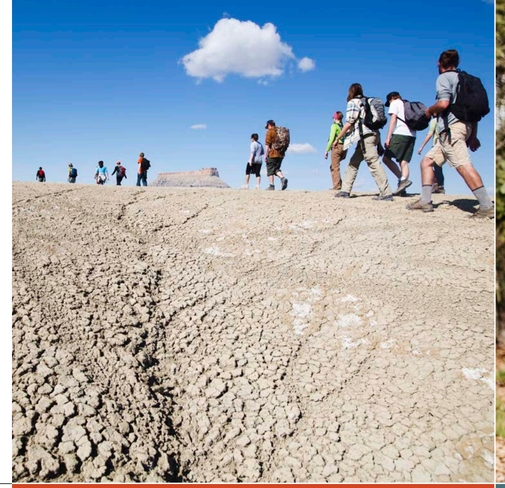
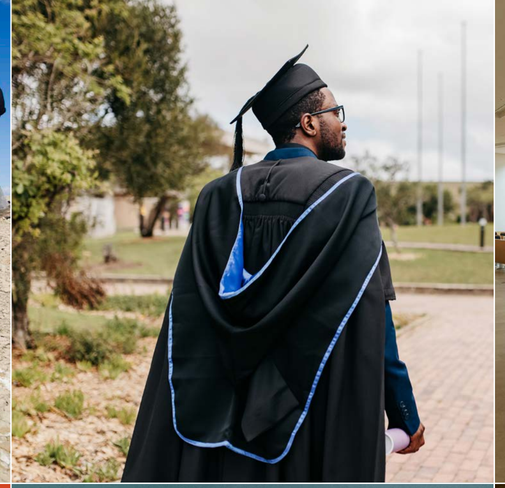
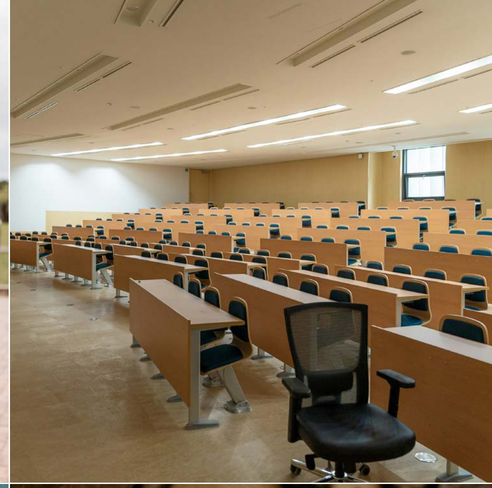
Now is the Moment that Matters.

A Campaign to Secure the Future of Geoscience

AAPG FOUNDATION®

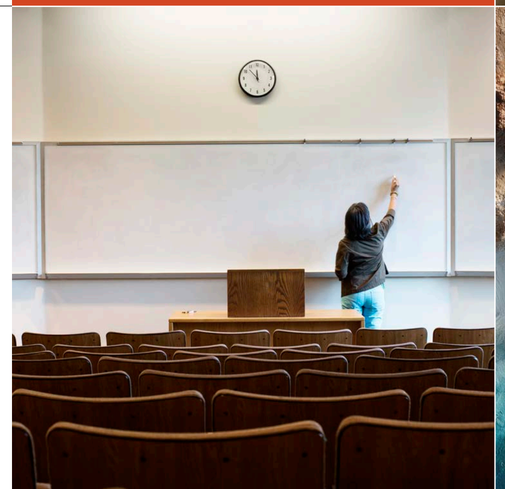
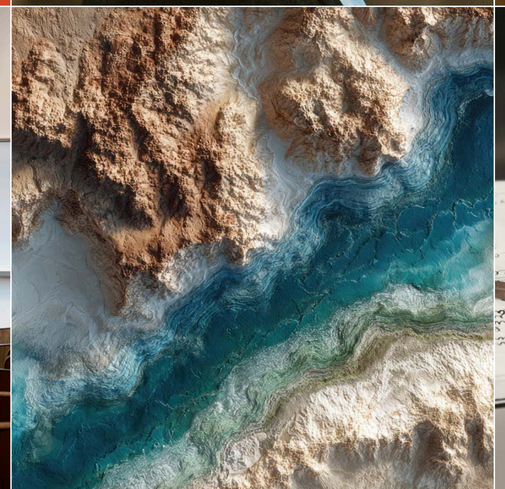
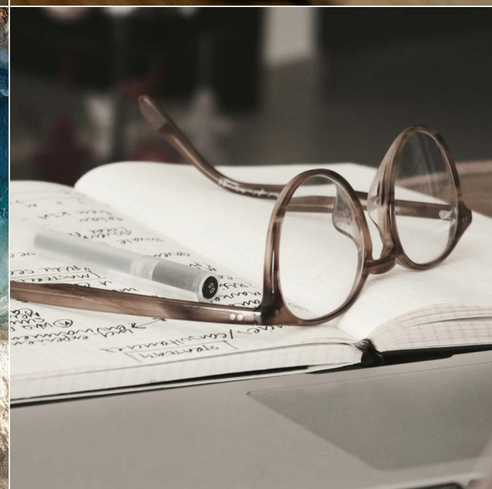





Table of Contents



03 The Situation

04 The Evidence

05 The Moment

06 Pillars of Impact

07 Research Pillar

08 Education Pillar

09 Outreach Pillar

10 Innovation Pillar

11 Ways to Give

12 Major Gift Opportunities

13 Moments That Mattered

14 Contact Us

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The Situation

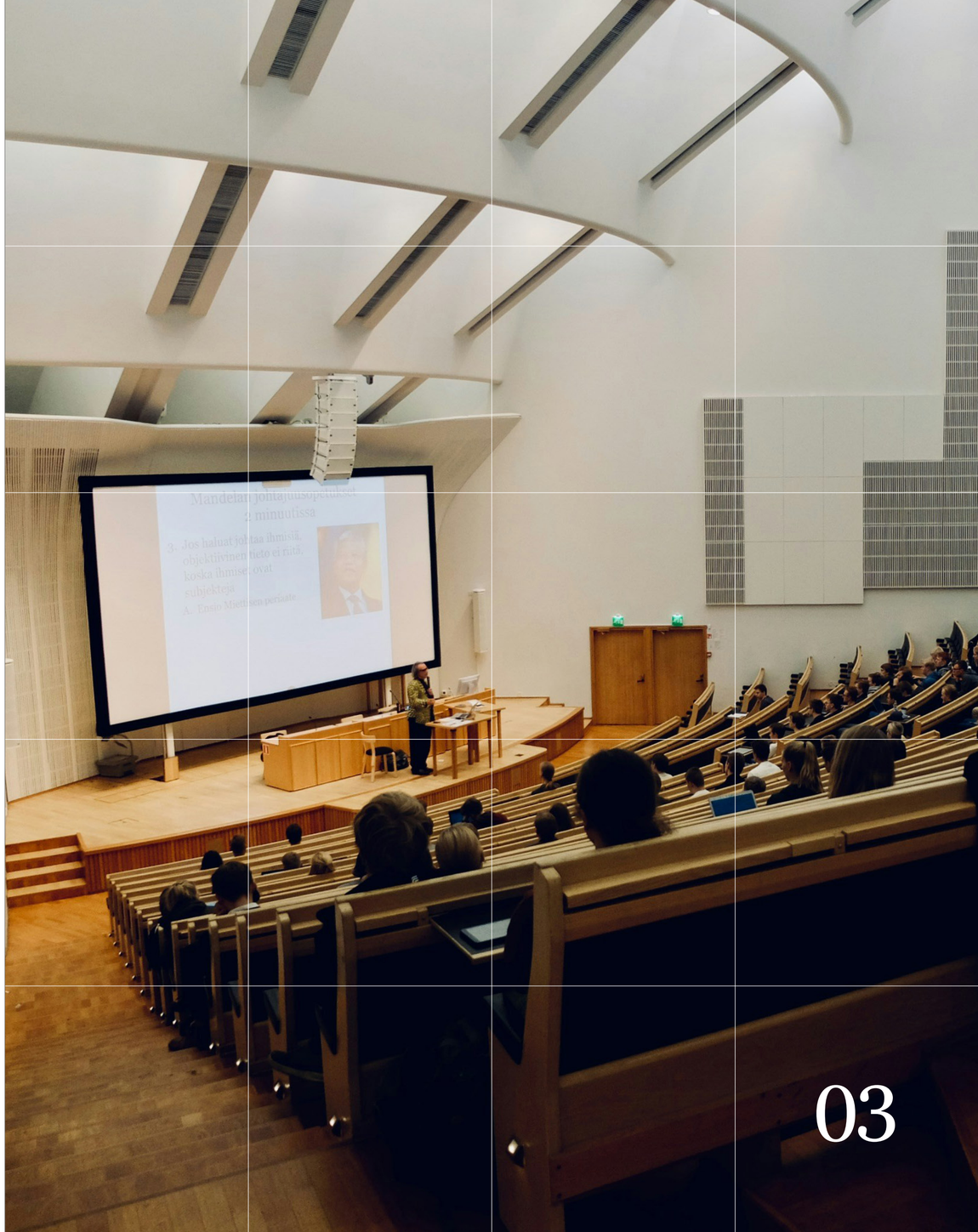
Geoscience Education is in Peril

U.S. geoscience enrollment has fluctuated dramatically over the past decade. Undergraduate enrollment fell by more than one-third between 2016 and 2021, the discipline's steepest contraction in more than 40 years.* It remains volatile, while graduate enrollment continues to decline.

Against this uncertainty, university programs are closing or consolidating. Research support is shrinking, and essential learning experiences are becoming more costly and less accessible.

Fewer students today means fewer researchers, educators, and practitioners tomorrow, with long-term implications for energy, resources, environmental stewardship, and scientific advancement.

Without intentional action, we risk losing the knowledge, talent, and institutional capacity the world will increasingly depend upon.



American Geosciences Institute; AAPG. Additional source information available upon request.

The Evidence

Proof of the Decline

The challenges facing geoscience education are not anecdotal. They are measurable and affect nearly every dimension of the discipline. These numbers reveal the breadth and urgency of the problem.*

18

Geoscience programs shuttered or absorbed into other departments over the past seven years

$27.5 million

Budget shortfall driving University of Nebraska's geoscience department closure

-14,102

Decline in total U.S. geoscience student population from 2016 to 2021

-2,282

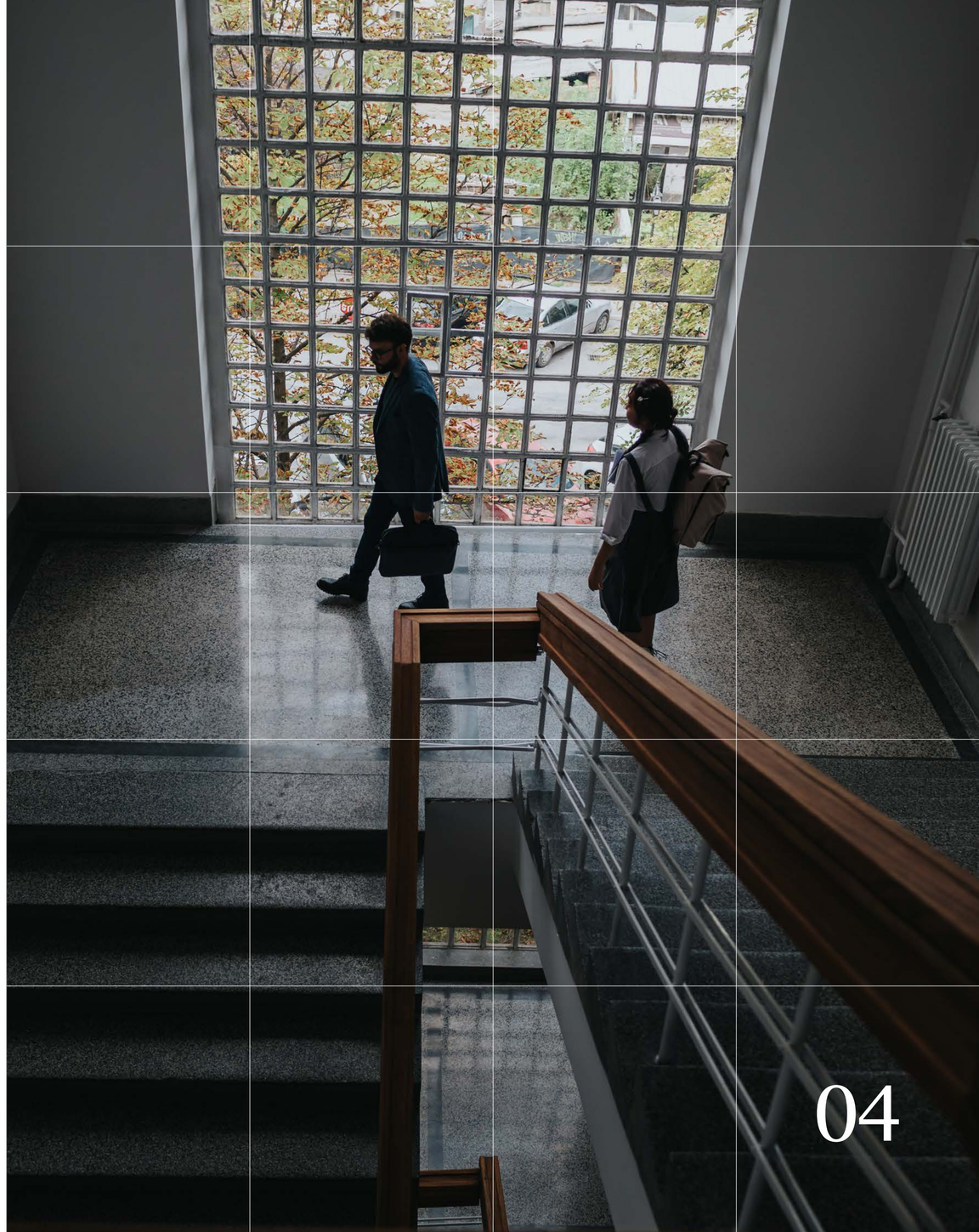
Decline in graduate geoscience enrollments from 2015 to 2025—a 20% decline

-20%

Decline in National Science Foundation research grants awarded from 2024 to 2025

$5,000+

Typical costs for field camp programs—a barrier for many students



Sources: AAPG, American Geosciences Institute, university enrollment data. Additional source information available upon request.







The Moment

A $25 Million Promise to the Future

The challenges facing geoscience require more than concern. They require decisive action.

The AAPG Foundation's $25 million capital campaign will strengthen the discipline at four critical points: research, education, outreach, and innovation.

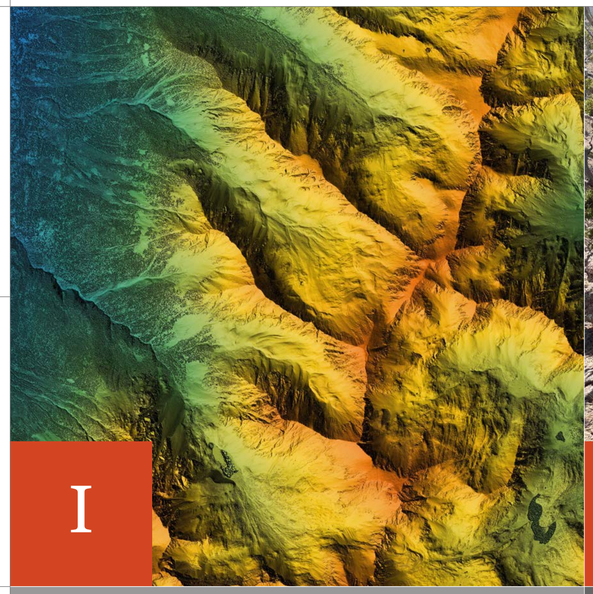
Rather than addressing individual symptoms, the campaign invests across the geoscience ecosystem: restoring applied research capacity, preserving formative learning experiences, expanding public engagement, and advancing tools that make geoscience knowledge more accessible and useful.

The Foundation is prepared to lead this work. But its success depends on the generosity and commitment of the geoscience community.

Pillars of Impact

Four Priorities. One Purpose.

Each of the campaign's Pillars of Impact addresses a distinct need within geoscience. Together, they create a comprehensive response that supports the discipline, from the development of new knowledge to the ways it is taught, shared, and put to work.



Research

Advancing applied geoscience and discovery



Education

Supporting students at defining moments



Outreach

Elevating geoscience awareness and accessibility



Innovation

Elevating geoscience to a new level of impact

Research Pillar

Advancing Applied Research at a Critical Moment

As traditional sources of academic and applied research funding continue to decline, the ability to advance new ideas, develop talent, and address complex energy and subsurface challenges is increasingly at risk. The campaign's Research Pillar ensures vital research continues when it is needed most.

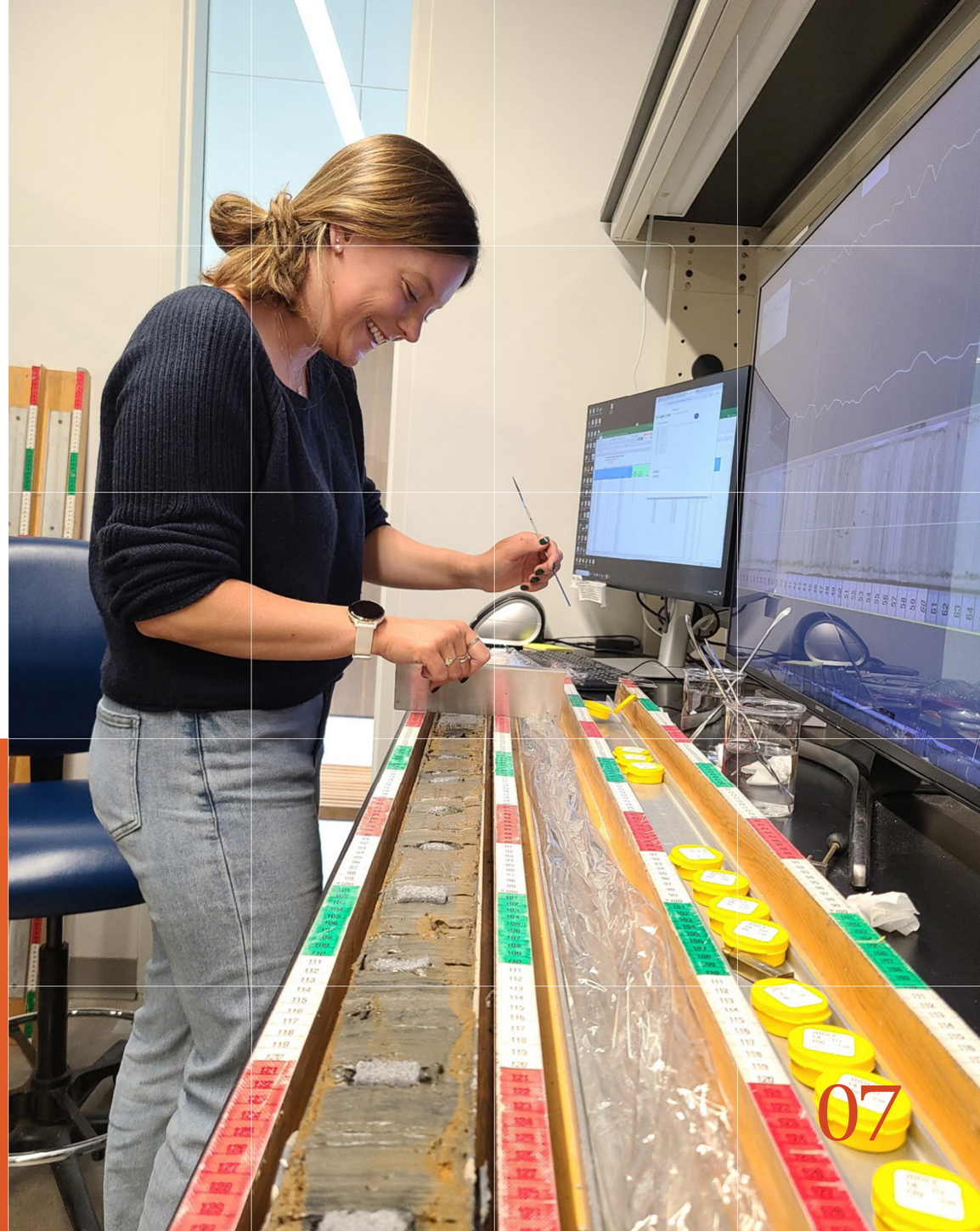
At the center of this effort is **AEGIS—Advanced Energy Geoscience Innovation & Support**—a new initiative created to restore applied geoscience research capacity at U.S. universities. Complementing this work is the Foundation's Grants-in-Aid program, an evolving initiative that supports graduate students as they pursue the research required to complete their master's and Ph.D. degrees.

Together, these programs strengthen both innovation and the pipeline of future geoscience leaders.

AREAS OF IMPACT

AEGIS Program
Strengthens industry–academic collaboration by funding competitive, peer-reviewed applied research grants.

Grants-in-Aid Program
Supports those pursuing Masters and Ph.D. degrees by augmenting program budgets or supplementing underfunded program costs.



Education Pillar

Preserving Opportunity at Defining Moments

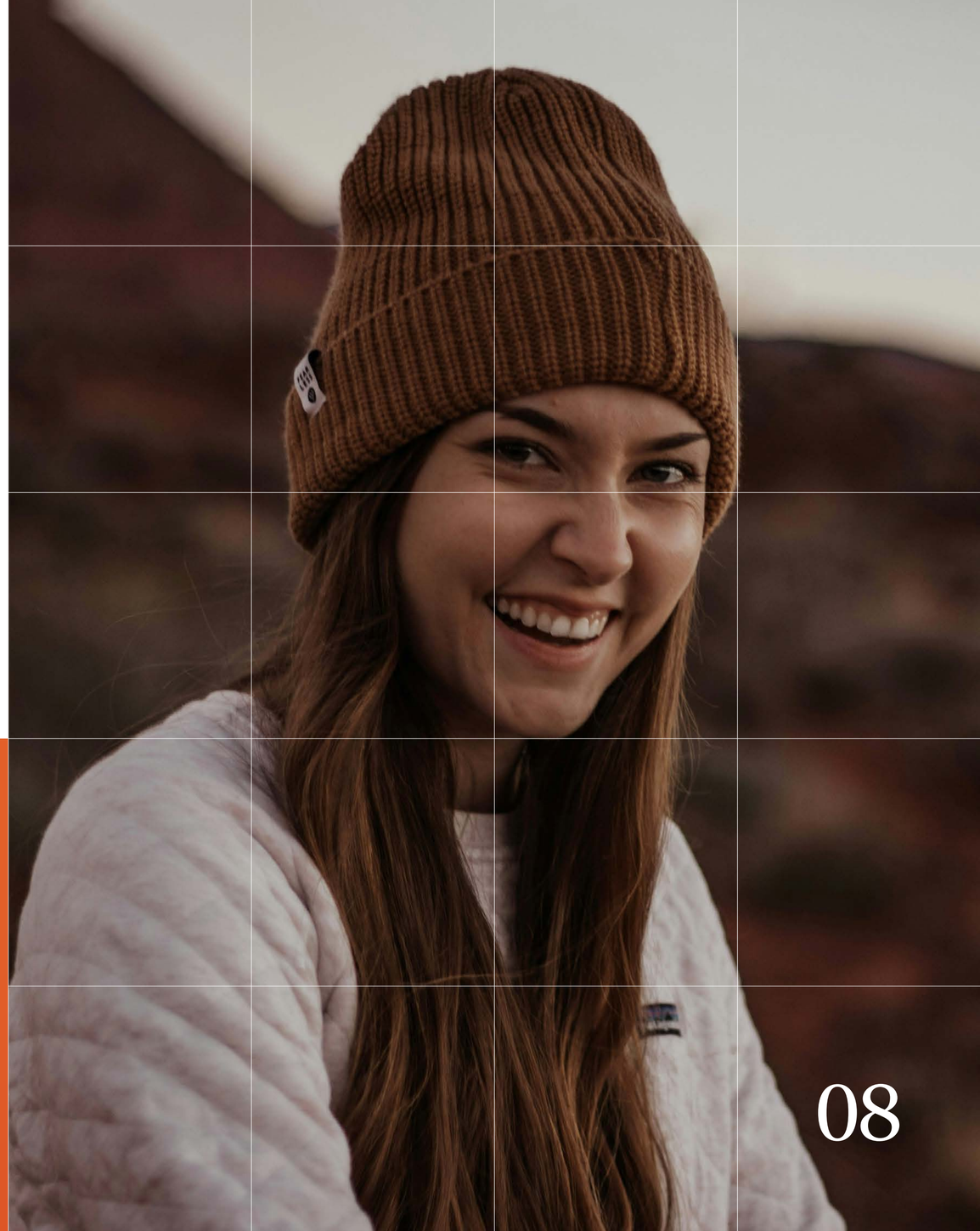
The Education Pillar focuses on supporting students at the moments that most directly shape their geoscience careers. As rising costs and reduced university resources increasingly limit access to hands-on learning, the Foundation's educational programs help ensure that talent, curiosity, and commitment—not financial circumstance—determine who can pursue the field.

Through scholarships, grants, and targeted student support, the campaign invests in experiences that build both technical competence and professional confidence. These opportunities not only prepare students for successful careers, but also strengthen the long-term vitality of the geoscience profession.

AREAS OF IMPACT

Field Camp Scholarship Program
Helps undergraduate students offset the cost of required field camp experiences. These are often transformational moments in a geoscience career.

Military Veterans Geoscience Scholarship Program (MVGSP)
Supports veterans and veteran dependents transitioning into geoscience education and careers.



Outreach Pillar

Elevating the Visibility and Relevance of Geoscience

The Outreach Pillar focuses on strengthening the connection between geoscience and the broader world. As public understanding of earth science has declined, the Foundation supports initiatives that make geoscience more visible, accessible, and relevant to everyday life.

Through targeted outreach efforts, the campaign helps demonstrate the real-world value of geoscience and geoscience practitioners. This helps spark curiosity, inspires future scientists, and highlights the profession's role in addressing global challenges.

AREAS OF IMPACT

Geoscientists without Borders®
Applies geoscience expertise to humanitarian and environmental challenges worldwide, while engaging students and local communities in solution-driven work.

Earth Science Week, K-12 & Early Education, and Public Education Partnerships
Supports national and global efforts to raise public awareness of earth science through education, events, and community engagement.

Scouting and Youth Outreach Initiatives
Introduces younger audiences to geoscience concepts and career pathways through hands-on learning and exploration.



Innovation Pillar

Supporting Innovation and Accessibility

The Innovation Pillar focuses on advancing geoscience through forward-thinking tools and initiatives that expand access to data, strengthen collaboration, and elevate the discipline's real-world impact.

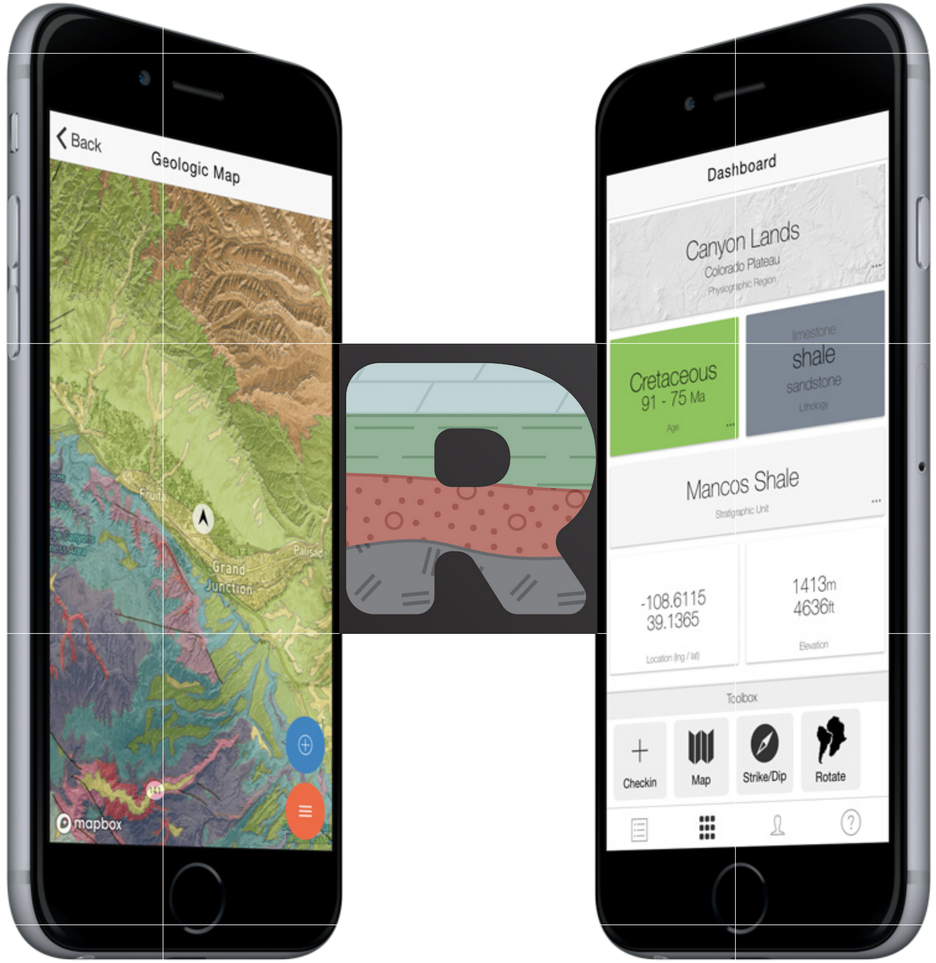
At the center of this effort is the **Rockd mobile application**, a dynamic digital platform that delivers geologic maps, stratigraphic data (including COSUNA), and related resources directly to users in the field. Rockd exemplifies how targeted investment in modern technology can broaden access to geoscience knowledge and extend its reach to students, professionals, and the public alike.

AREAS OF IMPACT

Rockd Mobile Application
Provides mobile access to digital geologic maps, stratigraphic columns (COSUNA), and related data through a user-friendly, location-aware platform.

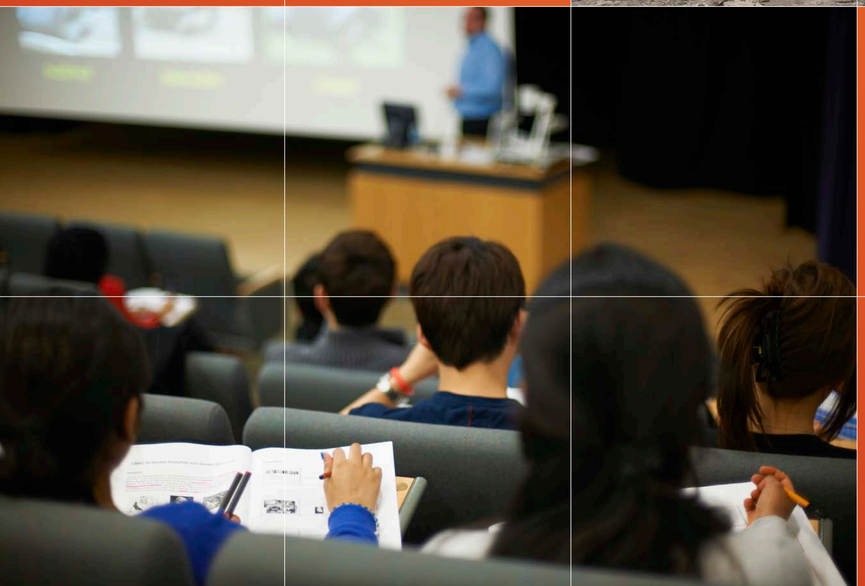
Improving Public Access to Geoscience Data
Makes professional-grade geological resources accessible beyond traditional academic and industry settings.

Innovation Through Technology Deployment
Demonstrates how targeted investment in modern tools can broaden the visibility, usability, and impact of geoscience worldwide.









Ways to Give

Every Gift Helps Shape What Comes Next

There is no single way to make a meaningful difference. Any gift, through any form, can help us support the future of geoscience.

General giving provides the Foundation with flexibility to direct resources where they can have the greatest impact. Donors considering a leadership commitment level may also explore opportunities aligned with the priorities that matter most to them.

Giving Options

- One-time gift (any amount)
- Multiyear pledge
- Planned or legacy gift
- Memorial or honorary gift
- Donor-advised funds (DAF)
- IRA distributions
- Gift of stock or appreciated assets
- Corporate or matching gifts

Secure donations can be made online at Campaign.AAPGFoundation.org
Or, to maximize the impact of your generosity, please contact our Giving Team.

Major Gift Opportunities

What Your Gift Can Make Possible

These are just a few illustrative examples of the direct impact a major gift can achieve. (Actual use and reach may vary.)

Leadership Giving Levels

At these levels, donors may work with the Foundation to explore support for particular campaign priorities. Where appropriate, named scholarships, grants, and other recognition opportunities may be available.

Associate
$15,000

Expands opportunities for young people to discover and explore geoscience through donations to key organizations and attractions.

Advocate
$30,000

Funds the activities in support of the Geology Merit Badge at the Scouting America National Jamboree.

Investor
$60,000

Provides 20 field camp scholarships for university students who lack the necessary financial resources.

Explorer
$120,000

Fully funds an applied research grant through the AEGIS program.

Developer
$250,000

Provides 25 geoscience scholarships for veterans of the U.S. military.

Producer
$500,000

Strengthens graduate education and provides vital support for geoscience programs facing urgent need.

Visionary
$1,000,000+

Advances transformative innovations in geoscience education, research, and application worldwide.

Moments that Mattered

“This is Why I Give.”



Dan Billman

I didn't realize how deep my network was until the Appalachian shale gas revolution began. As small operators sold assets, I pivoted from shallow, tight gas sands to horizontal shale opportunities. The connections I built through AAPG conventions and committee service made that evolution possible.



Pam Billman

Field camp transformed how I understood geology, bringing classroom concepts to life through direct observation and shared experience. That perspective is why I support the AAPG Foundation—to help more students access the same formative opportunity.



Lee Billingsley

I became involved with the Foundation's AEGIS program because it provides direct support for graduate students. I know first-hand that we are adding potential professional geologists with each student we support.



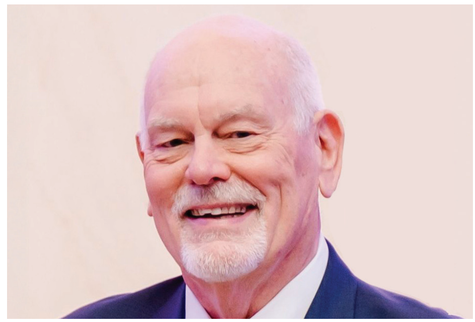
Jim Funk

In June 1971, I went to the Aleutian Islands as a field assistant. I got to work as part of a multidisciplinary team studying the history of the Bering Land Bridge. It turned out to be the first of many field seasons I spent in Alaska working for Shell.



Kay Pitts

Serving the Foundation over the years has been incredibly rewarding. However, the greatest joy comes from the lifelong friendships I've been fortunate to make with colleagues globally.



Joe Davis

In the fall of my junior year in college, I signed up for my first geology class. After the first three lectures and a field trip around campus, I knew that was what I wanted to do and immediately changed my major.



Kristie Ferguson

I loved how all the pieces came together during my field camp summer in 1995. It taught me that ‘geopals’ are forever, and the network of friends within this field is truly global and glorious.

Contact Us

Help Us Shape the Future of Geoscience

If you would like to learn more about supporting this campaign, or if you know someone who may share this commitment, we would welcome the opportunity to connect. Your tax-deductible donation goes directly to supporting these vital initiatives. Help us make this geoscience's finest moment.



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Legacy is not what you leave behind.
Legacy is what you set in motion.

Now is the Moment that Matters.

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