Accreditation in the Geosciences
AGI's Response

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October 2008
Role of the American Geological Institute

- Geological Society of America commissioned a second survey regarding accreditation.
- After the survey, AGI received a formal request from the Geological Society of America to facilitate the next steps.
- AGI is compelled to respond to this request.
AGI's Response to GSA

- Any move towards accreditation will be disruptive and historic for the profession
- The survey instrument and results need to be independently analyzed
- Need to define the issue this is addressing
- Identify the major concerns
The issue it is addressing?

- Ensuring department survivals
- Reestablish rigor in the curriculum
- Square the degrees with the jobs
- Enable accountability on campus
- Bolster the status of geoscience in society
- Are we at threat of being regulated?
Decoupling from Licensure?

- Licensure is in the interest for public health and safety
- Licensure is a State issue, and for geology, very uneven
- Technical fields with program accreditation usually have a licensure end-point
- Is an accreditation effort separable from licensure?
Broaden Exemplars

- Is accreditation for departments or people?
  - Defined by goals of effort

- Is it accreditation or review?
  - Strict ABET approach vs. looser “review” style approach
Accreditation Stakeholders

- GSA canvassed primarily their membership
  - Dominantly academic
  - Reasonable minority of licensed professionals
- Omitted major academic, industry and government leadership
  - Is it valued?
- Omitted populations that have experienced grandfathering of licensure
Stakeholder Response

- Effort only works if ALL stakeholders agree
  - Fundamentally self-regulation
- Define the secondary impacts
  - Can one divorce accreditation from issues of licensure
  - If licensure is key, why not use current vehicles?
- Risk/benefit analysis of potential pathways
Business Models

- Performing the analysis of accreditation potential
  - Who pays for the process?
  - Who assumes liability for results?
- How is a decision made to move forward?
  - Empowerment of what organization?
- How would an accreditation program be supported?
Broad Community Discussion

- Ensure all stakeholders interact in a common forum
- Enable the establishment of an authority to make a go/no-go decision
- Evaluate the potential level of cooperation in a go-forward situation
- Opportunity to establish and disseminate example models
  - ABET on one end
  - A lot of other models
Next Step

- AGI will act with a commitment and support to lead the study
- Determining if there is energy for even broaching the subject formally
  - Informal response from societies is extremely mixed
  - Substantial unsolicited input from community to-date
  - Uncertain of impact on licensure efforts if discussion opens publicly