

Department of Geosciences  
The Pennsylvania State University

**CHARTER FOR THE DEPARTMENT ALUMNI ADVISORY BOARD**

This Charter provides the Terms of Reference for the Department Alumni Advisory Board (the Board) established to work with the Department of Geosciences (the Department) of The Pennsylvania State University. This Charter may be amended from time to time by agreement between the Board and the Department so as to adapt to the changing needs of the Department and the environment in which it operates.

**University Mission<sup>1</sup>**

Penn State is a multi-campus public research university that educates students from Pennsylvania, the nation and the world, and improves the well-being and health of individuals and communities through integrated programs of teaching, research, and service. Our instructional mission includes undergraduate, graduate, professional, and continuing education offered through both resident instruction and online delivery. Our educational programs are enriched by the cutting edge knowledge, diversity, and creativity of our faculty, students, and staff. Our research, scholarship, and creative activity promote human and economic development, global understanding, and progress in professional practice through the expansion of knowledge and its applications in the natural and applied sciences, social sciences, arts, humanities, and the professions. As Pennsylvania's land-grant university, we provide unparalleled access and public service to support the citizens of the Commonwealth. We engage in collaborative activities with industrial, educational, and agricultural partners here and abroad to generate, disseminate, integrate, and apply knowledge that is valuable to society.

**Departmental Mission<sup>2</sup>**

The Department of Geosciences pursues fundamental, cutting-edge and strategic research in areas of the geosciences that have great societal impact, and educates students for careers that advance the forefront of knowledge in the geosciences. We focus on development and management of natural resources, assessment of natural hazards, understanding of processes that modify the Earth's surface and how they respond to natural and anthropogenic forces, and investigation of the habitability of Earth and other planets in the past, present and future. We achieve our mission by attracting and retaining a diverse, world-class faculty and student body, by providing a stimulating and collegial educational and research experience for undergraduate and graduate students, and by educating a broader population to make informed decisions about key environmental and resource issues.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.psu.edu/this-is-penn-state/leadership-and-mission/mission-and-character>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.geosc.psu.edu/mission-statement>

## **Role and Function of the Advisory Board**

The principal role of the Board is to provide advice, guidance, support and assistance to the Department and Department Head (DH) with particular emphasis on the educational and research goals of the Department and in establishing and fostering professional linkages. The Board members' personal experience in government, industry, consulting and academia will enhance the Department's knowledge base and links to the various communities it serves. It is understood that members represent their personal views rather than those of their employers.

The Board's consideration will include, but not be limited to, the following areas and activities:

- assisting the Department to develop its vision and goals, and assisting the Department to achieve those goals;
- building links between the Department and its stakeholders (industry, the profession, other academic departments, government, professional bodies, staff and students);
- providing advice on the development of the curriculum;
- assisting in the identification of advisors and mentors from industry, government, and professional societies;
- providing a professional perspective on current and foreseeable future needs in research and education;
- providing advice on career development for Department students and alumni;
- assisting in fostering philanthropy for the benefit of the Department and College;
- being ambassadors for the Department to other alumni and organizations;
- other matters upon which from time to time the DH may seek assistance or advice.

# **BY-LAWS OF THE DEPARTMENT ALUMNI ADVISORY BOARD**

## **ARTICLE I BOARD MEMBERSHIP**

### Section 1. Number

The Board shall consist of no fewer than nine and no more than twelve regular members plus the DH who shall be a member as of right.

### Section 2. Terms of Membership

The membership term shall be three years. Members shall retire in rotation and retiring members shall be eligible for immediate reappointment for a second term (of three years) upon mutual consent of the member and the DH. After a lapse of no less than one full term (three years) a member may be re-appointed to the Board. The DH with mutual consent of the member is allowed to provide a limited term extension beyond two consecutive terms.

### Section 3. Qualifications

Members of the Board should come from the areas where departmental graduates are being employed, including industry, academia, consulting, and government. They will have demonstrated capabilities in leadership and organization skills, ability to work with others to achieve a common purpose, and a willingness to devote time to the activities of the Board. They will have demonstrated high professional integrity and a firm commitment to the well-being and mission of the Department. Members will be alumni of the Department of Geosciences.

### Section 4. Nominations and Selection

The Board shall seek to maintain broad representation in these areas by nominating individuals to the DH, who will make the final selection and invitation.

### Section 5. Selection of Chair

Board members shall elect from among their members a Chair for a term of two years providing that their second term does not expire during that interval. The Chair will preside at Board meetings. It is recommended that a Chair-Elect be selected and that person serve for one year prior to being seated as Chair. In the absence of the Chair (or Chair-Elect) the members then present shall elect a Chair for that meeting.

### Section 6. Selection of a Secretary

Board members shall elect from among their members a Secretary for a term of one year. The secretary will be responsibly for taking and distributing minutes of the meetings to the Board and Department. In the absence of the Secretary, the members then present shall elect a Secretary for that meeting.

### Section 7. Removal of Members

Members missing two consecutive meetings, without presenting an explanation to the DH or Chair, will be released from membership. Also, if the DH and Chair determine that a board member no longer meets the qualifications

described in the previous paragraph, they will be required to step down.

#### Section 8. Compensation

Members shall not be compensated or granted special privileges for their services as members or for services rendered by them for the Department in any other capacity.

#### Section 9. Emeritus Membership Status

Members having fulfilled their service of regular membership shall be eligible for emeritus status upon mutual consent of the member and the DH. Emeritus members have full privileges of regular members at board meetings. Emeritus status shall be rescinded if individual fails to attend at least one of four consecutive board meetings unless waived by the DH. There is no limit on the number of emeritus board members.

### **ARTICLE II BOARD MEETINGS**

#### Section 1. Frequency

The Board shall meet at least twice annually.

#### Section 2. Agenda

The agenda shall being prepared by the DH and Board Chair, and distributed to Board members in advance of the meeting. Agenda items will reflect the strategic and academic goals and activities of the Department. Additional items may be proposed by any member of the Board, or, through the DH, by any member of the staff of the Department.

#### Section 3. Minutes

The Secretary shall be responsible for the timely preparation and distribution of minutes and these will be distributed to Board as well as the faculty and staff of the Department.

#### Section 4. Quorum

Board members representing 40% of the membership shall represent a quorum. The Members present at a duly convened meeting may continue to do business until adjournment, notwithstanding the withdrawal of some Members leaving fewer than a quorum.

#### Section 4. Secretarial Support

The Department shall provide secretarial and other support to the Board.

### **ARTICLE III AMENDMENT OF BY-LAWS**

#### Section 1. Procedure for Amendment

These By-laws may be amended or rescinded by the vote of a majority of the

votes cast at any duly convened Board meeting, provided that the notice of such meeting shall set forth in detail the amendment or rescission to be acted upon.

***Modified and amended on March 23, 2018 by a majority vote of the Board***

*This charter was modified by a template provided by Prof. J. Grundy, Swinburne University of Technology, Melbourne, Australia and was modified after comparison to a similar charter for the Indiana University Department of Geological Sciences.*