

The Department of Earth and Space Sciences

Newsletter
November, 2006

Image courtesy of NASA Observatory

The Department Newsletter is Back!

After moving out of the Geology building for its renovation, back in after renovation was complete, and waiting for the repairs of damage caused by Hurricane Rita we are pleased that we are able to bring back the newsletter and other good news.



Photo courtesy of NASA

Rita approaching the Texas coast, September 2005

During the renovation phase the department was renamed the Department of Earth and Space Sciences to reflect a newly added course program in Space Science. The department continues to offer Bachelor of Science degrees in Geology and Earth Science and now we have added minors in Geology, Earth Science, and Space Science. The minors are attractive to students from other disciplines that wish to have a concentration in one of these areas.

Faculty Update

Our continuing full-time faculty include Drs. Roger Cooper, Donald Owen, Jim Jordan (Chair), Jeff Pittman, and Jim Westgate. We have also added new faculty in the last two

years. Dr. Joseph Kruger, geophysicist, joined the faculty as Assistant Professor in the summer of 2004. He comes to Lamar from Idaho State University, and replaces Jim Stevens who retired in 2003. Jim and Margaret Stevens now reside in Terlingua, Texas. Dr. Bennetta Schmidt joined the faculty as lecturer in the fall of 2005. In addition we have the assistance of six adjunct instructors: Mark Adams (E.S. alum, '96), Richard Ashmore (Geol. Alum, '99), Lee Coggins, Mike Engle, Cissie Owen, and Joe Satterfield. Three of these adjuncts (Adams, Coggins, and Engle) are employed at NASA Johnson Space Center and come one day a week to Lamar to teach Space Science courses.

The Department Advisory Board

An advisory board for the Department was formed in spring of 2004. The members include department and other Lamar University alumni. The original board members include Robert Pledger ('69, Chairman), Byron Dyer ('57, Vice Chairman), John Wilson ('73, Secretary), Jason Dugas (EE'01), Richard Howe ('75), Brian Kalinec ('75), Claudia Ludwig ('66), Steve Rhea ('70), Robert Traylor ('69) and Mike Wakefield ('71). Robert Traylor recently stepped down after providing valuable advice and service in the board's initial stages.

Building Renovation

In June of 2004 the renovation of the Geology building renovation was begun. The one year project included gutting the building, and completely remodeling the interior. By the end of the renovation in fall of 2005 the classrooms, laboratory facilities, and faculty offices and research spaces had been upgraded. The hallway space had also been renovated to allow for 22 display cases in 11 alcoves. With the help of Board Vice Chairman Byron Dyer ('57) the department was able to form a partnership with the Houston Museum of Natural Science (HMNS) to install rocks and minerals from their collection in these cases. The opening of the

exhibit will be showcased as part of the building dedication on March 3, 2007.



The Geology building interior before new construction.



One of the department's new research laboratory spaces

Department of Earth and Space Sciences Computer Lab

The ESS Computer Lab was created for both students and faculty of the Department of Earth and Space Sciences. This is a multipurpose lab for ESS classes requiring the use of computers, for ESS student assignments and other tasks, and for both undergraduate and faculty research. The lab was specifically designed to accommodate the needs of geophysics, geochemistry, GIS, terrestrial and extraterrestrial remote sensing, and petroleum/subsurface geology, but also serves a variety of other disciplines in the earth and space sciences.

The ESS Computer Lab has a total of 10 workstations. Five were purchased in 2004 and are Dell Optiplex GX280 workstations with a 3.8 GHz Pentium 4 CPU and 4 GB of RAM. Each of these workstations has a 75 GB primary hard drive and a 150 GB secondary hard drive. Five were purchased in 2006 and are Dell Optiplex

GX620 workstations with dual-core 3.6 GHz Pentium D 960 processors and 4 GB of RAM. Each of these workstations has a 80 GB primary hard drive and a 250 GB secondary hard drive. All the workstations have two Dell 20 inch flat-panel plasma monitors. Software includes Adobe Illustrator, Photoshop, and Acrobat, ArcGIS from ESRI, RockWorks from Rockware, ER Mapper GIS and remote sensing software, The Kingdom Suite seismic interpretation software, SPW seismic data processing software, and GMSys gravity interpretation software. Each of these workstations, and other computers in the department, are connected to a Dell PE 2800 Server with two Intel Xeon 3.6 GHz CPU's and 4 GB of RAM. Peripheral Devices include a HP 4650dn Color LaserJet printer, an Epson Stylus Pro 9600 wide-format (44 inch) color printer with Ultrachrome ink, and a Vidor Select P42 wide-format (42 inch) color scanner.



Students at work in the Earth and Space Sciences Computer Lab

The Department Web Site

The Department now has a web site: <http://ess.lamar.edu>. The site will include alumni updates and newsletters will be posted. Please visit the site and share your news with us and other alumni. You may e-mail your information to Jim.Jordan@lamar.edu and it will be posted on the site and in the newsletter.

Building Dedication

As part of 2007 Homecoming at Lamar University to be held on March 2 and 3, the dedication of the newly renovated Geology building and the opening of the rock and mineral exhibit from the HMNS will occur on March 3. Joel Bartsch, President of HMNS, will be among the honored guest. Please join us and other alumni in celebrating and touring the newly renovated building and this outstanding hallway exhibit. Please let us know whether or not you plan to attend by filling out the enclosed form or by going online to <http://ess.lamar.edu> and filling out the form under *Alumni news*.

