

## VIEW FROM ACADIA - 2008

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After 32 years of avoiding the job, at least formally, I finally stepped in as Acting Head of the Department of Earth and Environmental Science in July, 2008, to enable the real head, Rob Raeside, to continue in his role as Acting Dean of Pure and Applied Science. Be assured that I am hoping that the "view from Acadia" will be written again by Rob a year from now.

Looking back on those 32 years at Acadia mentioned above, I think that one of the best aspects of university life is that it is constantly changing. In last year's newsletter, you read about how the merger of the Department of Geology with the Environmental Science program in July, 2007, had resulted in a larger and stronger Department of Earth and Environmental Science. The merger did not result in any changes in the degree programs offered - we still have Geology courses and Environmental Science courses and offer regular and honours undergraduate degrees in Geology, Environmental Geoscience, and Environmental Science, as well as MSc degrees in Geology and, as of 2008, Applied Geomatics.

However, because your personal "snapshot" of these degree programs is short (normally 4 years as an undergraduate or two years as a MSc student), you may not be aware that the courses and course requirements in these degree programs evolve on a yearly basis - almost every year we make modifications to one or two courses and take them through the lengthy approval process that is required (from the departmental level to the science department heads, the Science Faculty Council, the University Curriculum Committee, and finally the University Senate). However, periodically circumstances conspire to lead us to make more dramatic changes, and 2008 has been one of those years.

In order to provide a more rational distribution of content between the two second-year GEOL courses that are required for Geology, Environmental Geoscience, & Environmental Science students, beginning in 2009 we will offer a revised Mineralogy course in the Fall term that includes the study of minerals in hand specimen and thin section. It will be followed by a winter term course, Techniques in Petrology & Stratigraphy, which will cover fundamentals of igneous, sedimentary, and metamorphic rocks, and which in the labs will include both hand specimen and thin section work. This change will provide a better balance of instruction on all rock types in a single course. We think that it will be especially beneficial to Environmental Science students, for most of whom this course will be their last formal look at rocks. To put these changes in terms that most of you will understand, the courses you knew as "sed/strat" and "optics" will no longer exist. But much of the material in those courses will be part of the two new courses.

Some major changes were also made at the third and fourth year levels. Now students can choose to take any three of: Clastic Sedimentology and Petroleum Geology, Carbonate Sedimentology and Reservoir Development, Igneous Petrology, and/or Metamorphic Geology. Of course, we will encourage students to take all four! And to facilitate that possibility, we have reconstituted the material in three other courses into two new courses: Structural Geology and Tectonics (Fall term) and Global and North American Geology (Winter term). In addition to providing a little more choice for our students, these changes also facilitate the transfer into Geology or Environmental Geoscience from other programs at Acadia, or from other college programs, as many of our majors do. As always, we were careful in introducing changes to ensure that our graduates continue to meet the course requirements for professional registration, and that students will leave here with both the depth and breadth of formal education that will take them wherever

they want to go.

Other positive changes external to the Department of Earth and Environmental Science in 2008 have also occurred at Acadia in 2008. You may have heard that we have a new Vice-President Academic in place (Dr. Tom Herman from the Biology Department), and the search for a new president is in its final stages. The Acadia Advantage program, innovative in the 1990's, has evolved to a new model, in step with the current technological world. And a new budgeting procedure and emphasis on recruiting have us all optimistic about the future, in spite of the tough economic times.