RECOMMENDATION OF THE GEOSCIENCES DEPARTMENT FACULTY TO
BIFURCATE THE GEOSCIENCES MAJOR INTO TWO MAJORS: GEOSCIENCES
AND ATMOSPHERIC SCIENCES

I. Current Structure of the Major in Geosciences (current Undergraduate Bulletin
copy attached; introductory portion reproduced here)

The Department of Geosciences offers majors in the atmospheric and geological
sciences leading to the Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Science degrees. The
Atmospheric Sciences and Geology-Geophysics Options in the major lead to the
BS degree . . . The General Option in the major leads to the BA degree . . .

Course of Study: Majors
All majors in Geosciences must complete at least 15 credits at the advanced level
(numbered 300 or above) in residence at UWM.

ATMOSPHERIC SCIENCES
The atmospheric sciences component of the department offers courses designed to
prepare students for professional work in meteorology in both government and
private service and for graduate study in atmospheric sciences. The Atmospheric
Sciences Option leads to a BS degree with a major in geosciences and requires
the following courses . . .

All students in the Atmospheric Sciences Option also must take the following
courses . . .

GEOLOGICAL SCIENCES
The geological sciences component of the department offers both a Geology-
Geophysics and General Option in the major . . .

II. Summary of Proposed Change

Divide the existing major into two majors, Atmospheric Sciences and
Geosciences, the latter of these having two options, Geology-Geophysics and
General.

III. Justification for Proposed Change

Atmospheric Science has achieved recognition in the academic and professional
arenas, as well as among the general public, as a distinct discipline. This distinct
nature is made apparent in academia by the predominance of the atmospheric
sciences as a separate department on many university campuses. Professionally,
most atmospheric scientists are employed in this core discipline, in both the
Federal government (NOAA/NWS, NOAA/ERL, NASA, etc.) and the private
sector (meteorological consulting firms). At UWM, the lack of a distinct structure
for atmospheric sciences is largely the result of external and historical
considerations related to management. The program, which always has been
small, began at UWM in the college of Engineering and was transferred to 
Geosciences (as part of the College of Letters and Science) in the 1970s. 
Throughout its history at UWM, the atmospheric sciences program has operated 
with considerable independence within these larger administrative structures.

Referring to the atmospheric sciences program now as a separate major will in no 
way hinder its current or future operations; the proposed action does not involve 
any changes in the courses required for completion of the program. Furthermore, 
this action will give the UWM program the increased visibility that it needs to 
attract additional majors and to help those students achieve their future career 
goals (including admission to graduate school) in the field of atmospheric 
sciences.

IV. Proposed Structure of the Major in Geosciences (refer to Undergraduate Bulletin 
copy attached; introductory portion, as modified, presented here)

The Department of Geosciences offers majors in the atmospheric and geological 
sciences leading to the Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Science degrees. The 
Atmospheric Sciences Major and Geology-Geophysics Option of the Geosciences 
Major lead to the BS degree... The General Option in the Geosciences Major 
leads to the BA degree...

Course of Study: Majors
All majors in Atmospheric Sciences and Geosciences must complete at least 15 
credits at the advanced level (numbered 300 or above) in residence at UWM.

ATMOSPHERIC SCIENCES
The atmospheric sciences major faculty offers courses designed to prepare 
students for professional work in meteorology in both government and private 
service and for graduate study in atmospheric sciences. The Atmospheric 
Sciences Major leads to a BS degree and requires the following courses...

All students in the Atmospheric Sciences Major also must take the following 
courses...

GEOLOGICAL SCIENCES
The geological sciences major faculty offers both Geology-Geophysics and 
General Options in the major...

V. Recommendation for Action

That the bifurcation of the geosciences major be approved effective Semester II, 

Approved: Geosciences faculty, December 1, 1998