

A Geologic Pathway to Success, Tania-Maria Anders, Professional Assistant Professor, Geology Program Coordinator, Texas A&M University Corpus Christi, Department of Physical and Environmental Sciences

Among the geoscience community, geology is increasingly referred to as “the science of the 21st century”. The general public isn’t as aware of the importance of geology and career options in the field. It is my goal to develop a “geologic path” that extends from elementary schools to a geoscience degree from a University. This will aid in increasing awareness for our science and its careers as well as preparing students for a career in the geosciences. My focus for this workshop will be on the transition from a two-year college to a four-year program. Both existing as well as new tools will be utilized overall.

Step 1: Develop or use existing resources to increase appreciation for the geosciences at grade-school level. Locally, several resources are available through the Corpus Christi Geological Society for elementary and middle schools (maps in schools, bones in schools, boulders in schools, South Texas Ice Age DVD) and the Jackson School of Geosciences Friends and Alumni Network for high schools (“Earth is Calling” DVD and brochures). This is where recruiting and education efforts begin. Benefit: these resources already exist and can be utilized easily (nationally).

Step 2: Collaboration between local Community College and University. Existing resource: Texas A&M University Corpus Christi and Del Mar College have a consortium agreement, which allows students to take courses at these institutions concurrently and transfer course credits easily. Future efforts need to focus on increased personal interaction (e.g. joint field trips) to break down barriers and encourage students to pursue a four-year degree. Faculty at both institutions need to jointly develop strategies for smoothing the transition from College to University. I hope to develop these with my colleague(s) from Del Mar college at the workshop.

Step 3: Develop strong ties with the industry. Ideally, every geology major should be offered an opportunity for an internship to experience the field first hand. Two important benefits to the students include gaining experience and helping them in the decision-making process regarding specialization for their future. I have instituted a geology advisory board for our geology program whose members include people from the local industry as well as other educational institutions. I hope to gain valuable input at the workshop as to how to move forward from here and how to best create valuable collaborations.

In summary, I see many effective tools in the geoscience community that have been developed to help increase awareness of our science and careers within. Our challenge is to use these resources more effectively and to establish successful and durable collaborations among institutions as well as the workforce.