

# **Merger of the University of Louisiana Geology Museum and the Lafayette Science Museum and Potential Use as an Educational Tool**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The UL Geology Museum (ULGM) formerly housed in Madison Hall has been largely moved and merged with the Lafayette Science Museum in downtown Lafayette. Although the move means that the majority of specimens are no longer housed on campus where they would be available for students, the new home has a number of potential advantages, including more display space and greater exposure to the general public. The ULGM includes a significant quantity of mineral, rock, and fossil specimens that were donated to or collected by the geology program and put on display or stored.

The old museum was used for a variety of educational purposes, including quizzes and assignments for geology classes related to mineral identification, resource usage, Earth history, evolution, etc. Also, outside groups came for educational tours of the facility not only to observe minerals, rocks, or fossils, but also to determine geologic age, chemical composition, etc. For example, in order for Boy Scouts/Webelos to earn a "geology badge," they had to learn aspects of the rock cycle, mineral properties like hardness, and ore minerals.

All of the same things could be done with the new situation, but the advantages of more space and better, more modern displays, as well as a larger audience, including UL students, enable many more people to be exposed to and to learn about geology. The addition of a new lab space with an observation window will enable visitors to see ongoing hands-on research. In summary, the new museum will provide a much better environment for displaying the ULGM materials and a potential to grow into a much better museum as a joint venture of UL and the City of Lafayette.