PROBLEMS OF GEOLOGICAL EDUCATION
AND OF EDUCATING GEOLOGISTS

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The pressing problems of geological education are many and varied but most of them
stem from deep-rooted situations in the geological profession which give rise to three
major questions.

1. How can the proper number of highly qualified young men be persuaded to major
in geology at our colleges and universities?

2. How can curricula be devised and implemented which will give geology majors
the required specialized—or, to put it bluntly, vocational—training for successful profes­
sional careers, and at the same time train them to think and act like liberally educated
citizens as well as scientific leaders?

3. How can the kind of young men who are potential inspired, and thus potentially
inspiring, teachers of geology be persuaded to become geological educators—and, once
having entered the teaching profession, how can they be kept immune from the blandish­
ments of industry so that they will remain as teachers?

These questions are as yet unanswered, and the difficult problems which inevitably
flow from them are unsolved. Obviously, they are all so closely interrelated that it is im­
possible to consider one question entirely apart from the others. But because more general
attention has been given to the first two major queries than to the third, this paper deals
more directly with the pressing problem of securing and holding outstanding teachers who
are absolutely requisite for the training of geologists with capacities for leadership in the
profession.

Let us first advance several cognate theses.

1. The disparity in the tangible short-term rewards accruing to teachers of geology, as
opposed to the financial returns possible for the commercial practitioners of the profes­
ion, is not fully appreciated. As a consequence, not a few men enter the teaching profession
without really being aware of its limitations. They are thus only temporary pedagogues
who escape from teaching into industry as soon as they—and their wives—have had the
rude awakening, and have had time to find a commercial position.

2. The long-term intangible, as well as tangible, rewards of a teacher, however, are
much more significant than is commonly believed, even by many members of the teaching
profession. If they were better understood, more men who would actually like to be teach­
ers, but think they can not afford the shabby luxury of a professor’s life, might follow their
natural inclination and, therefore, greatly enrich the geology profession.

3. Industrial and business management, until fairly recently at least, has been rather
oblivious concerning its great debt to colleges and universities generally, and to good
teachers specifically. Industry has always been willing to pay for its raw materials and to
pay a premium for the best. But its most important raw material—new technical man­

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