

BLACK GOLD

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Alumni Update December 2006

PLEASE KEEP IN TOUCH! Send us your feedback. We want to know where life has taken you since you left West Virginia University. Complete and return this form with your news and comments. Also, pass this Newsletter on, or let us know any alumni who are not receiving *Black Gold*.

Send to:
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Department of Petroleum and Natural Gas Engineering

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table of contents

| | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Chair's Message | 1 |
| SPE Conference | 2 |
| Alumni Feature..... | 2 |
| Students Tour Equitable ... | 3 |
| Alumni News | 3 |



Winter 2006

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Serving as the chair of the Petroleum and Natural Gas Engineering Department has been an honor, a privilege, and a gratifying experience. The Department is among the strongest in the College and perhaps the nation. We are fortunate to have such a strong and positive relationship with the oil and gas industries, which provide direction and guidance as well as financial support. Moreover, we are indebted to our industry for the 100% placement of our graduates.

We also are very grateful for our outstanding and world-renowned faculty. They have achieved the excellence that our profession requires and deserves. The faculty's diverse educational background, enthusiasm, dedication, and empathy make PNGE an outstanding Department, and I am truly honored to lead such a team of professionals.

Moreover, we are grateful to our advisory committee, to our alumni and friends, and to Gene Cilento, the dean of our college, for their guidance and support. In short, none of our accomplishments would have been possible without the enthusiasm and commitment of our colleagues, our alumni, and our friends.

The Department's student enrollment totals 100 with 71 undergraduates. Our newly created Ph.D. program, funded by the Dominion Energy Endowment, will train women and men capable of performing at the highest levels of the petroleum and natural gas engineering profession. Presently, there are four Ph.D. students enrolled in the program. Thanks in great part to this endowment, our Ph.D. program is growing into what surely will become a national pinnacle of the industry.

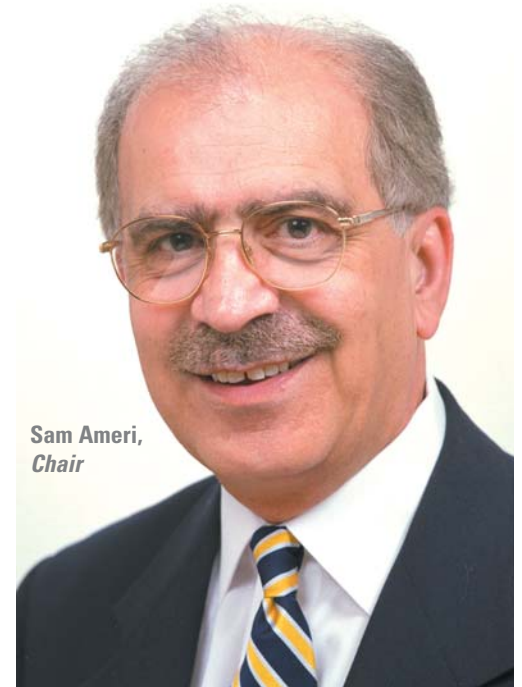
ABET reviewed the Department for accreditation in the fall of 2003 and, the department was accredited for six years – the maximum. Our next ABET visit will occur in the fall of 2009. We are the only department in the country to offer undergraduate and graduate

courses in coal mine and coalbed methane production engineering. Short courses are also being offered for coal bed methane production engineering industry professionals in coalbed methane reservoir engineering.

Over the past several years, we have acquired state-of-the-art laboratory facilities, our faculty has published extensively, and we have brought in an increased amount in externally funded research. During the past five years, the Department's research funding exceeded \$2 million.

Again, we would like to thank our friends for your support and guidance, which help us to continue to provide excellence in education, research, and service to our students and to our society.

Sincerely,
Samuel Ameri, Professor and Chair



Sam Ameri,
Chair

Students Attend Annual SPE Conference

The Society of Petroleum Engineers' Annual Technical Conference and Exhibition is the most significant annual gathering of petroleum professionals anywhere in the world. More than 30 undergraduate and graduate students from the Department attended this year's conference in San Antonio, Texas, in September, along with faculty and alumni.

Our students participated in several activities, including an International Student Paper Contest, Technical Sessions, and Young Professionals gatherings. Students also had the opportunity to learn about the latest technological advancements in the upstream oil and gas industry from displays and exhibits by more than 400 companies.

"Interacting face-to-face with representatives from top companies provides students with a learning experience unlike anything a student finds in the classroom," said Department Chair Sam Ameri.

A major highlight of this year's conference was the PetroBowl, hosted by the Gulf Coast Section Emerging Leaders Program, a tournament-style contest that tested students' knowledge of the E&P industry and SPE. Sixteen student teams, including the WVU students, competed. WVU made it to the second round of this spirited competition by defeating King Fahd University of Petroleum and Minerals of Saudi Arabia, but went down in defeat to Oklahoma State University in the next round.

Additional excitement was provided by Anadarko Petroleum Corporation, a leading oil and gas resources corporation that sponsored the WVU students on



From left, Chris Leoman, Joe Longo, Sam Blatt, and team captain Amol Bhavsar represented the Department in the PetroBowl competition at the conference.

a trip to Sea World in San Antonio. The Alumni Dinner also gave students an opportunity to interact and share some of their most valuable memories with Department of Petroleum and Natural Gas Engineering alumni. Students enjoyed meeting and interacting with the alumni. To put the icing on the cake, Dr. Samuel Ameri, department head, invited all the students and faculty members to join him for dinner along downtown San Antonio's beautiful river walk.

"This conference provides students with a fun-filled learning experience that exposes them to the latest in technological advancements and opportunities in the oil and gas industry," said Ameri. "It also gives them the opportunity to meet and interact with industry professionals and students and faculty from universities all over the world."

Students Tour Equitable Resources Facilities

By Amol Bhavsar

Equitable Resources is an integrated energy company that focuses on Appalachian area natural-gas supply, transmission, and distribution. Twenty-five WVU Petroleum and Natural Gas students were invited to tour Equitable Resources facilities and to watch the Pittsburgh Pirates take on the Cincinnati Reds in September.

We gathered in the late morning by our chartered bus with little idea of just how astonishing this field trip would be. Our first stop was Equitable Resources' compressor station, located in Waynesburg, Pennsylvania, where gas from Columbia Transmission, Dominion, and Equitable is compressed to higher pressures, gathered, and transmitted through a major pipeline to central West Virginia. We toured the facilities and learned about the equipment that optimizes their operations. I could not help but be amazed at how this vital installation is tucked away in a quiet town and has such up-to-date technology to display.

The second leg of the trip took us to Equitable Resources headquarters in Pittsburgh. There, we had the opportunity to observe the main operations being monitored and controlled from a central control room in the office. Following the demonstration, we had an information session with



Petroleum and Natural Gas Engineering toured Equitable Resources facilities in Pittsburgh in September.

Equitable Resources staff members, who provided an overview of the company's goals, aspirations, and policies. After the presentation we had an informal question-and answer-session during which we learned even more about the company.

To cap off this incredible learning experience, we attended a major league baseball game! As guests in Equitable Resources' sky-box we celebrated our amazing day as the Pirates and Reds played. Pittsburgh's PNC Park is a true showplace for this American pastime. As the sun set, Pittsburgh's handsome skyline began to sparkle as fireworks decorated the sky. This field trip definitely raised the bar for upcoming trips.

Alumni Feature: Sharon Flanery

Department Graduate a Leader in the Field

By Sam Ameri, Chair



Ever since she was a WVU freshman in Petroleum Engineering, Sharon Flanery's professional growth and accomplishments have been remarkable.

While attending WVU, Sharon was a student scholar as well as an active leader in student organizations, including the WVU Student Lambda Chapter of Pi Epsilon Tau (Petroleum Engineering Honor Society) and the WVU SPE Student Chapter. In all her activities Sharon showed qualities that one must possess in order to become a successful leader, manager and petroleum engineer. She earned the respect of the faculty and her student peers. Sharon graduated cum laude in 1978 with a degree in petroleum engineering. She was not only the first woman to complete her petroleum engineering degree at WVU, but one of the first women in the country to enter this field.

After obtaining her Juris Doctor Degree from Duquesne University in 1991, Sharon worked for two years as an attorney at Thorp, Reed and Armstrong, a large Pittsburgh law firm, where her practice was concentrated in the mineral and energy segments. She joined CONSOL Inc., a major United States coal producer, in late 1993 and served for over four years as counsel for its

coalbed methane operations, closed mining operations and river operations. She joined Columbia Gas Transmission Corporation in March of 1998 as assistant general counsel and assistant secretary. In this position she manages the corporate section of the Law Department.

Sharon also served as vice president of exploration for Columbia Natural Resources Inc., responsible for the Geosciences, Reservoir Engineering, Gas Supply and Marketing, and Land Departments. In 2004, she joined the prestigious law firm of Steptoe & Johnson, concentrating her practice in the areas of Energy and Mineral Law. Sharon is recognized in "The Best Lawyers in America" in the fields of energy, natural resources, and oil and gas law.

"In an industry some consider having more of a concrete ceiling than one made of glass, I've been fairly successful," she said. "Given the demographics of the industry, I attribute many of my achievements to the people I've worked with along the way."

For the past 28 years, Sharon has worked in the oil, gas, and coal industries. From 1978 through most of 1991, she has worked as a reservoir and

production engineer, engineering manager, or independent consultant for major oil and gas companies in the United States and Saudi Arabia. Her background also includes extensive coalbed methane experience throughout the United States.

Sharon is a member of the West Virginia, Pennsylvania, and District of Columbia state bars and holds a United States Patent and Trademark License. She serves on the Board of Directors for the Black Diamond Girl Scout Council and is a trustee for the Energy and Mineral Law Foundation. She is also a member of the Advisory Committee for the Department of Petroleum and Natural Gas Engineering at WVU. In the past, Sharon has served on the Board of the West Virginia Chamber of Commerce, and was president of the Alumni Association for the WVU Minerals and Energy Resources School.

"Study hard, work hard, be smart and be safe," are Sharon's words of advice for current students. "The PNGE faculty and staff offer the opportunity of a lifetime in that they truly care about students and their educations."

Alumni Notes

Matt Goralczyk, '04, has taken a new position at Dominion Gas Transmission in Clarksburg, West Virginia.

John Knight, '04 has taken a new position at Dominion Gas Transmission in Clarksburg, West Virginia.

Chris Zinn, '04, has taken a new position with Equitable Production Company in Pittsburgh.

Brent Criser, '03, has taken a new position at Columbia Gas Transmission in Charleston, West Virginia.

Zachary Evans, '03, has taken a new position at Columbia Gas Transmission in Charleston, West Virginia.

Joshua Jackson, '03, has taken a new position at Equitable Production in Beckley, West Virginia.

Daniel J. Tomley, '00, has taken a new position at Linn Operating Company in Pittsburgh.

Blaine Minney, '78, has taken a new position with Cabot Oil and Gas.