Welcome to the inaugural issue of Into the Field, a newsletter published by the USF Geology Alumni Society and dedicated to promoting the vitality of the USF Geology Field School Program.

If you’re reading this, chances are you were a field camp student at one time or another and have fond memories of the experience. Whether you pursued a geological career post-graduation or not, you likely appreciate the impact field camp had on your understanding of the science. In geology, not all concepts can be fully taught from the classroom—a powerful statement illustrated by the thousands of photos posted on geoscience department websites nationwide of their students learning in the field.

And yet these experiences are precisely those that geology students risk losing due to university budget cuts, rising tuition costs, and greater demands on students to personally fund their own education. Many programs charge students thousands of dollars to attend their field schools (see cost breakdown here). Other programs choose not to offer them at all, requiring their students to compete for placement in courses offered by other universities, often at greater expense, to meet curriculum and/or program requirements for graduate school applications.

At USF, the School of Geosciences identified this as an issue and rose to the challenge by adapting their program to best fit their students’ needs (highlighted in the Advantages section). In addition, the USF Geology Alumni Society (GAS) took action in 2008 by raising money each spring to offset the cost of the following summer’s field camp season (now known as the Sam B. Upchurch Scholarship Fund); however, as a more sustaining measure, GAS also established the Geology Field School Endowment in 2012, with the objective of growing a solid financial base from which accrued interest will ultimately support each summer’s field season.

To date, the Geology Field School Endowment has raised over $30,000. With the support of USF Geology alumni and friends nationwide, GAS strives to keep that number climbing so we can ensure that every Geology major can not only attend field school, but do so without undue hardship.

In This Issue:

Advantages
What is your alma mater doing to make your field school the best?

By Comparison
See the cost of field schools nation-wide.

2014 USF Geology Alumni Society Banquet: February 8
Registration & donation info.
Into the Field

Advantages:
What sets our field school apart from other geology programs?

Curriculum
Unlike most field schools that focus their curriculum on field mapping and structural geology, USF Geology majors can choose three of four field school segments tailored to their career objectives: Geologic mapping, Hydrology, Field Geophysics, and Coastal Geology.

Enrollment
Priority enrollment is given to USF Geology majors and is restricted to students enrolled at USF--meaning no student will be denied enrollment in any field school to accommodate geology majors from other universities.

Schedule
USF Geology majors with summer internship and employment commitments have more flexibility by being able to take three two-week field school segments during their final summer semesters rather than a single six-week course in one summer semester.

Value
Two of four field school segments are taught in-state, reducing the costs to USF Geology majors. Costs are further reduced by investing revenue from summer geoscience courses taught online to fund summer salaries for field school faculty and teaching assistants, and equipment maintenance.

By Comparison:
2012/2013 Field School Costs Per Student

- Idaho State U.: $4,250
- U. of Missouri: $3,800
- U. of Michigan: $3,700-$5,700
- Florida State U.: $2,400-$5,500
- U. of Florida: $2,800-$7,300
- U. of South Florida: $2600 to $4600

* Fee & tuition costs published by department and registrar websites based on 6-week/6-credit hour courses. Transport to field school not included. Ranges indicate in-state vs out-of-state tuition rates.

Want to see photos from your summer field school session in the next issue? So do we! Send them along with a brief description, the date taken, and your graduation year to Dorien McGee and share your field experiences with your fellow geology alumni!

2014 Geology Alumni Society Banquet
February 8, 2014
Gibbons Alumni Center
Tampa, Florida

Registration opening soon! Click here to check the Geology Alumni Society website for updates.

For sponsorship and donation information, email Eileen Rodriguez, Banquet Chair.