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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 5, 2006

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U.S. Introductory Geoscience Enrollments Increase in 2004-2005

ALEXANDRIA, VA – The American Geological Institute (AGI) conducted a survey to ascertain the number of students enrolled in introductory geoscience courses during the 2004-2005 academic year. 312 geoscience departments responded to this survey reporting a total of 191,778 students enrolled in three categories of introductory courses: physical geoscience, environmental geoscience, and geoscience of the National Parks or public lands. These introductory courses lay the foundation for our knowledge of energy and the environment.

Looking at responses from departments reporting across multiple years of the survey, total estimated U.S. enrollments in introductory geoscience courses increased slightly over the 2003-2004 academic year. The 2004-2005 enrollments show a 3 percent increase for the enrollment in Physical Geology, an 18 percent increase for the enrollment in Environmental Geology courses, and an 18 percent decrease for the enrollment in National Parks/Public Lands courses. The estimated total enrollment in introductory geoscience courses is 403,200. This estimate represents the upper bound of the population, as non-responding departments would have a higher rate of zero enrollments with the bias towards a non-response for departments without introductory courses.

Likewise, currently about 2.7 percent of the undergraduate population in the U.S. was enrolled in an introductory course in 2004-2005, through comparison of data from The National Center for Education Statistics and the results of this survey.

The entire Introductory Geoscience Enrollment in the United States, 2004-2005 report is available on AGI's public outreach website at <http://www.earthscienceworld.org/careers/>

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/>.