

California State University, Fullerton
Department of Geological Sciences
Program Performance Review
Self-Study Document: **Mission and Vision Statements**
February 2006

For decades, the Department of Geological Sciences has prided itself on its commitment to high-quality, field-based undergraduate education and to the requirement that all undergraduates complete a research thesis. With this educational base firmly in place, the department is mid-way through an important transition to an “education *and* research community”. This metamorphosis has been facilitated by the initiation of a graduate program in Fall 2000 and by the hiring of seven new faculty members in the last six years (we anticipate hiring an eighth this semester). Measures of the quality and magnitude of this on-going metamorphosis include the growth of the graduate program to a healthy 24 students, and the awarding of CNSM’s Outstanding Untenured Faculty Member status to three of the recent hires. As measured by numbers of Full Time Equivalent Students, the department has grown 78% since the 1997/98 Program Performance Review.

I. Mission and Vision of the Department of Geological Sciences

The Mission and Vision statements were crafted during two faculty retreats held in 2005.

A. Department Mission

The new Department Mission statement reflects the magnification of focus since the 1998 Program Performance Review.

a) February 1998

The mission of the Department of Geologic Sciences is to support student learning through effective teaching, research and professionalism.

b) May 2005

The Department of Geological Sciences is an interdisciplinary education and research community whose members are active mentors and role-models. We provide a student-centered educational and research experience that emphasizes critical thinking, communication, and scientific citizenship.

Though clearly still focused on the student and on the quality of the educational experience, the 2005 Mission Statement recognizes the roles that all Department members (i.e. students, staff, part-and full-time faculty) play in developing a culture that values scientific excellence and citizenship. A major shift is the explicit recognition of research as having value other than solely as a vehicle for student learning. As mentors, faculty are expected to spend the necessary energy to help their students evolve into professional scientists, critical thinkers, and effective communicators; as role models, they are expected to hold themselves to the highest professional and ethical standards, and to actively advance the state of scientific knowledge in their field.

B. Department Vision

Vision statements are grouped into those related to curriculum and teaching; to student-faculty research; and to the Department community, service and outreach.

a) Vision: Curriculum and Teaching

The Department of Geological Sciences strives to:

1. Provide a high quality, field intensive research-based curriculum that
 - ◆ trains students to be effective critical thinkers and communicators who are scientifically literate leaders and citizens.
2. Encourage faculty to
 - ◆ develop innovative pedagogical approaches, teaching methods, and materials that facilitate an effective learning environment;
 - ◆ increase field-based learning opportunities for undergraduate students (geoscience majors and GE students);
 - ◆ promote access and involvement of undergraduate students (geoscience majors and GE students) to laboratory-based research; and
 - ◆ develop inter-departmental curricular offerings.

b) Vision: Student-Faculty Research

The Department of Geological Sciences strives to:

3. maintain and strengthen faculty expertise in fields that includes research in
 - ◆ active Earth processes; and
 - ◆ interactions between the geosphere/hydrosphere/biosphere/atmosphere.
4. enhance interdisciplinary research with colleagues outside of our department.
5. maintain high-level Scholarly and Creative Activity (SCA) in each faculty member's discipline that
 - ◆ results in peer-reviewed publication in respected journals, books, or other written media;
 - ◆ involves undergraduate and graduate students;
 - ◆ brings in external funds; and
 - ◆ increases the visibility of our department in the Earth science community.
6. provide a high quality, competitive, and nationally recognized graduate program that
 - ◆ requires critical thinking;
 - ◆ provides relevant, original research opportunities;
 - ◆ culminates in a publishable thesis of interest to the greater scientific community; and
 - ◆ provides guidance for future career and/or educational goals.
7. provide undergraduate research opportunities that
 - ◆ require critical thinking;
 - ◆ enhance student learning; and
 - ◆ provide guidance for future career and/or educational goals.

c) Vision: Department Community, Service and Outreach

The Department of Geological Sciences strives to:

8. provide a department environment that
 - ◆ encourages collegiality and collaboration between faculty, staff, and students;

- ◆ works as a group to enhance and promote our department in the college, university, the public eye, and the Earth science community;
 - ◆ nurtures ties with alumni and friends.
9. provide service to the department, university and community that
- ◆ gives our each faculty member, and our department as a whole, a voice in the university community;
 - ◆ cultivates ties with industry;
 - ◆ cultivate ties with scientific organizations;
 - ◆ cultivate ties between geoscience students, educators and geoscientists in the region; and
 - ◆ seeks interdisciplinary research and teaching opportunities with other departments.
10. increase Earth science awareness in the local community by
- ◆ serving as a resource of knowledge regarding geoscience processes, products and hazards;
 - ◆ contributing to the education of teachers, community leaders, organizations and the public at large; and
 - ◆ becoming the steward, promoter, and developer of Orange County's paleontologic resources.