



# AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF PROFESSIONAL GEOLOGISTS

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April 17, 2019  
Westminster, Colorado

Dear Dr. Kerr,

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AIPG recently became aware of that the University of Tulsa would be terminating degree programs in Geophysics, Environmental Geoscience, and Biogeosciences in the Department of Geosciences. I am writing to express my disappointment with this decision, and to ask that the University reconsider this course of action, based on the following reasons.

Geophysics is the core of exploration for natural resources, be they hydrocarbon, coal, or metallic minerals. Natural resources (energy resources, metallic minerals, and building stones) are the foundation upon which modern society is built. Competent geoscientists with training specifically in geophysics are essential to a society that requires raw materials.

Every human activity leaves some impact on Earth's physical environment. Trained, qualified environmental geoscientists are critical to insuring the health and safety of the environment in which we live. Programs with a specific environmental focus often are the first programs that are lost when financial exigencies come into play. I believe that this approach, while common, is short-sighted. As we move deeper into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, I believe it is imperative that we have a well-trained, geologically literate workforce that can help mitigate the environmental impacts of modern society.

Recent developments in fields as disparate as ore deposit formation and environmental remediation have shown the importance of understanding the role of microbiota in surface and subsurface geologic processes. Ore deposit studies reveal the role that microbes play in sulfide reduction and ore formation. Environmental scientists have shown that microbiota play a role in remediation, and specific types of microbes can be used to remediate impacts of acid mine drainage, or to consume hydrocarbons that have been released into the environment.

Each of these examples, while specific, point to the crucial role that the geosciences and geoscientists play in the modern world. I believe that limiting programs that produce trained, competent geoscience professionals will ultimately have a negative impact on our society. I recognize that the landscape of higher education is changing and that Universities often have to make difficult, unpopular decisions. I hope the Administration and Department will reconsider this one.

With best regards,

Aaron W. Johnson  
Executive Director  
AIPG