

**Stony Brook University
The Graduate School**

Doctoral Defense Announcement

Abstract

The Early History of Earth Science Education in New York State (1865-1910)

By

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By the end of the nineteenth century, the momentum for the idea of a more practical education better suited to life in a modern, technological world brought some major educational reform movements to the nation. Concurrent reform efforts at the state and national levels influenced both the historical development of geoscience education and the status of the geosciences in secondary schools. Three themes received increasing attention: 1) the nature and college acceptance of the subjects in the secondary courses of study, 2) the time allocation for the subjects, and 3) the emergence and expectation of the incorporation of laboratory and fieldwork. These themes were also prevalent in discussions within the national committees that were meeting at the time.

The historical richness of educational reform efforts during the late 1800s and the early 1900's established an important foundation upon which the Earth sciences are presently grounded. To understand the influences that shaped the Earth sciences syllabus into its modern form, and to establish a framework upon which recommendations for future curricular development can be made, an analysis of the origin and evolution of secondary Earth science is warranted. The research presented in this thesis explores the historical framework of the individual core Earth science topics (physical geography, geology, astronomy, and meteorology), beginning in 1865 with the introduction of the intermediate level physical geography Regents' examination and ending in 1910 with the loss of astronomy and geology as accepted high school Regents courses. The chronological structure of this study is intended to establish a set of specific historical events that contributed to the present curricular structure of New York State's Earth science course.

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