



NABG 36TH Annual Technical Conference

“Leading the Geosciences through Collaboration”



NABG Field Trip Stone Mountain Georgia led by Dr. Aditya Kar (right of map) Fort Valley State University

The National Association of Black Geoscientists held its 36th Annual Technical Conference on the beautiful Georgia State University Campus in downtown Atlanta, Georgia. The National Association Black Geoscientists (NABG) is a nonprofit volunteer organization established in June of 1981 by a group of black geoscientists in the Houston/Dallas/Denver areas. The NABG informs students of career opportunities in Earth Science, of scholarship programs that are established for minority individuals, gives financial support to students pursuing degrees in geoscience, and works with corporate partners in locating potential employees for permanent and summer intern positions.

The Department of Geosciences at Georgia State University was gracious enough to host the annual conference event September 6th through 9th, 2017. The Georgia State University geoscience group is a stellar gem lead by Dr. Daniel Deocampo, who had served the university as Professor and Chair of Geosciences until recently accepting the position as Associate Dean for Faculty Advancement. Largely based on the efforts of Dr. Deocampo and his university staff the organization was able to attract students, organizations, sponsors, and professionals to the conference. The conference was attended by more than sixty graduate and undergraduate geoscience students from a series of Universities from across the nation. Faculty representatives from a number of academic institutions were in attendance with the goal of showcasing the presentations of individual students from their programs as well as attracting

new students to their departments. The NABG was excited to see that 25% of the student attendees were newcomers to the conference and particularly proud of the outreach efforts employed to locate new participants and get them to the conference.

The event got underway on Wednesday afternoon with a subsurface geologic workshop hosted by ExxonMobil. Twenty students participated in a Basin Analysis short course that culminated with the students forming teams and putting together mock bidding efforts to obtain and drill oil and gas projects in the test basin area. They utilized concepts related to basin analysis and sequence stratigraphy and attempted to translate their scientific efforts into reasonable business decisions while having a lot of fun doing so. A second workshop, sponsored by the National Science Foundation and led by Dr. Stephen Boss of the University of Arkansas, involved helping all of the students at the conference understand the importance of “Social Capital” and where it exists in their own circles. This workshop involved understanding some basic concepts related to trust, communication, and commitment. Dr. Boss endeavored to challenge the participants to access the areas where they possessed social strengths and weaknesses relative to relationships with family, friends, faculty, organizations, and business associates. As a direct result of conceptualizing their own varied types of social capital students were able to leave the session empowered with the knowledge and understanding of areas where they needed to continue bonding and bridging to enhance their own levels of connectivity.

The conference’s oral and poster presentations took place on Thursday and Friday. A wide range of technical research included structural topics related to ring complexes in rift systems, brittle shear fractures, the regional analysis sedimentary basins, karst environments, and the micro-analysis of porosity and permeability. Environmental research issues were presented with timely discussions related to flood risk in coastal areas, and the vulnerability of wetlands. Other topics included the analysis of tree ring relationships to climate fluctuations, GIS utility in environmental justice determinations, recreational ecology, effects of seasonal drought, and global policy. Perhaps one of the most important phases of the meeting was the parade of professionals from across the geosciences sharing the highlights and present opportunities with their companies and organizations. The diverse series of topics facilitated the interaction of students, government agency representatives, academicians, and industry representatives in a networking environ that encouraged total participation and yes “collaboration”.

In 2018 the 37th Annual NABG Conference will be held September 5th through the 8th. Students and professionals should get a head start and began making plans to attend. Announcements will begin to appear on the NABG website <http://www.nabg-us.org/> in the spring of next year.