Geology and Geophysics doctoral programs ranked highly in national NRC assessment

The Department of Geology and Geophysics doctoral programs in geology and geophysics have placed high in the national ranking of earth science programs in the 2010 National Research Council (NRC) Assessment of Doctoral Research Programs. The geophysics program ranked in the top 4% overall and in the top 2% in the categories of Research Activity and Student Support. The geology program ranked in the top 20% overall.

Prof. David Kohlstedt, Chair of the Department and Head of the Winchell School of Earth Sciences, was delighted to learn of the high national ranking of both programs. “Our outstanding faculty are highly productive and internationally recognized scholars, who cover multiple, diverse areas of research and are deeply committed to the education of their students. As a result they attract a strong group of graduate students who subsequently serve in academic, industrial, and governmental positions. The impact of our faculty is significant in local, state, national and international arenas.”

Provost Thomas Sullivan applauded our department’s achievement. “The recent National Research Council graduate program assessment confirmed quantitatively what so many alumni knew already from their qualitative experience as Geophysics students. Not only is our Geophysics graduate program nationally notable, but it is one of the top rated graduate programs at the University of Minnesota. We have many academic strengths at the U – and certainly Geophysics is a top one.”

Dean Steven Crouch praised the programs in the College of Science and Engineering. “The 2010 NRC assessment showed that nearly half of the College of Science and Engineering's Ph.D. programs rank as high as within the upper 10% of their respective peer groups. Geophysics is among these highly ranked programs – a clear testament to years of hard work and dedication by the faculty, staff, and students of the Department of Geology and Geophysics. On behalf of the college, I want to congratulate the department for this outstanding accomplishment.”

The NRC rankings are widely considered to be the most accurate and comprehensive of the published comparisons of doctorate programs. Over the past decade, the NRC has moved from peer assessment of faculty quality to a quantitative, data-based analysis. The NRC survey emphasized three metrics – research activity, student support, and diversity. The geophysics ranking in research reflects excellence in publications, citations, grants, and awards. The department’s high ranking in student support highlights our commitment to providing supporting our graduate student both financially and intellectually throughout their graduate and professional careers. The data for the 2010 rankings were collected in 2005-2006. With the addition of several excellent young faculty members since that time, Kohlstedt enthusiastically states “I fully anticipate that our ranking will be even higher in next NRC assessment.”

Along with support from the College and the University, the department is grateful to its alumni who have established scholarships and fellowship for our undergraduate and graduate students. Their generosity has helped to keep our geology and geophysics programs strong and vibrant.
More information on the results of the NRC assessment are available in the University (link to http://www1.umn.edu/news/news-releases/2010/UR_CONTENT_256182.html) and Graduate School (link to http://www.grad.umn.edu/transition/nrc/nrc.html) websites.