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Research on Ross Ice Shelf comes with Zumberge to UNL

Wherever UNL Chancellor James Zumberge goes, the Ross Ice Shelf project follows.

Zumberge, a former professor of geology, was a recipient of a \$1 million research grant of the U.S. National Science Foundation as a part of the U.S. Antarctic Research Program. The grant is to be used for research of the Ross Ice Shelf, according to John Splettstossen. The management office of the project is located at

The Ross Ice Shelf is a floating mass of ice attached on most of its sides to Antarctica. Its size is equal to that of Spain, Splettstossen said.

The Ross Ice Shelf project evolved from the interest of scientists who believe that a number of scientific problems could be solved if holes were drilled through the Ross Ice Shelf to sample the ice and the bottom sediments, he said.

Scientists and students

Splettstossen said scientists from 12 countries spend from early October until the end of January at Antarctica doing experiments in which holes are drilled in the ice.

He said a total of 60 scientists including three UNL students participated last fall in the field work at Antarctica.

October 1975 will mark the third year the scientists have traveled to Antarctica for field projects, Splettstossen said. After the projects field work is done, data collected is fed into computers at UNL for data statistics.

The first step in the examination of the Ross Ice Shelf involved a geophysical and glaciological program that was begun in the 1973-1974 field season and will continue for several years, he said. The program is designed to measure ice and water thicknesses, snow accumulation, surface movement, and response of the shelf to tides.

The program of drilling through the ice shelf began in 1975-76.

Core drilling

Splettstossen said the RISP management office also has similar responsibilities for the Greenland Ice Sheet Program, a multinational interdisciplinary program to investigate the near surface and inner nature of large ice masses by core drilling, core studies and geophysical and airborne remote sensing techniques

Because of the heavy involvement of ice core drilling in these polar projects the RISP management office has become a center for the development and construction of ice-core drilling equipment and its use, he said.

Splettstossen said the management office is staffed by a director, a co-director, two field operation managers, a drilling research associate and a secretary. The staff works closely with research investigators and personnel from the National Science Foundation's Office of Polar Programs to plan and conduct the details of research programs being managed by the RISP management office.

He said students will again be hired this year for the field work at Antarctica. Any student who applies is eligible. The students will be responsible for putting markers on the ice for measurement and surveying these markers and recording appropriate data.

The students as well as those involved in the project are paid through the grant financing. They are employed full-time except for those hired on a seasonal basis.

Splettstossen said the six employes are paid through the university payroll. The university receives the money for salaries from the foundation.

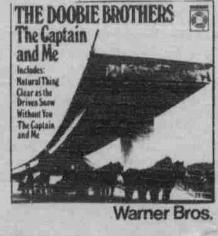


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