History

History of the Department of Geology

With establishment of the University of Ljubljana in 1919, Mineralogical-petrographic Institute has been set up at the Technical Faculty, led from the start by prof. dr. Karel Hinterlechner, former Chief geologist at the geological center of Vienna. At the same time Institute for Mineral deposits was founded. A year later, Chair for Geology and paleontology at the Faculty of Arts was formed. For many years chair was headed by prof. dr. Marijan Salopek, a former curator of the Croatian Natural History Museum in Zagreb. The following year, in 1920, chair was renamed to the Institute of Geology and paleontology.
The first two Institutes belonged to the Technical University until 1927 when they merged into the Institute of mineralogy, petrography and theory of mineral deposits, which in 1935 was renamed to the Institute of mineralogy, petrography and the theory of mineral deposits to remain at the Technical University until 1950. That same year, Technical high school was founded in Ljubljana. Institute of mineralogy, petrografijo and the theory of mineral deposits belonged to the Faculty of Mining and Metallurgy, from 1954 onwards to the Department of Mining, Metallurgy and Chemical Technology, and from 1960 onwards to the section of Geology Department of Mining of Faculty of Natural Sciences and Technology, University of Ljubljana.
Changes in addresses were no less numerous at the Institute of Geology and paleontology. Until 1950 it belonged to the Faculty of Arts, which passed it to the newly created Natural-mathematical faculty. This was in 1954 again joined with the Faculty of Arts into Mathematics-Natural sciences-Faculty of Arts. From this faculty the additional Faculty of Natural sciences separated in 1957. In 1960 it merged with the Technological faculty in the Faculty of science and technology, which still holds the Institute of Geology and paleontology.
Chair of quartarology was founded in 1946 as an Institute for human prehistory within the Faculty of Arts. It later underwent the same transformations as the Chair of Geology and paleontology.
The youngest segment of Geology Department is the Cahir of Economic Geology, which was founded in 1960, although the Institute for the theory of mineral deposits was established already in 1919, but only more or less formal. In recent years, disciplines which are taught at this department, became fairly important, and therefore have been separated in a special Chair.
The special role among all chairs had Chair of quartarology. It is true that the Chair has been at pains to cover all disciplines, that are present on quartarology departments at foreign universities, especially in areas where younger sediments are more widespread than in our country. Chair had special significance in former Yugoslavia because no similar Department existed on any other Yugoslav universities. Therefore, it's work has had a special role in Palaeolithic research throughout the former Yugoslavia.
The needs of the economy after the Second World War introduced a new field of geology studies – practical geology. Besides this direction, mineralogical – petrographic and palaeonthological direction were also present. For a while, pedagogicaly oriented courses existed, such as geology-chemistry, biology-geology and geography-geology. Thus we had first graduates after the Second World War with geology as the main subject matter, graduates who combined geology with chemistry, biology and geography, geology graduate engineers and graduates of the mineralogy with petrography. Graduates of pedagogical courses mainly got employed in middle and partly in the primary schools. Other graduates were primarily recruited by the Geological institute in Ljubljana, by the ZRMK – Technological Building & Civil Engineering Institute also in Ljubljana and in the various

mines, especially in Idrija and Mežica . Some of them were given place at a university in the Slovenian Academy of Arts and Sciences, the Natural History Museum and elsewhere.
Scientific work of Institutes was initially limited to narrower fields, which were nursed by individual teachers, for example studies of pleistocene fauna. The mineralogy and petrology achieved specific results only after the arrival of professor V.V. Nikitin, who was already world famous for his investigations on the dependence of positions of optical indicatrix of feldspars by their chemical composition. He dedicated his work at the University of Ljubljana to the study of rocks and minerals of the former Yugoslavia. On this field he as well as his scholars acquired great renown, thereby spreading reputation of the University of Ljubljana.
Post-war period the development of geology in Slovenia is characterized by a number of professors and scientists: J. Duhovnik, I. Rakovec, S. Grafenauer, C. Šlebinger, D. Kuščer, A. Ramovš, M. Pleničar, V. Osterc, V. Gregoric, M. Drovenik.
In 1995 the members of the Faculty of Natural Sciences and Technology parted. Department of Geology has become one of the five departments that make up the Faculty of Natural Sciences adn Engineering at the University of Ljubljana.
Currently, the Department has three chairs. Graduates from the Department of Geology obtain title engineer geology. Number of students enrolled and graduated is increasing from the early nineties. The upper potential limit of students enrolled in the first year is fifty and is achieved and even surpassed every year. Enrollment is limited due to spatial and instrumental abilities needed for the implementation of the pedagogical process.
In the nineties we updated the content of the undergraduate curriculum.
The program provides a broad range of knowledge of the palaeontology, stratigraphy, economic geology, tectonics, hydrology, geophysics, sedimentology, to crystallography, mineralogy, petrology, geochemistry and ecology. A thorough knowledge of mathematics, physics and chemistry represent knowledge base to listed geological fields. Dealing with one or two foreign languages and basic computer programs already belongs to any future intellectual literacy.
A good geologist is a geologist with with all his heart and soul. His work is not confined to laboratory and office but spreads all over the globe. This means that any political borders do not represent the end of employment opportunities. Even today, our graduates are employed outside the Slovenian territory. Geology is a science, which knows no national boundaries.