PREPARING FUTURE PROFESSIONALS THROUGH A STUDENT RESEARCH COLLOQUIUM
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Introduction
For the past ~20 years the Department of Geological Sciences at the University of Texas at El Paso has hosted a Student Research Colloquium every spring semester. The colloquium is modeled after professional meetings, including posters, oral presentations, keynote speaker, and field trip, and is entirely run by students. All undergraduate and graduate students in geological sciences and environmental sciences are welcome to participate. Presentation topics range from dissertation research to expanded team projects initiated in courses (see recent abstract volume below). Industry support covers nearly all expenses for the colloquium, including catered meals, coffee breaks, and generous monetary awards for best presentations in a number of categories.

Professional Skills Acquired
- Preparation and presentation of oral talks and posters
- Serving as session chairs, organizing abstract volume, and writing field trip guide
- Interacting and networking with professionals
- Planning and budgeting
- Raising funding and recruiting judges

Example of Colloquium Agenda
Friday, March 24, 2006
7:30 AM  Continental Breakfast (Room 308)
8:00 AM  Welcome and Introduction (Room 123)
Oral Session I (Room 123)
Geology and Remote Sensing 8:15 AM - 12:00 PM (14 talks)
10:15 AM  BREAK (Room 308)
Poster Session I (Reading Room, 3rd Floor)
Geophysics and Environmental Science 8:15 AM - 12:00 PM (9 posters)
LUNCH 12:00 - 1:00 PM, Room 308 Geology
Oral Session II (Room 123)
Geophysics and Environmental Science 1:00-3:15 PM (9 talks)
Poster Session II (Reading Room, 3rd Floor)
Geology and Remote Sensing 1:00-4:00 PM (9 posters)
4:00 PM  Slide Show, Awards Ceremony, and Closing Remarks (Room 123)
5:45 PM  Post-Colloquium Party (5817 Waverly Lane, El Paso)
Saturday, March 25, 2006
8:00 AM  Field trip to Kilbourne Hole and East Potrillo Mountains

What is Department Buy-In?
- Formal and informal mentoring of students on the preparation of oral and poster presentations
- All classes in Geology building cancelled on day of colloquium
- Faculty strongly urged to attend sessions and activities
- Faculty member running Department seminar series serves as main advisor
- Staff time devoted to assisting students
- Miscellaneous supplies (paper, printer cartridges, etc.), most costs covered by corporate donations

What are Positive Outcomes for the Department?
- Continued strong connections to professionals and industry
- Feedback from judges is given to students and used as part of Departmental self assessment (see example feedback form to right)
- Used as a recruiting tool for graduate students
- Raises visibility of Department to University and community
- Continued strong connections to professionals and industry
- Feedback from judges is given to students and used as part of Departmental self assessment (see example feedback form to right)
- Used as a recruiting tool
- Raises visibility of Department to University and community

Future Improvements
- Collaborate with Community College
- Seek more judges from environmental and geotechnical firms

Example of Feedback Form
Feedback to Colloquium Presenter (Oral Presentation)
Presenter: ________________________
TITLE: ________________________
Please circle the appropriate response
Content:
- Clearly stated purpose of research Yes No
- Acknowledged previous work Yes No
- Indicated what work was performed by student Yes No
- Described how research was conducted Yes No
- Discussed implications and where work is heading Yes No

Presentation:
- Good transitions between slides Yes No
- Flow of presentation was logical Yes No
- Slides were readable Yes No
- Presentor could clearly be heard Yes No
- Presenter talked too fast Yes No
- Presenter was clear Yes No
- Presenter used too much jargon Yes No
- Presenter was articulate and concise Yes No
- Professional appearance Good Needs Improvement

IF YOU WISH YOU CAN PROVIDE SPECIFIC COMMENTS ON THE BACK OF THIS SHEET. THIS PROVIDES FEEDBACK TO THE STUDENT AND IS ALSO USED BY THE DEPT. AS PART OF OUR ONGOING ASSESSMENT OF THE PROGRAM

Example of How Feedback Is Used

Spring 2005 Colloquium: Feedback - Oral Presentation

Spring 2005 Colloquium: Feedback - Oral Presentation: General

Spring 2005 Colloquium: Feedback - Oral Presentation: Event