

2007 GSA Denver Annual Meeting (28–31 October 2007)

Paper No. 203-8

Presentation Time: 10:00 AM-10:15 AM

ANNUAL THEMATIC EXCURSIONS IN GEOLOGY: STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS

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Over the past 25 years, members of our department have organized extended (8-14 day) geologic field trips for Smith College students on an annual basis. These trips have been held principally during the January "Interterm" between semesters, but they have also taken place over the March break and during the summer. Many of the trips have included only Smith students, but some have been joint ventures with Five College students and faculty, especially from Amherst College. The most common destinations have been San Salvador Island, Bahamas, Hawaii, and Death Valley, but other destinations have included Mount St. Helens and the Cyclades in Greece. We believe the following factors have contributed to the durability and success of our trips. (1) Annual trips. Having thematic excursions on an annual basis has been very beneficial to our program because of the expectations and commitment engendered among our students, faculty, and administration. (2) Multiple leaders. Sharing the planning workload as well as teaching and supervision in the field significantly improves the experience for all participants. (3) Course credit. Credit adds legitimacy in the eyes of non-geologists, including parents, and helps justify funding from college administrators. (4) Budgeted funding. If there is an annual budget with rollover, planning is encouraged and time can be devoted to trip geology rather than to trip fundraising. (5) Student projects. Based on data collection in the field and/or library research prior to the trip, projects focus student attention and learning. (6) Priority to majors. Because of limited resources, geology majors and potential majors are given priority to participate, providing some common preparation and ensuring maximum impact of the excursions on our program.

[2007 GSA Denver Annual Meeting \(28–31 October 2007\)](#)
[General Information for this Meeting](#)

Session No. 203

[Learning in the Field: Effective Strategies for Teaching Undergraduate Geology Outside the Classroom](#)

Colorado Convention Center: 603

8:00 AM-12:00 PM, Wednesday, 31 October 2007

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