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One of the major issues identified in the applications submitted for this meeting is the isolation that many two-year college geoscience faculty feel because they are the only geoscientist on the staff. Discuss actions you have taken or your ideas to reduce these feelings of isolation on your campus or with other geoscientists.

Many two-year college (2yc) geoscientists constitute a single-person department within a larger division of other science, math, or engineering colleagues. For many years I was the only geoscientist at Green River Community College (GRCC). We now have two full-time geoscience instructors and three adjunct instructors, but I have found that teaching with colleagues from other departments has been very rewarding and interesting.

The broad range of topics in geoscience makes it easy to find areas of common interest with faculty from other departments. In some cases these coordinated offerings have spanned the range of teaching existing courses with some minor level of coordination to other courses that we developed as entirely new interdisciplinary courses.

Some of the advantages of these interdisciplinary offerings include:

- **Broadening participation-** some of the students who enroll in the coordinated/interdisciplinary course are students who would not have enrolled in a single geoscience course, but are drawn to the course by the theme of the coordinated course.
- **Student retention-** Increased student retention has been observed in interdisciplinary courses in a study conducted by the Washington Center for the Improvement of Undergraduate Education at The Evergreen State College.
- **Learning community-** Since these interdisciplinary courses meet more hours per day, students form closer ties with other students. These bonds could be an important factor in increasing retention.
- **Faculty Development-** I have had the opportunity of working with a variety of faculty from physics, chemistry, biology, astronomy, history, English, and art in coordinated classes. I have learned new approaches to instruction as well as more about the topics in these disciplines.
- **Intellectual development-** Many students do not make the connections between their various classes and they become very motivated by the synthesis of ideas that happens in a coordinated studies class.
- **Continuation in Geoscience-** Although I do not have data to support this claim, I believe that students who have been in coordinated studies classes are more likely to take another class in geoscience compared to students who took a stand alone geoscience course.

I have heard instructors from other colleges say that this approach is a good idea, but it would not work on their campus. I am sure that there are some situations where this may be true, but there are many different modes of interdisciplinary classes and some of these modes require almost no structural changes to existing courses. Learning communities in coordinated classes are a great opportunity for geoscience faculty to become connected with other faculty in their institution.

Although interdisciplinary courses do not solve the geoscience community collaboration we need, this coordinated studies/interdisciplinary approach is an excellent opportunity for people in one-person departments to work with colleagues and find support within one's own college that ultimately benefits the students.