



NEWS RELEASE

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USI PROFESSOR TO STUDY GEOLOGY OF PAKISTAN UNDER NSF GRANT

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A geology professor at the University of Southern Indiana will return to the mountains of Pakistan next year in a continuing search for clues to earth formations and movements the last 200 million years and their effect on climate, including the greenhouse effect.

Dr. Joseph A. DiPietro, USI assistant professor of geology since 1991, was in Pakistan eight years ago while studying for his Ph.D. at Oregon State University. His return -- three months each in the fall of 1994 and 1995, and 1 1/2 months each in 1996 and 1997 -- will be under the auspices of a \$250,000 grant from the National Science Foundation.

DiPietro's work will occur in the Tarabela Lake area in northern Pakistan, where little research has been done. He hopes to be able to match historical accounts of ancient events with evidence he finds, with a result of introducing fresh ideas on what is occurring in the region today.

Included will be a study of the Indus Syntaxis earthquake fault area. DiPietro said events in the area may be repeating early events that created Nanga Parbat, a 26,600-foot mountain to the east that is still growing and may surpass Mount Everest in the next half-million years. DePietro also will search for insights into the greenhouse effect of 40 million years ago that may have a bearing on the current greenhouse effect.

The Connecticut native hopes to entice students into the study of geology. The self-described "high school derelict" was persuaded to enter college by a counselor; geology was among his first classes and he found himself hooked on the subject. He will involve USI students in the Pakistan study, taking one to Pakistan and one to Oregon State, where they will use specialized equipment to evaluate rock samples, while USI students at home will sort and work on rocks sent back from Pakistan.