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Wide range of geology career opportunities on display at Southeastern Section meeting

MARCH 28, 2007

In the world of science, it's usually pretty easy to identify geologists.

More often than not, they're the ones with the dirtiest hands.

Whether they're sifting through sand to measure the likelihood of saltwater intrusion into a coastal aquifer, or studying a mineral deposit to determine the possible location of a petroleum reservoir, geologists are not just of the earth they're in it, too.

However, the ever-changing world and its endless parade of technological advances have forced these scientists to develop an even wider variety of skills.

Consequently, they have more career options than ever before.

The numerous job opportunities that exist for geology majors will be one of the topics of discussion at 56th Annual Meeting of the Southeastern Section of the Geological Society of America (GSA), which will be hosted by Georgia Southern University on March 29 and 30 at the Hyatt Regency in Savannah.

'The career options for a geology major are as varied as the person's imagination,' said Dallas Rhodes, the chair of the Department of Geology and Geography at Georgia Southern.

The more than 700 scientists who are expected to attend the Southeastern Section meeting will provide an excellent sampling of the many job opportunities that are available to geology majors.

Representing eight states, they come from higher education, federal and state governmental agencies, and private business and industry. Their areas of expertise range from saltwater intrusion and industrial mineral resources, to meteorites and digital mapping.

According to Rhodes, most of today's geology graduates find work with environmental and engineering consulting businesses, oil and gas companies, the mining industry, local and state planning industries, the U.S. Geological Survey, and state geological surveys.

However, as Rhodes noted, the opportunities don't end there.

'Geologists are astronauts and park service rangers, and they work in law enforcement as forensic geologists, and in medicine linking environmental problems to health,' he said. 'I've even had students who took their undergraduate geology degrees and became environmental lawyers.'

The Southeastern Section meeting is being hosted by the University's Department of Geology and Geography and the Applied Coastal Research Laboratory at Georgia Southern.

One session at the meeting will be devoted to the myriad job opportunities that exist for recent and future geology graduates. The session will include individual papers that focus on:

- Complementary skills geology students can develop that will lead to a successful career
- Geology in environmental consulting the Phase I environmental site assessment
- Geology employment opportunities with environmental and engineering consulting firms
- Geology employment opportunities with geotechnical consultants
- The role of the geologist in the lifecycle of a landfill
- Petroleum industry positions for geologists
- Geologic mapping: why and by whom
- The geologist's role in underground storage tank cleanups with a focus on site characterization and remediation
- Geology and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers regulatory program
- Geology employment opportunities within state agencies
- Geologists and employment opportunities within the federal government
- Making geologists' skills more relevant in the workplace

The session will be co-hosted by Ron Wallace, who works for the Georgia Department of Natural Resources (DNR). He has been a geologist for three decades, and his job has taken him from the oil fields of Texas, to the waters of Alaska, to the shores of coastal Georgia.

Currently, Wallace works in the underground storage tank program for the Environmental Protection Division of the state DNR. With experience in both the public and private sectors, he knows that geologists have never been in greater demand.

'The employment outlook for future geology grads is very good,' Wallace said. 'My generation will be retiring in the near future, and all the numbers I have seen show that we do not have enough geology majors to replace us.'

The favorable job market is a big selling point for geology programs like the one at Georgia Southern.

'No student who has graduated from our program in the last nine years has failed to find employment or opportunities for graduate education,' Rhodes said.

To prepare them for rewarding careers, Georgia Southern's geology program gives students a chance to develop many of the field's most sought-after skills. Students can work with Geographical

Information Systems (GIS), improve their computer skills and software knowledge, and gain experience in writing reports and making oral presentations.

Along the way, geology students at Georgia Southern can gain field experience that ranges from conducting research in the coastal plains of southeast Georgia to going on expeditions as far away as California, Hawaii and Ecuador.

“We have a faculty of fine scientists and gifted teachers,” Rhodes said. “Our students are drilled in critical thinking, problem-solving and communicating their findings, and they have plenty of opportunities to become involved with our faculty’s research projects.

“After graduating from such a thorough program, the career options for our students depend entirely on the individual’s interests.”

For more information on the Southeastern Section meeting, visit <http://www.geosociety.org/sectdiv/southe/07semtg.htm> or call Georgia Southern’s Department of Geology and Geography at (912) 681-5361.

International Industrial Organization Conference in Savannah on April 14-15

MARCH 28, 2007

More than 300 economists and educators from around the world will meet in Savannah for the fifth annual International Industrial Organization Conference.

The conference will be held on Saturday and Sunday, April 14 and 15, at the Coastal Georgia Center.

Co-sponsored by the Industrial Organization Society and Georgia Southern University, the conference will feature 95 sessions that will cover a wide area of economic issues.

The keynote address will be delivered by Steve Berry, the James Burrows Moffatt Professor of Economics at Yale University.

Registration for the conference will remain open through 5 p.m. on Monday, April 5. To sign up, call (912) 681-5555.

For more information, visit <http://ceps.georgiasouthern.edu/conted/IIOC2007conference.html> or email seminars@georgiasouthern.edu.