

GeoNews

Department of Geography and Environmental Studies Newsletter



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Letter from the Chair

*As the seasons have turned, another year has flown,
In the realm of knowledge, we have thrived and grown.
Together we've ventured, hand in hand,
Through triumphs and challenges, we've made our stand.*

*In lecture halls filled with eager minds,
In laboratories where innovation binds,
We've explored the depths of wisdom's well,
And in our academic journey, we've cast our spell.*

*Through the corridors of discovery, we've roamed,
Unearthing truths and making them known.
With research papers and studies profound,
We've pushed boundaries, breaking new ground.*



The lines of these beautiful words go on and on... I am sure that you have figured out by now who authored this poem. Yes, ChatGPT, with my prompt asking for “a poem to celebrate another successful year of an academic department”.

The launching of ChatGPT on November 30, 2022 as an artificial intelligence chatbot was revolutionary. Our society’s reaction was, and still is, a mixed bag of excitement and concern. A heated discussion on its potential impacts on education started right away, so much so that the first counter app to help detect the use of AI in essay writing was released only 32 days later, on January 2, 2023. However, the situation in the rest of the academic year is not as bad as some of us worried. I was having a conversation with another faculty member just a few days ago about how we might respond to ChatGPT. Our discussion was geared towards how to adapt and adopt ChatGPT into teaching-and-learning, just as reported by McMurtrie and Supiano (2023)[1]. This is exactly what we do – to adapt to changes while pursuing development; to seek new opportunities for growth. This has been the known secret for the success of our department.

When we were at a growth bottleneck in the early 1980s, our faculty, under the leadership of then department chair, Dr. Richard Boehm, spearheaded the Master’s of Applied Geography (M.A.Geo) program focusing on preparing students for professional careers. The M.A.Geo program, the earliest in the nation, became such a success that we regularly had more than 120 students in the program, keeping us running at full capacity (or slightly beyond). Our M.A.Geo program gained a national reputation for its bold vision and effective student preparedness.

Fast forward to the 1990s, when Southwest Texas State University (SWT) started planning to offer doctoral programs, our department, led by late department chair, Dr. Lawrence Estaville, successfully summoned all mighty resources and talents to launch the first three doctoral programs on campus. We became the only geography department in a higher education institute to host three doctoral programs.

[1] McMurtrie, B. and Supiano, B. [Caught Off Guard by AI – Professors scrambled to react to ChatGPT this spring – and started planning for the fall.](#)
The Chronicle of Higher Education. June 13, 2023.

Letter from the Chair



Our first two doctoral students graduated in May 2000. Until May 2023, the Department of Geography and Environmental Studies at Texas State University has graduated a total of 168 doctoral students!

On top of these accolades has been our undergraduate programs. We have one of the largest undergraduate enrollments among all geography programs in the nation. Whenever I am asked by peers at national conferences about how we have and maintain such a large program, the pride that fills my heart is what, I am sure, you are all familiar with.

For all these successes, I always make sure to commemorate the four pillars of ours – faculty, students, staff, and alumni – as I discussed in last year’s Department Newsletter, and as ChatGPT put in the poem for me –

*Our faculty, the guiding lights so bright,
Our staff, the unsung heroes behind the scenes,
Our students, the vibrant souls we teach,
And our alumni, the unreserved support we treasure,*

I am sure that as you flip through this issue of our Newsletter, you will appreciate these pillars more.

We are certainly going through a time of change and of excitement. While navigating out of the Pandemic, we welcomed President Damphousse and his leadership. With Student Success and Run to R1 as two pillars to define TXST’s Hopes & Aspirations High, we are challenged (again) to make our department’s great contributions to the advancement of this University. We are facing an array of opportunities. With our adaptivity, resilience, passion, and dedication, we had our growth spurts and we made history to become one of the best geography programs in the nation. I have a strong feeling that the next growth spurt is in formation, as ChatGPT pointed out wisely –

*With gratitude and pride, we raise our voice,
Toasting to the next chapter, the next choice.
May the coming year bring even greater success,
As we continue on our academic quest.*

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Yongmei Lu'.

Yongmei Lu, Chair
Department of Geography and Environmental Studies

Alumni Reunion and Student Celebration 2022



@ the Texas Rock House

The 30th Alumni Reunion and Student Celebration
Join us at the Meadows Center on April 27, 2024!
Stay tuned for more details

News and Events 2023

Meadows Center Awarded \$2.5 Million for Climate Change Research to Protect Texas Water

The Meadows Center for Water and the Environment at Texas State University has received approximately \$2.5 million in federal appropriations in support of the Climate Change Impact on Water Initiative.

U.S. Representative Lloyd Doggett announced an initial \$2 million in funding in June 2022. He also announced additional funding on February 9th, 2023.



Rep. Lloyd Doggett (right) and Robert Mace (left) unveil the details of this new project on June 20, 2022. (Photo credit: The Meadows Center)

Dr. Soe Myint's recent research featured on EOS: Science News by AGU

Dr. Myint and his research team's recent paper: *An innovative scheme to confront the trade-off between water conservation and heat alleviation with environmental justice for urban sustainability: The case of Phoenix, Arizona* has been selected by the American Geophysical Union (AGU) to be featured on Eos.org.

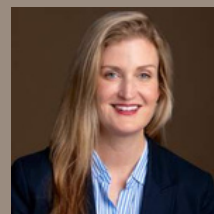
Fewer than 2% of papers are selected to be featured by the AGU. This featured paper on EOS is part of Dr. Myint's current NASA ECOSTRESS funded project.

Citation: Zhu, Y., Myint, S. W., Feng, X., & Li, Y. [2023]. An innovative scheme to confront the trade-off between water conservation and heat alleviation with environmental justice for urban sustainability: The case of Phoenix, Arizona. *AGU Advances*, 4, e2022AV000816.

Recent NSF Awardees

Dr. Sarah Blue and Dr. Jennifer Devine were recently awarded a NSF grant to pursue a research project titled Geographies of Migration and (In)Security. This 3-year project will provide opportunities for training and mentorship for six TXST master's or undergraduate students.

Dr. Alberto Giordano was recently awarded a NSF grant to pursue a research project titled HNDS-I: Migrant Mortality Mapping Portal Project (M3P2). A Postdoc and graduate student will be funded through this 3-year grant.



Wishing a happy retirement to Joyce and Angelika!

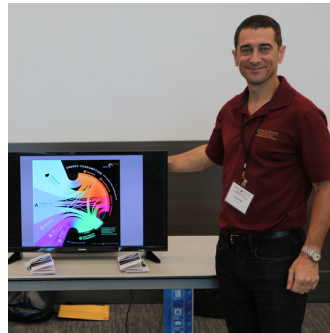
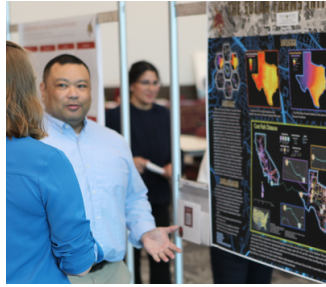
On behalf of the entire department, we wish both **Joyce Wilkerson** and **Angelika Wahl** a happy retirement! Your hard work and dedication to Texas State GES have been invaluable to us over the years, and we are grateful for all that you have done. You have both helped to make our department the success that it is today.

We hope that you will look back on your time with us with fondness and pride. You will be missed, but we know that your retirement is well-deserved and we wish you both all the best for the future.



News and Events 2023

Texas State GEO faculty and students participate in the Spring 2023 Sustainability Expo



Texas State Geo Students in THE UNIVERSITY STAR

Urban planning senior, Catching Valentinis-Dee has sparked a discussion about parking on campus by collecting more than 4500 student's signatures, then leading a rally straight to the President's Office, and the front page:



Photo courtesy of Felicity Guajardo.
The University Star 3/9/2023



Dr. Brian Cooper is selected by the National Council for Geographic Education to receive the *Higher Education Distinguished Teacher Award 2022*. Dr. Cooper's recognition brings the number of our faculty recipients of this prestigious teaching award to fifteen, counting from "the very beginning of the records" since 1982.

Dr. Christina Lopez was highlighted recently on the Texas State Newsroom's featured faculty for her article titled *Tubing destination, sacred natural resource – or both?*



Allison Glass-Smith received the *Mariel M. Muir Excellence in Mentoring Award for 2022*. This university level award is given to faculty and staff members who provide exceptional support of and commitment to assisting individuals in becoming more proficient in their professional activities. Allison is our staff coordinator for graduate programs.



Congratulations to **Samantha Serrano**, a student in the Online PhD in Geographic Education and teacher at Cognant High School in Illinois. She was elected as a member of the National Council for Geographic Education's Board of Directors.



News and Events 2022

TXST GEO at SWAAG Meeting 2022

Texas State was well represented at the Southwestern Meeting of the American Association of Geographers in Fayetteville Arkansas this past October.



Keenon Lindsey, *third place, poster*

Spatial Unit for Gentrification Vulnerability Analysis of Austin, Texas

Graduate student presentations included:

Hilary Ansah

Behind the Curtain of Public Space: Revealing Corporate Street Hawking Narratives in Globalizing Accra

Michael Boyles

Employing satellite remote sensing techniques on UAV imagery for crop mark interpretation: A case study from Roman Libarna

Delorean Wiley

Feminist Ferment - Media, Geography and Geopolitics Around Gender in the American Craft Beer Space

Callie High

Understanding Green Stormwater Infrastructure Impacts on the Water Quality of the Barton Creek Watershed in Austin, Texas

Raihan Jamil

50 years of Glacier Surface Elevation Changes in the Wind River Range, Wyoming Using USGS Lidar ... and historic Topographic Maps.

Heather Swienton

What is a Map According to Children?

Yusik Choi

Temporal/thematic bias of commemorative text and its spatial representation: A case study of Texas Official Historical Markers



Congratulations to PhD Student **Sojung Huh**! She was awarded the 2023 Phi Kappa Phi Dissertation Fellowship Award, the PEO International Peace Scholarship, and the College of Liberal Arts Outstanding Doctoral Student Award! Sojung's advisor is Dr. Injeong Jo.

Heather Swienton's thesis work entitled *What do children draw when asked to draw a map? Results of a mental map experiment* has been accepted for publication with the journal *Cartographica*, a top journal in cartography. Heather's advisor is Dr. Alberto Giordano..



Chikodinaka (Nakki) Ekeanyanwu, Ph.D. Student,

is awarded Best Paper for Map Use/Information Graphics. at SWAAG Meeting. Nakki's paper was titled *Modelling and Mapping Flood Hazard with a Flood Risk Assessment Tool: A Case Study of Austin, Texas*. Nakki's advisor is Dr. Yongmei Lu



Andrew Adams earned 3rd place as an individual in GeoBowl at SWAAG Meeting. Andrew was on the SWAAG GeoBowl Team and competed at AAG GeoBowl during the Denver Conference in March 2023. Andrew's advisor is Dr. Robert Mace.



Hilary Ama Ansah, Ph.D. Student, is awarded Best Paper for Communication/Storytelling at SWAAG Meeting. Hilary's paper was titled *Recognizing Texas Woman in Time and Space - A Qualitative GIS Inquiry into Historical Markers*. Hilary's advisor is Dr. Yongmei Lu.



Geography & Environmental Studies Student Research Symposium 2023

Held on March 3rd, 2023; San Marcos, Texas



Congratulations to our Competition Winners:

Heather Swinton
First place, paper
Advisor: Dr. Giordano

Yusik Choi
Third place, paper
Advisor: Dr. Giordano

Yanyan Liu
Third place, poster
Advisor: Dr. Zhan

Priyanjali Bose
First place, poster
Advisor: Dr. Julian

Kendahl Hejl
Second place, poster
Advisor: Dr. Jensen

Grad Student Accolades

Congratulations to **Chris Pierce** and **Emily Rhodes**, two of our doctoral students, who were awarded Summer Research Scholarships through the Southwestern Division of the American Association of Geographers.



Grayson Wylie received the 2023 Freeman Fellows Award (from Texas State's Freeman Center), as well as the South Central Arc Users Group Collaborative Scholarship.



Recent Undergraduate Accolades

Joseph van Smirren was elected President of the TXST Cycling Team, then went on to serve as the Race Director for this year's final events in USA Cycling's South Central Collegiate Cycling Conference, held right here in San Marcos.



Manny Hernandez, one of our geography undergraduate students, has been awarded an URF scholarship in the amount of \$500.00, to support his research project: Latino Perceptions of Outdoor Recreation Areas in San Marcos, Texas.

Hiram Zagala, won first place among posters in the College of Liberal Arts Research Expo on April 28th, for his project entitled "The Solar Farms Initiative".

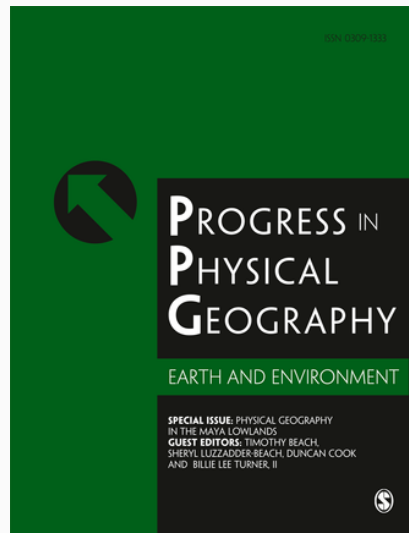
Anh Adams named College of Liberal Arts Outstanding Undergraduate Student. Anh is a double-major in history and geography.

Evan Wilson was selected by the Central Texas Section of the American Planning Association to receive Central Texas APA Section Student Scholarship, September 2022.

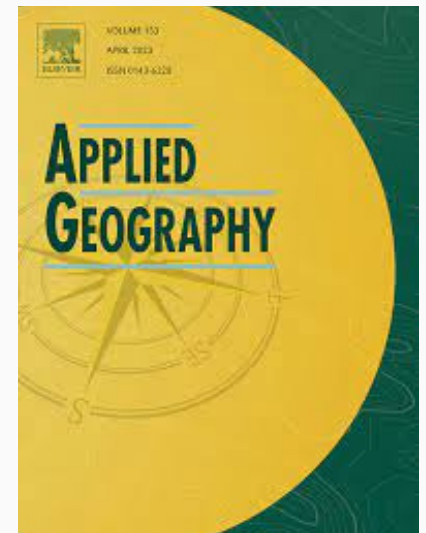
SAMPLES OF FACULTY PUBLICATIONS



Tom Ptak and coauthors published "Understanding borders through dynamic processes: capturing relational motion from south-west China's radiation centre. Published in 2022 in Territory, politics, governance.



Sam Krause coauthored two papers in Progress in Physical Geography's recent Special Issue: "Physical Geography in the Maya Lowlands". Now available online: April 2023



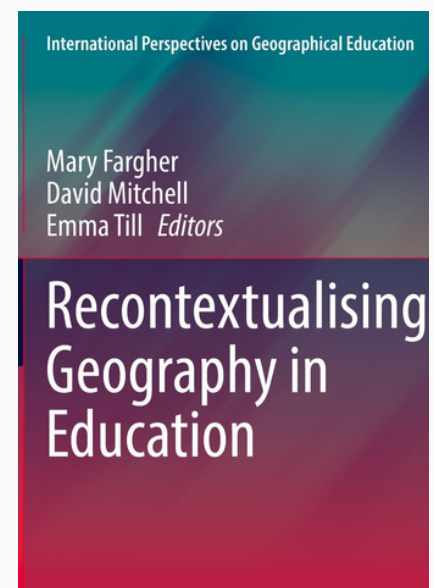
In 2023 Su Han coauthored the article "Daily changes in spatial accessibility to ICU beds and their relationship with the case-fatality ratio of COVID-19 in the state of Texas, USA" in the journal Applied Geography.



Yanan Li coauthored "Massive crop expansion threatens agriculture and water sustainability in northwestern China" in 2022.



Three faculty -- Drs. Li, Krause, and Jo -- describe "Teaching a Geography Field Methods course amid the Covid-19 Pandemic..." in 2022.



Osvaldo Muñiz Solari contributed "Practicing Powerful Geographical Knowledge to Understand Interdependence" in 2021.

Meet Our Newest Faculty Members

DR. SU Y. HAN

Dr. Su Han is thrilled to be part of the vibrant academic community at Texas State University's Department of Geography and Environmental Studies, where she joined in the fall of 2022.



With a Ph.D. in geography from the joint doctoral program of San Diego State University and the University of California, Santa Barbara, and an M.S. in Geography and Geographic Information Science from the University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign, Dr. Han brings a wealth of knowledge and expertise to her role. Her passion for geographic information science (GIS) was ignited during her undergraduate studies at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, where she majored in geography and minored in computer science.

With a strong passion for spatial data science, Dr. Han's research interests include social media analytics, health GIS, web-based GIS, GIS-based decision support systems, cyber-gis, cartography, geovisualization, geovisual analytics, and neighborhood dynamics. Her current research project focuses on developing a cyberGIS-based visual analytic system that explores geographical health disparities in disaster exposure while identifying vulnerable neighborhoods with respect to their socioeconomic and demographic characteristics. She is also the core developer and maintainer of CyberGIS-Vis, an open-source software tool for interactive geospatial visualization and scalable visual analytics.

Dr. Han's love for arts, computers, and geography began at a young age and has fueled her passion for geographic information science and geovisualization. She enjoys sharing her knowledge and expertise with her students. She teaches an undergraduate intro-level cartography course, "Maps and Map Making," and a graduate-level geovisualization course.

Over the years, she has honed her skills in making interactive and dynamic visualization tools, which has become her hobby. She enjoys sharing these tools with her students and teaching them how to use them for their research in her geovisualization course.

Aside from her academic work, she enjoys exploring nature and urban landscapes to find beautiful locations to photograph. She is particularly drawn to scenic vistas, historic architecture, and vibrant street scenes. Furthermore, she has a penchant for visiting diverse grocery stores, sourcing a range of ingredients to cook up delicious Asian cuisine.



DR. SOE W. MYINT

After obtaining his B.S. in forestry, Dr. Soe Myint joined the Forest Department of Myanmar as an Assistant Plantation officer in 1983. Two years later, he was promoted to Deputy Manager of Timber Corporation. He later pursued his postgraduate diploma in Forest Survey using aerospace remote sensing techniques at the International Institute for Geo-Information Science and Earth Observation (ITC) in the Netherlands through a Dutch fellowship. In 1991 he began his master's degree in the Natural Resources Program at the Asian Institute of Technology on a French scholarship. Dr. Myint spent four years at the United Nations Environment Program–Environment Assessment Program for Asia and the Pacific (UNEP – EAP/AP) as a Research Specialist before starting his PhD at Louisiana State University in 1998.

He received an Outstanding Achievement Award (AAG-RSSG), Prominent Alumnus of Asian Institute of Technology (AIT), Best Paper Award for Early Career Scholars in Remote Sensing (American Association of Geographers - AAG-RSSG), AITAA Distinguished Alumni Award (2007) for Academic and Research Excellence, USGS scholar award (2000), Intergraph Young Scholar award (UCGIS, 2002), and CPGIS Scholar, 2005 (selected by the Chinese Professionals in Geographic Information Science Abroad - CPGIS). He was nominated for the Zebulon Pearce Distinguished Teaching Award (2017) and invited as an Honored Guest (2009) by the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences at ASU, for making a difference in multiple undergraduate students' education.

Dr. Myint has served as Chair, Vice Chair, and Director of the Remote Sensing Specialty group of the Association of American Geographers (AAG), as well as President, Vice President, Director, and Membership Chair of the American Society for Photogrammetry and Remote Sensing (ASPRS) Southwest US region, and as Co-Chair of the technical program committee of the ASPRS conference (San Diego, 2010).

He is currently a member of the NASA ECOSTRESS Science and Applications team and NASA Land Cover and Land Use Change (LCLUC) Science team. He has been serving as Editor in Chief of the Urban Remote Sensing section of the Remote Sensing journal, Subject Editor of Ecosystem Health and Sustainability, Editorial Advisory Board Member of the International Journal of Remote Sensing, Associate Editor of the Ecological Processes, and Editorial Board Member of the GIScience and Remote Sensing journal. He served as Chair of the 4th International Electronic Conference on Remote Sensing with a focus on “Advances in Remote Sensing for the 17 Sustainable Development Goals” that was held from January 25–27, 2022.

After implementing his 12 research projects funded by national and regional organizations, including two NSF and two NASA funded projects between 2002 and 2011, he received three more grants from NASA, NSF, and NASA. He served as PI of the three projects, and the funded projects started in August 2012/13. The first grant titled Evaluation of Drought Risks and its Impact on Agricultural Land and Water Use to Support Adaptive Decision-making, was awarded under NOAA's Climate and Societal Interactions Program (CSI). The second grant titled “Understanding Impacts of Desert Urbanization on Climate and Surrounding Environments to Foster Sustainable Cities Using Remote Sensing and Numerical Modeling” was awarded by NASA. The third grant titled “Wavelet Analysis of High Spatial Resolution Imagery for Urban Mapping Using Infinite Scale Decomposition Techniques” was awarded by the NSF.

After completion of the three federally funded projects, he received a grant from NSF - Innovations at the Nexus of Food, Energy and Water Systems (INFEWS). He serves as Co-PI, and the funded project started in early 2018. Dr. Myint also has served as the Fulbright Canada Research Chair in Water, Environment, and Clean Energy (2019/2020). He has been working on a research project titled “Changing Landscapes, Urban Heat Island and the Effects on City Water Conservation Policy” awarded by the NASA ECOSTRESS program as lead PI since August 2020. More recently, Dr. Myint and his colleagues from Michigan State University, University of Illinois Urban-Champaign, and Yale University have received a \$1.7 million research funding from NASA for their proposed project titled “Decoding Land Transitions across the Urban-Rural Continuums (URC): A Synthesis Study of Patterns, Drivers, and Socio-environmental Impacts in Southeast Asia (22-SARI22-0001).”



DR. DANE M. ATKINS

Dane is a transportation geographer; his emphasis on personal mobilities serves as the central nexus for his studies in urban planning, environmental sustainability, the cultural and economic geographies of mobility, as well as the role we each play as individuals participating in and effecting the various transportation systems (perhaps best captioned as behavioral geography). Through this work, Dane hopes to raise awareness of the unsustainable nature of many current transportation systems, to critically reflect on the wide range of solutions on offer (and the various trade-offs therein), and most importantly, to empower the individual to take a few small steps towards a more sustainable – and safer – attitude regarding transportation.

Originally from Davenport, Iowa (a major river, road, and rail hub), Dane has always had a passion for travel and for maps, but he discovered academic geography the long way ‘round. His educational experiences include an inauspicious start back in 2006 at the University of Advancing Technology in Arizona; it would take until 2012 for him to complete an Associate’s Degree in Mathematics at Scott Community College (in eastern Iowa). In 2014, he decided to pursue a Bachelor’s at the University of Northern Iowa, where a keyword search for transportation led him to the Geography Department! From then on, he has embraced geography, earning his Masters in Iowa and, ultimately, completing his PhD at Texas State University in 2022.

Dr. Atkins is excited, now, at the opportunity to share his passion for mobility, geography, and education as a Lecturer with the Department of Geography and Environmental Sciences – an opportunity to encourage and empower the next generation of geographers. His training has included time in both physical laboratories and the GIS lab; meanwhile, his thesis and dissertation explored the gaps between people’s environmental perceptions and empirical geographic information



datasets. In addition to these experiences, Dane has been at the front of the classroom for over 6 years – from laboratories and Physical Geography, to Unmanned Aerial Survey and Digital Terrain Analysis; these broad research and teaching experiences were tailored for his new role teaching core disciplinary courses, such as the Department’s Research Methods in Geography and the Introduction to Physical Geography.

Away from the university, Dane is an avid bicyclist, motorcyclist, wilderness hiker, and though it’s been awhile, he hopes to one day resume his pilot training, too. “We all have places we need to go, why not at least enjoy the ride?!” As for the destinations – he prefers somewhere remote, somewhere wild, and if possible, somewhere with a view. In 2014, Dane pedaled his bicycle 3,000 miles across 7 states; in 2016, he used Amtrak to reach Glacier National Park, where he then hiked nearly 40 miles. More recently, in 2021, he rode a packed-down bicycle through the remote mountain passes of New Mexico and Colorado (camping the entire way). These experiences, he says, help him reflect back on his research and advocacy – a more sustainable and equitable transportation system, and perhaps, a relaxing and sunny commute. In between these big adventures, he enjoys a bit of wrenching, a bit of woodcraft, and after the sun sets, to be rapt by a good book.

Meet Our New Staff Member

ROBBY LONGORIA



Robby (they/he) is our new Administrative Assistant. They will be assisting our Department Chair with various tasks and projects as well as providing general support for faculty, staff, and students. Robby graduated with a M.A. in Sociology with a cognate in assessment from Texas State University. Robby has held previous positions at Texas State, including Academic Advisor for the College of Liberal Arts, Administrative Assistant for the Honors College, and most recently as a Residence Director for Housing & Residential Life. Robby is very happy to return to Academic Affairs and provide support in Geography and Environmental Studies. Robby enjoys learning new systems and processes and discovering new ways to accomplish tasks. They love a good movie, a fun board game, and watching tv shows and streamers. Cozy gaming is their favorite pastime. Robby looks forward to integrating into the Geography and Environmental Studies family and working to strengthen the good vibes.

Our Summer Study Abroad Programs



Left: Drs. Colleen Myles, Vaughn Baltzly and their students in Italy in June 2023



Right: Dr. Edwin Chow's class in Taiwan in July 2023

Welcome Three Postdoctoral Scholars

DR. YUANHUI ZHU



Dr. Yuanhui Zhu uses Google Earth engine with data mining or machine learning approaches and other big geospatial data analysis techniques to answer environmental research questions. He has been working as a Post-Doctoral researcher in the Department of Geography and Environmental Studies since February 2023. He worked with Dr. Soe Myint, who received a NASA ECOSTRESS funded project as PI in 2020. He was recruited as a NASA ECOSTRESS Post-Doctoral researcher. As part of the above NASA ECOSTRESS funded project, Dr. Zhu and his team published a paper in AGU Advances. The same paper has been selected by the American Geophysical Union (AGU) for featuring on Eos.org here as the Editor's Highlight. Fewer than 2 percent of papers are selected to be featured by the AGU. He will also be recruited as a Post-Doctoral researcher for a NASA project titled "Decoding Land Transitions across the Urban-Rural Continuums (URC): A Synthesis Study of Patterns, Drivers, and Socio-environmental Impacts in Southeast Asia" that Dr. Myint has recently been awarded.

DR. YUQIN JIANG



Dr. Yuqin Jiang joined the Department of Geography and Environmental Studies as a Post-Doctoral Scholar in June 2023. She received her Ph.D. in 2022 and M.S. in 2017 from University of South Carolina, and B.A. in 2010 from University at Buffalo. Dr. Jiang's research focuses on human mobility patterns and their dynamics during multi-scale hazards. Her research interests include big data analytics, urban intelligence, human mobility and geo-visualization. Her studies have published in top-tier journals including Annals of the American Association of Geographers, Cartograph and Geographic Information Science, and International Journal of Digital Earth. She's an active member of AAG and an ad hoc reviewer for multiple academic journals and funding agencies, including NSF.

DR. MOLLY MIRANKER



Dr. Molly Miranker joined the Department of Geography and Environmental Studies as a post-doctoral scholar in June 2023. She received her Ph.D. in Geography from Texas State University in 2023, earned her M.A. in Biological Anthropology from New York University in 2015, and completed a B.A. in Interdisciplinary Studies: Human Biology and Law in 2012 at American University. Dr. Miranker's research concerns migrant death at international borders, their sociopolitical context, and how geospatial technologies may support forensic and humanitarian interventions in ongoing mass disasters. Her post-doctoral position is supported by the NSF HNDS-I grant (Dr. Alberto Giordano, PI) Migrant Mortality Mapping Portal Project (M3P2). As part of the M3P2 project, Dr. Miranker works on database development and forensic data standardization from all four southwestern border states (CA, AZ, NM, and TX). Her research has been published in Digital Geography and Society, The Professional Geographer, and Forensic Science International. She has received multiple grants to support her dissertation research, including the Phi Kappa Phi Dissertation Fellowship and Philanthropic Educational Organization Scholar Award. Dr. Miranker has presented her research at the AAG, American Academy of Forensic Sciences, and University Consortium for Geographic Information Science annual meetings.

Geography Programs

Undergraduate Degrees

- B.A. Geography
- B.S. Geography
- B.S. Physical Geography
- B.S. Geographic Information Science (GIS)
- B.S. Resource and Environmental Studies
- B.S. Urban and Regional Planning
- B.S. Water Resources

Undergraduate Minors

- Geographic Information Science (GIS)
- Environmental Studies
- Geography
- Nature and Heritage Tourism

Graduate Degrees

- M.S. Geography
- Master of Applied Geography (General Concentration)
- Master of Applied Geography (Geographic Education Concentration Online)
- Master of Applied Geography in Resource & Environmental Studies
- Master of Applied Geography in Geographic Information Science (GIS)
- Ph.D. Geography
- Ph.D. Geographic Education
- Ph.D. Geographic Information Science

Texas State's Department of Geography and Environmental Studies is one of the largest undergraduate programs of its kind in the United States. The undergraduate geography program offers a variety of majors of study. The programs provide students with courses designed to increase their understanding of the world they live in and help students develop analytical skills necessary to interpret and solve real-world problems.

The Master of Applied Geography (M.A.Geo.) degrees are designed to prepare geographers to use their skills and background knowledge to solve real-world problems with geographic dimensions. Applied Geography includes a broad range of geographic sub-fields.

The Master of Science (M.S.) degree is designed to give highly qualified students exposure to geographic theory and research at the pre-doctoral level. Programmatic emphases include Environmental Geography, Geographic Education, Geographic Information Science, and other specialty areas in geography.

The Department's Undergraduate Minor programs are intended to offer a wide range of content courses to students in other departments; these courses provide knowledge and skills that can provide distinctive career preparation and competitive advantages for many majors.

The Department's Doctorate of Philosophy offers students the training necessary to design and implement world-renowned research programs in both academic and industry settings. Doctoral candidates can expect exemplary support from the Department's diverse faculty, with faculty research interests spanning both human and physical geographies utilizing a range of qualitative and quantitative methodologies.

For more information on undergraduate programs, contact Erin Elliott at ee69@txstate.edu

For more information on graduate programs, contact Allison Glass-Smith at am13@txstate.edu

GEOGRAPHY AND ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

“Internship experience is the most influential factor employers consider when deciding between two otherwise equally qualified job candidates.”

National Association of Colleges & Employers (NACE)

Earn and Learn with an Internship!

The Geography and Environmental Studies internship program allows students to receive 3 credit hours for their internship and to learn valuable, marketable workplace skills. One of our current interns is Callie High, a geography masters student. She is interning at The Texas Water Company. “As the water conservation intern, I work on conservation outreach events such as library story times, water conservation and quality research, and I get to work with a lot of amazing people! My experience in this internship has benefited me in so many ways, but the biggest one is now I am lined up to have a full-time job with the company by the time I graduate in May.”

Past intern Chase Adair highlighted the benefits of his internship for Jacobs in 2021, and now he is a full-time employee there: “During my time as an intern with Jacobs, I was given the opportunity to learn about the ins and outs of wastewater treatment by working alongside our maintenance team, laboratory analyst, and engineering group. I was also fortunate enough to be able to travel to some of our other project sites in Texas, Oklahoma

and Arkansas. I was able to explore what Jacobs has to offer and find out what I was really passionate about.”



As for finding a great internship like Callie and Chase, our alumni are awesome at letting us know about job or internship opportunities within their workplace. Current students can email geointernships@txstate.edu to find out about these opportunities. In addition, alumni can send us information about internships and jobs for us to share with our students. Just provide the job description, salary, and other details by filling out the online form at (<https://www.geo.txst.edu/geography-careers/employers/empinternships.html>).

Over the past year, we have received over 200 different internship and job opportunities, many of which have come from alumni. Offering an internship position to a current student is a great way for our alumni to give back. Thank you!

by Molly Allred, graduate student in Sustainability Studies



Dr. Rebecca Davio
Geography Internship Coordinator
geointernships@txstate.edu

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT
GEO.TXSTATE.EDU/GEOGRAPHY-CAREERS/INTERNSHIPS

Graduate Student Forum

Highlights and Happenings

“A COLLECTIVE FOR BUOYING GEOGRAPHY GRADUATE STUDENT CAMARADERIE, ACADEMIC SUCCESS, PROFESSIONALIZATION, AND INTRA-DEPARTMENTAL COMMUNICATION”

The Graduate Student Forum is a group for all master's and Ph.D. students in the Department of Geography and Environmental Studies at Texas State University. It is a social group and an open forum to meet others, exchange ideas and research topics, get advice on navigating grad school, organize outings, and keep each other (relatively) sane through the degree process.

This year, the Graduate Student Forum students produced a cookbook to promote diversity and inclusion through cultural dishes.

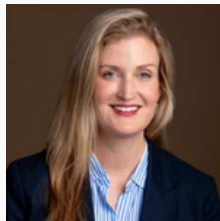
Food is a cultural agent that binds people together. In this regard, the Geograd Cookbook is part of the diversity and inclusion initiative of the Geography and Environmental Studies Graduate Student Forum.

Get your free digital copy here:

<https://gato-docs.its.txst.edu/jcr:60ab8f16-3951-494a-a65b-6dcc16178388/geogradcookbook.pdf>



CONGRAUTLATIONS TO
DR. JENNIFER DEVINE
FOR WINNING THE
GRAD FORUM'S
OUTSTANDING
PROFESSOR AWARD!



Meet the 2023-2024 Grad Forum Officers

SEE ALL THE UPDATES FROM
OUR STUDENT LED
ORGANIZATIONS ON THE
DEPARTMENT WEBPAGE



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Heather Swinton

Masters Co-President



Kendahl Heji

PhD Vice President



Keonon Lindsey

Diversity + Inclusion Committee Representatives



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Masters Faculty Representative



Garrett Pugh

Community Organizers



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Graduate Committee Representative



Sophia Staska

PhD Faculty Representatives



Marie White



Bren Vander Weil



Sophia Staska

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WHAT'S HAPPENING IN GEOGRAPHIC EDUCATION

DR. MICHAEL SOLEM RECEIVES FACULTY DEVELOPMENT LEAVE FOR POWERFUL GEOGRAPHY PROJECT WITH AAG

In Fall 2023, Dr. Michael Solem will be on leave to advance the implementation of the Grosvenor Center's Powerful Geography project in collaboration with the American Association of Geographers (AAG). The leave project is designed to fill a K-12 educational lacuna in the geography discipline's efforts to grow and diversify the next generation of geographers. Dr. Solem and his collaborators will apply the Powerful Geography approach to create geography curriculum resources supporting the diverse life and career aspirations of high school and college students in different states and communities. This work will involve surveys of geography students, interviews with professional geographers, and state-based curriculum design and development with teachers. Anticipated deliverables include classroom activities based on authentic applications of geography and guides to community college and four-year undergraduate geography programs that can help students achieve what they aspire to be and do in the future. .

AAG ANNALS TO PUBLISH ARTICLE EXAMINING UNEQUAL GEOGRAPHY EDUCATION

The Annals of the American Association of Geographers has accepted an article entitled "Factors that Impact Student Outcomes in U.S. Geography Education" written by Dr. Michael Solem (Department of Geography and Environmental Studies) and Dr. Phillip Vaughan (Data Analytics and Research Methodology) at Texas State University. Using large-scale datasets provided by the National Center for Educational Statistics, the authors developed a predictive model of geography achievement based on contextual opportunity to learn (OTL) variables and the relative poverty level of neighborhoods around schools. Hierarchical linear modeling (HLM) was used to account for data clustering, producing an achievement estimate for each predictor variable while controlling for the effects of all other predictors. Statistically significant OTL predictors included instructional exposure, curriculum organization, teaching experience, and the availability of computers in classrooms. Schools located in neighborhoods with higher income-to-poverty ratios outperformed schools in neighborhoods closer to the federal poverty threshold. Controlling for OTL and school neighborhood effects accounted for some of the geography achievement disadvantage associated with race and other student characteristics that was estimated in a previous study.

DR. INJEONG JO APPOINTED AS THE EDITOR OF THE JOURNAL OF GEOGRAPHY

Beginning January 2023, Dr. Injeong Jo will serve as the Editor of the Journal of Geography. The Journal of Geography is a highly respected, peer-reviewed publication for the discipline of geography which provides a forum to present innovative approaches to geography research, teaching, and learning. The Journal publishes articles on the results of research, instructional approaches, and book reviews, and is one of the foremost journals related to geography education. Older than the National Council for Geographic Education as an organization, the journal has the distinction of being the oldest journal in the United States devoted to the teaching of a particular school subject.



Follow updates about Powerful Geography on Twitter [@PowerfulGeoUSA](https://twitter.com/PowerfulGeoUSA)

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN GEOGRAPHIC EDUCATION

DR. INJEONG JO, SOJUNG HUH AND MICHELLE CRANE PRESENTED GEOACTIVITY TYPES IN APHG PROJECT AT THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON GEOGRAPHIC EDUCATION IN MINNEAPOLIS (OCT 2022)



CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR FIRST CLASS OF GRADUATES FOR THE ONLINE MAGEO IN GEOGRAPHIC EDUCATION!



From top left: April Bannert, Mara Leane, Taylor Loux, Kenny Martin

SUCCESSFUL LEADERSHIP ACADEMY FOR TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY'S ONLINE PH.D. STUDENTS IN GEOGRAPHY EDUCATION (STORY ON NEXT PAGE)



From left to right: Harris Payne, Greg Hill, Bren Vander Weil (Ph.D. student), Dr. Richard Boehm, Samantha Serrano (Ph.D. student), Kelly Nolan (Ph.D. student), Licia Paulus (Ph.D. student), Dr. Joanna Zadrozny, Lisa Elikan (Ph.D. student), Brandi LeRoy (Ph.D. student), Jan Rueschhoff (Ph.D. student), Skylar Slaughter (Ph.D. student), Dr. Michael Solem, Lisa Griffith (Ph.D. student), Dr. Jacqueline Housel, Omonyela Ahojuendo (Ph.D. student), Michael Dahmer (Ph.D. student), Dr. Carmen Brysch, Dr. Joseph Kerski. Missing from photo: Dr. Susan Hume

DR. INJEONG JO AND APRIL BANNERT, ONLINE MAGEO IN GEOED STUDENT & TEACHER AT HARLAN HIGH SCHOOL, TX, DELIVERED A WEBINAR FOR THE NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR GEOGRAPHIC EDUCATION (AUG 2022)

spatial thinking lesson: Tips and tools for teachers



Integrating spatial thinking into classrooms

INJEONG JO, GEOGRAPHY & ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES AT TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY
APRIL BANNERT, GEOGRAPHY & ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES AT TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY
HARLAN HIGH SCHOOL

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN GEOGRAPHIC EDUCATION

SUCCESSFUL LEADERSHIP ACADEMY FOR TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY'S ONLINE PH.D. STUDENTS IN GEOGRAPHY EDUCATION

In the midst of a record heatwave in central Texas and chaotic travel circumstances, Texas State University geography education doctoral students and a small select group of geography educators from across the country descended upon San Marcos to participate in a full day Leadership Academy to focus on major issues and future research opportunities and responsibilities within the world of geography education.

The Leadership Academy started as an initiative to provide a sense of community for the 100% online doctoral students in the geographic education degree program and bring everyone together to meet face-to-face. For second- and third-year students it allowed them to connect their coursework to broader teaching and research opportunities through thoughtful exchange of ideas. While incoming students had the chance to connect with the other students and prepare for what's to come. However, the chance to turn the meeting into a bigger opportunity to connect Ph.D. students and build a network with other geography educators in the discipline was soon realized. Since many conferences had gone virtual and the normal networking channels were reduced, Drs. Richard G. Boehm and Michael Solem, two of the department's geographic education faculty, knew how important an opportunity like this Leadership Academy would be for the Ph.D. students' future careers. Invited by Drs. Boehm and Solem, and organized by Dr. Joanna Zadrozny, a mixture of senior scholars, practicing geography educators, and online students from three different cohorts participated in the Leadership Academy.

The content and research agenda for the Leadership Academy was derived from current issues originally discussed during a roundtable discussion on the future of geography education at the end of 2019. The four major topics were:

1) Advanced Placement Human Geography, 2) powerful geography, 3) institutional well-being, and 4) early career faculty research responsibilities for new Ph.Ds.

Background research papers were assigned in each of these categories for participants to prepare for day-of discussion.

Thanks to funding from the Grosvenor Center for Geographic Education, the Academy was paid for, and all participant travel costs were covered. In addition, the Grosvenor Center hosted an informal reception the night before as participants arrived. The reception was a great opportunity for everyone to meet, talk, and mingle before a full day of discussions. As an online program, the students never met one another or their instructors face-to-face, so it provided a great moment for them to truly connect, interact, and feel like a Bobcat.

On Wednesday, July 27, the full-day Leadership Academy convened at the Embassy Suites that included 11 online Ph.D. students in geographic education and six geography education faculty mentors who agreed to share their wisdom, insight, and guidance with this next generation of researchers and scholars. Each session followed the same format, with a leader (Dr. Boehm or Dr. Solem) setting the stage and context of the session. Next, faculty consultants were assigned to each session based upon their background to carry on the conversation and pose discussion questions to the whole group.

The morning sessions consisted of lively discussions on the topics of Advanced Placement (AP) Human Geography © and Powerful Geography. The afternoon sessions provided insight into the future of professional expectations for the online Ph.D. students, such as institutional well-being and on the sustainability of future selves and how that will reflect in the Ph.D. students' research pursuits in graduate school and beyond.

By the end of the 8-hour session, the Ph.D. students were introduced to new mentors and created lifelong colleagues. The online Ph.D. students commented on how much they appreciated the opportunity to convene face-to-face, expand their network, and learn about the importance of what their research degree stands for. And as one faculty mentor stated, "the future is in good hands".



Notes from the field

The Field Rocks! Trips and travels with the Geology Program

By Dr. Shelly Wernette, Senior Lecturer

The geology program has had an active year of students visiting the field for fun and learning (and fun learning)! The spring Sedimentation and Stratigraphy class, led by Dr. Radoman-Shaw, studied and toured the rocks, fossils, and awesome erosional features of Canyon Lake Gorge. The Earth Materials class went with Dr. Wernette to diverse sites around the Llano Uplift where they witnessed the whole range of igneous, metamorphic, and sedimentary rocks that shaped the Austin area long before dinosaurs reached Texas. Our local parks were not overlooked as Dr. Wernette's Physical Geology class and the Geology Club have both made trips to collect fossils and check out the dam and caves at Purgatory Creek. The Geology Club also made it down to Natural Bridge Caverns a delightful trip through one of Texas' premiere natural wonders.





Notes from the field

Highlighting research and researchers from our Geography community

Observing how taste makes place at a central Italian agriturismo

by Colleen C. Myles, June 2022

As a scholar of food, fermentation, and place—especially how places are influenced by taste and the production and consumption of food and drink—I have found myself in many delicious scenarios. This photo was taken in June 2022, in the countryside surrounding Assisi, in the province of Umbria, Italy, which is adjacent to the more widely-known province of Tuscany. That day, I visited several different food and wine production sites, as guided by a local tour operator. This particular spot (the second stop of three) was where we had lunch. The property is nestled within an idyllic hillside landscape, encompassing beautiful rolling hills, and when we were there, it was a perfect sunny day beneath a clear blue sky.

This agriturismo, a rural, agritourism-focused enterprise, offers a classic example of a ubiquitous production and marketing model in the region: The owners grow a variety of different crops (e.g., a vegetable garden, winegrapes, olive trees...) and then turn those into value added products that are sold, and often consumed, on site. The form of the sales and consumption can vary, but, at this property at least, the hosts curate family-style lunches, which are served with *la famiglia* (the family) and consumed in the family home.

A typical meal in Italy includes several courses: an antipasti (or appetizer/starter), a primi (the “first” course), a secondi (the “second” or main course), and, finally, if you have saved any room, a dolci (something sweet, a dessert). The meal is consumed slowly, as those at the table savor these several servings of small-portion food items. When you are lucky—and, as is customary in Italy—wine is also a part of the meal. (Much like the French, for Italians, wine is food; it is a normal part of the everyday food culture.)

At this agriturismo, in addition to sourcing ingredients for the meal on site (or, if not from the property directly, from other producers nearby), they also paired each course with wines produced on the property, making this a very “hands-on” and place-based experience.

Behind the tiny tourist, who is shown thoroughly enjoying some homemade pasta, is the “mama” of the family. This winery deliberately leverages broad conceptions of the family as an organizing unit in their wine line-up, as well as playing upon their own family’s personal characteristics and personalities as they endeavor to make two very different wines interesting and appealing to consumers. As visitors to this place, we were given a peek into the “good life” in the Italian countryside in the form of gracious (and delicious) hospitality; offered stories of the food, the wine, and the family; and, of course, invited to purchase additional wines for takeaway that day or for shipment back home.



In my capacity as a researcher, I was conducting participant observation, seeking to observe first-hand the expression and construction of place vis-à-vis the expression and constructions of taste, as conveyed by the owners (*la famiglia*) as well as by the tour guide who led us there. I was examining the products being produced and how they were being shared, and I was carefully observing how the business model and operations of this producer influenced their financial and land management practices. These observations were in service of (ultimately) understanding how operations like this fit into the larger tourism systems and environmental management regimes of the region. In sum, it is clear that I am truly fortunate to be able to do research that involves having a great lunch!

GIS DAY 2022 HIGHLIGHTS



GIS Day 2022 took place on November 17th 2022. It was a huge success and we had a great turnout of students, faculty, and staff. Several companies and agencies showcased their projects and products, and attendees learned how GIS is used in their various organizations. There were also lots of snacks, swag, and souvenirs from the guests!



The keynote was delivered by Dr. Steve Radil of the Department of Economics and Geosciences at the United States Air Force Academy. His talk was entitled *Spatial Turns and Culture Wars within and Beyond Geography: One Human Geographer's Close Encounters with GIS*.



Thank you to our 2022 GIS Day Sponsors:

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2022-23 Colloquium Series Speakers



Dr. Mark Alan Rhodes II, Assistant Professor of Geography, Michigan Technological University

Museum Landscapes of Transcalar Memory Work:
Nation-building National Museum Wales

Dr. Steve Radil, Assistant Professor of Geosciences, Department of Economics and Geosciences, United States Air Force Academy

Spatial Turns and Culture Wars within and Beyond Geography:
One Human Geographer's Close Encounters with GIS



Dr. Deondre Smilesdeondre, Assistant Professor of Geography, University of Victoria, (BC, Canada)

Paul Bunyan and the Settler Colonial Whitewashing of Environmental Extraction

Dr. Johnny Finn, Associate Professor of Geography, Department of Sociology, Social Work, and Anthropology, Christopher Newport University

Social Murder and the Geographies of Injustice:
Socio-Environmental Impacts of Racial Segregation in Southeastern



Dr. Harvey Miller, Bob and Mary Reusche Chair in Geographic Information Science, Professor of Geography & Director of the Center for Urban and Regional Analysis, The Ohio State University

Death by Design: The science behind why our streets are so dangerous, and what we can do about it

Dr. David Butler receives the American Association of Geographers' Lifetime Achievement Honors

The American Association of Geographers awards AAG Lifetime Achievement Honors to Dr. David R. Butler.

Over his 37-year academic career, Butler's influential work at the interface of geomorphology and biogeography has advanced knowledge and understanding in physical geography. He has displayed exemplary devotion to teaching and mentoring both at the college and K-12 levels, putting diversity and equity principles at the forefront of his program. He has promoted and strengthened physical geography through his scholarship and his leadership and service.

Butler's extraordinary publication record includes hundreds of peer-reviewed articles, as well as monographs, book chapters, edited books, and special issues of journals. His award-winning book, *Zoogeomorphology: Animals as Geomorphic Agents*, laid the foundation for this subdiscipline of physical geography and is widely considered a classic text. His comprehensive works on alpine treelines have advanced our knowledge of the ways in which topography and geomorphology, including geomorphic hazards such as avalanches and debris flows, shape plant communities at high elevations. These insights have bolstered our understanding of the forces that drive stability and change in mountain ecotones. He led and edited the AAG Annals special issue on *The Anthropocene* (2021).

David R. Butler also merits this award for his exceptional commitment to education. He has mentored dozens of successful master's and doctoral students, many of whom are now professors, and has co-authored numerous publications with them. For his teaching effectiveness, he has received many honors and awards, among them the Distinguished Teaching

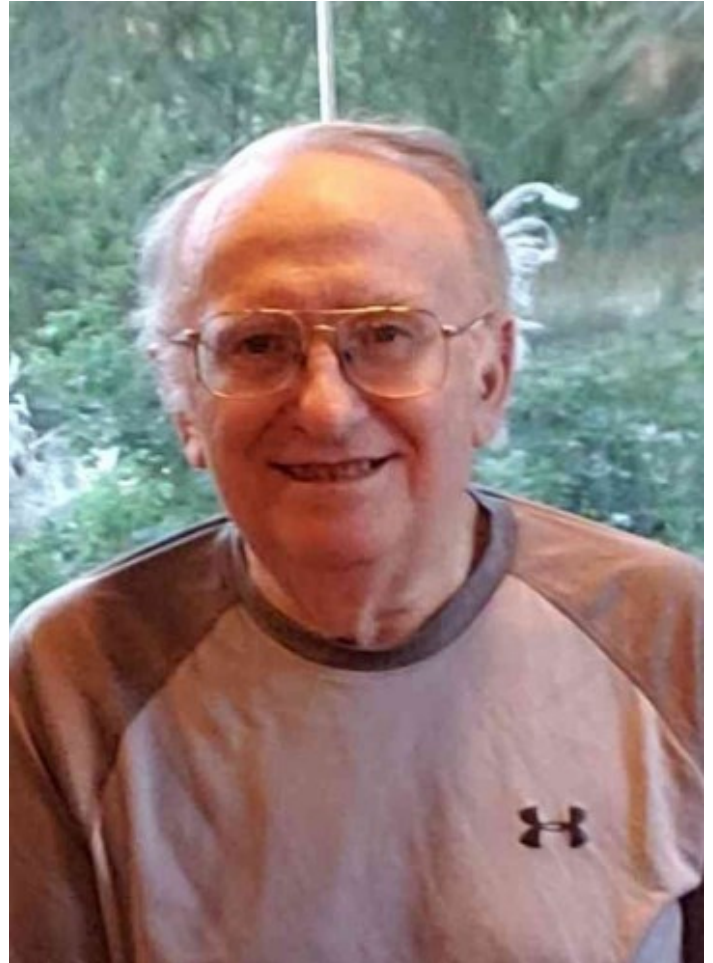


Achievement Award from the National Council for Geographic Education. Diversity, equity, and inclusion have always been core tenets of Butler's mentoring program, and he is widely recognized by colleagues for seeking to increase the presence of underrepresented groups in graduate programs and beyond.

Coupled with exceptional scholarship, teaching, and mentoring, Butler has an impressive record of professional service, including editorial and leadership roles within the AAG. Despite his emeritus status, he continues to be AAG Annals Editor for the Physical Geography, Earth and Environmental Sciences section, editor for *Progress in Physical Geography*, and an editorial board member for *Physical Geography and Earth Surface Processes and Landforms*. As Binghamton Geomorphology Symposium Steering Committee Chair, he worked to diversify the board and include more early-career scholars. Within the AAG, he has chaired the Geomorphology and Mountain Geography Specialty Groups and been on the Executive Board of the Biogeography Specialty Group

In Memoriam: Dr. James D. Harrison

Dr. James "Jim" Douglas Harrison passed away at the age of 83 years old. Dr. Harrison was born in Englewood, Colorado to Norman and Ruth Harrison. Throughout his childhood, he was an avid baseball player, and was destined for the Major Leagues until an elbow injury cut his Big League career short. Switching gears, he began working for the City of Englewood in the Urban Planning Department, and just a few years later, he became a professor of Geography and History at Louisiana State University. Jim had a robust desire to teach, and was soon hired to teach Urban Planning and Geography at Oklahoma State University in Stillwater, Oklahoma, while simultaneously earning his Doctor of Philosophy at The University of Oklahoma in Norman, Oklahoma. In 1970, Jim was hired to teach at then Southwest Texas State University, now Texas State University. He enjoyed a 32-year career with our department, and happily retired in 2002.



Dr. Harrison loved coaching soccer and baseball as much as he loved teaching, and was a role model to countless young athletes in the San Marcos area. He was a loving and caring father, and is survived by his two sons, Michael and Robert Harrison, both of San Marcos, Texas.

Thank You

Thank you scholarship and award sponsors for your continued support of our undergraduate and graduate students! As a result of your generosity, more than 400 geography students have received more than \$160,000 in scholarships and/or awards! We understand you have many options for contributions and are grateful for your donations to support Geography and Environmental Studies students. For your information, the online giving platform has been updated. You can search by scholarship by entering Geography in the “Or search for other Texas State University programs:” section (which will populate a list of scholarships) when visiting:

donate.txstate.edu

Your tax-deductible donation, no matter the amount, will make a difference in students’ lives. For donation inquiries to the department, please email geography@txstate.edu.



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