

Visiting Geoscientist Program
AAPG Staff Liaison Report
AAPG Annual meeting April 3, 2007
7:00-8:30 a.m. Hyatt Regency room 343B

- I. Visit totals
- II. Staff perspective on current issues
- III. Conclusion

I. Visit totals:

Current visits made or scheduled since June 30, 2006 - 47

This can be broken down as: 23 US visits and 24 International visits. These visits reached an estimated 1400 students and faculty; these are visits I know about.

I track visits this way, mainly because that is how it was done when the program was handed to me. Does this make sense? It appears it was done this way to fall in line with AAPG's fiscal year, and to give staff and the committee time to collect records and track statistics for the Program's annual report in the December AAPG Bulletin. Do we want to switch to a calendar year Jan – December? In actuality it will be from January through the deadline for the Annual report to be printed in the December Bulletin. Visits that fall after the “cut-off” date could be carried over in the next year's statistics.

II. Staff perspective on current issues :

A. Funding for VG visits:

A recent development in the evolution of the VGP is the funding of certain visit “tours”. One of the traditional items that set the VGP and DL programs apart was this funding issue, the VG program or more specifically the VG's cost to conduct a visit has been traditionally handled by the VG or perhaps the VG's employer, with some onsite expenses hopefully to be covered by University host. A quantum leap has occurred on this issue with the upcoming funding of a VG “tour” to be conducted by Peter Lloyd.

I would like to have discussion on this issue of funding for VG's. Any surpluses that the VG program has had from operational costs have been traditionally placed into a VGP account within the AAPG Foundation. Would we like to expand this by allowing or even seek supporters to donate to this Foundation account? Perhaps creating a pool of money

to be used to support “special” VG endeavors, I don’t know all of the rules, procedures, and red tape that will need to be looked into; just an idea. My vision would be a fund not to be used for a VG to run from Dallas to give a visit at Texas A&M; but rather to truly carry the AAPG and VG banner to places that might not otherwise be visited. I still receive numerous requests to places that never get visited such as schools in the African region.

B. Advertising

I would like for a Publicity Chair or a Sub Committee be named for the committee, whose role will be to work closely with me to not only communicate VGP to the AAPG Student Chapters, but to branch out to the SEG Student Sections and all GeoScience departments. My vision would be a brainstorming team to create new documents, website materials, advertisements, and other media to promote VGP and the Geosciences.

As an example I recently had hours of audio tape that had been developed for the VGP converted to a number of digital formats such as MP3. What should we do with this? Post on the VG site? I actually have not had a chance to completely listen to it yet; but I envision VGP DVD’s or audio and video clips on the website, frankly the program is too exciting to be adequately captured just in a VGP brochure. How about a VGP DVD explaining the program?

Since VGP is not my only responsibility to AAPG I will need some assistance to undertake this task.

C. Website and discussion boards.

I have recently begun to experiment with AAPG’s discussion boards; I now have some training and administrative rights to create these on the AAPG site. I know I enjoy using these in my personal life; perhaps you do too? For example I have created a “by invitation only” board for members of the VGP committee to discuss items, pass along ideas, post documents for review and edit. Should I open this board up or perhaps create a new community for all VG’s and perhaps post all received VG requests or leads for a visit there?

D. Email contact for updates of VG profiles/Activity record in AAPG Database

An email distribution list was created with from VG’s currently listed on the webpage and in the VGP matrix documentation at AAPG HQ. I recently sent out a request for VG’s to look at their online profile and to submit any updates, changes or pictures they would like added to their profile. The second goal was to make sure that everyone listed is on board with the program and making visits or is open to make visits. Many have

already responded to this request with updates, new talks, and some have decided to revive their efforts.

Something I have noticed within AAPG's database is that VG's are not currently recognized in the Activity record in the membership records. Those that serve on the committee itself have this recognized in their membership record. This has caused me headaches trying to run reports and determine, just who all of the VG's are. Would you like me to look into changing this?

E. Material Distribution

Note this text is pretty much unchanged from my report last year, if anything I would say the issue is greater. What should we do about it? I have noticed very few of the recorded visits received the traditional VGP packets; is this even a problem?

One of the more difficult aspects of my job is hardcopy material distribution in a speedy fashion before a visit. It seems that visits are arranged and communicated to me very quickly making mailing "VGP packets" especially internationally difficult, especially as I travel myself for AAPG.

Rather than fight this issue, I welcome it. It is the world we live in and this "strike while the fire is hot" approach is fine with me. It seems like I am working constantly via laptop, cell phone, and PDA; as I assume many of you are.

Perhaps a logistics change is needed, rather than trying to mail two sets of VGP packets before each visit in a very centralized method I propose a more decentralized approach. I have seen a number of comments from Peter Lloyd on this topic that I think are well put.

I would rather supply a VG with 10 packets at once and use the materials as they make visits, than 1 packet at ten different times during the year.

Should VG's request a number of packets all at once, perhaps supply them at the start of the year, since this is when most information is updated? Such items as Education Calendars, Bookstore Catalog, Student Chapter Brochure, etc could be mailed in packets then.

III. Conclusion

Significant strides have been made with this program in the past year and I see things "starting to come together" on an international scale. Working with local organizations/sections, dedicated local contacts and Oversight committees; seem to greatly streamline and enhance the visits. I look forward to seeing these successful models copied to other areas.

I am always open to your suggestions to make this program more successful, so please feel free to contact me with ideas, suggestions, complaints, etc.

This program is vital to the future AAPG and I look forward to working with you to continue the successes.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mike Mlynek". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "M".

Mike Mlynek