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The ASBOG Fundamentals Exam and Geology Students Today

Dr. David T. King, Jr.

Despite the fact that geologic licensure has existed in Alabama since 1997, most geology undergraduate and graduate students who are finishing up their degrees and starting to look for a job in geology are surprised to learn that geologic licensure is in their future. This is due in part to the lack of communication between ASBOG, our national board of licensing agencies, and the universities who offer geology degrees. Your Board has made efforts to help in this regard, but in the Board's defense, this is beyond the scope of what this Board is set up to do. The lack of communication is also due in part to the lack of understanding among many geology faculty members at universities, who in turn do not

mention geologic licensure to their students. For this, geology faculty members have to take some blame. When students come to me to ask about geologic licensure, I recommend to them that they take the ASBOG fundamentals of geology (FG) exam before they leave the university. In theory, this recommendation is made so that they can benefit from the freshness of their knowledge base gleaned from course work they have taken. I also recommend that they take a look at the ASBOG web

page (<http://www.asbog.org/>) for information on the nature of the FG exam and the examination dates. In particular, I say, they should look at the section on examinations and the Candidate Handbook. The Candidate Handbook is the only source for information on the examina-

tion objectives and questions, as there are no reliable commercial manuals or short courses for this purpose. FG exams are given only twice per year – early March and early October. The deadline to sign up for the exam is about two months prior to the exam date. So, for graduating seniors in geology in this state, the sign up comes just after the holiday break between their fall and spring semesters of their senior year, or during the summer just after spring grad-

uation. The timing of the sign-up date and the examinations is not particularly good for most students, but they have to follow this schedule if they want to have the best chance at the first step in licensure, the FG exam.

Many students say to me that they do not know if their geologic preparation in the university will be enough preparation for the FG exam. This concern is bolstered after they look at the sample questions in the





Alabama Geological Society's 44TH Annual Field Trip

J. Mark Tanner

The Alabama Geological Society (GSA) held its 44th Annual field trip November 29th through December 1, 2007. The subject of the field trip was "Locating, Permitting, and Operation of Construction Aggregate Mining Operations in Alabama." The field trip was based out of Auburn and was led by Robert "Bob" Fousek of FMR, Inc. Visits were made to Vulcan Materials Notasulga Quarry, the Cleveland Farms Greenfield Site, and SRM Aggregates (Oldcastle Materials) Opelika Quarry. A stop was also made at the National Center for Asphalt Technology (NCAT) test track and laboratories. There were

36 participants for this event and full time participants earned 15 Professional Development (PDHs) toward professional licensure. Several participants were from out-of-state.

The GSA's annual field trips provide excellent opportunities to obtain roughly half of the required 32 hours of continuing education credits for licensure. This annual event is also a great way to learn more about the geology of various areas of our state, and a way to keep in touch with others in the local geological community. The Board encourages participation in this annual event.

SEALS

Dorothy Malaier

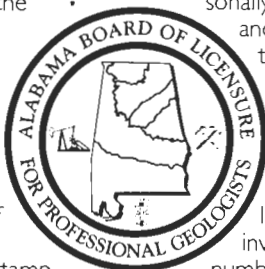
Do you have a seal? Each Licensed Professional Geologist who receives a license should obtain a seal authorized by the Board which bears the name of the licensee and their license number. A licensed professional geologist shall approve, sign, and affix his or her seal to all drawings, reports, or other geologic papers, or documents involving the public practice of geology which have been prepared by the licensed professional geologist or a subordinate under the direction of the licensed professional geologist for use by, or delivery to, any person or for public record within the State of Alabama.

Don't have a seal? A rubber stamp identical in size, design, and content with the approved seals may be used by the licensee at his/her option.

Do you submit documents to agencies such as ADECA, ALDOT or ADEM? Then you most likely are publicly practicing geology and documents that you submit should bear your signature and seal.

What if the agencies' rules don't speci-

cally require a seal? The agency regulations may not specifically require a seal, but the Professional Geologist regulations do require the sealing of certain documents. Chapter 334-x-11 includes the regulations regarding the use of a seal in the State of Alabama.



The professional geologist shall be personally and professionally responsible and accountable for the care, custody, control and use of his/her professional geologist seal, his/her professional signature and identification. Should your seal be lost or stolen, upon discovery of its loss, report the loss to the Board. The Board may invalidate the stolen registration number and seal and if necessary, issue another registration number.

Renewing your license? The continuing education reporting form requires that a stamp or seal of the professional geologist be applied to the report form.

Don't have a seal or stamp? Order forms for obtaining a seal or stamp are located on the Board's website. The current cost for ordering a seal or stamp is \$50.00.

Congratulations to our newest PGs!

Jeffery R. Day

Pensacola, FL
PG License # 1206

Jeff Richardson

Columbus, GA
PG License # 1207

Wanfang Zhou

Oak Ridge, TN
PG License # 1208

Mark E. White

Tallahassee, FL
PG License # 1209

Howard J. Frank

Greenville, SC
PG License # 1210

Ronald S. Higginbotham

Jackson, MS
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Don A. Lundy

Norcross, GA
PG License # 1212

Alec Macbeth

Fort Walton Beach, FL
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Roger Paulson

Memphis, TN
PG License # 1214

Gary Mark Teague

Utica, MS
PG License # 1215

William A. Rueckert

Palm Beach Gardens, FL
PG License # 1216

Candidate Handbook and the table of information presented below. In my mind, this is an entirely legitimate concern. University geology faculty members do not teach to this FG exam or any other examinations except their own. ASBOG, an organization which functions largely in their own vacuum,

and employers realize this, and voice their concerns to ASBOG, the sooner this problem may be addressed.

To illustrate my point, listed below are the current content domains of the FG examination (and their percent weights on the 2007 FG examination):

- A. General Geology: Field Geology, Geophysics, Imagery, Modeling, & Graphical Methods (17%)
- B. Mineralogy, Petrology, & Petrography (15%)
- C. Sedimentology, Stratigraphy, & Paleontology (14%)
- D. Quaternary Geology, Geomorphology, & Surficial Processes (10%)
- E. Structure, Tectonics, & Seismology (14%)
- F. Hydrogeology & Environmental Geochemistry (14%)
- G. Engineering Geology (9%)
- H. Economic Geology & Energy Resources (7%)

has not attempted to exercise any influence over what courses students take in their undergraduate education. ASBOG, like many employers, seems to be completely unaware that **university geology departments have strict limitations on what they can require** of their students. For example, the amount of course work required for most baccalaureate degrees at universities has decreased (by mandate of the administration) by twenty percent or more. Today's B.S. degree is not the same as the one earned by me and almost anyone who is reading this article. Many courses that were considered essential to geologic education have now been eliminated, downgraded, or made into electives within geology programs. This is not a peculiar problem to geology departments in our state. In fact, in Alabama, for the most part, geology departments have resisted this national trend. Nevertheless, some of these profound changes have been implemented here. For example, it would be rare indeed for a geology student with a B.S. degree from an Alabama university to have had all the courses over which they would be examined in the FG exam from ASBOG. In other words, most students taking the FG exam are not adequately prepared and this is not their fault. The sooner students, faculty members,

There are many parts of the current content domains that are no longer included in the typical undergraduate curriculum (or would be electives that a significant number of a typical B.S. graduate would take for their degrees). **These include: Quaternary geology, geomorphology, surficial processes, seismology, hydrogeology, environmental geochemistry, engineering geology, economic geology, energy resources, imagery, modeling, and graphical methods.** Of course, some students will glean some information on some of these subjects from classes with other names or from independent study or work experience. For

example, some of the many graphical methods are taught in structural geology, stratigraphy, and other classes. However, at Auburn, for example, we have never required nor have we ever taught specific courses in Quaternary geology, geomorphology, surficial processes, and energy resources. At Auburn, we have electives in seismology (geophysics), hydrogeology, environmental geochemistry, and economic geology. Our engineering geology class is now defunct because Civil Engineering majors are no longer required to take it.

Back to the original question from students—am I prepared to take the FG examination upon graduation? Sadly, I am not sure that they really are...not all of them anyway...and I do not think that this is the fault of our state's geology faculty members. The key to solving this problem lies with ASBOG, the organization that writes the FG examination. ASBOG needs to reach out to geology departments across the U.S. and geology departments need to respond to help ASBOG understand modern geologic education. In the mean time, I will continue to recommend to my students that they take electives that will help prepare them for the FG examination, assuming that they want a career involving geologic licensure.

CONGRATULATIONS TO THOSE THAT PASSED THE ASBOG EXAM!

FUNDAMENTALS OF GEOLOGY

PRACTICE OF GEOLOGY

Tiffany Borton

Michael Dillon

Suzanne Evans

John Hargraves

John Hargraves

Stephanie Park

Robert Monrreal

Derek Prince

Alabama Licensed Geologists by State of Residence

J. Mark Tanner

An article in the previous issue of *The Alabama Geologist* (Winter 2007, Vol. 1, No. 3, p. 4) titled "Trends in Licensing of Geologists in Alabama", summarized information compiled and maintained by the Board relative to trends in the number of Alabama licensed professional geologists since inception of the Board in 1995 and subsequent issuance of licenses beginning in 1997. The winter article documented that for the eleven-year period from 1997 through 2007 the number of licensees grew steadily from 819 in 1997 to 882 in 1999 and then subsequently declined to 564 in 2005, essentially remaining level at about 565 since 2005.

This article is the second in a three-part series addressing various trends in licensing of geologists in Alabama. In this article, an overview is provided of information on the number of licensees residing in-state versus out-of-state for two years of record. The first year evaluated was 1999, the year when the Board's records indicate the number of licensees peaked. The second year evaluated was 2007, the year of the Board's most current data.

Data indicate that of the 882 geologists licensed in Alabama in 1999, 35% resided in Alabama. A graphic representation of the data is provided below. Adjacent states of Florida, Georgia, Mississippi and Tennessee accounted for 34% of the total with Florida accounting for the largest percentage (15%). Resident geologists in "other" states accounted for 31% of the total. In summary, the 1999 data indicate that Alabama licensed geologists by state of residence were split in

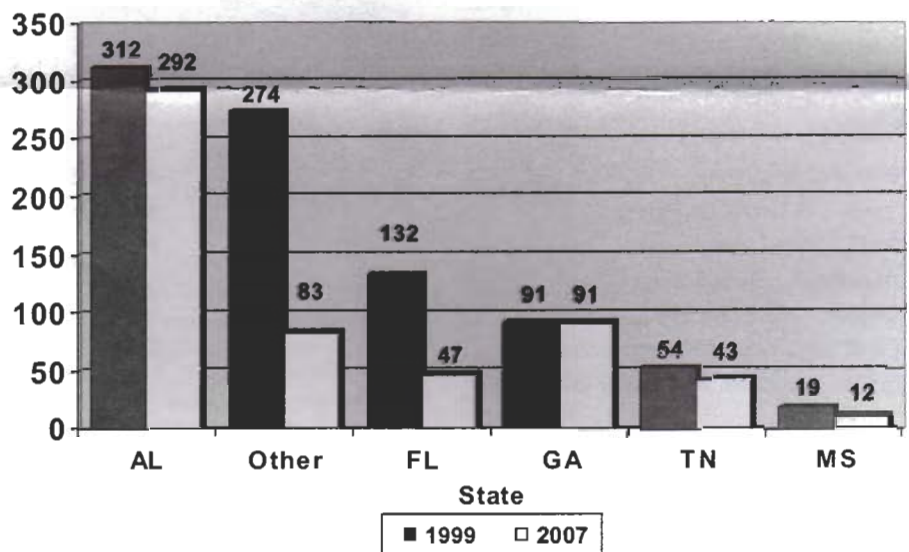
three roughly equal categories (Alabama, the four adjacent states, and all other states), each accounting for 31% to 35% of the total.

In comparison, the 2007 data indicated a 36% decline (from 882 to 568) in the total number of licensees from 1999 to 2007. A graphic representation of the data is provided below. These data indicate that 16% of all Alabama licensees reside in Georgia. Two states (Florida and Tennessee) tie for the next closest number of Alabama licensees residing out-of-state. Approximately 16% of Alabama licensed geologists reside in both of these two states. The number of Alabama licensees residing in Florida and Tennessee combined is equivalent to the number of Georgia resident

licensees. Alabama licensed geologists residing in Mississippi account for only 2% of the total Alabama licensees. All "other" states account for 15% of the total.

The most telling aspect of the Board's analysis of the data for state of residence seems to be that the total number of resident Alabama licensees has decreased slightly through the years evaluated by approximately 7%, whereas the number of resident out-of-state licensees has markedly decreased by 49% during the same 11-year period. Also of note is that while "other" states accounted for a significant number of licensees in 1999 (31%), other states currently only account for 15% of the total.

Number of Alabama Licensed Professional Geologists by State of Residence (1999 and 2007)



Board Membership Changes

Your Board Chairman, Mark Tanner and all the Board members wish to thank Tom Bruner for his service in the mining geologist position over the past three years. Tom recently resigned his Board appointment due to health reasons.

Your Board welcomes its newest appointee, Marsha Andrews. Governor Bob Riley appointed her on April 17,

2008 to the mining geologist position, replacing Tom Bruner. Marsha is a 1990 graduate of the University of Alabama Birmingham with a BS degree in Geology. While a student, Marsha worked for Taurus Exploration and later with Vulcan Materials Company in their Corporate Research and Development Lab. Currently, Marsha is Vulcan's Principal Geologist and

Manager of Core Drilling. She is responsible for interpreting the geology of all Vulcan's aggregate quarries and sand production locations from southern Illinois to southern Florida. She is also responsible for all exploration, reserve analysis, reserve modeling and reserve verification of any proposed green field site within this vast geographical area.

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2008 Geology Board Calendar

Note: All Board meetings are held at the Board office, and begin at 10:00 a.m.

August 7, 2008	Board Meeting	(Thursday – 10:00 a.m.)
October 3, 2008	ASBOG Exam	(Friday – 8:00 a.m.) Deadline for registration is August 5, 2008
October 16, 2008	Board Meeting	(Thursday – 10:00 a.m.)



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