



Midland College

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For Immediate Release

Midland College Petroleum Professional Development Center receives funding from The Southwest Section of the American Association of Petroleum Geologists Donations designated for training unemployed energy professionals

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Curtis Helms, the new director of Midland College's (MC) Petroleum Professional Development Center (PPDC), has implemented several new initiatives. One of these is partnering with professional organizations to fund an unemployed professionals' scholarship in order to give back to the community. Helms has already secured funding from various sources, and recently the **Southwest Section of the American Association of Petroleum Geologists (SWS-AAPG)** donated \$7,500 toward this much-needed project.

"I am confident about the impact this partnership with AAPG can make," stated Helms. "The goal is to deliver premium training to the Permian Basin's oil and gas industry professionals. **Training for advanced or new skills is vitally important—the opportunity for networking and retaining talent in the Permian Basin is priceless.**"

Helms continued, "When I joined the PPDC about a year ago, I had been unemployed for several months due to the downturn in the industry. I know how tough it is for oil & gas professionals to find employment, and often taking a course, seminar or workshop is needed in order to 'brush up' on knowledge and current trends in the industry. Energy companies are looking for people who know the latest technology and can manage the technology to increase productivity. So, I want the PPDC to be able to offer the benefit of reduced tuition to those who suddenly find themselves needing to update their knowledge base in order to find successful employment. The funding will enable us to provide our offerings up to a maximum of \$2,500 per student."

Any unemployed member of SWS-AAPG (members of AAPG living in parts of North Texas, West Texas and/or Eastern New Mexico, or geoscientists who are members of one of the eight SWS-AAPG affiliated geological societies located in Wichita Falls, Dallas, Fort Worth, Midland, Abilene, San Angelo El Paso, or Roswell, New Mexico) are eligible for the reduced tuition funded by SWS-AAPG. **In addition, SWS-AAPG has also set aside a separate travel fund to further assist those members not living in Midland.**

"We are excited to participate with Midland College PPDC in giving back to the geoscience community, while preparing professionals for the future," said Mike Raines, current president of SWS-AAPG. "It is especially noteworthy that the SWS-AAPG Board of Directors Ad Hoc Committee helped work through

the idea of balancing Midland residents with those who live farther away by devising the travel assistance concept.”

Raines explained that Helms and former SWS-AAPG President Darrell Mauldin led the initial discussions to fund the project.

The PPDC is one of seven mid-career training centers worldwide recognized by AAPG. The center is located at the corner of Main Street and Illinois Avenue in Downtown Midland. Many of the PPDC’s classes, seminars and workshops qualify for re-certification credits for engineers, geologists, CPAs and petroleum landmen. For a list of courses, visit the center’s website at ce.midland.edu/ppdc

On the evening of November 16, the PPDC is coordinating the annual **Permian Basin Energy Leaders Legends Lecture Series** event at the Scharbauer Student Center Carrasco Room located on the MC main campus. Guest lecturer will be West Texas oil & gas executive **Ted Collins, Jr.** The event is open to Energy Leader members who have donated \$1,000 in 2016 toward scholarships for Midland College programs related to the oil & gas industry, which include Energy Technology, Engineering and Geology. Special guests will be members of the Petroleum Museum’s Energy Circle.

For more information about the November 16 event, as well as reduced PPDC tuition opportunities, contact the center at (432) 683-2832.

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