



# Professor of Geology



**Christopher DiLeonardo**  
Professor of Geology and  
Oceanography

Foothill College

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I am a Geoscientist with an expertise in the four-dimensional architecture of the earth's crust and tectonic systems. My studies utilize a number of technological advances including radar and thermal imaging of the earth's surface from space and creating 3-dimensional images inside the crust.

## Areas of expertise:

- Geosciences
- Tectonic systems
- Radar and thermal imaging

## How I first became interested in this profession:

My interest in geoscience was cultivated in high school but followed my childhood fascination with planetary exploration sparked by the "space race." My imagination was further fueled by my fourth grade teacher who mentioned the idea of engineering planetary environments for colonization of other worlds. Fostered partly by reading science fiction and the recognition of a need to better understand environmental and natural resource issues, I studied sciences in high school. By the time I took introductory science courses in college I became so fascinated that I went on to major in geology and later pursue a career in the geosciences.

## What helped prepare me for this job:

I guess being a geoscientist requires seeing the world with child-like eyes. Studying the earth requires looking at it with a sense of awe and wonder. In a way, I have been preparing for my work all of my life. My studies in college required a broad background and preparation in science and mathematics. To study the geosciences you must be prepared in basic areas such as chemistry, physics, and mathematics through calculus. In addition, special study in the geosciences and a great deal of "fieldwork" — looking at the earth up close — all helped in preparing for my work today.

## My role models or inspirations:

I have several inspirations in the geosciences. Alfred Wegner, who was the first to recognize the dramatic far-reaching movements of the continents, was one such person. It was his work that led to a greater understanding of movements of the Earth's crust. Another was Tanya Atwater, who was able to use the emerging plate tectonic model in the early 70's to explain the geology of much of Western North America.

## My education and training:

- Ph.D., Earth Sciences, University of California Santa Cruz
- M.S., Geology, San Jose State University
- B.A., Geology, San Jose State University

## My career path:

I have worked as a researcher for academic institutions, government agencies, and for industry. Over the last two decades I have spent much of my time teaching for a number of colleges, including Foothill College where I am now the head of the Earth Sciences program.

## What I like about my job:

I like being able to show students new ways to look at the earth. I especially like fieldwork and enjoy doing research or teaching field workshops in exotic

## What I don't like about my job:

In my role as college professor I am faced with assessing the progress of my students. I hate grading tests just about as much as my students hate taking them.

## My advice to anyone interested in this occupation:

Get a great general background in the geosciences and other areas of math and science as an undergraduate. Don't specialize in any particular sub-discipline until graduate school.

## Additional Resources:

- American Institute of Biological Sciences  
<http://www.aibs.org>
- American Physiological Society  
<http://www.faseb.org/aps>
- American Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology  
<http://www.biophysics.org/biophys/society/biohome.htm>
- American Society for Microbiology  
<http://www.asmsusa.org>
- Astrobiology Summer Academy  
<http://academy.arc.nasa.gov/>
- Biotechnology Industry Organization  
<http://www.bio.org/welcome.html>
- Graduate Student Researchers Program  
<http://spacelink.nasa.gov/Instructional.Materials/NASA.Educational.Products/Graduate.Student.Researchers.Program.Brochure/.index.html>
- MATHCOUNTS Competition  
<http://mathcounts.org/>
- Minority University Research and Education Programs  
<http://mured.nasaprs.com/>
- NASA Cooperative Education Program for college students  
<http://spacelink.nasa.gov/Educational.Services/NASA.Education.Programs/Student.Support/NASA.Cooperative.Education.Program/.index.html>
- NASA Jobs  
<http://nasajobs.nasa.gov/>
- NASA Office of Life and Microgravity Sciences and Applications  
<http://www.hq.nasa.gov/office/olmsa/>
- NASA SHARP Internship Program for high-schoolers  
<http://www.mtsibase.com/sharp/>
- NASA Student Employment  
[http://nasajobs.nasa.gov/stud\\_opps/employment/index.htm](http://nasajobs.nasa.gov/stud_opps/employment/index.htm)
- NASA Student Involvement Program student contests  
<http://www.nsip.net/index.cfm>
- Order NASA career videos such as "Engineers: Turning Ideas into Reality," "Careers: Aerospace Engineer" or "Reaching for the Stars" from NASA CORE.  
<http://core.nasa.gov>
- Student's Guide to Astrobiology  
<http://www.astrobiology.com/student.html>
- Tech-Interns.com  
<http://www.tech-interns.com/>

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