

The Geologists Convene Again

On October 8-9, 2010, more than 40 alumni returned to campus for the seventh triennial meeting of the Geology Alumni Conference series, affectionately called SLUGAC. The theme of SLUGAC 7 was "St. Lawrence Geology from Pole to Pole," honoring the achievements of Albert P. Crary '31, the first person to stand at both the North and South Poles.

These conferences feature geology alumni speaking to students and faculty about career and research experiences in a wide range of fields to help answer the age-old question, "What are you going to do when you graduate from college?" Students saw first-hand the various paths alumni have taken after leaving SLU with their degree in geology. From talks about glaciers and climate change on Earth and Mars to learning about maps and GPS units or using Google Earth for research or how to make best use of library resources for searching the literature, students were treated to two days of talks showing the many directions open to them.

The weekend also featured the R.O. and Vera Bloomer Lecture, delivered by distinguished geophysicist and glacial geologist Andrew Fountain '75; a tree dedication ceremony in memory of long-time department secretary Alice Quackenbush; a geophotography gallery featuring images taken by several alumni; student poster and oral presentations; and the awarding



Conferring and gathering their thoughts before going "on" were Career Panel members (from left) hydrogeologist Gerry Gould '82, Alaskan petroleum advisor Douglas Waters '79, paleontological research projects manager Trisha Smrecak '06, science and technology librarian Bonnie Muller Swoger '99 and consulting firm officer Rick Standish '71.

of the W. T. Elberty Jr. Medal to Christopher Stevens '04, Jeff Chiarenzelli '81, Sally Street and Severn Brown for their sustained service to the geology program. The conference was chaired by Chapin Professor of Geology Mark Erickson and Sarah McElfresh '98, with significant work by Christopher Stevens '04, Heather Cunningham '98 and Kate Zubin-Stathopoulos '08.

Reflecting upon the weekend, one recent alum said it "may end up being the best and most important of my life" after networking with several alumni. A current student noted, "I now have a much better understanding of what's possible with a degree in geology."

—Sarah Zimmerman McElfresh '98,
Conference Chair



Chapin Professor Mark Erickson, left, and Andrew Fountain '75 confer before Fountain presented the R. O. Bloomer Lecture on his long-time study of mountain glaciers of western North America.