

# PREPARING FUTURE PROFESSIONALS THROUGH A STUDENT RESEARCH COLLOQUIUM

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### Introduction

For the past ~20 years the Department of Geological Sciences at the University of Texas at El Paso has hosted a Student Research Colloquium every spring semester. The colloquium is modeled after professional meetings, including posters, oral presentations, keynote speaker, and field trip, and is entirely run by students. All undergraduate and graduate students in geological sciences and environmental sciences are welcome to participate. Presentation topics range from dissertation research to expanded team projects initiated in courses (see recent abstract volume below). Industry support covers nearly all expenses for the colloquium, including catered meals, coffee breaks, and generous monetary awards for best presentations in a number of categories.

### Professional Skills Acquired

- Preparation and presentation of oral talks and posters
- Serving as session chairs, organizing abstract volume, and writing field trip guide
- Interacting and networking with professionals
- Planning and budgeting
- Raising funding and recruiting judges

### Example of Colloquium Agenda

Friday, March 24, 2006

- 7:30 AM Continental Breakfast (Room 308)
- 8:00 AM Welcome and Introduction (Room 123)
- Oral Session I (Room 123)  
Geology and Remote Sensing 8:15 AM-12:00 PM (14 talks)
- 10:15 AM BREAK (Room 308)
- Poster Session I (Reading Room, 3rd floor)  
Geophysics and Environmental Science 8:30 AM – 12:00 PM (9 posters)
- LUNCH 12:00-1:00 PM, Room 308 Geology
- Oral Session II (Room 123)  
Geophysics and Environmental Science 1:00-3:15 PM (9 talks)
- Poster Session II (Reading Room, 3rd floor)  
Geology and Remote Sensing 1:00-4:00 PM (8 posters)
- 4:30 PM Slide Show, Awards Ceremony, and Closing Remarks (Room 123)
- 5:45 PM Post-Colloquium Party (5817 Viewmont Lane, El Paso)

Saturday, March 25, 2006

- 8:00 AM Field trip to Kilbourne Hole and East Potrillo Mountains

### What is Department Buy-In?

- Formal and informal mentoring of students on the preparation of oral and poster presentations
- All classes in Geology building cancelled on day of colloquium
- Faculty strongly urged to attend sessions and activities
- Faculty member running Department seminar series serves as main advisor
- Staff time devoted to assisting students
- Miscellaneous supplies (paper, printer cartridges, etc.), most costs covered by corporate donations

### What are Positive Outcomes for the Department?

- Continued strong connections to professionals and industry
- Feedback from judges is given to students and used as part of Departmental self assessment (see example feedback form to right)
- Used as a recruiting tool for graduate students
- Raises visibility of Department to University and community
- Continued strong connections to professionals and industry
- Feedback from judges is given to students and used as part of Departmental self assessment (see example feedback form to right)
- Used as a recruiting tool
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### Future Improvements

- Collaborate with Community College
- Seek more judges from environmental and geotechnical firms

### Example of Feedback Form

Feedback to Colloquium Presenter (Oral Presentation)

Presenter: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Please circle the appropriate response

Content:

Clearly stated purpose of research	Yes	No
Acknowledged previous work	Yes	No
Indicated what work was performed by student	Yes	No
Described how research was conducted	Yes	No
Discussed implications and where work is leading	Yes	No

Presentation:

Good transition between slides	Yes	No	
Flow of presentation was logical	Yes	No	
Presentation was	too long	too short	just right
Slides were	readable	unreadable	
Present could be clearly heard	Yes	No	
Presenter talked	too fast	too slowly	just right
Presenter was relaxed	Yes	No	
Presenter used too much jargon	Yes	No	
Presenter was articulate and concise	Yes	No	
Professional appearance	Good	Needs Improvement	

IF YOU WISH YOU CAN PROVIDE SPECIFIC COMMENTS ON THE BACK OF THIS SHEET. THIS PROVIDES FEEDBACK TO THE STUDENT AND IS ALSO USED BY THE DEPT. AS PART OF OUR ONGOING ASSESSMENT OF THE PROGRAM

### Example of How Feedback Is Used

