



DEPARTMENT OF
GEOGRAPHY
College of Arts and Sciences

Geography Newsletter

September 2023

INSIDE:

Welcome! 1

New Faculty, Staff,
and Admin 2

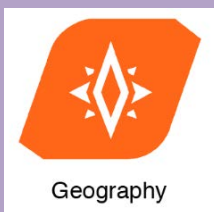
News from Around
the Department . 6

New Graduate
Students 11

Retirements . . . 16

Alumni News . . 18

Party Pics 19



Welcome!

Fall 2023 – The Department of Geography celebrates its Diamond Jubilee 75th Anniversary this year!

The department has already had some social events, including a department-wide cookout/pool party at Brentwood Park Estates on Friday, August 25. Photos included at the end of this issue.

Please send pertinent news items (research, travel, social) to the editor (bbays@okstate.edu) for inclusion in our upcoming newsletters.

Important upcoming dates:

- October 25-28 – AGX (formerly the AGC - the Applied Geography Conference), in Pittsburgh, PA
- November 2-3 – Southwest Division of AAG (SWAAG) regional meetings in Laredo, Texas
- November 20-24 – Fall Break and Thanksgiving Holiday, no classes (university closed Nov. 23-24)
- December 11-15 – Finals Week

New Faculty and Staff



Dr. Rory Hill, Assistant Professor, is a human geographer with a passion for wine. His doctoral thesis, completed at the University of Oxford, explored the place of the originally French concept of terroir in that country's agricultural and broader cultural life.

He followed this with postdoctoral work in France, Germany, and New Zealand, before taking up a lecturing position at EIT-Te Pūkenga in Hawke's Bay, New Zealand. Moving from the Antipodean winter to the 100+ degree summer in Stillwater in August 2023 was quite an adjustment!

But he is thrilled to be here and is currently instructing the GEOG 1713 Regions and Nations in Global Context course, developing a new globalization of food and wine course, and working to complete his book on terroir for the University of Washington Press, under the title *The Stored Soil: Uncovering the Logic and Rhetoric of Terroir*.

New Faculty and Staff (cont.)

Dr. Dani Dempsey, Teaching Assistant Professor, holds a PhD in Religious Studies from the University of California, Riverside. In 2020 Dani received the UC-Riverside Holstein Graduate Prize in Religion and Social Justice.

Dani's current research focuses on religions in North America and institutional Christianities, studying these areas in global contexts that emphasize factors such as colonialism, diaspora, and conflict. Dani was interviewed as an expert for the *National Catholic Reporter* for an article titled "Injustice and crime: Reviewing Pope Francis' apologies for church's role in colonialism" in March of 2023.

Dani's forthcoming article, "Religious Studies, Whither and Why: The Imprint of Institutional Religiosities on 21st-Century Geopolitics" draws on Dani's research connecting historical religious institutions and their influence on current global, religio-cultural geopolitics.



Dani is looking forward to teaching transdisciplinary courses across Geography, Gender and Women's Studies, and Religious Studies, such as Gender and Religion Across Cultures.

New Faculty and Staff (cont.)



Ana Segoviano, Administrative Support Assistant I, is the Department of Geography's newest staff member. Ana reports that, besides spending time with her children, in her spare time she enjoys reading and learning languages. She enjoys helping others and meeting new people and says the office atmosphere is positive and welcoming.

Administrative Changes

Dr. Rebecca A. Sheehan, Professor and Graduate Coordinator, has taken on a new role in Whitehurst Hall as Interim Associate Dean of the Graduate College.



Dr. Thomas Lavanchy, Assistant Professor, is the department's new Graduate Coordinator.



Dr. Jon Comer, Professor, during the summer was appointed Interim Head of the OSU Department of Geography.



News from around the Department

Grants and Scholarships Received

PhD student **Nivedita Kamaraj** received a \$5,000 Delores and Jerry Etter Research Scholarship, for the second year in a row, to map plant diversity using remotely sensed data. Nivedita will be working with Dr. Hamed Gholizadeh on this project. *Congratulations Nivedita!*

Publications

Dr. Kianoosh Hassani (PhD, 2023) is lead author in Hassani, K., Gholizadeh, H., Taghvaeian, S., Natalie, V. A., Carpenter, J., and Jacob, J., (2023). "Assessing the Impact of Spatial Resolution of UAS-based Remote Sensing and Spectral Resolution of Proximal Sensing on Crop Nitrogen Retrieval Accuracy", *International Journal of Remote Sensing*, doi.org/10.1080/01431161.2023.2237162. *Congratulations Kianoosh!*

Conference Presentations

PhD students **Ny Aina Rakotoarivony** and **Nivedita Kamaraj** presented at the 2023 Ecological Society of America meeting in Portland, June 6-11, 2023.

PhD student **Ny Aina Rakotoarivony** attended the 2023 Spectral Ecology Summer School at Mountain Lake Biological Station (Virginia), June 18-24, 2023.

Oklahoma Pandemic Defense Project



Dr. Tao Hu and five other OSU College of Arts & Sciences researchers are embarking on a large project to develop strategies to battle pandemic disease. The multidisciplinary team received a \$500,000 grant from the National Science Foundation.

They aim to research and model COVID-19's impact in Oklahoma, setting a foundation for combating future pandemics.

The funding supports investigation into disease outbreak severity and its relationship to socioeconomic, behavioral, and environmental variables.

Dr. Hu is Geography's member of the 2021 CAS faculty cluster hire for pandemic research. Collaborating with him are experts from biology, history, math, and strategic communications.

Diverse yet understudied, Oklahoma is a unique case for studying disease dynamics. Its urban-rural spectrum promises vital data to inform models and insights for other areas. Upon completion, their data, codes, and models will be available for broader academic and regional use.

Driving Discovery and Building Capacity for Rural Climate Resilience



Dr. Saber Brasher, Assistant Professor, is part of a research team who have received a \$3.7 million National Science Foundation grant over four years to help rural communities weather climate change.

Rural communities in the United States are especially vulnerable to climate change due to their more direct reliance on natural resources. Much of climate research is urban-centric, and there's a notable gap in rural representation in science. This can breed skepticism about climate science in rural areas.

The project goals are to:

1. Work with communities to better understand climate resilience.
2. Predict climate impacts using innovative simulations.
3. Assist rural communities in crafting climate strategies.
4. Promote STEM opportunities for underrepresented groups.

By merging academic knowledge with rural insights, the project aims to foster trust in science within rural communities and offer tools to tackle climate challenges. The initiative will also introduce STEM pathways for marginalized groups, refining its approaches in select communities to create a replicable model. Through advanced climate models, potential impacts will be estimated and shared with communities to aid their resilience plans. This effort aims to bridge the gap between rural communities and scientific expertise in the face of climate change and rural depopulation.

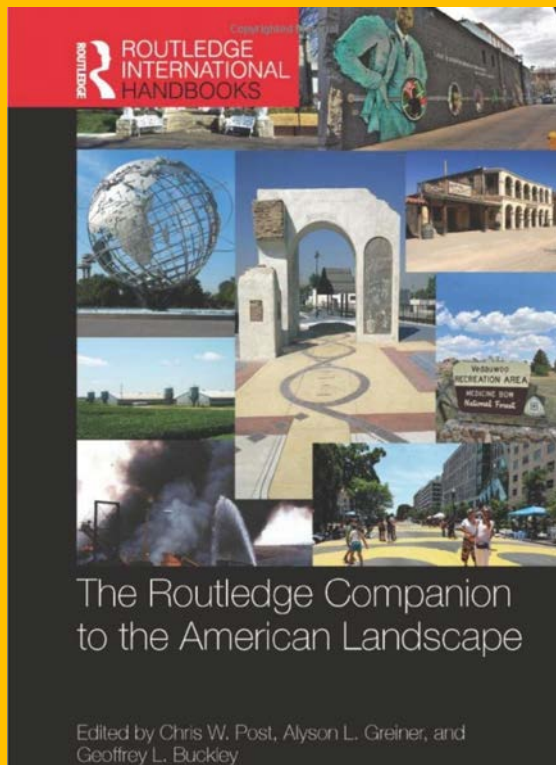
Faculty Scholarship



In March, Routledge published *The Routledge Companion to the American Landscape*, which was co-edited by **Dr. Alyson L. Greiner**.

The collection of essays offers a modern and comprehensive insight into the American landscape, tailored for the 21st Century.

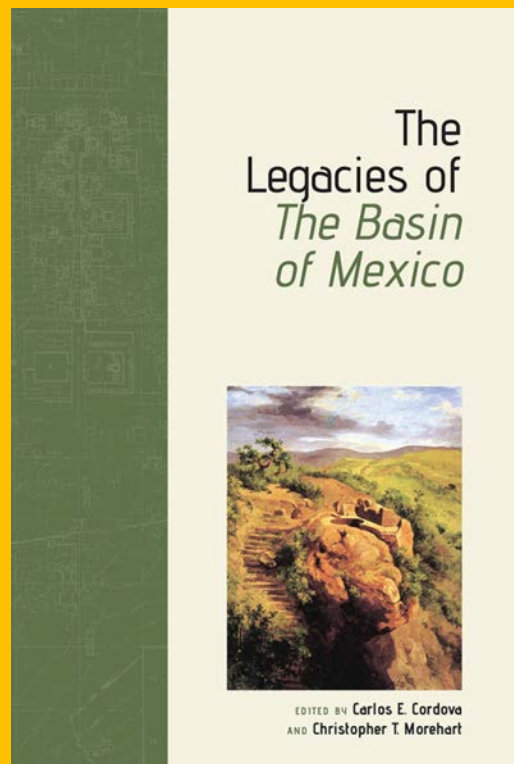
Former AAG president Alec Murphy says this "remarkable volume brings together some of the most thoughtful, insightful scholars of the American landscape in a book that provides a revealing portrait into the vitality and relevance of landscape study. The book is full of thought-provoking insights into the changing American scene. It serves as a powerful reminder of why 'reading the landscape' is such a valuable component of efforts to understand the cultural, social, and political world we inhabit."



Faculty Scholarship (cont.)

In August, the University of Colorado Press published *The Legacies of The Basin of Mexico*, a volume co-edited by **Dr. Carlos E. Cordova**.

This collection pays tribute to the enduring influence of *The Basin of Mexico: The Ecological Processes in the Evolution of a Civilization* (1979) by William T. Sanders, Jeffrey R. Parsons, and Robert S. Santley. The seminal work offered a synthesis of findings from the Basin of Mexico surveys and subsequent site excavations. It also set forth theoretical and methodological research frameworks for central Mexico and Mesoamerica at large.



New Graduate Students

Farzana Afroz

Farzana is a new Geography MS student with GIS/spatial analysis experience who has worked as an urban planner in disaster risk assessment. Her research interests are hydroclimate and land use dynamics. She earned a Bachelor's in Urban and Regional Planning from Rajshahi University of Engineering & Technology (RUET), Bangladesh.



Fatemah (Sheyda) Azinmoghaddan

Sheyda is a new Geography PhD student who has research interests involving human geography. She completed her MS training at Ferdowsi University of Mashhad, Iran.

New Graduate Students (cont.)

Benjamin Biney

Benjamin is a new Geography MS student who earned his Bachelor's degree in Geography and Regional Planning from the University of Cape Coast, Ghana. His research interests are in Transportation Geography and GIS. He seeks to incorporate GIS into transport to understand travel behavior and accessibility to transport systems among maternal women.



Omokhudu Great Igiekhumhe

Great is a new MS student in the Environmental Science program with research interests in climate change, sustainability, and environmental stewardship. He completed his undergraduate training at the Federal University of Technology-Akure, Ondo State, Nigeria. Beyond academics, he loves discussing and engaging in sports.

New Graduate Students (cont.)

Sadril Islam Kahn

Sadril is a new Geography PhD student with research interests in droughts, climate change impact and mitigation, and sustainable development. He completed his undergraduate training in 2016 at the University of Dhaka and earned his MS at the University of South Wales in 2018. Presently on study leave from his role as a Senior Lecturer at Daffodil International University, Dhaka, Sadril is also a passionate golfer.



Lauren McIntosh

Lauren is a new MS student in the Environmental Science program with research interests in water availability and sustainable water management under varying climate regimes. Originally from Edmond, Lauren completed her undergraduate training at The Ohio State University. She enjoys the outdoors, reading, crafting, and spending time with her cat.

New Graduate Students (cont.)

Adeyinka Michael Olusanya

Adeyinka is a new student in the Geography MS program. He earned his undergraduate degree at the Federal University of Technology-Akure, Ondo State, Nigeria. Adeyinka's research interests involve the application of GIS and Remote Sensing in combination with ecosystem-based management approaches to address imbalances in the food, energy, and water nexus.



Katelyn Cooke Ososkie

Katelyn is a new PhD student in Geography. She received her M.A. in Global Affairs from the University of Oklahoma this past May 2023. This Fall, she has returned to the alma mater of her bachelor's as a Ph.D. student and Teaching Assistant. In her spare time, Katelyn enjoys hiking and photography, especially of places that will support her research looking at landscape change over time in the Sooner State!

New Graduate Students (cont.)

Chloe Taylor

Chloe is a new MS student in Geography. Chloe recently completed her BSc Geography degree at Loughborough University, Leicestershire, England, in June. She has now returned to OSU, after thoroughly enjoying her study exchange in Stillwater (2021/22), to complete her MS, exploring natural hazards and water quality. Having recently retired from her netball career upon moving to the United States, Chloe keeps busy at the gym and in the kitchen baking cupcakes!



Retirements

The Physical Geography Lab Stream Table

The Department's cherished stream table, meticulously crafted by Professors Emeritus Dale Lightfoot and Tom Wikle in the mid-1990s, has decided to retire.

"I was built in the mid-1990s by the two tall, flying geographers, both of whom have recently hung up their hats. I've given my best decades to the institution, in no less than three different buildings. I've had the good fortune to have influenced thousands of undergraduate students, many of whom probably think of me each time they pass over the Cimarron River bridge or find themselves conversing about dendritic drainage patterns with friends. I plan to retire in Stillwater and spend my golden years on a beach volleyball court."



New Equipment Physical Geography Lab Stream Table



Stream Table 2.0

Manufactured to exact specifications with space age polymers, the new table is termite and rot resistant.

News from Alumni

Jordan McAlister (PhD, 2023)

This year has been quite an eventful one for my family and me. I will remember 2023 fondly as an annus mirabilis.

This January, my partner of eight years and I visited the Central American/Caribbean country of Belize. There we rented a car and explored the colonial architecture of Belize City, the Mayan ruins of Lamanai, Xunantunich, and Altun-Ha, and the UNESCO-listed coral reef.

In March, I attended the Denver AAG conference where I presented my dissertation research on the historic preservation of county courthouses. My partner, Jida Wang, and I got married this April at our home in Kansas.

Then, this summer, I worked on completing my dissertation. Brad Bays was there for me every step of the way and was the greatest advisor I could ever want. I am also grateful for the summertime commitment from my committee. Finally, in late July, I successfully defended, and officially graduated in August.

This was directly followed by a move to Urbana, Illinois, where my husband was hired as an associate professor in the University of Illinois (UIUC) Department of Geography and Geographic Information Science. With this position, he has been granted tenure three times in his career, including at Kansas State in 2020 and at Syracuse in an early-2023 job offering.

We purchased our first house in the Land of Lincoln, and we are tickled pink to live in this lovely, small Midwestern city. I am now in the process of seeking employment as an academic geographer (preferably in a teaching position). The U of I is assisting us in this endeavor.

Lastly, this autumn, Jida and I are taking a trip across Europe from the three Scandinavian capitals to the Apennines as a honeymoon/graduation celebration. It doesn't hurt that we can combine the touring with Jida's NASA/SWOT Satellite conference in Toulouse.



The Geographers (Not) At Work



The Geographers (Not) At Work (cont.)

