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DEPARTMENT OF GEOLOGICAL SCIENCES

KIMBALL HALL
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September 27, 1982

Professor W. D. Means: Chairman
Department of Geological Sciences
State University of New York at Albany
1400 Washington Ave.
Albany, NY 12222

Dear Win;

I would be most happy to comment on the geology graduate program at Albany. It is excellent. As a recent Ph. D. candidate in the program I was able to participate on several different geological research projects, each headed by an individual at the leading edge of his field. I also received formal classroom training from these same individuals, which broadened my geological perspectives while at the same time providing me with a firm foundation on which to pursue further work. Having been out "in the real world" now for two years, I am more impressed than ever with the breadth and quality of the geology program at Albany, especially considering its relatively small size.

Since receiving my Ph. D. in the fall of 1979, I have continued to pursue research on several geology related topics; first as a Post Doc. at Otago University in New Zealand, and more recently as a Research Associate at Cornell University.

If I can be of any further service, please let me know.

Best Regards

Doug Nelson

K. Douglas Nelson

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September 28, 1982

Dr. Winthrop D. Means, Chairman
Department of Geological Sciences
State University of New York at Albany
Albany, NY 12222

Dear Win,

Life never seems to slow down. In January Martha and I moved to Houston where I accepted a position with the Houston Division of Texaco U.S.A. I am assigned to an exploration group working the Paleocene and Eocene trends along the Texas Gulf Coast. In the past Texaco's policy was to maintain a separation of duties between the geophysicists and geologists within such groups. Now, however, geologists often find themselves "walking both sides of the fence". As a geologist my principal tools for subsurface exploration are well log analysis and correlation. Detailed stratigraphic analyses usually play a secondary role as a majority of the structures which my group is pursuing are antiformal "roll-over" traps associated with regional faulting. In addition, I am directely involved in seismic program planning, interpretation and the application of seismic stratigraphy.

Needless to say, my current work is quite a shift from my "hard-rock" background. The education in geology which I obtained while attending Albany was outstanding. The Department's great strengths in structure tectonics and global geology have given me a foundation from which to expand into petroleum geology.

Having received my Bachelor of Science degree from the University of California at Davis in December, 1979, I was drawn to Albany by the outstanding faculty within the Department of Geological Sciences. I was accepted into the Master of Science program in Geology beginning in the Spring Semester of 1980 and completed my degree in the Spring of 1982. My research interest in ophiolites was already well established when I arrived. Through discussions with the faculty my course program was sketched out and possible thesis projects examined. Perhaps the single-most important step in defining my thesis topic occurred when my advisor, Dr. Bill Kidd, suggested that I apply for a Geological Society of American Penrose Grant. Bill worked with me closely while I scrambled to put together a coherent proposal. It was submitted within two months of my arrival at Albany. I know that I benefited greatly from having such an early deadline to define my thesis project. I was fortunate to be one of two students within the department to be awarded funding through this grant.

Overall, the courses I took through the department were outstanding. Especially notable were the series in structural geology and plate tectonics which gave careful examinations of a broad spectrum of the forefront research. The dynamic interest in global geology shared by the faculty was also well utilized. I feel my exposure to it may have given me a bit of an edge while interviewing with the petroleum industry. In the graduate level program it would be nice if the scope of the advanced petrology courses could be expanded, giving more rigorous treatment of the material and especially more lab work with thin sections.

As a graduate student I found the research facilities of the department to be excellent for my specialization. I greatly benefited from the thorough review of key chapters of my thesis by my committee members well before my defense.

Win, I would like to thank you again for all your help and challenging discussions of strain induced fabrics (i.e. The "French" versus the real world). If I can ever get ahead of my work here I would like to try to get my thesis material into paper form. In any event I will certainly try to keep in touch. Martha is working for Conoco as a Corporate Analyst. We have recently bought a house and are adjusting to the Houston life style.

I you are ever in the Houston area, please look us up - and don't forget to bring your tennis racquet.

Best Wishes,

Rob Blake

RWB:KGH

**University of Houston**
**Central Campus**
Houston, Texas 77004

**Department of Geosciences**

September 20, 1982

Dr. Winthrop Means
Dept. of Geological Sciences
State Univ. of N.Y.
1400 Washington Ave.
Albany, NY 12222

Dear Dr. Means:

This letter is in response to your request for comments on the undergraduate and graduate programs in the geology department. As a former graduate student until 1980, I felt that the department offered a quality graduate program and was particularly strong in the fields of structural geology, tectonics, marine geology, field geology and igneous and metamorphic petrology. The department has an international reputation in these fields and attracts many top graduate students to the program. I was particularly impressed with the quality of graduate teaching and research while a student at the department.

Undergraduate education at the department was always a large part of the focus of the department and the excellence and adaptability of the teaching faculty more than made up for the absence of faculty with certain areas of expertise (e.g. sedimentology, stratigraphy, paleontology and geophysics) in providing a well rounded and sound education.

Since I have left, the department's complexion has changed a great deal and perhaps I am not as qualified to comment on the last two years. The recent loss of John Dewey and Jeff Fox from the faculty is certainly a loss to the department, but one that I think need not be devastating by any means. The quality of the faculty remaining is exceptional and the department is still regarded by the geological community as one of the strongest (both personnel-wise and academically). I do, however, see a danger in the way I sense the department is heading. A combination of the future retirement of Dr. Peter Benedict and the loss of the above faculty will leave the department severely depleted of faculty with expertise in soft rock geology (sedimentology, stratigraphy, paleontology) as well as deficiencies in geophysics and marine geology. Because the department's two recent hires have added to the faculty with interests in the areas of petrology and geochemistry, I feel that the department may be biased in this area, having 6 out of 9 full time graduate faculty positions filled by petrology-geochemistry oriented people. I see this more as a danger for the undergraduate program than for the graduate program which will thrive on good people no matter what their field of expertise. A well rounded education in geology is what is important if undergraduate degree recipients are to successfully compete for positions in industry. To a large degree this depends on the diversity of the department's faculty. I think if faculty with expertise in soft rock geology and geophysics are

not hired to cover these fields adequately, graduates of the bachelor's program will be at a severe disadvantage. About 80% of geologists with undergraduate degrees in geology are employed by petroleum-related industry. A certain degree of expertise in soft rock geology and geophysics are extremely important to industry when hiring geologists with bachelor's degrees. I strongly encourage the department to reevaluate its strengths and weaknesses with regard to these various areas of expertise left uncovered by the present teaching faculty.

I think also the majority of graduate students have traditionally thought of the department as particularly strong in field-related research (i.e. detailed mapping, etc.). I think the department is becoming increasingly lab oriented and this may lead to incoming crops of students who quickly become disenchanted with the degree to which field-related research projects are readily available. I'm not saying the department should always stay with its traditional strengths, but at the same time I think it will enjoy more success in the future if it becomes more diversified.

I hope this letter is of some help. I emphasize that I may be completely off base with respect to the recent past, but this is my view from a distance.

Best wishes,

Jack Casey

Jack Casey
Assistant Professor

JC/avg

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September 16, 1982

Dr. W. D. Means
Chairman, Department of Geological Sciences
State University of New York at Albany
1400 Washington Avenue
Albany, New York 12222

Dear Dr. Means:

Assessing the Albany geological program from this distance is somewhat of a problem. First, I only dealt with the department as a graduate student, so cannot say anything about the undergraduate program. Second, the department has changed personnel since I left, and as a consequence it must have changed its emphasis to a certain extent. At the same time, I have the advantage of a certain amount of perspective.

As you are undoubtedly aware, I completed my dissertation at Albany in February of 1980. The next month I joined the University of Texas Marine Science Institute in Galveston, Texas, which has since become the University of Texas Institute for Geophysics and is now located in Austin. My present position is that of Research Associate. My current research interests encompass two fields - ocean crust (including ophiolites) and Caribbean tectonics - and I am pursuing a variety of projects in both areas.

I have discovered, over the past two years, that my studies and training at Albany were excellent preparation for dealing with problems and information dealing with all aspects of tectonics. In my case, the program was successful. Plate theory as taught at Albany was, by far, superior to that practiced anywhere else. I feel that Albany also offered excellent training in the areas of field geology, structural geology and, although I didn't take advantage of it as much as I should have, petrology and rock geochemistry. These have been Albany's strengths in the past and I would like to see these continued.

The shortcomings of the Albany geology program lie in overemphasizing certain narrow aspects of tectonics at the expense of developing a broad based program as possible. The department is too heavy in petrology and geochemistry and is lacking in the areas of stratigraphy (e.g. basin analysis, continental margin

studies), geophysics (all aspects, including seismic stratigraphy) and paleontology. I do not suggest developing full blown research programs in these areas, but merely adding to or changing the faculty to include persons who can both teach these subjects and provide expertise to the department as a whole. Presumably you could want people whose interests lie in the tectonic applications of their disciplines, so they can talk with the group as a whole.

In a few words, then, my recommendation is to nurture the tectonics expertise of the Albany program but broaden the base of that expertise.

One other improvement to the graduate program which I strongly recommend is that you involve graduate students in all aspects of proposal writing - "grantsmanship" as it were. This is essential if your graduates are going to quickly establish themselves within the academic community. By no means should students be asked to fund themselves, but they should be involved in preparing the next generation of proposals to come out of the department.

I hope this helps. Please don't hesitate to call if you have any questions or want additional comment.

Regards,

Eric

Eric Rosencrantz

ER:km

COLGATE UNIVERSITY
HAMILTON, NEW YORK 13346

*Department of Geology*

September 8, 1982

W.D. Means, Professor & Chairman
Dept. of Geological Sciences
SUNY at Albany
1400 Washington Avenue
Albany, NY 12222

Dear Win:

In response to your letter of August 26, I do have several comments to make concerning my perceptions of the quality of the Albany geology program. To keep things in proper perspective, I entered Albany State in the fall of 1977 and received my Ph.D. in the fall of 1980. I am presently an Assistant Professor of Geology at Colgate University in Hamilton, New York.

Albany presented me with a stimulating and interesting academic environment. I felt that the graduate courses were generally of top quality, and that a healthy emphasis was placed on self motivation and direction. Early initiation of independent and faculty directed research was strongly encouraged, as can be attested to by the number of student papers written by my peers at the time. Research facilities were excellent in many areas, although lacking in others.

A deficiency of some importance in the geology program during my stay at Albany existed in the actual set of formal requirements for qualification for advanced degrees. These requirements tended to change from year to year, as experience was gained in a relatively new doctoral program. This made for some anxious moments for some graduate students, and some unfortunate disappointments for a few. Hopefully this situation has been alleviated by now.

All in all, I believe Albany's program to be a superior one, and have encouraged some of my better students to investigate it as a possibility for graduate study.

Sincerely,

Bill Bosworth

William Bosworth
Asst. Prof. of Geology

WB/bcd

WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY
PULLMAN, WASHINGTON 99164

9/22/82

DEPARTMENT OF GEOLOGY
A. C. 509 335-3009

Dr. Win Means
Department of Geological Sciences
Earth Science 351
State Univ. of NY at Albany
1400 Washington Avenue,
Albany, NY 12222

Dear Win;

In response to your request concerning the geology programs at SUNYA, I would rate the graduate program as being very high, particularly for tectonice/structures/oceanography. However, I felt like the undergraduate program was a bit limited. I studied in the department from 1976 to 1980, obtaining a Ph.D., and have been an assistant professor of geology at Washington State University for the last two years.

The graduate program gave me a chance to study under first-rate people who are highly esteemed in their fields. The department gives their students opportunities to work on current problems, and solve problems that are highly relevant. As such, there always seemed to be an exciting air of being on the brink of a new discovery. The professors in the department also encouraged a friendly working relationship with the students. I'd rank the department as one of the top structures/tectonics/oceanography graduate departments in the country.

One of the main drawbacks of the department is this specialization in tectonics, which as I've said before, is one of it's biggest advantages also. The department is limited in other fields of geology, and so graduate students may not have a universal choice of possible thesis areas. This drawback is also evident on the undergraduate program, where there are not as many course offerings as at other universities. One particular drawback is economic/petroleum geology. I'd say that the undergraduates are still getting a good education, just not as well rounded as it could be.

Sincerely yours,
Richard Thiessen