EGI Energy & Geoscience Institute
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF UTAH

Since 1972

David Thul, MSc

Affiliate Scientist

Petroleum Systems & Geochemistry

David is a petroleum geochemist and geologist with experience in unconventional petroleum exploration across North America. He has worked with a range of clients from two-man exploration and production companies to some of the largest unconventional petroleum producers in the United States. His work experience covers 19 sedimentary basins in North America with particular expertise in Cretaceous source rocks of the Rocky Mountain Region and Gulf Coast as well as Paleozoic source rocks of the Rocky Mountain Region and Canada. As Manager of Petroleum Geochemistry David's experience is applied globally across a wide range of EGI projects.

As a petroleum geoscientist, David's focus is to evaluate and understand source rock maturity in the context of a basin's stratigraphic and tectonic evolution. David's geochemical specialty is Rock-Eval™ and SRA™ pyrolysis and he also has experience interpreting biomarker, vitrinite reflectance, and gas isotope data. David has worked extensively in 1-D and 3-D basin modeling to predict hydrocarbon charge and phase.

David earned a B.A. in Geology from the University of Colorado at Boulder and a M.Sc. in Geology from the Colorado School of Mines. At CU, his focus was on numerical modeling of earth systems. David's M.Sc. thesis research at CSM was on the maturity of the Niobrara Formation in the Denver Basin. While at CSM, he managed the Source Rock Analyzer Lab and collaborated on multiple projects across the Rocky Mountains.

David is currently working towards a Ph.D. in Geology at the Colorado School of Mines. His dissertation project, a characterization of the geochemistry of the Uinta Basin petroleum systems with emphasis on the Green River unconventional play, is funded by the Green River Research Consortium.

At EGI, David developed a research program focused on optimizing the search for, and production of petroleum. His research interests pertain to the generation, expulsion, and migration of petroleum. Heading up EGI's Petroleum Geochemistry group until mid 2017, David led fundamental research about the process of petroleum evolution (e.g. quantifying the effect of organic matter on petroleum fluid retention and migration within source rocks) as well as applied research (e.g. defining the geochemical prerequisites for successful unconventional petroleum systems) through the combination of high-resolution geochemical measurements, basin scale datasets, and integrated information about structure, stratigraphy, and basin history.

David was the project lead for South American Shales, Phase 2 and Petroleum Systems Atlas of Mexico as well as lead geochemist on major EGI international projects in South America, China, Mexico, PNG, and others. His experience in North American shale systems guided geochemical assessments in each of these regions, ensuring their resources can be accurately compared to in-production analog systems.

David is now pursuing a career in the oil industry.

Research Interests

- Source rock maturity and basin evolution
- Hydrocarbon charge history and phase prediction
- Petroleum migration in unconventional systems

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