

**Mike Passarello '08**



Meet Mike, a 2008 CofC graduate with a B.S in Geology.

After graduating from CofC, I went on to pursue my M.S. in Hydrogeology and Geosciences from The University of Texas in Austin. Attending perspective student weekends at a variety of universities around the country helped me decide that UT was the place for me. Some of the more appealing aspects of UT were the school's close ties to the oil and gas industry, the reputation of the [Jackson School of Geosciences](#) as being one of the top programs in the country, its location in Austin, and their competitive compensation package (tuition + monthly stipend). I was fortunate enough to attend graduate school at UT partly due to the undergraduate research I did with Dr. Callahan, Dr. Levine's connection with my main advisor at UT via GSA, and Dr. Carew's history with the program as an alumni.



*Field trip mapping caves and other karstic features with the Applied Karstic Hydrogeology class at UT*

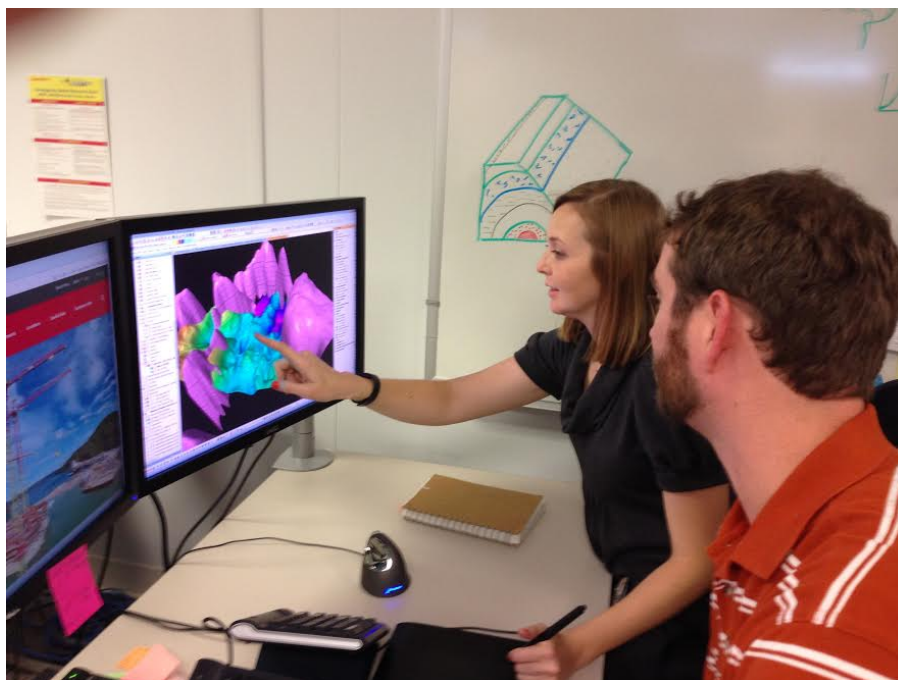
During my two years with the Jackson School, I was a teaching assistant for various undergraduate and graduate courses. My TA experience at CofC was tremendously helpful towards preparing me for these responsibilities. My Thesis was focused on modeling recharge to the local Edwards Aquifer from both natural and anthropogenic sources utilizing both GIS and MODFLOW. The results were used to predict sustainable yield and mitigate future drought conditions. I really enjoyed this work because it required me to work in tangent with various city and state organizations that monitor the aquifer as well as collaborate with the Water Resource Engineering department at UT. I was awarded the 2011 Water Conservation and Groundwater Stewardship Award by the Barton Springs Edwards Aquifer conservation district upon completion of my research. It was very rewarding to know that my research was being used to help manage this critical water resource.



*Me receiving the 2011 Water Conservation and Groundwater Stewardship Award from the Barton Springs Edwards Aquifer conservation district*

As I mentioned previously, the Jackson School of Geosciences often partners with the oil and gas industry. This partnership has enabled students potential employment opportunities which are competitive to obtain. Every fall, numerous companies come to UT in order to recruit new employees for internships which will hopefully turn in to full time offers. I was fortunate enough to get an internship with ExxonMobil's Geoscience Computing department during the summer of 2010. I believe I was chosen due to my experience with GIS, Remote Sensing, and other geoscience software...much of which I garnered while attending CofC. My summer internship project was to evaluate various technical applications for performing seismic well ties. This is a process in which seismic data and well data are "tied" to one another in order to understand their time-depth relationships.

I got hired on at ExxonMobil as a [User Support Geoscientist](#) in August, 2011. My role in the company is to provide technical computing support to the 1000+ geoscientist throughout the company. We consult with various business units in order to ensure they are up to date on the latest tools, are using the best techniques for the type of interpretation they are performing, and to basically make them as efficient and productive as possible. I am also responsible for delivering training in the form of formal classes as well as informal "lunch & learns." Interacting with people is a huge component of my job. Being known as the guy who can fix things or figure out the best process, is very rewarding and fun. Thus far, I've supported ArcGIS, ENVI, Petrel, RokDoc, GeoFrame, Openworks, and a whole suite of proprietary tools. I was most recently transferred into the Gulf of Mexico Production team and plan on being there for the next 2-3 years. I really enjoy production geology because it is a much smaller scale, you have a wealth of data, drill lots of wells, and you get to see how the company actually makes money.



*Consulting with one of my geoscientists on how best to model salt bodies that are prevalent in her field.*

ExxonMobil, like the rest of the oil and gas industry, provides an incredible amount of opportunities as a geoscientist. I never realized how almost every discipline of geology is utilized to find and produce hydrocarbons. We hire stratigraphers, structural geologists, geophysicists, environmental geologists, geochemists, paleobiologists, paleoclimatologists, and on and on. It is because of this that any individual's career path within the company is limitless. You get hired on as one position, but can easily switch to others if you are so inclined. This flexibility has been great as I have not stayed in one group for longer than a year. These companies also have world class training that continues until you retire, which can send you all over the globe. Its like field studies on steroids, but you're getting paid to be there! I would highly recommend any geology student to consider the oil and gas industry as a career path. If anyone is interested in learning more

about these types of opportunities, please reach out to one of our alumni in the [CofC Geology Alumni - Houston Chapter](#) group on Facebook.



*Me and Dorien McGee (Carew's Niece) at the Great White Sands National Park on an ExxonMobil field course*



*Photo from the most recent CofC Geology Alumni - Houston Chapter happy hour. From left to right: Mike Passarello '08, Timmon Drumm '09, Tim McClinton '09, Sharon McMullen '09, Lillian Comegys '11*