

Texas A&M Students Study in France at Institut Français du Pétrole

Written by student intern reporter, Julia Paslavska, January 2009

In 1998, Texas A&M University joined forces with the French Institute of Petroleum (Institut Français du Pétrole or IFP) to form the Reservoir Geosciences and Engineering Program. The dual degree Masters Program involves one year of intensive study in Paris, followed by an additional two years at Texas A&M.

Dr. Wayne Ahr, Professor of Geology and Geophysics in the College of Geosciences, is the program liaison for the geology department. According to Dr. Ahr, graduates of the two programs have an advantage over their peers, especially in times of the current financial crisis. The demand for college graduates with diplomas in the related fields has declined as lower oil prices have adversely affected the petroleum industry. The increase in inquiries about the IFP program in the recent months shows the need of graduates to differentiate themselves from other potential hires.

The courses in IFP are taught in English, but learning French is highly encouraged. According to Dr. Ahr, “Students going abroad must have the mental flexibility and open-mindedness to learn a foreign language and culture; those who don’t, still have a great experience, but it’s a sheltered one”. Every year, there are far more students coming from the IFP to Texas A&M than there are Texas A&M students going to Paris; something that the University Geology & Geophysics Department would like to change. Dr. Ahr, a strong advocate of the program and international educational travel for all students, would like to see more Texas A&M students applying for the IFP Program. The program is a great opportunity to learn a new language, experience a new culture and earn a Masters equivalent diploma from a prestigious European institute.

In the past, the TAMU/IFP program has welcomed students from the European Union, Africa, the Caribbean Islands and the United States. Students who begin the program in France are required to finish their engineering diploma before they can apply to Texas A&M’s Masters program in Geology or Geophysics. However, those students already enrolled in the Masters program at Texas A&M have the flexibility to choose when they want to study in Paris. The Masters program at Texas A&M requires students to complete two semesters of coursework and two or more additional semesters dedicated to their thesis. At the end of a successful program, students receive an engineering diploma from the IFP and an MS in Geology or Geophysics from Texas A&M.

Texas A&M students with an adventurous soul who are interested in fields related to Geosciences and Engineering should contact one of the Texas A&M liaisons to the IFP program listed below. In the past students received funding from various petroleum companies; additional funding from the IFP is also available.

Liaison for Geology: Dr. Wayne Ahr

Liaison for Geophysics: Dr. Luc Ikelle

Liaison for Petroleum Engineering: Dr. Tom Blasingame

Liaison for IFP in Paris: Dr. Alain Auriault