

DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY & GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SCIENCE

Greetings from the Natural History Building!

In June 2017, we officially moved into the beautifully renovated Natural History Building (NHB)! We invite you to check out the building's stunning new spaces:

- spacious faculty, graduate student, and staff offices
- Russell Seminar Room (pictured)
- modern research laboratories for GIS, remote sensing, and fluvial geomorphology
- interactive teaching and learning spaces
- the School of Earth, Society & Environment (SESE) commons, or CORE

Our faculty and staff offices, as well as the Russell Seminar Room, are located on the southern half of the second floor, with our graduate student spaces and research labs just below on the first floor.

There will be an open house during Illinois Homecoming on Saturday, October 28th, from 2 to 4:30 p.m., where you can take

a tour and learn about the renovation. An NHB dedication event hosted by the School of Earth, Society, and Environment, featuring

speakers from our department and the other units in SESE, will be held on the following Saturday, November 4th. Faculty, students, and alumni will speak about the past, present, and future of Earth, society, and environmental studies at the University of Illinois. Please register if you plan to attend this November 4th event:

go.illinois.edu/SESEregistration.

You can read more about the Natural History Building renovation process, including naming opportunities, at the Liberal Arts & Sciences website: las.illinois.edu/giving/building/nhb ✨



The Russell Seminar Room in the Natural History Building

Dr. Janice Monk Receives Inaugural Distinguished Alumni Award



We are proud to announce the new Department of Geography & GIScience Distinguished Alumni Award, as well as our first recipient! This annual award will honor graduates who have made significant contributions to society and/or to their profession that bring distinction to themselves, our department, and the

University of Illinois.

Dr. Janice Monk (MA, '63, PhD, '72) is widely known for her path-breaking research on geographies of women and gender and her distinguished scholarly and service contributions to the discipline of geography. She is the former executive director, and currently Social Scientist Emerita at the Southwest Institute for

Research on Women (SIROW) at the University of Arizona, where she is also Research Professor Emerita in the School of Geography and Development.

Monk's many national and international honors and awards include: Lifetime Achievement Honors from the American Association of Geographers, the George J. Miller Distinguished Service Award from the National Council for Geographic Education, the Lauro d'Honneur from the International Geographical Union, and an honorary doctorate from the Autonomous University of Barcelona.

We are hosting an award ceremony this year, and look forward to celebrating Dr. Monk's many achievements and contributions to geography as she returns to campus. ✨

From the department head

Greetings:

I am writing this letter from my office in the newly renovated, stunningly beautiful Natural History Building, feeling honored and humbled to serve as the new department head. First, on behalf of the department I want to extend many huge thanks to Professor Sara McLafferty for her great headship and wonderful service over the past five years. Sara has done a great deal of incredible work to transform our department in many innovative ways. Under her leadership, our department has gained tremendous strengths and solidified the international leadership of our core programs.



While I am amazed by the extensive accomplishments, creative works, and strong dedication of our students, faculty and staff, I am particularly energized by the loyalty of our alumni, the support of our friends, and the enthusiasm of many employers who want to hire our graduates. I cordially invite you to share your Illinois experiences with me, and very much hope to see you at our new home in NHB.

I see an extremely bright future for our department, as the horizon and impacts of geography and GIS continue to grow and expand. As always, your support is very important for us to lead future cutting-edge research and innovative education, and further the excellence of our programs. Please feel free to get in touch with me via email: shaowen@illinois.edu or by phone: (217) 333-7608.

All the best,
Shaowen Wang

From the previous department head

Dear Friends:

As I write this, my term as department head is coming to a close. It's been an exciting, eventful, and rewarding five years, after which I look forward to devoting full attention to research, teaching, and family. I step down knowing that the department will be in the excellent hands of Shaowen Wang, a renowned expert in GIS and high-performance computing whose research and leadership talents have been evident throughout his time here. In 2013, Shaowen established the CyberGIS Center, a campus-wide center for research on geospatial 'big data' science that has been a huge success, garnering more than \$10 million in external grant funding and stimulating interdisciplinary research in areas ranging from bioenergy to climate change to electoral redistricting. We are very fortunate that Shaowen has agreed to devote his visionary leadership to our department, and I have no doubt that he will take the department to new heights.



Marked by two departmental moves and three major budget cuts, my term as department head had some challenging moments, but those were more than offset by many positives: our department's top ranking among PhD-granting programs; our move into the beautifully renovated Natural History Building; our successful launch of the Professional Science Master's in GIS (GIS-PSM); the rebound of the GGIS major; hiring of talented new faculty; our alumni's outstanding accomplishments; and many others. Most importantly, I've been fortunate to work with an incredibly collegial, stimulating, and supportive group of students, faculty, staff, and alumni who've made it a pleasure to come to work each day. These five years have shown time and again that the core strength of our department lies in our unwavering commitment to equity, inclusion, and respect as we welcome and support diverse students, faculty, and scholars from across Illinois and across the globe. Please visit us in our new home in NHB and join us in the rededication festivities. Thank you for your generosity and support!

Sara McLafferty




FALL 2017

**Department of
Geography & Geographic
Information Science
School of Earth, Society
and Environment**

College of Liberal Arts &
Sciences, University of Illinois
at Urbana-Champaign

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Sivapalan Receives International Hydrology Award

The European Geosciences Union (EGU) awarded Professor **Murugesu “Siva” Sivapalan** the 2017 Alfred Wegener Medal, which recognizes scientists who have achieved exceptional international standing in the atmospheric, hydrological, or ocean sciences. Siva traveled to Vienna, Austria this April to receive the award and deliver a career-spanning lecture to the EGU General Assembly.



Alfred Wegener (1880-1931) was a German geophysicist and climatologist, best known for presenting the “Pangaea” theory—that the Earth’s continents were once a single landmass that drifted apart over the millennia and formed separate continents. Wegener collected matching fossil and rock specimens from each continent to prove his

theory, and subsequently changed our understanding of how the continents were formed.

It is fitting that Siva has received a medal bearing Alfred Wegener’s name, since his work has had a similarly profound impact on the field of hydrology, helping us to understand and make better predictions about the water cycle. Siva becomes the third hydrologist to receive the medal since it was first awarded in 1983. In fact, the 2014 Wegener Medal was awarded to Siva’s PhD advisor Eric Wood, professor of civil and environmental engineering at Princeton University.

“Siva has covered many research themes throughout his career, with a strong theoretical grounding in fluid mechanics and hydrologic processes. He explores hydrology’s scientific questions beyond the boundaries of the literature, or ‘popular thinking,’” said Wood. “In reading Siva’s papers, one is forced to reconsider old approaches and results, and is provoked to think in new ways.”

In 2012, Siva founded the field of socio-hydrology, a new science that examines the interactions between people and water systems. His groundbreaking work has helped geographers, hydrologists, and engineers better understand and manage the physical and social processes behind water cycles in a changing world.

In 2015, Siva was named Chester and Helen Siess Endowed Professor in Civil & Environmental Engineering, where he also holds a faculty position. He invited his former master’s student Ciaran Harman (MS, 2007; PhD 2011 CEE) to give the opening remarks at his investiture ceremony. Harman is currently assistant professor of geography and environmental engineering at Johns Hopkins University, and received a 2017 NSF CAREER



From left: EGU President Jonathan Bamber, Bristol University, UK; Professor Murugesu “Siva” Sivapalan; Former EGU President Hans Thybo, University of Copenhagen; and Professor Michael Roderick, Australian National University

Award for his research into water cycle dynamics.

“Siva always urges his students to look up from the nitty-gritty details, and to keep their sights on what is really creative, important, and groundbreaking. Today he is one of the most well-known and recognizable figures in the hydrologic community, but the frequent advice he gives to young scientists still rings true: you shouldn’t strive for awards and recognition, and to be the biggest guy in the room—just find an important question and to try to answer it—and then all the other stuff will come,” said Harman during the ceremony.

The Wegener Medal and Seiss professorship are just two of Siva’s many career-defining accomplishments that illustrate his broad reach across theory and practice, his envisioning of hydrology as use-inspired basic science, and his leadership in mobilizing the community to move the field of hydrology in new directions. ✨

Cienciala's EELS Lab Launches New Stream Habitat Field Site in Northeastern Washington

Assistant Professor **Piotr Cienciala's** Ecogeomorphology, Ecohydraulics & Landscape Systems (EELS) Lab is studying the network of beautiful mountain streams in northeastern Washington State, to aid habitat restoration efforts of bull trout, a native fish now federally listed as an endangered species.

"Our goal is to better understand how landscape characteristics influence the quality of fish habitat and its spatial distribution, and hopefully our findings will inform habitat restoration across the watershed, from small tributaries to much larger main stem channels," said Cienciala.

In August 2016, Cienciala led master's student Ryan Keeling and then-senior and Roepke Research Scholar Paige Richardson for two weeks of instruction and data collection at the new EELS Lab field site, located just south of the Canadian border.

Richardson, who graduated in Spring 2017 with a double-major in Geography & GIS and Earth, Society, and Environmental Sustainability, was awarded a Summer 2016 Roepke Research Scholarship to participate in Dr. Cienciala's field project.

"I am interested in pursuing environmental law, and this trip was a great chance to participate in the scientific processes behind environmental decision-making, court decisions, and the development of regulations and policies," said Richardson.

Ryan Keeling's graduate research focuses on the human impacts of urban and suburban watersheds, and stream restoration. He is also an experienced outdoor adventurer, having completed the entire 2,189-mile Appalachian Trail just before coming to Illinois. The field site is an ideal classroom for him, with incredible scenery, tranquility, and a wealth of geographic features and processes.

"We learned a wide range of field survey techniques, using advanced sensors and simple tools that we carried on our backs to capture a detailed picture of stream characteristics important for trout habitat. We also got to work closely with academic and applied scientists, and environmental consultants involved in the project," said Keeling.

Cienciala and Keeling returned to Washington in August 2017, joined this time by first-year master's student Alec Fojtik and undergraduate major Matthew Blaser, to deploy new equipment including a drone and a laser scanning system (LiDAR), which will provide high-quality data on the area's topography, sediment characteristics, and riparian vegetation structure.

Blaser also received a Roepke scholarship to participate in the EELS Lab research project. He became interested in physical



From left: Piotr Cienciala, Ryan Keeling, Alec Fojtik, and Matt Blaser

geography and ecology after family trips to remote parts of the western United States, including Arizona, Colorado, and South Dakota.

"Dr. Cienciala's project aligns very well with my interest in river processes and GIS, and it's a great chance to explore the wilderness and also improve my computational and analytical skills," said Blaser.

They collected data downstream of a dam that is slated for removal, as well as in specific upstream locations that will see future restoration actions. The absence of bull trout in the study streams is likely a consequence of the dam, which has disconnected the watershed from other river channels for over 100 years. Its removal will enable fish movements in and out of the watershed, but the subsequent release of a century's worth of accumulated material will temporarily smother downstream channels and significantly affect stream habitat.

The EELS Lab will continue monitoring changes in the physical and biological processes in the stream corridor, as winter and spring floods transport the released sediment downstream. Their findings will ultimately provide a unique look at fish-bearing mountain stream ecosystems, and help us understand how their flora and fauna respond to restoration efforts. ✨

Ecogeomorphology Ecohydraulics & Landscape Systems (EELS):

<http://pcienciala.wixsite.com/pcienciala>

Political Ecology Symposium Honors Bassett's Career

Professor Tom Bassett retired in December 2016 after more than three decades of teaching, research, and service at Illinois. On March 10th, Geography & GIScience, along with **Jesse Ribot's** Social Dimensions of Environmental Policy (SDEP) program and the Center for African Studies, celebrated Bassett's career of scholarship with a special symposium: *Political Ecology of Global Development and Environment*.

Trevor Birkenholtz organized the symposium on behalf of our department, inviting five of Bassett's professional colleagues, including two of his former doctoral students, to participate in the afternoon panel session:

Judith Carney
University of California, Los Angeles
Shared Trajectories: Hunger Vulnerability and African Environmental Transformations

Carney and Bassett met as UC-Berkeley graduate students and both trace their career-long research interests in political ecology and West Africa to their dissertation advisor Michael Watts. Their work over the years has advanced our understanding of peasants as "active agents who influence their own development."

Betsy Beymer-Farris
University of Kentucky
Reflections on a Political Ecology of Praxis for Carbon Forestry in Tanzania

Beymer-Farris (PhD, '11) and Bassett co-authored a paper "The REDD* Menace" in 2012 based on her research in Tanzania. The paper revealed unjust treatment of Tanzania's Warufigi people in the name of conservation. Betsy reflected on Tom's support through the political battles resulting from the paper's publication, and then explored its practical implications.

In fact, Tanzania's constitutional human rights body has worked to prevent evictions of the native Warufigi people, encouraged by "The REDD Menace," and especially by Beymer-Farris's subsequent work.

* REDD: *Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation*

Matthew Turner
University of Wisconsin-Madison
Land, History, and the Micropolitics of Enclosure in Sudano-Sabellian West Africa

Turner presented research on a theme featured throughout Tom's career: the socially embedded nature of land rights. Through detailed exploration of three villages in Niger, Turner focused on the importance of history in the study of land rights. His investigation of the contested nature of chieftaincies illustrated that history plays a stronger role than land scarcity in land rights conflicts.

Leslie Gray
Santa Clara University
Urban agriculture in California's Silicon Valley: Spatial Politics and the Land Question

Gray (PhD, '97) was Bassett's first PhD advisee at Illinois, and her presentation revealed a reverse parallel between their work. Tom's Master's research focused on urban agriculture in the U.S., and he eventually shifted his focus to rural West Africa. Gray has active research projects in West Africa, and is now investigating urban agriculture in Silicon Valley, California. Her work serves as a helpful reminder that the tools of political



From left: Trevor Birkenholtz, Jesse Ribot, Judith Carney, Carol Spindel, Tom Bassett, Matt Turner, Tad Mutersbaugh, Betsy Beymer-Farris, Leslie Gray, and Alex Winter-Nelson

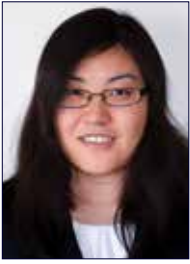
ecology are not only for rural research in developing countries; they can also illuminate the politics of agriculture, ethnicity, and gentrification in the U.S.

Tad Mutersbaugh
University of Kentucky
Agricultural Crop Registries, Registration Hurdles and Gender Equity in Mexico

Mutersbaugh discussed the financialization of organic coffee production and trade in Mexico's Oaxaca region. He highlighted the number of financial institutions involved in funding certified coffee and the burdens they place on farmer cooperatives. Mutersbaugh focused on the gendered implications of dealing with these new accounting practices.

Ribot and **Alex Winter-Nelson**, professor of agricultural and consumer economics, led a roundtable discussion following the presentations, and the symposium concluded with a dinner in the Channing-Murray Foundation hall. ✨

NEW FACULTY PROFILE: Chunyuan Diao



What is your academic background, and how did you become interested in geography?

I first became interested in geography through my yearning to explore and discover the richness of the world, and my academic background is rooted in geography albeit with a strong interdisciplinary orientation. I earned

my Bachelor of Science in resources science and engineering at the Beijing Normal University, and continued my studies at the University at Buffalo, where I obtained an MA in biostatistics and a PhD in geography with a specialization in remote sensing.

What are your current research interests, and what field work have you conducted?

My research interests lie at the confluence of remote sensing, GIScience, and biogeography. The broad goal of my research is to develop advanced remote sensing frameworks to understand the interactions among land cover dynamics, hydrologic regimes, climate changes, and human activities. In today's big data era, large volumes of remotely sensed information open up new paradigms for exploring these interactions. To date,

my research has mostly focused on advancing time series of remote sensing at multiple spatial, temporal and spectral scales, to better understand riparian vegetation (e.g., invasive species) dynamics in response to environmental changes. I am also interested in building advanced remote sensing and GIS solutions to investigate the influence of natural and anthropogenic disturbances on the phenological dynamics of vegetated ecosystems, including riparian zones, deciduous forests, and agricultural crops.

I have conducted fieldwork in two riparian zones: the Rio Grande in Texas and New Mexico, and the Hei River in Inner Mongolia, to study how environmental disturbances affect riparian vegetation dynamics through remote sensing.

What drew you to the Illinois campus?

I am thrilled to join the Department of Geography & GIScience, as it provides me an ideal platform to conduct cutting-edge research in remote sensing and GIS. It offers me amazing opportunities to interact and collaborate with world-class researchers across multiple disciplines (e.g., GIScience, river science, environmental science, and urban geography) to advance scientific discoveries. *

GRADUATE STUDENT PROFILE: Yoo Min Park

- Exploring Time-Space GIS and Public Health



Yoo Min Park is using geographic information science (GIS) techniques to create interactive 3D maps that illustrate our exposure to air pollution as we walk through the city. Her research is shedding light on the real dangers of air pollution, and reinforcing the vital connection between air quality and public health.

She grew up just outside of Seoul, South Korea—the world's fourth-largest city, whose geographic setting and sprawling population lead to increasing concerns about its air quality. A family member's respiratory health struggle drove her to learn more about examining human exposure to air pollution and its effects on health.

Yoo Min's uncle developed severe pulmonary fibrosis, and underwent a complicated lung transplant surgery. After the procedure, he faced an equally difficult decision of where to live. Staying in the city would ensure access to quality medical care, but the relatively poor air quality would aggravate his recovery efforts. A move to Korea's countryside held the promise of fresh air, but not the same quality medical care and attention. He ultimately chose to stay in the city, knowing that he must visit the hospital for regular hemodialysis treatments.

"I was frustrated that there was no perfect place for my uncle to live, with access to quality health care and good air quality. Through this experience, I learned how much our residential environment can influence our health, which led me to think about what I could do as a geographer to make everyone live in a healthier environment."

Yoo Min earned her BA in geography education, and an MA in geography from Korea University in Seoul, and began her doctoral research at Illinois with Professor **Mei-Po Kwan** in Fall 2014. She has received multiple prestigious awards and fellowships to support her research, including the National Science Foundation's Doctoral Dissertation Research Improvement Grant, the Dissertation Research Grant from the American Association of Geographers (AAG), first place in a student paper competition organized by the GIS Specialty Group at the 2016 AAG Annual Meeting, and a Graduate College Block Grant Fellowship. She also received our department's Messina Stanley Graduate Scholarship, awarded to students researching medical or environmental geography.

"It would be really rewarding if the maps I create can help promote public awareness and understanding of the dynamic

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Here Today, Gone 4 Days Later! Piracy of the Slims River



The enlarged Kaskawulsh River, now capturing the flow of the Slims River, as it leaves its lake in front of the Kaskawulsh Glacier, Yukon.

When **Jim Best** and his colleagues Dan Shugar (University of Washington Tacoma) and John Clague (Simon Fraser University, Canada) arrived at Kluane Lake, Yukon, in the summer of 2016 to continue their research into the dynamics of the Slims River delta, they found a startling change: the Slims River had vanished!

“We went to the area intending to continue our measurements in the Slims River, but found the riverbed more or less dry,” said Best. “The delta top that we’d been sailing over in a small boat was now a dust storm. In terms of landscape change it was incredibly dramatic.”

Reorganization of the river drainage at the front of the receding Kaskawulsh Glacier had occurred in May 2016, resulting in most of the flow of the Slims River being captured by the upstream Kaskawulsh River. Best and colleagues studied both the ice front,

documenting a new ice canyon that is now taking most of the water discharge, and flow records that indicated the river piracy had likely occurred over a period of four days.

The team also used statistical techniques to show that there was a 99.5% probability the glacial retreat at the heart of this river piracy was due to post-industrial climate change, which now results in the Slims River draining into the Pacific Ocean rather than the Bering Sea.

Their research, published in *Nature Geoscience* in April 2017, attracted worldwide press attention—over 160 news agencies picked up the story, including the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *BBC*, *The Guardian*, *Radio Canada*, *CBC*, *MSN*, *USA Today*, *Time*, and *Geographical Magazine*.

BBC Link: bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-39634290. ✨

FACULTY AWARDS, HONORS & RECOGNITION



Trevor Birkenholtz received the Robert McC. Netting Award from the Cultural and Political Ecology (CAPE) Specialty Group of the

American Association of Geographers (AAG), which recognizes “distinguished research and professional activities that bridge geography and anthropology.” ✨



Julie Cidell was elected Treasurer of the American Association of Geographers (AAG). ✨



Brian Jefferson received a two-year Junior Faculty Research fellowship from the Unit for Criticism and Interpretive Theory,

to complete his first book: *Digitize and Punish: Digital Cartographies of Policing and Racialized Space Economy*. He will chronicle the expanding use of GIS-based crime mapping by the New York City and Chicago police departments, and the implications for racial profiling, surveillance, and violence. ✨



Ezekiel Kalipeni was named a Center for Advanced Study 2017-18 Faculty Associate.

His project, based in southern Malawi, will study how biodiversity and forest cover change affect the virulence of parasites in mosquitoes that cause malaria. ✨



Mei-Po Kwan received the 2017 Alan Hay Award in Transport Geography, from the Transport Geography Research Group of the

Royal Geographical Society with the Institute of British Geographers; and the Distinguished Scholar Award from the International Association of Chinese Professionals in GIS. ✨



Bruce Rhoads was selected as an American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) 2016 Fellow for “distinguished

contributions to physical geography and fluvial geomorphology, particularly for defining flow and sediment dynamics of stream confluences and river meanders.” ✨

PROGRAM UPDATE: Professional Science Master's in GIS

Welcome Class of 2018!

Front Row (from left): Nurlan Khamzin, Kaixian Yang,
Prof. Shakil Kashem, Yuki Zhang, Nattapon Jaroenchai
Back Row: August Zhang, Tom Gong, Aaron King



Class of 2017 – Summer 2017 Internship Profiles



Wenhan Kong

John Deere, Illinois Research Park
Developed a web-based GIS imagery analysis portal based on Google Maps, for use through the Amazon Web Server. ✨



Edmond Lai

Champaign County Regional Planning Commission, Urbana
Used GIS to analyze neighborhood development factors, and helped create a sustainable neighborhood toolkit. ✨



Dale Lee

Dow AgroSciences
Created a workflow for data cleaning, storage, analysis, and visualization, and used Tableau software to create dynamic data visualizations. ✨



Ruoxin Li

Illinois Sustainable Technology Center, Prairie Research Institute
Worked on a project that gives industry officials in the Great Lakes Region access to information about the Toxics Release Inventory and greenhouse gas emissions. ✨



Xu Li

CyberGIS Center for Advanced Digital and Spatial Studies, University of Illinois
Developed a website application to help farmers analyze and predict crop yields. ✨



Fikriyah Winata

State Farm Research and Development Center, Illinois Research Park
Studied the 2011 Prague, Oklahoma Earthquake Sequence Loss Study, which examines the association between earthquake magnitude/intensity and insured damage. ✨



Det Yang

Dow AgroSciences, Illinois Research Park
Conducted GIS data mining and analysis, and developed and employed machine learning models for aiding the product development process. ✨



Hao Zhang

CEB Data Innovation Center, Illinois Research Park
Used web development technologies and visualization libraries to create interactive graphs. ✨



Daniel Zhang

Environmental Systems Research Institute (ESRI), Redlands, CA
Used ESRI software to access different geodatabases, and added support for Postgre, an open source database management system. ✨



Stephanie Zhang

Dow AgroSciences, Illinois Research Park
Helped produce Weed Resistance Maps, performed analysis on drone images, and assisted in debugging Dow's online product. ✨

NEW GRADUATE STUDENTS

Fall 2016



Betsy Breyer is studying the ecological effects on urban vegetation patterns in residential Cleveland, Ohio, that result from home foreclosures, vacancies, and more recently land grabs by international speculators. Betsy is also examining how local residents are experiencing and contesting these changes. She earned a BA in economics from Reed College in Oregon and an MS in geography from Portland State University. *



Aida Guhlin earned a BS in geography from Texas A&M University. Her doctoral research interests include health geography, health GIS, race, gender, and health intersections; and human-animal interaction epidemiology. She is currently studying healthcare accessibility for Spanish-speaking and non-Spanish-speaking Latinxs in urban areas. *



Ryan Keeling is a Master's student in the Rivers, Watersheds, and Landscape Dynamics program, with a BS in environmental science from the University of Michigan-Dearborn. His research interests include applied GIS and remote sensing to assess human impacts on watershed quality, river restoration, and vegetation-water interactions. *



Lirong Kou is interested in tourism geography, seasonal mobility, and geographies of health and wellbeing. Her doctoral research focuses on the combination of GIS and qualitative methods to understand human mobility patterns and experience. She earned her bachelor's and master's degrees from the School of Tourism Management at Sun Yat-Sen University in Guangdong, China. *



Arrianna Planey earned her BA in history from UC-Berkeley and an MA in social sciences from the University of Chicago. Her dissertation work examines healthcare service access, utilization, and outcomes among people with disabilities in the U.S., with an emphasis on hearing-related healthcare. *

Fall 2017



David Dukes earned both his BS and MS in geology from Temple University. His research background is in post-fire aeolian sediment transport and subsequent geomorphic changes, and he is currently studying the fluvial transport of sediment and large woody debris in intensively managed landscapes. *



Alec Fojtik earned a BS in environmental science from Wheaton College. He has also conducted plant stress/drought research at the University of Arizona's Biosphere 2 facility. His current research interests center on ecogeomorphology, with a focus on both channel sediment dynamics and surrounding biotic attributes that influence salmonid feeding and spawning habits. *



Karan Misquitta has a BA in economics from St. Xavier's College, and an MA in development studies from the TATA Institute of Social Sciences, both located in Mumbai, India. His research focuses on community-based natural resource management, and how households and communities in semi-arid regions are responding to growing water scarcity. *



Evan Lindroth has strong interests in earth surface processes and the improvement of field methods. He will conduct his Master's research in fluvial geomorphology, and the use of drones to measure the velocity of stream flows. He earned a BS in geology from the University of Illinois. *



Dong Liu is interested in urban transport research, especially in the field of urban railway transit. He also has an interest in the sustainability of metropolitan areas. He earned an MS in geography & geoinformatics from the University of Copenhagen, and a bachelor of geographic information science from Shandong Jianzhu University, China. *

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IN MEMORIAM

Professor John Thompson 1924-2017



John Thompson passed away on Sunday, February 19th at the age of 92. He devoted his 33-year career at Illinois to advancing the disciplines of geography and Latin American studies, and has left a lasting impact in both fields. His book *Wetlands Drainage,*

River Modification, and Sectoral Conflict in the Lower Illinois Valley, 1890-1930 remains a point of reference for adapting prairie land for agriculture.

Thompson joined the Geography faculty in 1963, and was unanimously chosen in 1965 as our second official department head, succeeding Dr. Joseph Russell. In this role, Thompson made substantial improvements to our undergraduate curriculum, including the launch of our introductory course **Geography 103 – Earth’s Physical Systems**.

He also embraced the role of undergraduate academic advisor, and his dedication to undergraduate education in geography lives on through a generous gift to our department. Each spring, we award the John Thompson Prize to several graduating seniors in recognition of their outstanding academic achievement and departmental leadership and engagement.

John Thompson was born on April 21, 1924 in Talara, Peru. He maintained a strong connection with Latin and South America throughout his life—speaking fluent Spanish and traveling frequently to the region to explore and conduct research.

He served as founding director of the Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies (CLACS) at Illinois, from 1963-1969. CLACS is still thriving as a U.S. Department of Education-funded National Resource Center in Latin American Studies, and honored Dr. Thompson during its 50th anniversary celebration in 2013, with a plaque and special session entitled “Our not-so-Humble Beginnings.” *

NEW GRADUATE STUDENTS CONTINUED



Erron Perez earned her BA in Geography & GIS this spring, and is continuing on to our PhD program. She is examining the relationship between feminist political economy, urban landscapes, and the prison industrial complex. *

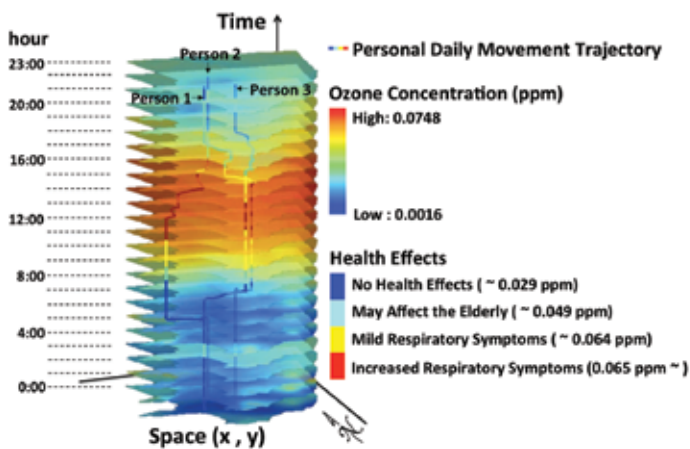


Rebecca Vandewalle plans to develop geospatial tools and applications to support interdisciplinary research in the humanities. Her doctoral research interests include exploring heuristic problem solving approaches and modeling spatial and attribute uncertainty. She earned her BA in Greek and Roman studies from Rhodes College, studied classics at the University of Pennsylvania, and earned an MS in geographic information systems and archaeology from the University of Edinburgh, Scotland. *

PARK CONTINUED

interaction between people and air pollution, and its health effects. As a result, they might even modify their daily behaviors, such as avoiding going out during peak hours of air pollution levels.”

After completing her PhD, Yoo Min hopes to continue her academic research and teaching at the university level. She has a genuine passion for health geography and GIS, and is dedicated to pushing its boundaries and possibilities. *



This graph, from data collected in Los Angeles County, California, illustrates three peoples’ movement patterns, and their exposure to changing levels of air pollution and its health risks throughout the day. Image: Yoo Min Park

2016-17 Student Awards and Scholarships

Undergraduates

- **Jerome Fellmann Award**
Grace Newton
- **John Thompson Award**
Erron Perez
Paige Richardson
- **Howard Roepke Undergraduate Research Scholarship**
Matthew Blaser (*Advisor: Dr. Piotr Cienciala*)
Erron Perez (*Advisor: Dr. David Wilson*)
Paige Richardson (*Advisor: Dr. Piotr Cienciala*)

Graduate Students

- **Charles S. Alexander Graduate Fellowship for Women in Geography**
Rea Zaimi
- **George Beatty Fellowship**
Quinn Lewis
- **Messina Stanley Graduate Scholarship**
Yoo Min Park
- **Joseph and Marion G. Russell Fellowship in Geography**
Pronoy Rai (*Fall 2016*)
Quinn Lewis (*Spring 2017*)

STAFF UPDATE



Susan Etter

retired this spring, after more than eight years of dedicated service to Geography & GIScience, and 13 years at the University of

Illinois. She oversaw the year-round functioning of our department, expertly coordinated with faculty, and provided our graduate students with invaluable support and encouragement. Faculty, graduate students, and Susan's husband and friends gathered in March to celebrate, share memories, and present her with gifts including a geographically decorated box containing students' handwritten notes of gratitude. Pronoy Rai and Sandy Wong gave remarks on behalf of our graduate students, excerpted here:

I'm extremely appreciative and grateful for all of the work that Susan has done to make our lives easier. She's helped me navigate the bureaucracy of the university to make sure that I've met my degree requirements in a timely manner. Over

the past few years, Susan has gone above and beyond to seek answers to my questions. She's made my life less stressful, and that has meant more than words can describe. Being a graduate student can sometimes be taxing, so it's a relief to be able to turn to a supportive person like Susan. Regardless of the content of our conversations, I always come away feeling more positive and optimistic after talking to her.

– Pronoy Rai, PhD student

In the midst of our demanding workplace, Susan promoted a positive environment for all of us. Her infectious good attitude and compassion has made our office a better place. Susan's ability to foster a supportive workplace, her proactive planning, and her overall kind nature have garnered her immense gratitude and sincere appreciation from all students in GGIS.

– Sandy Wong (PhD, 2017) ✨

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