

GeoNews

Department of Geography and Environmental Studies Newsletter



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Letter From the Chair

So much has changed since the last issue of the Department Newsletter in Fall 2019. With the onset of the COVID-19 Pandemic in early 2020, the world that we used to know started being described as “unprecedented,” “uncharted,” and “trying.” Meanwhile, another group of words, including “resilient,” “adaptive,” and “dynamic” became frequently used. If the first group of words depicts WHAT we have been living through in the past 2+ years, the second captures precisely HOW we, as a department, navigated through this challenging time with success.



The reason for our success? A community of courageous and united Bobcat Geographers – **our faculty, students, staff, and alumni, the four pillars for the success of our department since the beginning of time.** As I captured in my Chair’s Message in the 2019 Newsletter, the dedicated and outstanding faculty, the passionate and aspiring students, the skillful and problem-solving staff, and the loving and loyal alumni are the four reasons for our continuous success. Almost one unparalleled pandemic later and after so many changes to our lives and in the world, these success factors remain.

Like the whole higher education, we went through a lot—from budget cuts to workload increase, from mostly in-person class to online teaching, from sudden and unprepared isolation to staying connected through zoom. We have been creative and resilient in exploring alternative approaches and assembling possible resources to complete the multiple milestone projects. We conducted our department academic program review despite the once-in-a-century ice storm in February of 2021 during an unprecedented pandemic. We changed the department name to Department of Geography and Environmental Studies effective October 2021. We launched two online programs in Fall 2020 – PhD in Geographic Education and Master of Applied Geography with a concentration in Geographic Education. We secured the approval to change the Master of Applied Geography majoring in Natural Resources and Environmental Studies program to 51-100% online. We added two new minor programs – Environmental Studies and GIS. And we added to our fabulous family with multiple outstanding faculty hires.

On top of this list is our success in maintaining strong, unreserved support to our students in and outside of the classroom. At the onset of the Pandemic, I immediately began working with the department faculty and staff to create the TxState Geography COVID-19 Relief Program. Through this program, we were among the first on campus to provide students with scholarships in response to COVID-19. By the end of Spring 2020, we distributed over \$15,000 to more than 40 students. Turning to Spring 2021, we successfully held (online) the TxState Geography Student Research Symposium and Alumni Reunion and Student Celebration. This academic year, we enjoyed our traditional Welcome-Back Picnic in Sewell Park in October 2021, our in-person GIS Day in November 2021, and our TxState Geography and Environmental Studies Student Research Symposium (hybrid) in February 2022. We will host a fully in-person departmental Scholarships and Awards Ceremony and the 27th Alumni Reunion and Student Celebration on April 29. Please join us on this day of celebration!

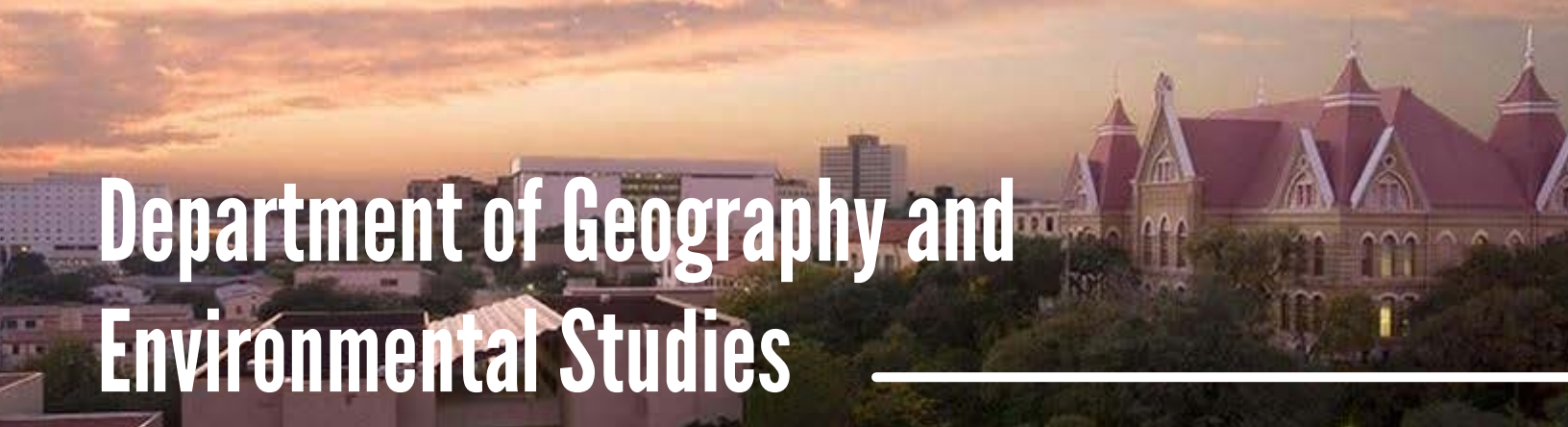
This list of our success stories is very long. There are student awards, faculty publications and grants, and stories of staff going above-and-beyond and of alumni always around. I invite you to read through this Newsletter and find out for yourself. You will be impressed by what we have achieved as a community.

The spring of 2022 has been a little slow with a relatively cool March. Although a little late, the bluebonnets are blooming now in Central Texas. They are here surrounding us, passionately and without reservation, just like the four pillars for the success of our department.



Yongmei Lu, PhD
Chair, Department of Geography and Environmental Studies





Department of Geography and Environmental Studies

Name Change Reflects Department's Contributions to Environmental Studies at Texas State

For decades, the Department of Geography at Texas State University has served as the most prominent voice in a growing chorus of environmental programs on our campus. Our Bachelor of Science (BS) and Master's of Applied Geography (MAG) in Resource and Environmental Studies degrees have become common professional calling cards in most environmentally-related state and city departments in and around Texas. Our alumni run agencies, manage companies, develop communities and resources, and teach the next generation how to plan for a safe and equitable future, the success of which will hinge largely on the environmental knowledge and advanced skills that Texas State Geography graduates have always brought to the workforce.

As our campus has grown and the university's academic departments, programs, and degrees related to environmental themes have expanded, our department began exploring ways to bolster and enhance our long-standing, prominent role in environmental education at Texas State. In recent months, we have worked together to enhance our environmental courses, degree plans, and catalogue descriptions. We have also reconfigured the MAG in Resource and Environmental Studies to include hybrid and online features to leverage new educational technologies and to better serve the scheduling needs of working professionals in our master's program. However, in addition to these curricular changes, we have made an even bigger change that we are excited to share with you.

After much discussion and with an expressed desire to have the educational and workforce contributions of our students and alumni more clearly reflected in our title, the Department of Geography is, as of October 2021, The Department of Geography and Environmental Studies. We believe this name more accurately reflects our collective contributions on campus and beyond, and offers a clear, descriptive signpost for future students seeking careers in environmental fields. We also believe, based on many supportive comments from our students and alumni, that this title change will help our graduates to better leverage their education and expertise in a diverse and rapidly changing environmental career marketplace and more accurately reflect the department's role as a leader in environmental education and research.



**TxState Geography and Environmental Studies
Alumni Reunion and Student Celebration**


**FRIDAY,
APRIL 29, 2022**

4:00 p.m. – Scholarships/Awards

Centennial Hall

6:00 p.m. – Dinner/Reception

Texas Rock House



www.geo.txstate.edu

For more information and event registration please visit

<https://www.geo.txstate.edu/newsevents/reunion.html>

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News and Events

Spring 2022

AAG GeoBowl National Champions

Our SWAAG (Southwest Division of American Association of Geographers) team won this year's AAG Geobowl (held virtually), topping every other region in the nation. The team was led by Walter Furness (TXST doctoral student) and included Andrew Adams (TXST master's student), Elise Thompson (TXST master's student), Blair Mirka (UNM student), and Daniel Beene (UNM student). Walter Furness also finished second among all participants in individual points scored.



Congratulations to our 2022 G&ES Student Research Symposium Winners

Binay Thapa - 1st place Graduate Paper
Climate change perception and adaptation among Indigenous farmers: A study on Thamis of Dolkha district, Nepal

Advisor: Dr. Jennifer Devine

Danielle Smilovsky - 1st place Graduate Poster
Olive & 71st Avenue – Peoria Subsidence Feature Investigation

Advisor: Dr. Jennifer Jensen

Anh Adams - 1st place Undergraduate Paper
Making “Little Saigon”: A Geographic History, 1970-2020



Andy Pinon, Ph.D. student
receives \$20,000 2022-2023
P.E.O. Scholar Award

Recognized for scholarly excellence, academic achievement, and worthwhile career goals

TEXAS STATE
GEOGRAPHY AND
ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES



Molly Miranker, Ph.D. student
named 2021-2022 College of
Liberal Arts Outstanding Student

TEXAS STATE
GEOGRAPHY AND
ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES

Dr. Jennifer Devine was named the College of Liberal Arts Associate Dean of Promotion. She will lead the promotion of the college faculty, students, and activities.



Fall 2021

Drs. Jennifer Devine, Colleen Myles, and Tom Ptak are featured in *The Conversation*.

News and Events

Fall 2021

Congratulations to student awardees at the annual SWAAG Meeting

Madeline Wade - 1st place Graduate Student Poster
Blue Index San Marcos: Assessing emotional experiences, patterns of use, and values of Waterscapes.
Advisor: Dr. Jason Julian.

Chayanika Singh - 2nd place Graduate Student Poster
Cross-Scale Examination of Spatial Disparity in Functional Health of Older Americans.
Advisor: Dr. Yongmei Lu.

Joanna Weathersby - 1st place in Individual category for the GeoBowl Competition.
Advisor: Dr. Jason Julian.

2021 Presidential Award for Excellence in Teaching **Dr. Brian Cooper**



Spring 2021

Christina Lopez
2021 Outstanding PhD student in College of Liberal Arts. Advisor: Dr. Jason Julian



Congratulations to Dr. Injeong Jo for receiving the Excellence in Online Teaching Award. Dr. Jo has been leading the development and teaching of online courses for the Geographic Education MAG degree.

Fall 2020

Congratulations Geography Faculty Award and Honors Recipients

Dr. Brian Cooper
College Achievement Award, Teaching

Dr. Jennifer Devine
College Achievement Award, Teaching

Dr. Suzon Jammes
College Achievement Award, Scholarship

Dr. Michael Solem
Excellence in Research Funding and Sponsored Programs

Dr. Alberto Giordano
Honorary Professor, International Studies

Spring 2020

Congratulations Dr. Denise Blanchard for being elected to the Board of Directors for the Applied Geography Conferences.



Student Accolades

PhD student, Mael LeNoc, received a five month fellowship from the Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies for his research project, "Towards a Geography of Persecution: The Case of the Arts-et-Métiers and the Enfants-Rouges Quarters of the Third Arrondissement of Paris, 1940-1946." Mael LeNoc also received a Dissertation Fellowship from Phi Kappa Phi (the first for a Texas State student!). He is one of only 10 recipients nationally of this prestigious award in the amount of \$10,000. LeNoc's advisor is Dr. Alberto Giordano.

PhD student, Christina Lopez, is one of the three recipients from Texas State University for the 2020-21 P.E.O. Scholar Award. This \$15,000 merit-based award recognizes and encourages academic excellence and achievement by women in doctoral-level programs and provides partial support for study and research. Only 100 students are selected annually from among almost 1,000 applicants, and the students went through a lengthy selection process, including on-campus interviews and nomination by local P.E.O. chapters. Lopez's advisor is Dr. Jason Julian.

Mei Yang, GIScience PhD student, receives a P.E.O. International Peace Scholarship for the 2020-21 year in the amount of \$12,500. Yang's advisor is Dr. Ben Zhan.

Two Texas State Geography students are awarded Research Fellowships by the San Marcos Greenbelt Alliance (SMGA). PhD student Raihan Jamil's project is titled "Urban Greenspace Distribution and Connectivity: A Case Study of San Marcos, Texas, USA." Jamil's advisor is Dr. Jason Julian. Undergraduate student Haley Tacker's project is titled "Trail-Side Inventories of *Ligustrum lucidum* and *Nandina Domestica* Throughout Prospect Park and Spring Lake Natural Areas." Tacker's advisor is Dr. Kimberly Meitzen.



TEXAS STATE GEO STUDENTS IN THE **UNIVERSITY STAR**

Texas State students map Hurricane Ida disaster zones with national, federal agencies



Texas State students map Hurricane Ida disaster zones with national, federal...

Students in Texas State's Geographical Information System (GIS) program assisted the Civil Air Patrol (CAP) and the Federal Emergency Management...

Texas State graduate students aid Afghanistan refugees



Texas State graduate students aid Afghanistan refugees

Graduate students involved in the university's geographic information systems (GIS) program worked with national agencies and nonprofit...

Meet our Newest Faculty Members

DR. SAMANTHA KRAUSE

Dr. Krause (Dr. K) is a soil geomorphologist, and most of the research she conducts focuses on reconstructing past landscapes over the late Quaternary. Dr. K has experience in geo-archaeology, geochemistry, and climate science, and uses a variety of proxy datasets to answer questions about how past people transformed landscapes, conducted agriculture, and used water resources. This research allows us to understand past vegetation and environmental changes and can help us make decisions in the face of today's climate and resource challenges.

Although Dr K was encouraged by high school guidance counselors to not go to college, she ended up pursuing a bachelor's degree in Geology in her hometown of Fredericksburg, Virginia. She has been hooked on understanding our dynamic planet ever since! Dr. K's PhD is in Geography and the Environment from UT-Austin (2018), and her research there focused on using Lidar, traditional soil survey, and isotope geochemistry to explore ancient farming techniques within a karstic floodplain on the Belize/Mexico/Guatemala border. Dr K first met the fabulous faculty here at Texas State when she was still a graduate student at UT Austin. The Geography department here at TXST was hosting the Binghamton Geomorphology Symposium in 2016, and she was impressed by the research, collegiality, and fantastic scholars here. That's why she jumped at the chance to work here when TXST advertised for a Physical Geographer. She feels beyond lucky to have become part of this engaging and dynamic department.

Sam is now working on three major projects. The first one focuses on past environmental change in New Mexico, where she is working

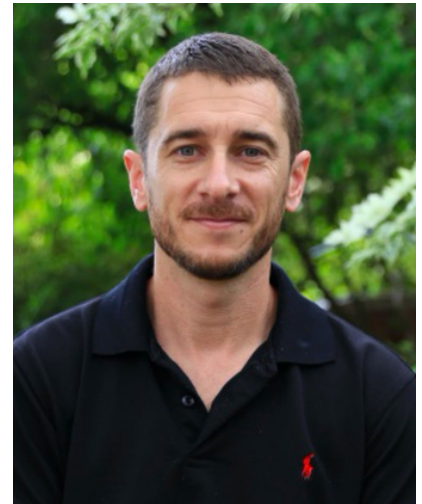


with one of our fantastic graduate students and reconstructing how ancient people used water and soil resources. The second project is in coastal Belize, where she is conducting research on ancient hydrological patterns in a perennial wetland that used to be a large inland lake ~5,000 years ago. The third project takes place in Cyprus in the Mediterranean, where she is working as a project geomorphologist for an amazing group of archaeologists. The team is trying to understand human impacts on the landscape during the Chalcolithic period.

Dr K teaches Meteorology, Field Methods, and Environmental Management. Like many physical geographers, she is an avid hiker, camper, and rock hunter. She also enjoys rock climbing, weightlifting, and playing Dungeons and Dragons. Before she completed her PhD, she once lived in a town of 900 people in the mountains of New Mexico--at 9,000 ft elevation. She spent many years working for cultural and environmental consulting firms, where a typical day included hiking 10+ miles and surveying many different types of ecosystems and cultural resources to help make land management decisions. Dr. K has always been impressed by the scope and scale of research coming out of this department and university. However, she thinks the most important aspect of this department is its focus on providing students with excellent training and skills that can be used in a variety of fields and across research disciplines. Three cheers for Texas State GEO!

DR. THOMAS PTAK

Tom Ptak joined the Department of Geography and Environmental Studies in Fall 2021. He completed his PhD in Geography from the University of Oregon in 2016. Tom is an energy geographer and his scholarship critically investigates a range of socioenvironmental consequences shaped by human interactions with various energy systems. He is passionate about trying to understand and ultimately offer solutions to some of the most pressing energy-based challenges humans currently face. While there are many, Tom's work contributes to the multiple "energy transitions" that are currently taking place to mitigate impacts of human-induced climate change. His research covers a diverse range of topics, for example using geographic analysis to better understanding outcomes of building hydroelectric dams on river systems far from urban areas where energy is consumed. Other projects see Tom analyzing disruptions to energy supply from wildfires and winter storms to identify vulnerable populations or evaluating the degree to which community-based energy projects actually benefit the intended target populations.



After spending four years in another department as an Assistant Professor, Tom came to Texas State because of the opportunity to work in a large, collegial, well known and respected program. It is no secret that our Department of Geography and Environmental Studies has a long history and strong reputation. Being a member of the Texas State Geography program and community was what finally convinced Tom to leave the Pacific Northwest and head to the Lone Star state. Dr. Ptak teaches one of our most popular courses, Global Environmental Change (GEO 2310), along with Energy Resource Management (GEO 3321) and Geography of China and Japan (GEO 3333).



Tom was born in Melbourne, Australia, however, he spent his formative years growing up in Adelaide before taking off for a one year "around the world" adventure which lasted for more than twenty. Having not decided on a career path he set out to see as much of the world as he could and ended up exploring seventy countries on six continents. He hopes to make it to Antarctica one day. His experiences in the world were essentially Tom's first foray into field research and naturally led him to the discipline of Geography. Tom hates sitting still and loves being outside, preferably in the mountains. He loves climbing and riding mountain bikes. Moving through nature is where the noise fades and ideas about research tend to emanate. Tom once jumped on his bike in Greece, and rode all the way to Egypt, which gave him a lot of time to think.

Dr. Ptak's favorite thing about our department is interacting with colleagues, staff and students. So, if you see Tom, please say hi!



DR. ROSALIE RAY

Dr. Ray studies the decision-making procedures that shape just transitions toward more sustainable transportation. Her research falls at the intersection of geography, planning, and political science, looking at multi-scalar deliberations between communities and agencies. She received her PhD from Columbia University in the City of New York in the pandemic year of 2020.

Rosie has always loved cities, but she became passionate about urban geography and transportation during a study abroad year in London. Somehow, she managed to go a whole year using a car only twice. Her realization that a car-free life was possible led to an undergrad thesis on the local bus system, a dissertation asking what made London's buses so good, and now a career exploring why some modes of transportation are easier than others in a given city. She's excited to be here at Texas State because "Texas is a fascinating place to study multi-scalar decision-making and just transitions."

As Rosie was moving here, the US Department of Transportation paused a contested highway expansion in Houston, the city of San Marcos moved towards a transit partnership with the university, and Tesla began exploring the possibility of building tunnels to improve employee commutes. Texas communities have a lot of decisions to make about how best to accommodate new growth, and researchers and planners need to very quickly construct arguments and frames that will shift Texas to a more sustainable path. Working and teaching at Texas State provides the opportunity to participate in and study these processes up close. She loves the diversity of our department's research interests and its dedication to sharing our expertise and applications with the community. We try our best to make the world a better place.

Dr. Ray is planning a survey that will collect demographic information on transit board members. Transit activists have been fighting for better representation for transit-dependent riders, riders of color, and riders with disabilities on the boards. Working with researchers at the University of North Texas and Harvard, she's using the exogenous shock of Covid-19 service cuts as a natural experiment as to whether boards with better representation from vulnerable riders made different service choices. Closer to home, she's also looking at how we evaluate the equity impacts of new microtransit proposals, looking at case studies in Denton and San Marcos.

Dr. Ray teaches Urban Geography, Community and Regional Planning, Location Analysis, Cities and Urban Design, and Urban Infrastructure Management. When she's not teaching, you'll find her biking, driving, walking, training, or busing around cities, playing Dungeons and Dragons, watching women's basketball, or possibly at Zelick's, where it seems like she always runs into someone from Geography and Environmental Studies.

DR. SHELLY WERNETTE

Dr. Shelly Wernette is excited to be back in her home state of Texas where she grew to love geology during trips to Palo Duro Canyon, Enchanted Rock, and the Guadalupe River. Her passion is helping new generations of Texas students understand and appreciate the geology



around them. Shelly's specialty is paleontology, mostly early Paleozoic trilobites, but she considers herself a geologist with broad interests and leads diverse geology classes.

Shelly received her PhD in Geological Sciences in 2020 from the University of California, Riverside. Her dissertation used trilobite fossils from Thailand and Myanmar (Burma) to improve dates on the geologic time scale and understand the past movements of the small continental terranes that comprise most of east and southeast Asia. Dr. Wernette was the first person to collect and describe fossils from the Cambrian rocks of Myanmar, and she continues to describe new species from these collections. So far, she has described more than 10 new species and 2 new genera. Shelly is developing research plans to also explore the Cambrian trilobites of Texas' Llano Uplift.



Dr. Wernette teaches Earth Materials and Structural Geology, as well as Physical Geology. One of her favorite things about teaching Earth Materials and Structural Geology is getting to take the upper-division geology students out on field trips. She loves how excited Texas State students get about our state's landscapes and natural resources. She is also impressed by how well the Geography Department's students work together and support each other while out on field trips and during challenging classes.



Meet our Newest Staff Member Erin Elliott

Erin is our new Undergraduate Support Staff. She will be assisting the Undergraduate Coordinator and Department Chair with administrative tasks while serving the needs of approximately 500 majors and minors in the Department of Geography and Environmental Studies.

Erin was born in China, but adopted at a young age and grew up in Austin. She obtained her B.A. in Political Science with a minor in Japanese from Texas State in 2020. Erin is happy to be in a place where she can give back to the community that gave her so much.

Erin is a high energy individual with a love for traveling and gaining new experiences. One of her main interests is learning languages. She also likes to spend her free time writing, drawing, playing video games, and watching movies, especially Ghibli ones. Erin loves how caring and attentive the fellow staff members here are. Be it with faculty, staff, or students, the passion for the department is shown daily. She enjoys working in an uplifting and positive environment; it makes her proud to be a part of the community here!

Geography Programs

Undergraduate Degrees

- 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 in Geographic Education
- 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

For more information on undergraduate programs, contact Erin Elliott at cae69@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)



Geography Careers Webpage Benefits Students, Alumni, and Employers

If you are a student seeking an internship, an alum looking for a job, or an employer looking to hire interns or new employees, check out the Geography Careers webpage:
<https://www.geo.txstate.edu/geography-careers!>

Within this webpage, interns can find information about the requirements to complete an internship for credit, tips on how to create a winning resume and cover letter, and ideas about how to find an internship. We are also in the process of adding a searchable list of internships to the website. Until then, students can watch for weekly emails from geointernships@txstate.edu for the latest postings.

Geography alumni are good about sharing job postings in their companies with us. Thank you for giving back! In May, we will begin sharing these postings in the Jobs portion of our website so that other alumni can see them more readily. Employers seeking an intern can find information about what times of the year students seek internships (Summer yes!, but also Spring and Fall); what's required for students to receive course credit for their internship work; and soon, employers will have a place to submit their internship and job postings online for distribution to all students.

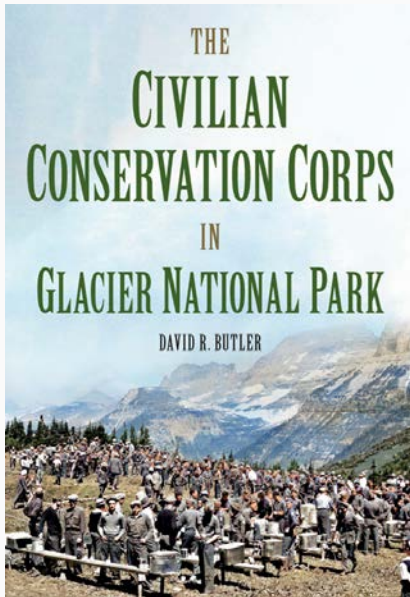
As one of our professors says, "internships are the icing on the cake to help our students launch successful careers." Whether you are a student seeking an internship, a recently graduated alumni, or an employer who needs an intern or a new employee, the Geography Careers webpages are designed to help you. If you have questions, ideas for information you'd like included on the website, or want to talk about anything else career related, please contact Rebecca Davio, Internship Coordinator.



FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT
[GEO.TXSTATE.EDU/GEOGRAPHY-CAREERS/INTERNSHIPS](https://www.geo.txstate.edu/geography-careers/internships)

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

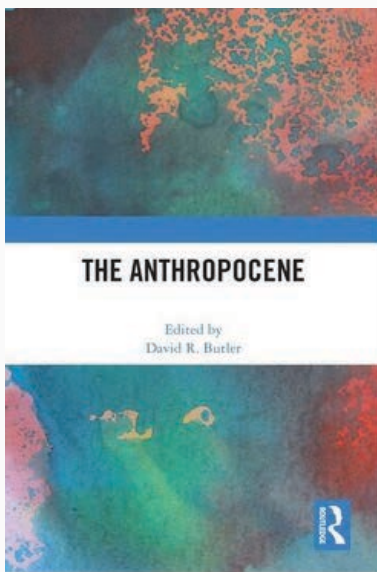
FACULTY BOOKS



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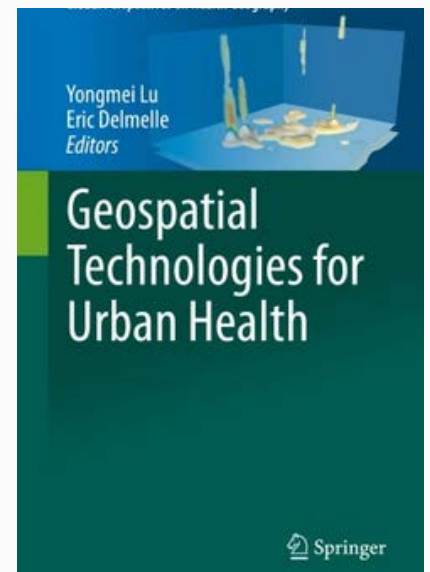
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Graduate Student Forum Highlights and Happenings

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

Established in 1997, the Graduate Forum (GF) was created to represent graduate students in our department. The GF was conceptualized as a mechanism for the formal exchange of information with department leadership and as a formal entity that could petition the department for resources on behalf of graduate students, volunteer for service events, and propose new initiatives in the department. The GF evolved into an important part of the many social, professional, and community facing efforts that our department is known for, including the Annual Alumni Reunion and Student Celebration, the Back-to-School Picnic, academic conferences, and colloquia. Additionally, the GF created several departmental traditions such as our orientation week's "What I Wish I Knew..." for incoming geography graduates, the annual Thanksgiving potluck dinner, and the Outstanding Geography Professor Award. This academic year (2021-2022) the GF was pleased to bring back myriad in-person activities that were previously hosted virtually for safety purposes. First, there was the Back-to-School Picnic and Halloween Geography Costume Contest.



Our department's very own Andy Piñon was lead decorator and put together a "famous geographers cemetery." Spooky and educational! During the costume contest two "geo-babies" were able to wow the department with their ballerina and dragon outfits, i.e., representations of movement through a place and the space of the imaginary respectively. This picnic marked the first return to some in-person events (hosted outdoors) for the department. Colleagues were reunited, new graduates met the "older guard," and geo-undergraduates were able to check out the geography student groups, chat with graduates and faculty, and flex their creative muscles with their own geography costumes. The GF hosted three in-person professionalization panels this year that covered the topics "How to Publish," "Academic Job Preparation," and, in collaboration with SWIG, "Balancing Family, Academic, and Professional Life." Professionalization panels such as these have been instrumental in demystifying the various stages of development many graduate students navigate. These sessions have the added benefit of bringing faculty, students, and professionals together, fostering opportunities for collaboration that might not otherwise occur.

Finally, the GF added two new student officer roles this year, Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) Committee graduate representatives. The GF is very excited to be able to have up to two graduates sit on the new D&I Committee. They will be able to keep the graduate student body up-to-date with university and department D&I conversations and initiatives, solicit feedback from graduates, and bring student's ideas or concerns to the department's leadership.

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN GEOGRAPHIC EDUCATION

GRADUATE STUDENTS PUBLISH IN SPECIAL ISSUE OF THE JOURNAL OF GEOGRAPHY

Dr. Michael Solem guest edited a recent special issue of the Journal of Geography (2021, volume 120, issue 6) that highlights current research into the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) in Geography. NAEP is a large-scale federally funded study of what students know and can do in different school subjects including geography. The special issue features several articles written by TXST doctoral students who used the NAEP Data Explorer tool to analyze factors associated with varying levels of geography achievement. Congratulations to Yusik Choi, Michael Makowski, Zac Martin, Kelly Nolan, Licia Paulus, Heather Palma, and Jan Rueschhoff! Their work sets the stage for deeper analyses of NAEP datasets aimed at supporting efforts to improve student outcomes in geography classrooms across the country.

POWERFUL GEOGRAPHY: MAKING GEOGRAPHY RELEVANT FOR TEACHERS

The Grosvenor Center for Geographic Education has been busy cultivating their new approach to teaching and learning geography called **Powerful Geography**. Through this bottom-up approach, it veers away from the typical top-down curricular standards and puts the emphasis on what students can do with geography based upon their career aspirations and interests. It uniquely accounts for the diversity of classrooms and creates an equitable and inclusive geography course. The Grosvenor Center has created a website www.powerfulgeography.org that houses resources for teachers and students that help make the connection between what is required to be taught in K-12 schools to a fulfilling life that can be enhanced with geographic knowledge, perspectives, and skills. Resources include interviews with professional and non-professional geographers, lesson plans, and job summaries that highlight the geography in over 200 different jobs and careers. The Grosvenor Center has shared this approach with teachers across the state of Texas over the last year including workshops at Education Service Center Region 20 (San Antonio), Region 10 (Dallas), Region 11 (Fort Worth), Waxahachie ISD, Texas Social Studies Supervisors Association Fall and Spring

Conference, Texas Council for the Social Studies Annual Conference, and the American Association of Geographers Annual Conference. If you are interested in helping us build our resources and would like to be interviewed, please contact Joann Zadrozny at j_z37@txstate.edu.



Dr. Joann Zadrozny hosting a professional development workshop for teachers at Waxahachie ISD.



[Follow updates about Powerful Geography on Twitter @PowerfulGeoUSA](#)

IMPROVING SCHOOL GEOGRAPHY THROUGH CRITICAL RESEARCH OF THE AP HUMAN GEOGRAPHY EXAM

In 2021, the Gilbert M. Grosvenor Center for Geographic Education supported a small research project on Advanced Placement Human Geography. This research grant totaling \$16,000, supported four scholars to analyze 20-years of data and student outcomes. After a year of research, the results of this research will be presented in a special issue of the Journal of Geography to be published later this year.

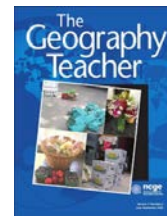
Our thanks for the careful work of Dr. Michael Scholz (Winona State University, Minnesota), Dr. Carmen Brysch (Texas A&M University), Dr. Jorn Seemann (Ball State University, Indiana), and Yusik Choi (Texas State University) for their work on this project. Drs. Scholz and Brysch are graduates of the Texas State Department of Geography with PhDs in geography education and Yusik Choi is a current Ph.D. student in the Department of Geography and Environmental Studies. In his article, Michael Scholz analyzes trends and patterns in APHG growth at the school district-level in Texas. Carmen Brysch examines the 20-year record of APHG student outcomes from the perspective of race, ethnicity, and gender. Jorn Seemann's article compares racial and ethnic group participation rates and outcomes in APHG with other AP social studies and environmental science courses. Our intentions are for this research to begin a discipline-wide reassessment of the values and process of AP Human Geography and the educational responsibilities of school administrators, geography education professional associations (such as the National Council for Geographic Education and American Association of Geographers), and The College Board to ensure a fair and equitable education for all students.

E. WILLARD AND RUBY S. MILLER GRANT FOR RESEARCH IN GEOGRAPHIC EDUCATION

Sojung Huh, a PhD student in Geographic Education (advised by Dr. Injeong Jo), was selected to receive the 2021 E. Willard and Ruby S. Miller Grant for Research in Geographic Education by the National Council for Geographic Education (NCGE)! This grant is awarded to advance the frontiers of geographic education by supporting and promoting innovative research in theory, practice, and application. It is a prestigious honor that serves to recognize the best of the best within the geography education community. Congrats Sojung!

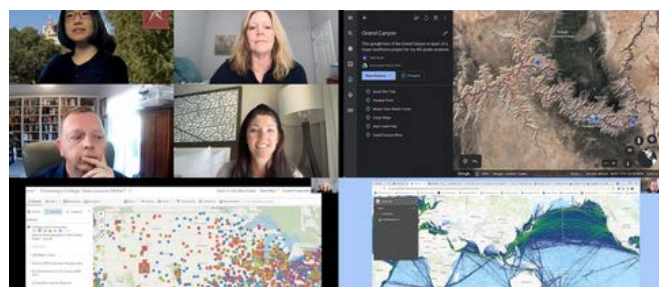


A RESEARCH PROJECT: GEOGRAPHY ACTIVITY (GEOACTIVITY) TYPES IN AP HUMAN GEOGRAPHY



Dr. Injeong Jo and six graduate students – April Bannert (MAG in Geographic Education), Michelle Crane (PhD in Geographic Education), Dean Haakenson (MAG in Geographic Education), Sojung Huh (PhD in Geographic Education), Taylor Loux (MAG in Geographic Education), and Kenny Martin (MAG in Geographic Education) – have five articles accepted for a special issue of the *Geography Teacher* (2022, in press): GeoActivity Types in AP Human Geography. Collaborating with experienced AP Human Geography (APHG) teachers, they identified types of course activities that the teachers frequently use and introduced five distinctive GeoActivity Types – map and photo analysis, discussion, field study, exam preparation, and end-of-year culminating project – with specific examples and suggestions for the successful implementation in the APHG classroom.

GEOSPATIAL TECHNOLOGIES INTO K-12 CLASSROOMS: OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR EDUCATORS



Three PhD students in Geographic Education--Lisa Elikan, Kelly Nolan, and Jan Rueschhoff--were invited and presented at the AAG panel session, Geospatial Technologies into K-12 Classrooms: Opportunities and Challenges for Educators. Few studies have examined the specific types and aspects of geospatial technologies (GST) that influence their use or non-use by teachers. It is important to understand what opportunities and challenges teachers face as the findings will guide the design of teacher education programs to enhance teachers' GST knowledge and skills. In the panel session, Lisa, Kelly, and Jan shared their experiences learning about GST as a tool for teaching geography, presented geospatial lessons they developed, and discussed the opportunities and challenges of curriculum-based usage of GST.



Students Return to the Big Bend!

By Dr. Christi Townsend, Senior Lecturer

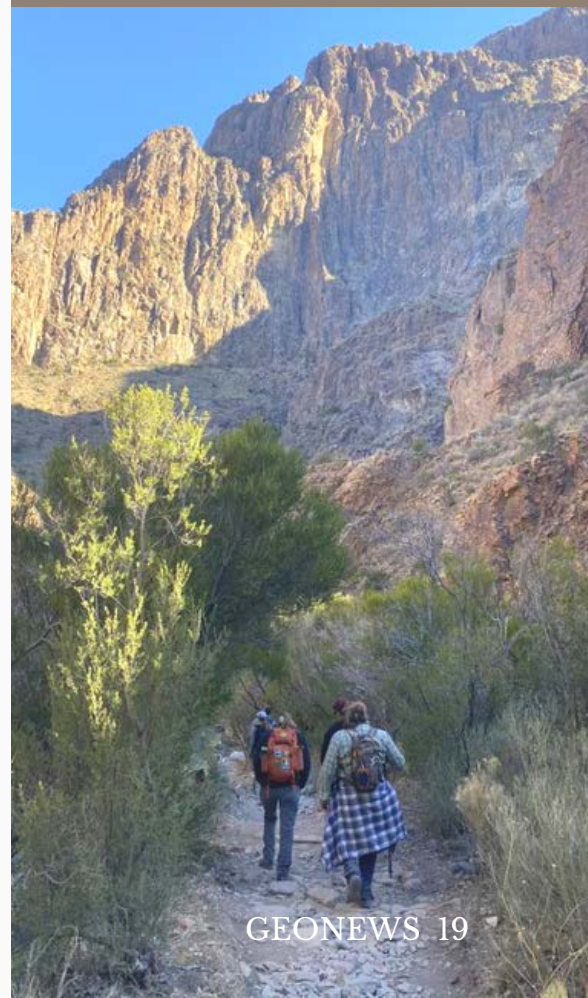
As geographers, we know how critically important it is to get outside and see, feel, and touch the world around us. The ability to observe the physical, cultural, and historical processes responsible for the formation of landscapes contributes greatly to our place-based knowledge. Unfortunately, the pandemic made this difficult, but after two long years of cancellations, the Big Bend Regional Field Course made a successful return for Spring Break 2022! This trip was particularly momentous because it was the first time since the pandemic began that the university permitted students to travel together as a group for a field-based or study abroad course.



The Big Bend Regional Field Course is one of Texas State's most popular Study in America courses. For forty years, Dr. Jim Petersen led groups of eager students through Big Bend National Park to study the physical geography of the Chihuahuan Desert. I took the reins in 2019 after Dr. Petersen's retirement, realizing quickly that I had very big shoes to fill! This year, nine enthusiastic undergraduate and graduate students joined me and my program assistant, graduate student Kevin Colgan, on an adventure through the rugged Trans Pecos region of far West Texas, and they quickly learned how captivating and bursting-with-life the desert landscape can be.

“...coming from someone who had never been to these locations, it was a huge memory for me. This trip meant a great deal.”

-Graduate Student, Kelly Scott





We fit a multitude of amazing places into a whirlwind tour of the region. We began at Big Bend National Park, where we made many stops, hiked, and learned about the rich biogeography, geomorphology, geology, and historical geography of the desert landscape. A visit to Big Bend Ranch State Park included a terrific meeting with superintendent and Texas State alumnus, Mr. Nathan Gold, who discussed day-to-day park operations and employment opportunities. We traveled to Alpine, home of Sul Ross University, where archeologist Bryon Schroeder graciously shared with us stunning artifacts from the region, one of which was more than 13,000 years old! Historian and museum curator, Matt Walter gave us a personalized tour of the Museum of the Big Bend, including their priceless collection of extremely rare and historic maps. We explored the cultural geography and vibrant art scene of Marfa, including a visit to the famous Prada Store and later that day learned about cienegas (desert wetlands) as we took a refreshingly cool dip in the spring-fed pool at Balmorhea State Park. The trip culminated with a Star Party at the McDonald Observatory, where we observed constellations, nebulas, and star clusters through high powered telescopes and learned about earth's position in space.

“...experiences you can’t get by yourself. I mean, I was tearing up in the map room (at Sul Ross).”

-Graduate Student, A. Crane

“one of my favorite moments of the trip was when we would stop and watch the ISS (International Space Station) go by...”

-Undergraduate Hannah Waters



Big Bend is truly a unique and special place. I am honored to have been able to guide these fantastic students on this wonderful adventure and take great delight in knowing that they (and I) have made friendships which will last a lifetime.

For more information about this popular course, please contact Dr. Christi Townsend at ct1086@txstate.edu

GIS DAY HIGHLIGHTS



GIS Day 2021 took place on November 18 and recorded a huge turnout of students, faculty, and staff. Department alumnus Dr. Mark Deka, now an ORISE fellow with the CDC, delivered the keynote address titled *Geospatial Data Science and Environmental Health*. Several companies and agencies showcased their projects and products, and attendees learned how GIS is used in their various organizations. Fun activities included a treasure hunt challenge hosted by the City of San Marcos, drone displays, and another treasure hunt hosted by the Alkek Library. There were also lots of snacks, swag, and souvenirs from the guests.



Thank you to our 2021 GIS Day Sponsors:

Alkek Library

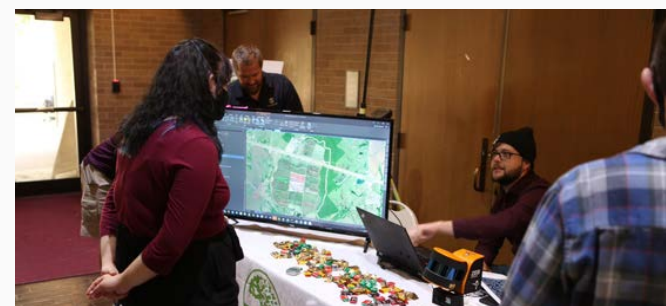
Guadalupe Valley Electric Cooperative (GVEC)

City of San Marcos

Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT)

Plummer Associates

P2 Energy Solutions



IN MEMORIAM

J. RONALD EYTON

1942-2022



It is with a heavy heart that we announce the passing of our friend and faculty colleague, Ron Eyton, on 14 March 2022.

Ron was raised in Atikokan near present Thunder Bay, Ontario. Ron's father was a chemist at a local iron mine and helped Ron develop his life-long love of experimentation, photography, and cartography.

Summer jobs in and around the mines convinced Ron to pursue a career in academic cartography. In a span of ten years, Ron completed degrees from Rochester Institute of Technology (AAS photographic science), U of North Dakota (PhB, MS physical geography & geology), and U of Illinois (PhD physical geography & photogrammetry). Ron's dissertation on Ohio River floodplain and terrace formation was published in the *Geological Society of America Bulletin*.

In the ten years following his PhD, Ron held a variety of academic appointments at U of Illinois, U of South Carolina, Penn State U, and U of Alberta. He was promoted to Professor of Earth and Atmospheric Sciences at Alberta, however an institutional reorganization brought Ron to Texas State University in the Fall of 1995. Ron was an important member of the Geography Department, helping us to be awarded the first doctoral program at Texas State University. Two sabbatical opportunities in his career resulted in visiting positions at the U of New South Wales and the U of Pittsburgh Semester at Sea program.

At the time of his retirement in 2006, Ron had supervised 10 doctoral and almost 30 master's students along with serving as a member of numerous doctoral and master's research advisory committees. Ron was best known to his students for his classes in cartography visualization and remote sensing. Ron wrote most of the analysis software used in these classes and freely shared his code with students. His photography hobby was made use of in the classroom as his students were encouraged to fly with him and use his digital multiband camera systems to acquire and process their own data. His most popular class was "Digital Remote Sensing and Terrain Modeling."

Ron was committed to sharing the work of he and his students, publishing over 50 papers, and making over 30 professional presentations, many with his students as co-authors. Ron was in demand to share his expertise at invited lectures as well, making 46 presentation on digital terrain modeling and raster data processing to government and private sector groups in the US, Canada, and Australia. His expertise and commitment to sharing was recognized with teaching and service awards at all levels.



Retirement did not slow Ron. Accompanied by his spouse Lynne, they traveled throughout the US and Canada--wherever Amtrak or VIA Rail would take them. After brief stops in MN and eastern WA, they finally settled in Pemberton in the Sea to Sky country of Western BC. We will all miss their annual Christmas calendar illustrated with images of their many travels. All of us send our best wishes to Lynne and their children, Ben and Tammy. Our memory of Ron will always include a short sleeve white shirt, khaki shorts, and if outside, a white Tilly hat.

Persons wishing to remember Ron are asked to contribute to the American Society for Photogrammetry and Remote Sensing International Educational Literature Award (IELA). Checks can be made payable to the **ASPRS Foundation, Inc.** and include **IELA** on the memo line. Please mail your donation to:

The ASPRS Foundation, Inc.
c/o James Plasker, Treasurer
15331 W. Piccadilly Road
Goodyear, AZ 85395

For more info on ASPRS-IELA and the Foundation:
<https://www.asprs.org/education/asprs-awards-and-scholarships>
<https://www.asprsfoundation.org/>

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:

https://secure.ua.txstate.edu/site/SPageServer/?pagename=main_donation_form

Your tax-deductible donation, no matter the amount, will make a difference in students' lives. Please contact Angelika Wahl at angelika@txstate.edu or 512-245-2170 with any questions about donations.



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