

Peter Flemings Named Interim Chair of Department of Earth and Planetary Sciences

FEBRUARY 9, 2026

Jackson School of Geosciences Professor Peter Flemings, a lauded geologist who led a multi-year mission to collect core samples of methane hydrates in the Gulf of Mexico, has been named interim chair of the Department of Earth and Planetary Sciences (EPS).

Flemings was appointed by former chair Professor Danny Stockli, who was recently [named interim dean of the Jackson School \(https://www.jsg.utexas.edu/news/2026/01/danny-stockli-named-interim-dean-of-the-jackson-school-of-geosciences/\)](https://www.jsg.utexas.edu/news/2026/01/danny-stockli-named-interim-dean-of-the-jackson-school-of-geosciences/). Stockli said Flemings' track record as an innovative leader fits his new role as department chair.

"Peter is a world-class scientist who leads a top-notch research group and cutting-edge laboratory facilities in the department," Stockli said. "He has close ties to both the Institute for Geophysics and the Bureau of Economic Geology. Peter's record of research accomplishment and prowess speaks for itself."

Flemings said he is proud to be taking on this new leadership role in the department, the academic heart of the Jackson School and home to one of the largest combined graduate and undergraduate enrollments of any geoscience program in the country.

"I am honored by Danny's kind words, and I am excited to have the opportunity to contribute to EPS, the Jackson School and UT," Flemings said. "I look forward to working with all of you to further strengthen EPS and the Jackson School. We have a great team of staff, students, and faculty in place to make this so."

Flemings said one of his goals as chair is to make it easier for the department faculty to achieve



Peter Flemings, interim chair of the Department of Earth and Planetary Sciences

impactful teaching and research in a collaborative fashion.

“We will focus on freeing the faculty to do what they do best,” he said.

Flemings also cited the Jackson School’s new Strategic Investment Plan that funds research in energy and global change, Earth hazards, and planetary dynamics. He envisions that these initiatives will also provide a foundation to build stronger educational and research partnerships with other departments across UT.

In the short term, Flemings said he is focused on helping to recruit the next generation of graduate students and a new faculty member in the broad area of sedimentary geoscience.

Flemings leads an industry-supported research consortium, UT GeoFluids (<https://geofluids.ig.utexas.edu/>), that studies pore pressure and fluid flow in basins. With Demian Saffer, director of the University of Texas Institute for

Geophysics, Flemings co-leads the GeoMechanics laboratory (<https://www.jsg.utexas.edu/geomechanics-geofluids>), where they study the geomechanics of materials to illuminate Earth behavior in processes such as landslides, earthquakes, hydrocarbon entrapment, and permafrost melting. He is the current holder of the Leonidas T. Barrow Centennial Chair in Mineral Resources, and was recently awarded the Robert R. Berg Outstanding Research Award by the American Association of Petroleum Geologists.


Among his many scientific accomplishments, Flemings led a Department of Energy-funded project to study methane hydrates, an energy-rich substance that makes up as much as 20 percent of the world’s mobile carbon. Watch a short documentary on the research. (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hGRRbLVL37M>)

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