The Oceanography Graduate Council at Texas A&M University

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Editor's Note: This section of the magazine will be used to discuss the interests and concerns of graduate students in oceanography and related fields. The first contribution, from students at Texas A&M University, calls for the formation of a national organization of oceanography graduate students. We solicit and welcome concise descriptions of the activities, interests, and concerns of oceanography students at other institutions.

The Oceanography Graduate Council (OGC) of Texas A&M University in College Station, Texas, is a student organization designed to enhance the educational environment of graduate students and to foster quality interactions with the faculty. The OGC, which presently has about 85 members, provides an effective mechanism for students to offer opinions about issues of concern, such as computer usage and the selection of seminar speakers. The OGC also provides an excellent environment for the development of leadership capabilities.

The OGC sends new and prospective students information about the community, housing, the University, and the Department. A welcoming party for new students is sponsored each fall at a faculty member's home. Through fund raising activities such as paper recycling, monies are obtained to fund a mini-grant program, which provides monetary assistance to enable students to attend conferences, to present papers and poster sessions, and for unfunded research activities.

Each semester, the OGC solicits student reviews of all the courses offered by the department and furnishes the results to students, faculty, and administrators. The OGC publishes a newsletter twice a semester which reports to students, faculty and staff on topics of academic and recreational interest. The OGC contributes money for purchase of books for the Working Collection (a marine science library located in the Oceanography building). Parties and "happy hours" sponsored by the OGC help the students relax after work and provide a positive social setting for interaction with faculty.

We believe that students should have a voice in the development of the Oceanography Society (TOS). Such a voice will encourage TOS to address issues of particular interest to graduate students. In return, students can assist with TOS activities and offer insights from the students' perspective. To accomplish this, we propose the formation of a national Council of Oceanography Graduate Students (COGS), comprised of representatives from member institutions and governed by an elected executive committee. The principal functions of COGS would be to promote student oceanography organizations, provide a forum for development of student views, and promote student interest and awareness in the professional world of oceanographers. If COGS prospers, the Executive Council of TOS could be petitioned to include the COGS president as a voting member. The COGS should meet to conduct its business at the annual TOS spring meeting, beginning in the spring of 1989.

To promote an exchange of ideas and provide information to students, a bulletin board named GRAD.STUDENTS has been established on Telemail/Omnet. The bulletin board provides a convenient way to discuss matters of student concern. Suggestions and ideas about COGS are especially welcomed.

Persons interested in further information can contact Ann Jochens through the bulletin board or at Texas A&M University, Department of Oceanography, College Station, Texas 77843.