

Pioneer's Investment Benefits Geosciences Students



Pioneer's gift will assist future geosciences students, like the ones shown here in the Baca Canyon near Magdalena, New Mexico.

When it comes to educating geoscientists, plenty of the learning happens outside the classroom. A gift of \$600,000 from Pioneer Natural Resources will allow the Department of Geosciences in the School of Natural Sciences and Mathematics to send more students to outdoor laboratories, from a cross-country trip examining the tectonic processes that formed the western United States to exploring geologic wonders throughout New Mexico and Colorado.

Pioneer's contribution will elevate several aspects of Geosciences, which immerses students in the study of the composition, structure and history of the Earth and the universe. Ten students will receive support for a fast-track degree option, which consolidates the time it would take to receive both bachelor's and master's degrees. Some of the funds will be used for graduate student field-based research, including mapping a range of geologic features in several settings. Each summer, about 40 undergraduate students will receive support to pursue research in field geology courses in New Mexico, Colorado and the western Great Basin.

"The basis for Pioneer's decision to donate to the Department of Geosciences is twofold," explained David Sanders, manager of corporate geosciences at Pioneer. "First, we have a shared history with UT Dallas Geosciences. In fact, 10 years ago Pioneer's first entry-level geoscience college hire was from UT Dallas. Today, we have numerous UT Dallas alumni working in multiple disciplines across our hydrocarbon-producing assets. The second reason is forward-looking as we are in agreement with the geoscience vision set forth by Geosciences Department Chair Dr. John Oldow."

For Oldow, Pioneer's gift will provide welcome resources for students. "This is a historic gift for our program and it will allow us the opportunity to greatly enhance the educational and research experience for our students," he said. "We cannot thank Pioneer enough for their investment in our vision to build a world-class geosciences program at UT Dallas."