

## RECOMMENDATION TO CHANGE THE NAME OF THE DEPARTMENT OF GEOLOGY AND GEOPHYSICS TO THE DEPARTMENT OF GEOSCIENCE

### Background

Over the past two years, the Department of Geology and Geophysics has had discussions about whether to change its name. The recommendation is motivated by two primary considerations. First, the faculty believe that *geoscience* is a more inclusive term that captures the range of subdisciplines represented in the department, including geophysics, geochemistry, geobiology, geomicrobiology, and geohydrology. One indication of the prevalence of *geoscience* as an inclusive and accepted term for the department's science is that the directory of departments published annually by the American Geological Institute has been called the *Directory of Geoscience Departments* since at least 1964. While some departments nationally have not adopted this new identity, many have. The department debated between *geosciences* or *geoscience*, it concluded with a preference for the singular term since it reflects a more unified approach to the science of the Earth. The second consideration in this name change is a pragmatic one; the recommended name is considerably shorter than the old one, which will resolve its cumbersome use in correspondence.

The name change proposal recognizes that in the broadest sense the term encompasses specialties that are housed in other departments and programs at UW-Madison and that there is no intention of expanding the scope or department to duplicate that expertise or course offerings. The new name suggests that there are opportunities for even more interaction and collaboration with the departments of geography and soil science as well as with geological engineering, and those units have also indicated their support. In addition, the recommendation has the support of the College of Engineering and the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences and is also supported by the University Academic Planning Council. The recommendation is now presented to the Faculty Senate for discussion.