Dave West, Professor of Geology

Much of this past year has seen me teaching my normal load of courses in the department *(Dynamic Earth, Structural Geology, Earthquakes and Volcanoes, Tectonics)* and continuing my field-based research in south-central Maine. This fall I’m enjoying a one-semester sabbatical from teaching and have been devoting most of my extra time to field work in Maine. I recently published my eighth 1:24,000 scale bedrock geologic map from my field studies in Maine (that’s over 400 square miles), and I should have an additional two maps published as a result of my extra field work this fall. Who says no one does bedrock mapping anymore?!

This spring I was fortunate enough to be awarded a Whiting Fellowship that provided me with support for two weeks of field investigation in Iceland for the purposes of enriching my teaching. Having spent the majority of my career studying ancient rocks in the Appalachians that were produced during compressional tectonics, the modern extensional environment of Iceland proved to be quite eye-opening! In addition to encountering a surprisingly diverse array of volcanic rocks (lots of rhyolites!) and extensional tectonic structures, I was blown away by the spectacular glaciers and dramatic deeply eroded coastline. An additional motivation for the trip was to provide impetus for bringing Middlebury students, and perhaps alumni, to this incredible geologic setting. Stay tuned!

I would be remiss if I didn’t comment on what will be my colleague Ray Coish’s last full year of teaching in the department. As many of you know from first-hand experience, Ray has been the heart and soul of Middlebury Geology for over 35 years, and he has been a wonderful colleague and mentor to us all. Ray and I have published several papers together over the years, and we’re currently collaborating on additional projects – so I don’t plan on letting him spend too much time in the rocking chair! We know Ray plans to remain in the area and we look forward to his continued engagement and friendship.