

# More Questions than Answers: Identifying Geoscience Career Opportunities

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Illinois Central College is located along the Illinois River in Peoria, Illinois. We currently serve approximately 12,000 FTE students. Our three full-time faculty teach sections of introductory Earth Science, Physical Geology, and Meteorology. We also teach a two week field course each summer that takes students out west for hands-on learning. The faculty who teach physical geology require multiple field trips to local and regional locations, teaching students basic field observation techniques. Our biggest success in marketing the geoscience program has been the field courses. Students who declare geology as a major often cite the field trips as the reason they're interested in a geoscience career. Those who transfer to four-year institutions enjoy a high success rate. These students often return to tell us they felt more competent in field courses and at field camp because of their exposure to our field-teaching methods. I feel we do a good job generating interest in a geoscience career but we need to widen our knowledge base to answer students' questions about career opportunities.

My goal in attending this workshop is to update our program's ability to help students in three ways: 1) identify current areas for career opportunities in the geosciences, 2) develop alternative activities to give students more exposure to the skills they will need either in employment or as they transfer to four-year programs, and 3) identifying and developing partnerships with local employers to showcase geoscience careers in the community. I am eager to hear from other faculty and industry representatives what career opportunities exist and how best to engage our students' interests in the geosciences.