Organizational Charter

John A. and Katherine G. Jackson School of Geosciences

February 7, 2005

1. Preamble

The bequest of John A. and Katherine G. Jackson challenged and empowered the geosciences community at the University of Texas at Austin to pursue sustained leadership and highest distinction in "the subjects of geology; geophysics; energy, mineral, and water resources; as well as the broad areas of the earth sciences, including the Earth's environment." The organizational structure of the John A. and Katherine G. Jackson School of Geosciences (hereafter, "the Jackson School") must foster rapid evolution toward that goal.

With that goal in mind, this document defines key elements of the governance structure of the Jackson School, some of its protocols and some aspects of its functional mechanisms. It is supplemental to the Regents' Rules and the U.T. Austin Handbook of Operating Procedures. The charter is intended to address issues unique to this federation of distinct units that combines academic and organized-research functions and personnel.

The Jackson School comprises the Department of Geological Sciences, the Bureau of Economic Geology, and the Institute for Geophysics as component units, including all staff and students. Voting members of the School (hereafter, the School's "members" or "membership") are full-time, permanent employees who are classed either as faculty, including lecturers, or as Code 1000 research staff.

Although this document is written to address specifically the School's initial configuration of three affiliated units, any future redefinition of units or addition of new units can be accommodated by appropriate modifications, following the procedure set forth in the section on "Modification and Amendment of the Organizational Charter".

2. Authority and Responsibilities of the School's Leadership

2.1 Dean

The Dean, as the chief administrative and academic officer of the Jackson School, provides vision and central leadership for the School.

2.1.1 The Dean has executive authority over academic affairs, appointments of faculty and research staff, and the School's budget, including proceeds from endowments within the Geology Foundation.
2.1.2 Responsibilities of the Dean include:

- developing the environment necessary to sustain, enhance, and coordinate the missions of the major units making up the School;

- appointing, subject to higher-level approvals, the Director of the Institute for Geophysics, the Director of the Bureau of Economic Geology, and the Chair of the Department of Geological Sciences (hereafter, "the unit leaders");

- appointing, subject to higher-level approvals, faculty and research staff in all three component units of the School, based upon input from the School’s Appointments Committee;

- recommending, subject to higher-level approvals, salary rates, promotion, tenure, renewal of appointment, or non-renewal of appointment for faculty and research staff in all three component units of the School, based upon input from the unit leaders and the relevant governing bodies (e.g., budget councils) within each unit;

- serving as Director of the Geology Foundation, overseeing its management and reporting functions, leading its development activities, and maintaining a strong relationship between the Jackson School and the Geology Foundation Advisory Council;

- reviewing annually the past year’s commitments and the current principles of use of the Jackson endowment and other Geology Foundation funds with (a) the line officers above the school, including the President, the Executive Vice President and Provost, and the Vice President for Research, and (b) the Geology Foundation Advisory Council; and

- submitting to the Vice-President and Dean of Graduate Studies recommendations for appointments of the Graduate Advisor and Chair of the Graduate Studies Committee in Geological Sciences.

2.1.3 The Dean will be advised and counseled by the unit leaders and by the three principal advisory bodies described below.

2.2 Unit Leaders

The Director of the Institute for Geophysics, the Director of the Bureau of Economic Geology, and the Chair of the Department of Geological Sciences are responsible for the leadership, management, and administration of their respective units.

2.2.1 Each of the three unit leaders directly reports to and is responsible to the Dean of the Jackson School; however, second-level officers for the unit leaders are distinct, as defined in section 2.3.
2.2.2 Responsibilities of the unit leaders include:

- developing the environment necessary to sustain and enhance the excellence of programs and activities within their unit;
- integrating their unit's activities into the broader mission of the Jackson School;
- creating internal policies and procedures appropriate to their unit that accord with School-wide protocols;
- budgetary management for their unit;
- advising the Dean on the development of the annual budget for the Jackson Endowment and all other Geology Foundation funds;
- evaluating faculty and research staff within their unit; and
- presenting to the Dean recommendations for initial appointments, salary rates, promotion, tenure, renewal of appointment, or non-renewal of appointment for faculty and research staff within their unit.

2.3 Second-level Officers for Unit Leaders

Recommendations of the Dean that are subject to higher-level approval are made through appropriate second-level officers, as follows.

2.3.1 The Vice-President for Research is the second-level officer for the Director of the Bureau of Economic Geology. In this capacity, responsibilities of the Vice-President for Research include:

- approving and submitting to the President recommendations made by the Dean for appointment of the Director of the Bureau of Economic Geology; and
- approving and submitting to the President recommendations made by the Dean for initial appointments, salary rates, promotion, tenure, renewal of appointment, or non-renewal of appointment for all faculty and research staff in the Bureau of Economic Geology.

2.3.2 The Executive Vice-President and Provost is the second-level officer for the Chair of the Department of Geological Sciences and the Director of the Institute for Geophysics. In this capacity, responsibilities of the Executive Vice-President and Provost include:

- approving and submitting to the President recommendations made by the Dean for appointment of the Chair of the Department of Geological Sciences and the Director of the Institute for Geophysics;
- approving and submitting to the President recommendations made by the Dean for initial appointments, salary rates, promotion, tenure,
renewal of appointment, or non-renewal of appointment for all faculty and research staff in the Department of Geological Sciences and the Institute for Geophysics; and

- providing administrative oversight for the Dean in the Dean's capacity as Director of the Geology Foundation.

2.3.3 Recommendations pertaining to individuals with joint budgetary (non-zero-time) appointments in both the Bureau of Economic Geology and one of the two other units will be reviewed by both second-level officers.

2.4 Reporting Relationships for Specific Activities

The diversity of academic and research functions performed by the School's component units requires specific reporting relationships for certain activities. Such activities are those representing unusual needs for individual units or requiring coordination of activity among units.

2.4.1 The Director of the Bureau of Economic Geology is directly responsible to the Vice-President for Research for the Bureau's interactions with state and Federal governments; interactions with private sector and foreign-state-owned entities; related contracts and other legal affairs; and policies on overhead rates and return for contracts and grants. The Director is responsible for ensuring the Dean's cognizance of all such matters.

2.4.2 All unit leaders will coordinate through the Dean their unit's activities concerning industrial interactions (e.g., Industrial Associates programs, corporate development programs) and public outreach. Actions by the Dean requiring review and approval will flow through designated second-level officers as appropriate for each action.

3. Strategic Planning Council

3.1 Purpose and Scope

The purpose of the Strategic Planning Council is to assist in developing the Jackson School's vision by creating long-term plans for fostering excellence in the School's programs of basic and applied research, education, and service. The Council weighs external advice, strategic missions of individual units, and input from the school's membership. Its goal is to provide strategic advice for the Dean and the School's units, and to offer guidance for periodic visiting committees or external review panels, through two main functions:

3.1.1 The Strategic Planning Council identifies new opportunities, directions, and programmatic thrusts for the Jackson School.

3.1.2 The Strategic Planning Council develops recommendations for the long-term focus of the School's resources, including personnel, facilities and equipment.
3.2 Membership

The Strategic Planning Council includes nine members from within the School and one representative from the Geology Foundation Advisory Council, and may, at the discretion of the Dean, include additional members from outside the School.

3.2.1 The Institute for Geophysics, the Bureau of Economic Geology, and the Department of Geological Sciences are represented by their unit leaders.

3.2.2 Six additional persons are drawn from the membership of Jackson School, with the Dean appointing representatives for each unit.

3.2.3 The chair of the Geology Foundation Advisory Council may elect to serve, or may delegate this role to the vice-chair.

3.2.4 In order to obtain external strategic advice, the Dean may appoint additional members to the Council from outside the Jackson School.

3.2.5 Terms of service on the Strategic Planning Council are for three years, except for the representative from the Geology Foundation Advisory Council, who serves while in office. Members other than unit leaders may serve no more than two consecutive terms without a break in service. Appointments are scheduled to stagger changes in the membership.

3.2.6 The Dean appoints one member of the Council to serve as its chair.

3.3 Operational Mechanisms

3.3.1 The Strategic Planning Council works with the Dean to canvass the widest practicable range of sources for strategic ideas. It seeks input from visiting committees, from strategic plans of established units, from the membership at large, and from other units within the University relevant to the mission of the Jackson School.

3.3.2 The Strategic Planning Council is responsible for creating a strategic plan for the School every three years, evaluating progress, and updating the plan annually during the two years following its creation.

3.3.3 Reports of the Strategic Planning Council, and summaries of its deliberations, will be circulated to the membership of the School for comment.

4. Endowment Committee

4.1 Purpose and Scope

The Endowment Committee is charged with advising the Dean on both general strategies and specific requests for the use of the Jackson endowment and all other Geology Foundation funds, as well as assuring accountability to the membership of the Jackson School through two main functions:
4.1.1 The Endowment Committee provides oversight of the broad categories of appropriations of proceeds from the Jackson endowment and all other Geology Foundation funds. This oversight ensures fidelity to the donors' intent and consistency with the overall soundness and vitality of the Jackson School and its programs. With that purpose, the Endowment Committee advises the Dean on the development of the annual budget for the Jackson endowment and all other Geology Foundation funds.

4.1.2 The Endowment Committee reviews and assesses principles and policies governing expenditures from the Jackson endowment and all other Geology Foundation funds.

4.2 Membership

To ensure representation of the viewpoints and activities of the broader geoscience-related community in the University, the Endowment Committee consists of eight members, two from each of the units and two from the University community outside the Jackson School.

4.2.1 Each unit in the School nominates for the Dean a slate of potential representatives, using a process supported by a majority of the unit's membership. The Dean will select each unit's representatives from the slate of nominees.

4.2.2 One of the two committee members from outside the School is appointed by the Executive Vice-President and Provost, and one by the Vice President for Research.

4.2.3 Because unit leaders must of necessity be strong advocates of budgetary actions that have beneficial impact on their units, they are not eligible to serve on the Endowment Committee.

4.2.4 Terms of service on the Endowment Committee are for three years. Appointments are scheduled to stagger changes in the membership.

4.2.5 The Dean appoints one member of the committee to serve as its chair.

4.3 Operational Mechanisms - General Oversight of Appropriations

4.3.1 The Dean consults with the Endowment Committee during development of the annual budget for expenditures from proceeds of the Jackson endowment and all other Geology Foundation funds.

4.3.2 As part of the consultative process with the Dean, the Endowment Committee makes recommendations for use of resources, and provides comments on the specific budget allocations proposed by the Dean.

4.4 Operational Mechanisms - Review and Assessment of Principles and Policies Governing Expenditures

4.4.1 School-wide standing committees established by the Dean (e.g., Graduate Support Committee, Equipment Committee, etc.) are responsible for
developing administrative policies to govern the expenditure of funds allocated to them during the annual budgeting process. The Endowment Committee reviews these policies, and where appropriate reviews proposed expenditures, making recommendations to the Dean.

4.4.2 The Endowment Committee, at the direction of the Dean, develops policy for expenditures in areas not overseen by established committees and makes corresponding funding recommendations to the Dean.

5. Appointments Committee

5.1 Purpose and Scope

The Appointments Committee is tasked with sustaining the highest quality of academic and research staff across the Jackson School through three main functions:

5.1.1 The Appointments Committee is responsible for evaluation of proposed hiring actions in all three units involving persons who would hold the title of Assistant Professor, Associate Professor, Full Professor, Research Associate, Research Scientist, or Senior Research Scientist. Proposed hiring into other titles of equivalent stature, as determined by the Dean, is also subject to review and evaluation by this committee. The committee's evaluations are transmitted to the Dean as advisory recommendations.

5.1.2 The Appointments Committee serves as the School-level promotion and tenure committee. It is responsible for providing evaluations, independent of the Dean's evaluation, of all tenure and promotion actions proposed by the leaders of the units and their respective relevant governing bodies (e.g., budget councils). These evaluations are transmitted via the Dean through the appropriate second-level officers to the President for decision.

5.1.3 The Appointments Committee provides the Graduate Studies Committee in Geological Sciences with evaluations and recommendations regarding persons in non-professorial titles nominated for membership on the Graduate Studies Committee.

5.2 Membership

The Appointments Committee consists of eight members, two from each of the units and two from outside the Jackson School. For purposes of promotion and tenure considerations, the committee will be augmented by two additional members from outside the Jackson School.

5.2.1 The members of the Appointments Committee are selected by the Dean, taking into account nominations and recommendations from the unit leaders.
5.2.2 The members of the Appointments Committee should be chosen from the personnel of the Jackson School who command the highest respect professionally and academically. Eligibility will be restricted to Full Professors, Senior Research Scientists, and persons of equivalent stature in other titles as determined by the Dean.

5.2.3 Unit leaders will be actively involved as initiators and advocates of hiring and promotion actions within their units. Because the Appointments Committee is charged with providing an independent level of review and evaluation, unit leaders are not eligible to serve on the Appointments Committee.

5.2.4 Terms of service on the Appointments Committee are for three years. Appointments are scheduled to stagger changes in the membership.

5.2.5 The Dean appoints one member of the committee to serve as its chair.

5.3 Operational Mechanisms - Proposed Hiring Actions

5.3.1 Initial evaluation of prospective hires is done by a search committee constituted by the leader(s) of the unit(s) involved, and approved by the Dean. For hiring at the level of Full Professor or Senior Research Scientist, the search committee must include at least one representative from each unit of the Jackson School.

5.3.2 For hiring at the level of Assistant Professor or Research Associate, the Appointments Committee will receive from the chair of the search committee the full application package from the candidate. For hiring at any level above Assistant Professor or Research Associate, the Appointments Committee will receive from the chair of the search committee documentation equivalent to that required for candidates being considered for promotion internally to the equivalent positions.

5.3.3 For each action, the chair of the Appointments Committee will report the decision of the Committee and its full vote, conducted by secret ballot. This report will be provided to all unit leaders and to the Dean.

5.4 Operational Mechanisms - Promotion and Tenure Actions

5.4.1 Consideration of candidates for promotion is initiated within the candidate's unit by whatever internal procedures the unit deems suitable, consistent with University policy. The appropriate governing body in the unit (e.g., budget council, promotions committee) will prepare a dossier in accordance with the annual instructions issued by the President's and Provost's offices, which will include an evaluation of the candidate by that body. In the case of a candidate with a budgetary (non-zero-time) appointment in more than one unit, consideration for promotion may be initiated by any unit, and the dossier will be prepared by a single committee formed by the Dean from members of the appropriate governing bodies of the units.
5.4.2 Evaluation of candidates by the Appointments Committee follows established University protocols for college-level promotion and tenure committees. Summary evaluations and the results of votes by secret ballot are transmitted via the Dean, through appropriate second-level officers, to the President for decision.

5.5 Operational Mechanisms - Nominees to Graduate Studies Committee

5.5.1 Persons in non-professorial titles may be nominated for membership on the Graduate Studies Committee in Geological Sciences by the unit leaders, who will provide a dossier documenting the candidate's qualifications, including the scope and intensity of the candidate's involvement in programs of graduate teaching and research supervision.

5.5.2 The Appointments Committee will evaluate the candidate's dossier and forward its recommendation to the Graduate Studies Committee for action.

6. Modification and Amendment of the Organizational Charter

As the Jackson School's structure and function evolve through practice, modifications to this charter will likely be necessary. Similarly the creation of new units or subunits (centers, facilities, programs, etc.) within the School will likely require significant amendment of this document. Such changes may be accommodated as follows:

6.1 Initiation and Evaluation

Changes to the Organizational Charter of the Jackson School may be proposed by the Dean, or by the action of any of the three principal advisory bodies defined in the charter. The proposal will be referred to all three of the principal advisory bodies for consideration, and each body will prepare a written response to it. The proposal will also be circulated to the membership of the Jackson School along with a solicitation of written comments.

6.2 Decision

The Dean will submit all such proposals — together with the responses of the advisory bodies, a summary of the commentary from the membership, and the Dean's own recommendation — to the Executive Vice-President and Provost, who has final authority to approve or reject any proposed modifications or amendments.