

# MEETING

## Young Paleoclimate Scientists Meet to Broaden Knowledge and Build Ties

**PAGES 1st Young Scientists Meeting: Retrospective Views on Our Planet's Future; Corvallis, Oregon, 6–7 July 2009**

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Paleoenvironmental science provides important context for assessing ongoing and projected changes in Earth's climate and has informed research on central issues such as greenhouse gas variability, abrupt climate change, and ice sheet dynamics. Studies of the past have provided insight into natural climate variability at interannual to glacial/interglacial timescales and have fostered appreciation for a systems approach to global environmental change.

As a contribution to the future of paleoscience, the Past Global Changes (PAGES) project, an international effort sponsored by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the Swiss and U.S. National Science Foundations to coordinate and promote past global climate change research, convened its 1st Young Scientists Meeting (YSM) in July 2009, as an adjunct to the subsequent 3rd Open Science Meeting. Early career researchers were given the opportunity to broaden their knowledge base, build international and cross-disciplinary networks, tackle emerging issues

of concern to the paleoscience community, and learn about international science infrastructures.

More than 90 participants from 21 nations, representing numerous paleoscience subdisciplines, were selected to participate in the YSM. The scientific program was organized around PAGES foci of climate forcings and feedbacks, reconstructing and modeling regional climate dynamics, global-scale Earth system processes and linkages, and past human-climate-ecosystem interactions. In addition, several presentations were dedicated to PAGES cross-cutting themes of climate proxy development, chronology, and numerical modeling. The YSM also included presentations by senior scientists, editors, and administrators, intended to help early-career researchers navigate the world of research grants, academic publishing, data management, and science communication.

Breakout sessions provided participants with the opportunity to discuss challenges facing the community. Several groups brought up the issue of spatial and temporal gaps in instrumental and proxy climate records, and suggested that increased input

from the modeling community and incorporation of routines to identify "missing data" in climate field reconstructions would help fill those gaps. Another group considered accessibility to published data in digital archives (the common lack of calibration data, inefficient search functions, inconsistent inclusion of data from older literature). Other topics of discussion included the need to conduct "salvage" research on at-risk proxies (e.g., in tropical ice caps and corals) and increase the relevance of paleoresearch by tackling problems that address societal needs (e.g., improved regional-scale climate models and forecasting).

Participants also discussed ways to increase young scientists' participation in the paleoclimate community, noting that top-down skills transfer, support, and advice were widely sought. Suggestions included organization of "skills clinics," mentorship programs pairing junior and senior scientists, and better representation of young scientists at workshops, at panel meetings, and on program committees.

By the end of the meeting, participants had been exposed to innovative research across many subdisciplines, debated issues of concern to the paleoscience community, and forged new research links with peers from around the world. Abstracts and PDF versions of scientific presentations, and summaries of breakout group discussions, are posted at [www.pages-osm.org/ysm/](http://www.pages-osm.org/ysm/). This report was prepared with assistance from Thorsten Kiefer and Leah Witton (PAGES International Project Office, Bern, Switzerland).

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# ABOUT AGU

## Berkner Fellows at 2009 Joint Assembly

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Students and young scientists from economically depressed and developing countries who were this year's recipients of Berkner Travel Fellowships gathered for a reception on 26 May during the Joint Assembly in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. Joint Assembly, part of AGU's international collaboration program, was sponsored by eight societies: AGU; Canadian Geophysical Union; Geological Association of Canada; International Association of Hydrogeologists, Canadian National Chapter; Mineralogical Association of Canada; Society of Exploration Geophysicists; Mineralogical Society of America; and Geochemical Society.

Attendance and participation in the meeting by students and young researchers from different countries and research

fields are major objectives of AGU and partner societies. Berkner Travel Fellowships provide fellows with financial support for meeting registration, travel, and subsistence while attending the meeting. Applicants must be under 36 years of age, a first author and presenter of an oral or poster abstract at Joint Assembly, and a permanent resident of a low-income or lower-middle-income country.

This year's Berkner Fellows span a wide range of research fields including biogeosciences; Earth's deep interior; hydrology; space and planetary sciences; seismology; and volcanology, petrology, and geochemistry. Fellows, who were hosted by Canadian society cosponsors and the local organizing committee of Joint Assembly, indicated the importance of opportunities to interact at the meeting with peers from diverse countries.

Berkner Fellows are selected by AGU's Committee on International Participation (CIP). The committee is interested in increasing the number of applications submitted to the Berkner Fellowship program and in having more students and young researchers attend and participate in international meetings. This year, there were six fellows from China, India, Iran, and Nigeria. In 2008, there were 12 fellows from Azerbaijan, China, India, Iran, Iraq, Mongolia, and Peru. In 2007, there were eight fellows from Brazil, Ecuador, Guatemala, India, and Nicaragua.

CIP also welcomes applications for Berkner memberships. This related Berkner program provides 3-year AGU memberships to researchers and students from developing countries. Berkner programs are named for Lloyd Viel Berkner, who served as AGU president from 1959 to 1961 and who had a special interest in supporting and working with students and international colleagues. A memorial fund in honor of Berkner was established in the 1970s to continue his work. Other programs for young scientists and students to attend AGU and other international meetings include Joint Assembly/Fall Meeting student travel grants, Ocean Sciences Meeting