



- Without understanding societal needs, how can researchers design research which is truly relevant to those needs?
- Without access to high quality graduates and excellent underpinning fundamental and applied research, how can geoscientists in ‘industry’ or public service deliver their expertise effectively?

9th December 2018

Dr. John W. Williams, one of the United States representatives on the Task Group on Global Geoscience Professionalism (TG-GGP) presented with his colleague Dr. Randy Kath a poster on their research: Need For Academic Professional Ethics Training To Prepare Candidates To Take The National Association Of State Boards Of Geology (ASBOG®) National Licensing Examinations at the annual meeting of the American Geophysical Union in Washington.

5. IUGS INHIGEO Anniversaries. Alexander von Humboldt: “Unkelstein” in the River Rhine, Basalt and the Pyramids – A Strange Connection 250 Years Ago



International Commission on the
History of Geological Sciences

Without a doubt von Humboldt (1769-1859) was, and still is, one of the most famous naturalists. His global activities, his expeditions to America (1799-1804) and Asia (1829) and his holistic view of nature are all deserving of recognition.

There is much to say about Humboldt’s life and his contributions to science. Let us consider his first work dedicated to geology. After his time as a student at the Universities of Frankfurt/Oder and Göttingen, he undertook an excursion lasting several weeks to the river Rhine. His observation of basalts between Andernach and Bonn resulted in



a short book with the title “Mineralogische Beobachtungen über einige Basalte am Rhein” (1790). He asked the stoneworkers about their experiences. From today’s perspective, this method of including statements of practical workers was much more innovative than Humboldt’s cautious interpretations that tended nevertheless to support the Neptunist theoretical explanation that was dominant in this time.

Read more at: http://iugs.org/uploads/Reports/Anniversaries_INHIGEO_January2019.pdf



Fig. 2 – Frans Hogenberg, the attack on Unkel (Neuwied), Germany, c. 1583. Wikisource. The “Unkelstein” was identified as basalt; the basalt rocks that were seen in the Rhine (on the right bank of the river) were considered dangerous for shipping.