



Gary Axen

GRFP Recipient: 1987

Undergraduate Institution:
B.S. and M.S. 1980, Massachusetts
Institute of Technology

Graduate Institution:
Ph.D. 1991, Harvard University

Graduate Field of Study:
Structural Geology and Tectonics

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Current Position:
Associate Professor of
Geology and Chair,
Department of Earth and
Environmental Science, New
Mexico Institute of Mining
and Technology

RESEARCH INTERESTS //

Gary Axen is a structural geologist with research interests in fault mechanics, continental tectonics (extensional, convergent and strike-slip), fault- and shear-zone evolution and thermochronology. His research into fault mechanics focuses on low-angle normal faults, which share many common mechanical conundrums with the San Andreas Fault. Axen's recent tectonic projects focus on the complex 3-D evolution of oblique rifting and collision, and his studies in low-angle normal fault terrains have led to projects to advance thermochronologic methods.

A FOND MEMORY FROM MY EXPERIENCE AS A FELLOW //

"There are many, but the best was to be involved in the incredibly exciting research groups of Dr. Brian Wernicke (who I believe also received a GRF when he was in grad school) while working on my Ph.D. Brian and my cohort of fellow students (his and others) taught me how to recognize the important scientific questions to ask, to hone those questions for funding and presentation, how to defend qualitative geological results in the face of incorrect quantitative theory, how to integrate disparate types of field and laboratory data into a meaningful whole, and how to have a great time while doing it all."

HOW I BENEFITED FROM THE GRF PROGRAM //

"The GRF program benefitted me primarily by making it unnecessary to be supported as a teaching assistant (TA) while earning my PhD. I already had several years of teaching experience in instructor positions with University of Nevada, Las Vegas, Idaho State and Northern Arizona University (NAU), and

was happy to spend a few years focused on research. It was these experiences, especially five years at NAU during which time I was lucky to be given essentially full faculty rights in the Geology Department (teaching, advising four Masters students, writing proposals) that convinced me that an academic career was for me. The GRF made getting the Ph.D. much more enjoyable, productive and shorter than if I had needed to be a TA.”

AWARDS/ HONORS //

- Fellow, Geological Society of America (1998)
- Faculty career development award, University of California, Los Angeles (1998)
- Best Professor in Applied Geophysics, Centro de Investigación Científica y de Educación Superior de Ensenada (1993)
- Sistema Nacional de Investigadores, Mexico (1993)
- McDermott Scholarship, Massachusetts Institute of Technology (1975)

POSITION PROFILE //

- 2005-present - Associate professor, New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology
- 2001-05 - Associate professor, University of California, Los Angeles
- 1995-2001 - Assistant professor, University of California, Los Angeles
- 1992-95 - Investigador Titular (approximately equivalent to associate professor.), CICESE–Centro de Investigación Científica y de Educación Superior de Ensenada
- 1994-95 - Adjunct faculty, San Diego State University
- 1992 - Visiting lecturer (half time), Harvard University
- 1991-92 - Visiting lecturer (half time), Massachusetts Institute of Technology
- 1991-92 - Postdoctoral fellow (half time), Harvard University
- 1990-91 - Research fellow, Harvard University
- 1985-87 - Research Fellow, Northern Arizona University
- 1985-85 - Faculty Appointment, U.S. Geological Survey
- 1982-85 - Instructor of geology, Northern Arizona University
- 1981-82 - Visiting instructor, Idaho State University
- 1980-81 - Geologic consultant, HydroGeoChem Inc., Tucson, Ariz.
- 1980-80 - Visiting lecturer, University of Nevada, Las Vegas

