common areas that facilitate learning and community-building for students.

To get involved, please contact Karen Cochran at (512) 471-6010 or kcochran@jsg.utexas.edu.

Giving with Impact: Rapid Response

Since our inception as the School of Geology 125 years ago, the Jackson School has risen to the top tier of geoscience programs in the world. One of the capabilities that sets us apart is our Rapid Response Program, which deploys leading researchers and students to the sites of geo-hazards around the globe. These teams gather critical data on earthquakes, tsunamis, volcanic eruptions and hurricanes that can help local communities assess damage and better plan for the future.

When Superstorm Sandy slammed into the east coast of the United States in late 2012, it flooded homes, altered lives, and radically reshaped protective sand deposits/barrier beaches. We quickly deployed an interdisciplinary team of scientists from the Jackson School's Institute for Geophysics and collaborating local agencies and universities to survey underwater damage. The team's work will help local authorities identify the most effective ways to restore fragile coastal ecosystems.

"Such large-scale field missions are incredibly difficult to mount under the best of circumstances, let alone with only a few weeks' notice," explains James Austin, senior research scientist and associate director at the Institute for Geophysics and co-principal investigator for the Sandy

mission. "Due to the Jackson School's size, diversity of disciplines and global reach, we can play a role that virtually no one else can play as a partner with local institutions to deal with these events."

To ensure that the School is able to respond to similar events in the future, we are establishing an endowment for Rapid Response. Seeded with a lead gift from Dr. Austin, funds from this endowment will facilitate mobilization of faculty, research and technical staff, students and equipment to locations of natural hazards as quickly as possible.

"I cannot think of a more appropriate way to challenge the loyal and generous supporters of the Jackson School than by kicking off the endowment campaign for Rapid Response," says Dr. Austin.

We are only part of the way toward our \$3 million goal, and we need your help. By contributing, you will not only further secure the Jackson School's position as a top academic and research institution, but you will also create a lasting humanitarian impact on communities around the world. See a video about the program at www.jsjg.utexas.edu.

If you would like to support Rapid Response, please contact Karen Cochran at (512) 471-6010 or kcochran@jsjg.utexas.edu.



2010 Rapid Response team was deployed to study the effects of the devastating earthquake in Haiti



Researcher Fred Taylor tours Solomon Islands with representative from country's Department of Mines, Energy and Water during Rapid Response mission in 2007.

Undergraduate Honors Students Break Research Boundaries

The Jackson School believes that a strong undergraduate studies program is crucial to meeting future workforce demand and establishing our leading role amongst peer institutions. One initiative that sets our school apart is the Undergraduate Honors Research Program. This innovative program enables students to work with top faculty members and research scientists to conduct independent research that advances scientific understanding. Students compete for limited spots by demonstrating strong academic performance, then craft and execute a research project during their final two years of study. They also write and publicly defend a thesis on their research. Many present results at scientific meetings and publish in prestigious journals.

"Since its inception in 2006, the Undergraduate Honors Research Program has deeply engaged our top students in frontline research investigations, firing their scientific passion and providing exceptional preparation for professional geoscience careers," says Prof. Bill Carlson, program founder and current co-director.

Recent research projects have focused on topics as diverse as the ancient climate of Cameroon, ice deposits on Mars, improved methods for interpreting seismic data, and the tectonic history of northern Turkey.

Honors research students also take field trips with top faculty members to study spectacular geology. This past spring, students traveled to the Philippines, where they visited the site of the world's largest volcanic eruption in more than a century, snorkeled at several coral reefs, and paddled on the longest navigable underground river in the world.



Undergraduate Honors students visit Mount Pinatubo, site of world's largest volcanic eruption in a century, on Philippines island of Luzon during 2013 program trip.

"The Philippines was the most influential trip I have ever taken," says Kyra Kim, an undergraduate student who graduated in May and will study coastal hydrogeology at the University of Delaware. "Before the trip, I was leaning towards a graduate program that did not have a field component. But I was so wrong. Traveling in the Philippines reminded me how incredible the Earth is, and I saw how much happier I was studying geology outside the book—hiking, climbing, swimming—and all to reach an outcrop. I realized that this is what I wanted—needed—to do."

The Undergraduate Honors Research Program is currently funded on a year-to-year basis. Our goal is to start an endowment to ensure that this program becomes a permanent component of the Jackson School undergraduate experience. To contribute, please contact Karen Cochran at (512) 471-6010 or kcochran@jsjg.utexas.edu.



Mike and Susi Looney accept special geode memento to honor their induction into Jackson School giving societies at the 7th Annual Society Dinner in Austin, TX.



Jackson School Alumni visit Machu Picchu and the Galapagos Islands with the Flying Longhorns.

2013 Alumni Reunion



Top left: (from left to right) John Boone (BS '73, MA '79), Frank Cornish (MA '75), Ann Leist (BS '79) and Karl Warning (BS '71; MA '77) celebrate the 2013 Jackson School All-Alumni Reunion with UT celebrity Bevo.

Top right: Mark Ver Hoeve (BS '82), Bruno Maldonado (BS '82), David Pustka (BS '76), Matt Deso (BS '76), and David Noe (MA '84) explore the history of UT football.

Bottom left: Richard Leach (BS '77) and Sara Avant-Stanley (BS '78) follow UT football player tradition of rubbing longhorns for good luck in the Moncrief-Neuhaus Athletic Center.

Bottom center: Tatiana Frierson (BS '85) hooks 'em behind Mack Brown's desk.



Top left: Undergraduate valedictorian Yanadet Sripanich gives a Longhorn salute to fellow graduates at Spring 2013 Commencement Ceremony.
Top middle and right: Some of the newest Jackson School graduates during Spring 2013 Commencement Ceremony.



Above: Dr. Charlie Kerans lead Jackson School alumni into the field at Pedernales Falls State Park

Top right: Jackson School alumni kick off All-Alumni Reunion at DKR-Texas Memorial Stadium. From left to right: Bob Murray (BS '85), Denise Noe, David Noe (MA '84), Steve Speer (MA '84), Danny Worrell (BS '80), Lisa Emmet (BS '81), Chip Fly (BS '80, MA '85) and D'nese Fly (BS '80)

Right: Jackson School alumni cap off two-day All-Alumni Reunion with dinner and dancing at Texas Memorial Museum. Music was provided by geology-bred Coyote Crude, featuring Wilson Echols, current JSG junior (standing right).

Bottom right: Walt Boyle (BS '54, MA '55) with wife Vada on the steps of the Texas Memorial Museum

Below: Chris Massell Symons (BS '96) and Alison Henning (BS '94; MA '97) connect with BEG researcher Chris Zahm and wife Laura.



Another exciting Reunion is in the books!

Our 2013 Jackson School All-Alumni Reunion was an overwhelming success! Over 100 alumni, students, faculty, scientists, and staff reconnected on campus at the end of April. We had a lot of fun and even learned a thing or two. Attendees were excited by ALL that the Jackson School has to offer, both on the 40 acres and at the Pickle Research Campus. They enjoyed visiting a sampling of our state-of-the-art labs, including multiple flumes, the stable isotope lab, the CT lab and many more. We also showcased a private screening of the acclaimed energy documentary *Switch*, produced, written by and featuring our very own Dr. Scott Tinker.

This year's field trip took a group out to Pedernales Falls State Park for a hands-on geology lesson with two faculty members, Dr. Charlie Kerans and Dr. Mark Cloos. An unexpected demonstration of cutting-edge science by way of drones was the hit of the morning!

Those present got to interact with the next generation of geoscientists at a poster session over lunch in the Holland Family Student Center. Student presenters were the top award winners at the second Annual Jackson School Research Symposium this spring.

Alumni were able to reconnect to the larger university in many ways as well, such as visiting the brand new Belo Center for New Media and having a private tour of a long-time favorite, the Harry Ransom Center. But nothing beats taking pictures with Bevo, being serenaded by the band at Darrell K Royal - Texas Memorial Stadium, and getting a private tour of the UT Tower with classmates!

We capped off these fun-filled two days with dinner and dancing at the Texas Memorial Museum. Coyote Crude, a geology born-and-bred Texas country band, featuring our very own Wilson Echols, currently a junior at the Jackson School, was the perfect ending to a wonderful weekend. We had a blast this year and hope to see even more alumni and friends at the Reunion in 2016.



Alumni Support Student Field Experiences

Remember when you took your first summer field course? Did you buy new hiking boots? Were you anxious about facing the elements during hands-on fieldwork? Did you wonder how previous generations got by without satellite cell phones and high-tech equipment?

A new batch of Jackson School students have just entered their first summer field camps, and they are learning first-hand what you could recall anecdotally. These experiences will impact their future careers, connecting them to the geosciences in ways that a classroom setting cannot replicate.

At the Jackson School, we strongly believe that field experiences are a critical component of a complete geosciences education. We were actually one of the first geoscience programs in the country to require field camp as part of the undergraduate degree and have maintained

fieldwork as the hallmark of our undergraduate program since 1930. The world has changed greatly since then, and we have adapted by continuing to expand this element of our curriculum, from the extremely important 660 Summer Field Camp, to field courses in hydrogeology, marine geology / geophysics and class-based fieldtrips.

As an alumnus, you understand the unique value that field experiences have upon learning, and we need your help to make an even bigger impact. By contributing to established field programs, such as the Friends of Student Field Experiences Fund, or creating your own field endowment, you can help more students afford summer field camps and enable professors to enrich more classes through field excursions.

"I did the Marine Geology and Geophysics field course in summer 2012, and it was a life-changing experience for me. I feel very passionate about ensuring a thriving future for this course. That is why I have already made a gift this year to MG&G," says Michael Cronin, current graduate student.

"Field camp had a tremendous impact upon my interest in geology and where I saw my future career going. I wanted to do my part to ensure that future generations of students would have access to these types of experiences, so I started my own field endowment. It has been one of the most rewarding decisions that my wife and I ever made," says alumnus Mike Looney, BS '71, MA '77.

Gifts of all sizes can make an impact, and you can even set up your giving as annual payments. Additionally, gifts from current students and graduates of 3 years or less will be matched – dollar for dollar – by the Jackson School. Factor in your company's matching program, and you could find that your giving goes much farther.

To explore how you as an alumnus can make a difference in Jackson School field programs, please contact Kristen Tucek, assistant director of alumni affairs, at (512) 471-2223 or ktucek@jsg.utexas.edu.

Dr. Mark Helper leads Jackson School students on 660 summer field camp in 2012. A new round of students are heading out for 2013 field programs now. Can they count on your support?



Make a Gift to JSG



Upcoming Alumni Events

Friends and Alumni Network (FANs) Board Meeting
Sept. 13, 2013
Austin, TX

Tailgate and 125th Anniversary Celebration
Sept. 14, 2013
Austin, TX

SEG Alumni Reception
September 24, 2013
Houston, TX

GSA Alumni Reception
Oct. 28, 2013
Denver, CO

Geology Foundation Advisory Council Meeting
Nov. 7-8 2013
Austin, TX

Jackson School Scholars Luncheon
Nov. 8, 2013
Austin, TX

AGU Alumni Lunch
Dec. 11, 2013
San Francisco, CA

Stay tuned to www.jsg.utexas.edu/alumni for more information about upcoming alumni events near you:

Continuing Education Lunches in Houston and Corpus Christi
Networking Reception in Denver

Additional Chapter Events in Dallas, San Antonio and Austin

You can also check out your inbox and mail box for event invitations.
Make sure the Jackson School has your current contact information!

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JSGeo Travel Program



Scotland

August 23 – September 3, 2014

Experience varied geology, natural beauty and diverse fossils with JSJ geoscientists and UT alumni.

Scotland is a country rich in geological history. From the discovery of plate tectonics to theories about the formation of rocks, Scottish geologists and non-Scots working in Scotland have played an important part in the development of the science. Join us as our own Scotsman, Dr. Ian Dalziel, leads us on an exciting tour of his home country.

Limited space, so register early!

Learn more at www.texasexes.org/travel

Questions?

Contact ktucek@jsg.utexas.edu

or 512-471-2223.



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SAVE THE DATE SEPTEMBER 14, 2013

TAILGATE AND 125TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION
GEOLOGY BUILDING, 23RD & SAN JACINTO

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

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