



Earth & Environmental Sciences

RUTGERS-NEWARK



THE NEWARK SUPERGROUP

ALUMNI NEWSLETTER

Volume 1

Spring 2005

Newark Alumni Association

Thank you for participating in our survey on a proposed alumni association. We received 44 responses but we are hoping that with time that number might increase to at least 100. We ask your help in encouraging fellow alumni to send in their contact information to achieve that goal. We are happy to report that most people were also interested in field trips and other social gatherings like dinners and trips to museums. Most people wanted two short newsletters per year rather than one long one. We will therefore have spring and fall issues. The most popular proposed departments are stories about alumni since they left Rutgers and faculty members through the years. Both will be included. The most popular write-in suggestion was to have an employment board. We would be happy to include that as well. Believe it or not, another popular suggestion is to use the alumni association to raise money for the department through solicitation of alumni. In no way did we intend to use this newsletter or the association to raise money. On the other hand, if any of you give regularly to Rutgers, that donation may be designated to the Department of Earth

and Environmental Sciences if you wish. If you have any other suggestions, we are all ears.

Recent Departmental History

In order to bring you up to speed on the current department, a brief history on the past 20 years will be presented. In 1984, Sam Agron, the long time shepherd of the department, retired at 62 years of age. He was replaced by Joseph Hull, a structural geologist who was ABD from University of Rochester, NY. Hull chose to return to finish his doctorate and was replaced by Alexander Gates in 1987. Dr. Gates was a Visiting Assistant Professor at Lafayette College, PA with a doctorate from Virginia Tech. It was about this time that Dr. Bill Gilleland passed away. Dr. Gates occupied Dr. Phil Garner's office because he retired the previous year and moved to Lynchburg, VA to farm and paint in that order. The department had only a handful of majors at the time and prospects were not good. About 20% of the departmental space on the 4th floor of Boyden Hall was taken away and given to the Department of Biology for an Anatomy and Physiology lab.

After a national search, the department chose to hire Dr. Festus Akinduny, a hydrogeologist from University of Waterloo, Canada to replace Dr. Garner. However, he had problems immigrating to the United States and the search had to be resumed the next year. Dr. Howard Mooers from the University of Minnesota was chosen but the position was taken away at the last minute as a result of budget cuts. It was at this time that half of the six teaching assistants were also taken away. Two years later, the rest would be taken away and as a result the graduate program was suspended. The long time departmental secretary took a position elsewhere in the university and she was replaced with a half-time secretary. Dr. Gates took a position with the New York State Geological Survey in 1990 but returned to Rutgers in 1991.

Upon his return, Dr. Gates teamed with Dr. Vassiliou to undertake a program to reinvigorate the undergraduate major. They started several enrichment courses and other projects that ultimately increased the number of undergraduate majors to the mid 40's by 1996. Dr. Theokritoff retired in 1994 and was replaced with a lecturer position rather than a professor position. It was first held by Dr. Michael Wizevich for one year and then by Dr. Richard Langford the following year. Dr. Wizevich came to us from a post-doctoral fellowship from New Zealand and held adjunct positions at Montclair State University and Kutztown University before becoming a researcher at Cornell University. Dr. Langford came from University of Utah and joined the faculty at University of Texas at El Paso upon his departure. A new undergraduate major in Environmental Science was begun in 1995 and

administered by the Department of Geology.

Because of the great success in attracting and retaining majors, we were able to finally hire an Assistant Professor as a replacement for Dr. Theokritoff. Dr. Vicky Hover, a geochemist, came to us from University of Michigan where she had just completed her doctorate. The following year, we added Dr. Sam Peavy, a geophysicist from Virginia Tech. We also renewed the graduate program by offering a Master's degree in Environmental Geology. This program utilizes course offerings at both NJIT and at Rutgers - New Brunswick to present a much larger program than we would be able to offer on our own. We also made a deal to allow the Environmental Science major to be offered jointly with NJIT. In return, we became full members of the now joint graduate program in Environmental Sciences. In addition to an MS degree, for the first time we have access to a Ph.D. program in which we established a Geoscience track.

As part of the rebuilding of the program, we began to replace the teaching assistants. Two grew to four and now we are back up to six with the promise of additional positions in the future. The full secretary position was also restored. We even renamed the department from Geological Sciences to Earth and Environmental Sciences. Unfortunately, Sam Peavy left us after three years for the University of Southwestern Georgia but was replaced in 2002 by Dr. Lee Slater who was a faculty member at University of Missouri at Kansas City. Dr. Slater is a dynamo, conducting cutting edge research, bringing in grants and attracting top notch graduate students. He had the first ever graduate research

assistants in the department and the first ever post-doctoral fellow in the department.

The end of an era occurred when Dr. Vassiliou retired from the department two years ago. He had served as Chair for some 16 years. He is now a Professor Emeritus and teaches the lab science sequence of Planet Earth and lab and Environmental Geology and lab during the summer sessions for us. We replaced him with Dr. Nathan Yee, a biogeochemist who received his Ph.D. from Notre Dame University and served a post-doctoral fellowship at the University of Leeds, UK. He too does outstanding research that overlaps the work of biologists.

Dr. Manspeizer is currently in his terminal sabbatical semester. He will retire at the end of this semester after a 40+ year career at Rutgers. We are currently searching for his replacement. Dr. Puffer also announced his retirement this past semester. Next year will be his final year and we will search for his replacement next year.

One of the biggest changes for the department has been the relocation. For years, biology faculty from downstairs would snoop around to see if we were making efficient use of our facilities. We were constantly fighting off their efforts to throw us out. Finally, we made an agreement to leave Boyden Hall after more than 30 years. In the deal, we are getting 6 state of the art research labs and offices in the York Center at NJIT. The York Center was built as one of 5 EPA regional centers using industrial funding among others. It houses an impressive array of top analytical equipment. We now occupy 4 laboratories and offices and we are highly active there. The teaching part of the department has now moved to the

first floor of Smith Hall. We are still not completely moved in but we are operational. Some like the new facilities while others are unhappy. It took over two years to move and the instability took a great toll on our undergraduate major population. We are looking forward to a period of stability in terms of both staff and facilities. Spread the word and help us increase our majors.



The York Center at NJIT
We occupy part of the third floor.

The Current Crew

At present we have six faculty, four associate faculty, two lecturers, five graduate teaching assistants, four graduate research assistants, an administrative assistant and a part-time technician.

FACULTY



Alexander Gates (*Ph.D. Virginia Tech*)
Professor and Chair
Structural Geology, Tectonics, Field-Regional Geology, Highlands



John Puffer (*Ph.D. Stanford*)
Professor
Igneous Petrology, Geochemistry,
Mesozoic and late Proterozoic mafic
rocks



Lee Slater (*Ph.D., Lancaster Univ., UK*)
Assistant Professor
Environmental Geophysics, Electrical
methods, Wetlands



Warren Manspeizer (*Ph.D., Rutgers*)
Professor
Stratigraphy, Tectonics of the Newark
and related Mesozoic basins



Nathan Yee (*Ph.D., Notre Dame*)
Assistant Professor
Biogeochemistry, Surface Mineral
chemistry, Microbial geochemistry



Vicky Hover (*Ph.D., Michigan*)
Assistant Professor
Aqueous Geochemistry, Environmental
Geology, Clay Mineralogy

STAFF



M. Elizabeth Morrin,
Administrative Assistant

ASSOCIATE FACULTY



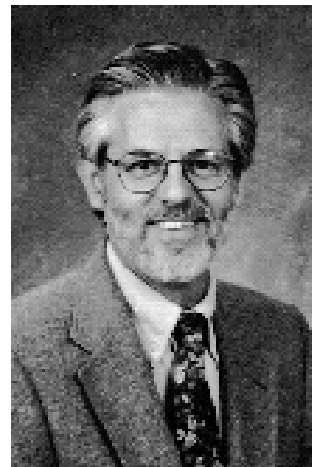
Lisa Axe (*Ph.D., IL Inst. Tech.*)
Associate Professor, NJIT
Environmental Geochemistry, Chemistry
and Engineering



Nancy Jackson (*Ph.D., Rutgers*)
Associate Professor, NJIT
Coastal Geomorphology, Watershed
Management



Sima Bagheri (*Ph.D., Wisconsin*)
Professor, NJIT
Remote Sensing, Geographic
Information Systems



Andrew Kasper (*Ph.D., Connecticut*)
Associate Professor (Biology)
Paleobotany, botany

Current Programs

We currently offer three undergraduate majors: Geology, Environmental Science and Geoscience Engineering. The geology major has three tracks, Classical, Environmental and “negotiated.” The Classical track is a

traditional 1960's style curriculum. The Environmental track includes all geology courses related to the environment and other courses with a biochemical slant. The program earns a BA normally but with a few extra courses, students may earn a BS degree. The Environmental Science major includes five courses from each of biology, geology and chemistry. It is a joint program with NJIT so both names appear on the diploma. It is a BS program. A disastrous experiment on the part of NJIT to make four tracks in the major is being reconsidered and will likely be eliminated. The Geoscience Engineering program is collaborative with the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering at NJIT and earns a BSE degree. The only other Geological Engineering program available in New Jersey is at Princeton University. The program is designed to lead to PE licensure. The Star Ledger called this program a "career of the 21st century."

The graduate program includes three degrees, an MS in Environmental Geology, an MS in Environmental Science and a Ph.D. in Environmental Science with a Geology track. All classes for all of the programs are one night per week to accommodate working professionals. The Environmental Geology program utilizes courses offered at Newark, New Brunswick and NJIT (about 20 per semester). It is available as a certificate program to the NJIT and New Brunswick students. It can be taken with either a thesis or non-thesis option. The MS in Environmental Sciences is a joint program with NJIT. It has 5 core courses and all others are electives. There are both thesis and non-thesis options here as well. The Ph.D. program is also joint with NJIT. It too requires the 5 core courses but all other

courses are in Geology either at Newark or New Brunswick. Only Ph.D. candidates are eligible for teaching assistantships and University fellowships.

The only program that is saturated at present is the Ph.D. program. We could really use more undergraduate majors and we still have room for MS candidates. Please spread the word that there are opportunities for employment and that students will get a good education at Rutgers-Newark.

Faculty Outreach

The Faculty have been involved in several outreach projects. Dr. Gates worked with The Newark Museum for three years to produce the acclaimed "Dynamic Earth" exhibit. It demonstrates the control of plate tectonics and climate on the evolution of life. The crowning jewel in this exhibit is a synthetic outcrop with a cave in limestone faulted against Franklin Marble. The fabricators actually cast the surface of outcrops in the field to produce the outcrop. The exhibit receives up to 1,700 visitors per day.

Dr. Gates also produced a videotape for K-12 children entitled "The Supercontinent Rodinia" through a National Science Foundation grant. It summarizes the geology of the Highlands region using footage from ABC-TV and an animated character. If you are a teacher or in any recreational group and wish to receive a copy of the video, please contact him.

Dr. Gates also appeared in an NJN documentary entitled "The Highlands Rediscovered" that has aired several times this fall and winter. To view or order this documentary, please visit the NJN website at www.njn.org.

The Old Fogies Corner

Not you, the professor. Want to know what happened to that old professor you had? We will start a column next issue telling you about them. Here is a photo. Can you identify any of these guys?



Let's Hear From You

Many of you wanted to hear stories about what has happened to fellow graduates over the years. We will have two tiers of reporting, big stories and quick greetings. We would like a few volunteers for full stories and then you will be contacted to provide the story. If you would like to put a business card in the next issue, you may send that. If we get overwhelmed with them we may have to charge a small fee.

Spread the Word

We are missing a large number of alumni from our list. Please spread this newsletter around to any alumni you are in touch with. If you have not already done so, please send your contact information to agates@andromeda.rutgers.edu as soon as possible. Thank you for your help.

**ALUMNI ASSOCIATION DATA SHEET
FOR NEW MEMBERS**

NAME _____ YEAR _____

1) Would you rather have the newsletter sent electronically (preferable for us) in word or pdf? If so, give us your permanent e-mail address here:

Would you rather have it in hardcopy through snail mail? If so, please provide us with a current mailing address:

2) We will summarize the news of the department in the newsletter including personnel changes, research programs, announcements and academic programs. What else would you like to see? (circle all that apply)

- a) Stories about other alumni?
- b) A message board to post notes to the other alumni?
- c) An employment opportunities section?
- d) Stories about the history of the department?
- e) Make a suggestion _____

3) Would you seriously consider attending (ie: you would come if your schedule permits) an alumni geologic field trip including faculty and current students?
Y N (circle one).

5) Would you seriously consider attending (ie: you would come if your schedule permits) an alumni picnic or social function (dinner, etc.) including faculty and current students? Y N (circle one).

6) Would you seriously consider attending (ie: you would come if your schedule permits) an edutainment function like a trip to a museum or other exhibit (with input from a faculty member or alumnus) including faculty and current students?
Y N (circle one).

7) Would you seriously consider attending (ie: you would come if your schedule permits) a sponsored booth at a conference like Geological Society of America?
Y N (circle one).

8) Do you have any other suggestions to run a better Earth Science alumni association?

Return completed forms to:

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