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Geoscience Students Missing Job Opportunities

Alexandria, VA – The American Geological Institute (AGI) has conducted a survey of students majoring in the geosciences and faculty to ascertain their attitudes towards employment in the geosciences. With a large percentage of the workforce retiring in coming years, job opportunities for recent graduates are plentiful with more openings than applicants to fill them. But many students are either unaware or uninterested in the fields where these employment opportunities exist.

A total of 1,358 students and 558 faculty members responded to the survey representing more than 260 schools. To view the report in its entirety, please go to <http://www.earthscienceworld.org/careers/>. The three most preferred career pathways for students of any education level (BA/BS, MA/MS, and Ph.D.) are Federal Government, State/Local Government, and the Environmental sector.

Of particular note:

The petroleum industry has indicated that it will need to replace over 50 percent of its workforce in the next ten years. But few students indicate that the private sector is a career path in which they have interest. Academic advisors are more likely to promote careers in the environmental sector than those in the petroleum industry to their students while only 61 percent of all students would consider an environmental career path. This division is even more striking at the graduate level, where only 31 percent of students would consider entering the environmental industry. Another disparity is in K-12 education careers. Many advisors recommend this path while few students have interest in becoming teachers.

The question becomes, where will industry find applicants to fill these positions? It is most likely that these positions will be filled using foreign-trained geoscientists and more non-geoscience technical workers to replace retirees and to handle the expected growth within the petroleum industry as energy demands increase.

The American Geological Institute is a nonprofit federation of 44 scientific and professional associations that represents more than 120,000 geologists, geophysicists, and other Earth scientists. Founded in 1948, AGI provides information services to geoscientists, serves as a voice of shared interest in the profession, plays a major role in strengthening geoscience education, and strives to increase public awareness of the vital role the geosciences play in society's use of the resources and interaction with the environment. More information about AGI can be found at <http://www.agiweb.org/>. The Institute also provides a public outreach site at <http://www.earthscienceworld.org/>.

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