

Attraction of University Students to Petroleum Geosciences – A Snapshot of the CSPG Outreach Program

Simon Haynes¹, Dawn Hodgins², and Stephen Dryer³

¹Statoil Canada Ltd, Calgary, AB, sihay@statoil.com

²Imperial Oil Ltd, Calgary, AB

³Whiskeyjack Resources Ltd, Calgary AB

GeoConvention 2012: Vision

The Canadian Society of Petroleum Geologists (CSPG) Outreach program can be divided into two main target audiences – for those members of the general public that have a general interest in earth science, and on university students that already have, or may be interested in, petroleum geology. The CSPG focuses on the latter group to; i) attract the best and brightest students to petroleum geoscience, ii) encourage these same students to pursue academic studies on topics that are relevant and timely for our industry, iii) promote petroleum geoscience and our Society throughout Canada, and iv) self-perpetuate our Society (students attracted through CSPG programs are more likely to become active members and volunteers).

The two main programs designed to support university students are SIFT (Student Industry Field Trip) and University Outreach. SIFT was started in 1977 and is a two-week introduction to the oil industry. The CSPG annually sponsors a 3rd- year student in earth sciences from each Canadian University offering a program (currently 32) to travel to Calgary and attend a series of lectures, workshops, lab sessions, and a 4-day field trip through the Rocky Mountains. In a nutshell, SIFT provide an overview of what petroleum geologists typically do. Students form syndicate “companies” of 4-5 people, and participate in a project that involves analyzing well logs, mapping plays, and drilling wells in the pursuit of hydrocarbons. Each syndicate company appears before a panel of industry experts at the end of the program to present their results. Two awards are granted – the Larry Strong Financial Award and the Bill Ayrton Technical Award which are presented at the final Wine and Cheese Event on the final day of the program.

The University Outreach (UO) committee handles dealing with students outside of SIFT. This involves our volunteers attending student-organized, Canadian geoscience conferences. Their role is to promote our industry, act as judges and make awards for presentations and posters, and financially support the conferences. The UO committee organizes lecture tours in the fall and winter semesters, that send speakers on a 2 to 6-university tour to present a relevant petroleum geology-related topic. Annually these speakers attend 8 to 15 Canadian Universities, with the objective of getting a lecture to each Canadian University with a geoscience department every other year. The committee also oversees applications for regional student awards, and student event grants – the latter are given out to student groups to help support activities such as field trips.