

ZENITH

OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY

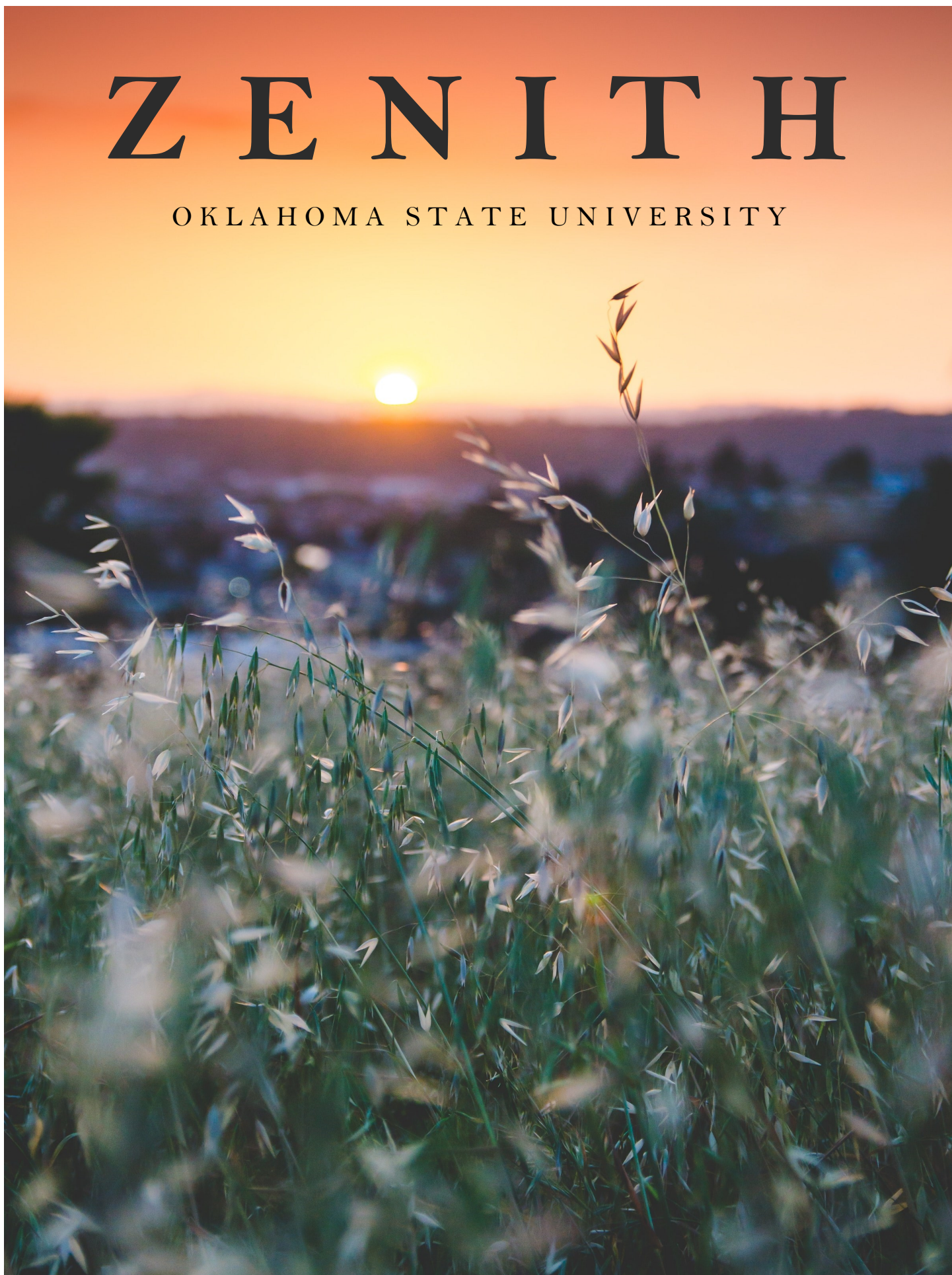


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DEPARTMENT OF
GEOGRAPHY
College of Arts and Sciences



Letter from the Department Head

Dear Alumni and Friends,

Another amazing year has come and gone, with so many more memories created along the way. In May, we celebrated as students received their diplomas. One of our graduating seniors, Jackie Harsha, was recognized as the Orange Gown Graduate for the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS). Each college selects one student for this special recognition. Jackie wore the orange cap and gown, carried the college banner into the ceremony, and was the first to receive her diploma at the CAS graduation ceremony. Jackie completed three bachelor's degrees in Geospatial Information Science, Geography, and Spanish. In addition to earning minors in International Studies and Aerospace Studies, she also managed to complete the GIS Certificate. She recently took her oath as an Officer in the U.S. Space Force and became the first Space Cadet from OSU. We also received news that Abbi Lesnick, a May graduate and Global Studies major, was awarded a prestigious Fulbright English Teaching Assistant Award. She will soon travel to Germany to begin that work. In the fall, CAS also recognized Karen Morgan (B.S. Geography 1985) as the Distinguished Alumna from our department.



Over the past year our faculty have had research grants supported by NASA, USDA, NSF, Oklahoma Center for the Advancement of Science and Technology, the National Park Service/Oklahoma State Historic Preservation Office, and USGS. The pace and productivity of research remain strong and these various projects support many graduate and undergraduate students, giving them excellent experience with fieldwork, including a variety of data collection methods from interviews to drones.

Likewise, our graduate students have been very active in presenting their research at regional and national conferences. This year we had students attend and participate at the following conferences: SWAAG, AAG, Ecological Society of America, American Geophysical Union (AGU), Conference of Latin American Geographers, the Environmental Data Science Summit, and Oklahoma South Central Arc Users Group (OKSCAUG). Additionally, we were one of five departments selected to participate in the inaugural program by Career Services to create paid internship opportunities on campus, and Cartography Services hired a Geospatial/Mapping Intern.

This fall we look forward to the arrival of a new faculty member, Dr. Rory Hill. He is presently Senior Lecturer and Wine Business and Innovation Program Coordinator at the Eastern Institute of Technology in New Zealand. He obtained his Ph.D. in Geography and the Environment from the University of Oxford, and brings expertise in the globalization of food, sustainability in food and farming, and connections between wine regions, wine tourism, and sense of place. Some folks are also moving on, including Carissa Gabilheri, who helped maintain our social media this year, and professors José Torres and Peter Crank. We appreciate all of their hard work and collegiality while with us. There is one additional change to note: By the time you receive this, my time as Department Head will have ended. It has been such an honor to have served this department and to have met and connected or reconnected with so many of our alumni. Nevertheless, it is time for me to pass the baton. In July my colleague, Dr. Jon Comer, will take the reins as Interim Department Head.

As always, take care and send us your news!

Sincerely,

Alyson Greiner



DEPARTMENT OF
GEOGRAPHY
College of Arts and Sciences

Scholarships

Your contributions to department funds and scholarships enable us to support our current students and enhance their education. Thank you so much for your support!

Congratulations to Our Spring Awardees!

The Awards Committee has selected departmental awards. The recipients are:

2022-2023 Academic Year Recognitions



John F. Rooney, Jr. Scholarship for Outstanding Junior

Perri Lewis



**Outstanding Senior
Orange Gown Graduate**

Jackie Harsha



Robert E. Norris Memorial Scholarship for Outstanding First-Year Graduate Student

Nivedita Kamaraj



Susan Shaull Medal For Excellence in Teaching Geography

Kathy Osei



Jerry Croft & Family Award in Geographic Education

Kathy Osei



Mark & Susan Miller Fellowship in Geography

Emma Riddle

2023-2024 Academic Year Travel Awards



Stephen W. Tweedie Travel Scholarship

Suzu Piccolo



Robert E. Norris Memorial Scholarship for Conference Travel Award

Ny Aina Rakotoarivony,
Nivedita Kamaraj

Graduates of the 2022-2023 School Year

Fall 2022

Lydia Blew—B.A. Global Studies
Gabrielle Boyd—B.A. Global Studies
Chad Brazeel—B.S. Geospatial Information Science
Emily Gile—B.S. Geography
Stephanie Grace—M.S.
Samuel Harris—B.S. Geospatial Information Science
Benjamin Maddock—B.S. Geospatial Information Science
Camille McCullough—B.A. Global Studies
Jali Robertson—B.A. Global Studies

Summer 2023

Kianoosh Hassani, PhD
Jordan McAlister, PhD
Katrina Ward, MS

Spring 2023

Caitlin Brooks—B.A. Global Studies
Hadley Brumley—B.S. Geospatial Information Science
Connor Cotner—B.S. Geography
Jacquelyn Harsha—B.S. Geography & B.S. Geospatial Information Science
Jeremy Hicks—B.A. Global Studies
Abigail Lesnick—B.A. Global Studies
Isabelle Ley—B.S. Geography
Brianna Lucas—B.A. Global Studies
Blaine Mann—B.S. Geospatial Information Science
Elise Neighbors—B.A. Global Studies
Jacob Shepherd—B.A. Global Studies
Christopher Tucker—B.A. Global Studies
Jordyn Walls—B.S. Geography

GIS Certificate Earners

Fall 2022

Benjamin Maddock

Spring 2023

Hadley Brumley
Connor Cotner
Jacquelyn Harsha
William Lewis
Isabelle Ley
Blaine Mann

Alumni Spotlight Feature

We recently caught up with **Gabby Boyd** (B.A. Global Studies 2022). This spring she started the graduate program in Latin American Studies within the School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University. She took courses on the Political Economy of Latin America and Culture and Power in Latin America. She is also continuing to work on her proficiency in Spanish.

What made you decide to go to graduate school?

I wanted to gain more experience. As someone interested in Latin America, I felt like I needed to learn more about the region, its culture, and political affairs before going to work.

How have you found the transition from Stillwater to the D.C. area?

Washington, D.C. is so different from anywhere else that I have lived (like Florida and Oklahoma). There is always so much that is going on in D.C., plus the cost of living is so high. Everything is expensive there and Georgetown has different campuses. It has been an adjustment getting used to graduate classes.



There are not as many assignments, and no quizzes. Instead, your grade is often based on participation and a paper. The papers aren't the kind that you can do in a week or so. You have to start working on them right away. My transition to D.C. was busy, especially with starting classes in January, but manageable. Amazingly, I ran into Caitlin Brooks (B.A. Global Studies 2023) when she was visiting George Washington University and considering its graduate program in Global Health. It was such a surprise to see her in D.C.! She will be attending graduate school at George Washington University.

What was the best part about being a student at OSU? *Honestly, it was the community. I felt welcome at OSU from the time I stepped on campus, and I say that as someone who came to OSU as an out-of-state student. I always felt supported by my friends and the faculty at OSU, too. I'm not saying that there is no community at Georgetown; it's just different. Georgetown is very competitive. I always felt like OSU promoted both community and the academics.*

What are you looking forward to? *I have an internship that I will be starting in a few weeks in the country of Grenada. I will be working for the former Ambassador to the United Nations and current President of the Senate of Grenada, Ambassador Dessima Williams. We have talked about some different projects, so I'll know more soon, but I am very excited to have this opportunity to work with someone with so much experience, and to be able to learn more about this Caribbean Island and the Caribbean region more broadly.*

What advice would you give to students in our department? *Don't be afraid to take risks especially in terms of getting involved with different organizations and seeking out internships. I was able to arrange an internship in Ecuador while I was a student at OSU. Being accepted into Georgetown was a long shot for me. I applied to a wide range of graduate programs, but I'm glad I took the risk and applied to Georgetown as well. If you are interested in something, apply or try it out because you just never know and it might work out.*

2022 Distinguished Alumni

Karen Morgan (B.S. Geography '85, M.A. Environmental Science)

As a Kansas farm girl, Karen Morgan's eyes were open to the earth's amazing environment. However, it wasn't until age 40 that she realized she needed an education to unlock the mysteries of the world. With the support and encouragement from instructors who recognized her curiosity and zeal to know more, Karen earned her bachelor's degree from OSU's geography department and a master's in environmental studies. Her thesis advisor, Dr. Steve Stadler, supported her idea to study potential correlations between Tulsa County's air quality and respiratory disease.

A National Geographic Society internship in Washington, D.C. was the icing on the cake for the 47-year-old OSU graduate. Although a career in medical geography was a dream, Karen found another love working for Girl Scouts of the USA. She became a Certified Girl Scout Executive Officer and served as CEO of Girl Scouts of Eastern Oklahoma and Girl Scouts of the Ozark Area.

As a retiree, Karen is involved in Monarch butterfly protection, water gardening, and being a group discussion leader for Bible Study Fellowship International.

All of Karen's children attended OSU and the first of her eight grandchildren was born the night before she finished her thesis in 1988. "Thank you, Oklahoma State University," Karen said. Quoting The Starfish Thrower story, she added, "You made a difference to this one."



Alumni News & Memories

Karen Allen Morgan (1987-88)

Last year was an amazing year in the life of this Geographer who just keeps on keeping on. I graduated in 87/88 along with my many young geographer friends, some of whom I still communicate with. I received notice in April that I would represent the OSU Geography Department through the School of Arts and Sciences as their Distinguished Alumni. What an amazing surprise! The celebration took place in September in a beautiful ceremony. Thank you OSU Geography Department!

I stay busy as a part time Patient Care Coordinator for a doctor's office, President of the Green Country Water Garden Society, ramrodding my class of 1958 Class Reunion and nurturing milkweed plants and Monarch butterflies. Seven of my 8 grandchildren are either in college or have graduated and the youngest is a high school junior. They will all have amazing futures with the most recent granddaughter graduating this May from Duke School of Law. Husband Mike is doing great and enjoys our water garden and growing flowers and vegetables. Age is only a number and this Geographer/Grandmom says she'll never give up on the JOYS of life and living!

Gail Pickens-Barger (1981)

Talking with a former co-worker for Conoco Oil Company, I was reflecting on how we made those computer contour maps using seismic data and Landsat Satellite data. I am tickled that I was able to use my geography degree and actually use it in my first job out of college. I collaborated with contour mapping systems companies, both Radian's CPS-1 and Zycor Mapping Systems. I taught both geologists and geophysicists how to use their data to create oil-in-place maps.

Years later working for DuPont did a lot of computer, software, and desktop support.

Now teaching yoga for veterans online since the pandemic and getting to teach in-person classes too.

The Department of Geography gave me experience in the CARS lab as an undergraduate and as a student assistant in the Remote Sensing class coursework. Came full circle now, back to helping people but in a different manner.

If I were to be getting this same degree, all these years later it would be considered to be Geographical Information Systems.

Attended Dr. Vitek's Geomorphology summer course. One of my fondest memories and toughest one's too at Oklahoma State University. Thanks, OSU for all the fond memories as a student and participant in the marching band too!



Alumni News & Memories, continued

Stephanie Heald (2018)

Currently:

Geography Instructor for Southeastern Oklahoma State University
Interim head Track and Cross Country Coach at Southeastern Oklahoma State University
Social Studies Education Coordinator at Southeastern
Fellowship of Christian Athletes Sponsor and Young Democrats Sponsor at Southeastern
Geography Adjunct Instructor at Seminole State-part time
OSU Geography Adjunct Instructor

Getting married this Summer

Fav Memories-

Working for Mike Larson for SHPO

Working with Kim for SHPO in the Summers

Stats Classes with Dr. Comer

Going to AAG with my peers

AP Human Geo Grading in the summers and seeing all my geography friends/colleagues

Living in the computer lab making maps, Excel spread sheets, and SPSS (all of which I thoroughly enjoy!)

Ryan J Johannes (1986)

After graduating from OSU, in 1992 I earned a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration in Accounting from Missouri Southern State University. I subsequently attended the University of Oklahoma College of Law working as an editor for the American Indian Law Review, graduating with a Juris Doctor in 1996 after repeatedly making the Dean's List and receiving other honors. During law school I worked for the Oklahoma County District Attorney's Office and the Oklahoma Statue Bureau of Investigation. After graduation, I was admitted to the State Bar of Texas and Oklahoma Bar Association and worked in the area of issuance of affordable multifamily housing tax exempt bond funding in Houston, Texas. During this time period, I attended the University of Houston Law Center and earned a LL.M. Masters of Laws degree.

From 2002-2004, I worked as a Hearing Officer for the Texas Workforce Commission in Austin, Texas.

In 2004, I was accepted as an Attorney Advisor for the Social Security Administration Office of Hearing Operations in the Dover, Delaware office and in 2007 was appointed Senior Attorney of the San Diego office. In June, 2012, I was appointed a United States Administrative Law Judge for the Office of Hearing Operations in Toledo, Ohio. I was sworn in as a Judge by the Commissioner of the Social Security Administration in the US House of Representatives Ways and Means Committee room. I served two and a half years at the Toledo office and two and a half years at the Reno, Nevada office. Since 2017, I have served at the Fort Myers, Florida office.

I like to spend my spare time traveling around the country birding. I have traveled to Maine, Arizona, California, Oregon, Colorado, Texas, Michigan and Alaska, as well as birding locally. I have sighted 610 species of birds starting this hobby in 2012.

Alumni News & Memories, continued

Jim Dunn (1973 and 1974)

It's been a while since I sent an update. My wife, Aletha, and I have resided in Portland, Maine since my retirement from the Army. My last assignments were serving as Defense and Army Attache in Bangladesh and Nepal so you can imagine how much of South Asia we were able to see. My next career was as a school administrator where I worked in Maine, Ghana, Jordan, and Egypt. Again, lots of travel. Following my final retirement, we continue to seek adventures abroad, and have racked-up over 120 states visited with more planned. We visited Stillwater last year for a Pershing Rifle reunion and it was grand to see old friends and the updated campus. Best regards to my Geography colleagues.

Nathan Smith (2015)

I am happy to share that I have taken up a new position as a GIS Analyst II at United Communications, a rapidly growing Telecommunications company in middle Tennessee. As a 2015 graduate of Geography and short term Cartography Services employee for Mike Larson, followed by 7 years of experience in Garmin's cartography department, I have gained valuable skills and knowledge in creating maps, maintaining database information, performing spatial analysis, and utilizing GIS software.

In this role, I have been responsible for creating and maintaining GIS databases, generating reports and maps, and collaborating with other departments to achieve business objectives. Given the telecommunications industry's strong reliance on GIS for network infrastructure management and customer location tracking, I am confident that this new challenge of visualizing their 70 years worth of infrastructure will provide exciting opportunities for professional growth and development. Furthermore, I am eager to contribute to United's expansion of broadband access, ensuring that individuals in rural areas have access to high-speed internet. By utilizing my expertise in GIS, I aim to assist in identifying underserved regions, planning and implementing broadband infrastructure, and facilitating data-driven decision-making to optimize network expansion efforts.

Thank you to all the staff and faculty I crossed paths with while I was there, some have moved on from OSU but each one of you had a positive impact on my success. Starting a new job in a new state can certainly be a daunting experience. However, with all of the stories and positivity Dr. Allen Finchum brought to us all about the state of Tennessee I am well-prepared to tackle this new adventure!

In Memoriam

Tom Daxon (B.S. Economics 1970 and M.S. Geography 1977)

With sadness we note the passing of Tom Daxon in November 2022. He wrote his thesis, "Spatial Allocation of Marketing Resources in a Political Campaign," under the direction of professors Hagle (advisor), Norris, and Stine. In the preface to his thesis Tom stated that he "...was always intrigued by the effect of place upon economic theories." Tom went on to be elected Oklahoma State Auditor and Inspector and held many other positions in state government during his career. In 2017 he was recognized as a Distinguished Alumnus of our department.

Student Organization Updates

Gamma Theta Upsilon (GTU) News

This academic year, the Gamma Theta Upsilon Chi Chapter organized and participated in multiple events.

On April 6th, GTU hosted a fun-filled geography trivia night with snacks and prizes! Students and friends of the department alike showed off some niche geography knowledge. Judging and moderating was kindly provided by Dr. Greiner, Dr. Comer, and Dr. Brasher. Emma Riddle and Jim Pender's team won the night! A short piece on the event was created for OSU's news website, the O'Colly, featuring a video interview on the importance of geography with GTU President Erin Templeton.



On April 27th, GTU held its induction at the annual Geography Department Awards Ceremony. Pictured from left to right: Dr. Thomas LaVanchy (Advisor), Jacquelyn K. Harsha, Erin K. Halligan, Isabelle K. Ley, Alexandra G. Roberts, and Erin Templeton (President). Inductees not pictured include Jennifer L. Stanford and Christine A. Young. Congratulations on this impressive academic achievement!

GTU Leadership Fall 2022-Spring 2023

President: Erin Templeton

Vice President: Emmanuel Kumi

Secretary: Wenqi Liu

Advisor: Dr. Thomas LaVanchy



Geographers in the Field

Joseph H. Williams Tallgrass Prairie Reserve

Dr. Hamed Gholizadeh and his students had another successful field campaign at the Joseph H. Williams Tallgrass Prairie Preserve in summer 2022. The field campaign lasted about 4 weeks in July-August. This field campaign was part of a NASA-funded project to study grassland biodiversity and the impact of invasive species on prairie ecosystems using remotely sensed data. The rest of the time, the team were having fun with data analysis.



The last day of our 2022 campaign (Samuel Harris; Kianoosh Hassani; Ny Aina Rakotoarivony; Veronique Tessier).



Team members in the field (Veronique Tessier; Ny Aina Rakotoarivony; Samuel Harris).

Geographers in the Field, continued

Lake Texcoco Project

This project aims at recovering information of the natural and cultural heritage of former Lake Texcoco, including modern traditions and attachment of land. Dr. Carlos Cordova works with archaeologists to accomplish this goal. Clayton Lucas II works with local communities to study aspects of cultural political ecology related to the land and water commons, as part of his dissertation research. He also helps with the work of geomorphology and archaeology. He does not complain about hard work in the sun or walking, which is great, like a good field geographer. Below are some views of the recent findings and places.



Figure 1. Left: Clayton exploring the erosional remains of a delta with some artifacts. Right: This is a used grinding stone recycled as weight for fishing net. How old is it? Probably as old as farming in this part of Mexico.



Figure 2. Temazcal: Mesoamerican traditional steam bath, or the Mesoamerican version of sauna. It is ceremonial and a way of purifying someone's body. This location is the site of one of the palace built facing Lake Texcoco by Aztec king Nezahualcoyotl in the 15th century.

Geographers in the Field, continued

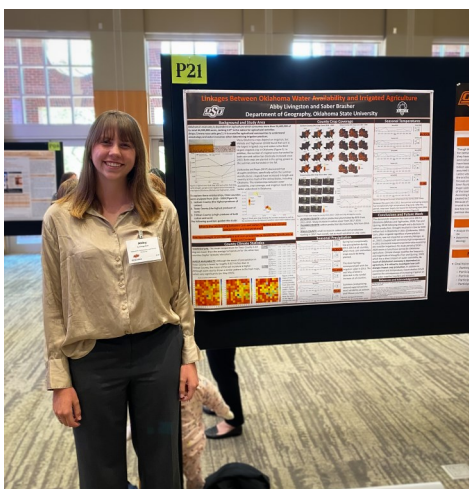
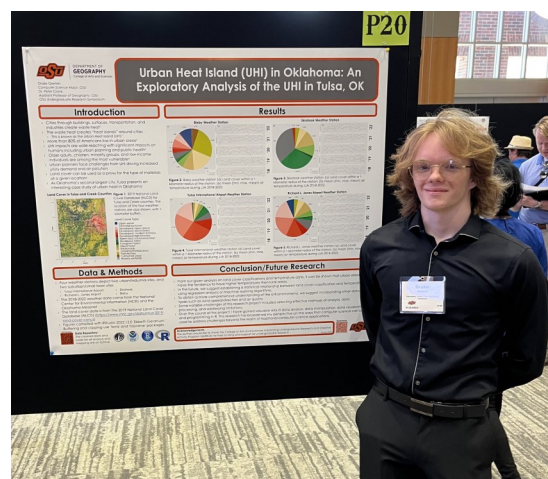


Figure 3. This platform on top of a hill, an island of former Lake Texcoco, is a ceremonial ground, still used by the local inhabitants to mark the passage of the sun through the zenith in mid-May and mid-August. The place is visited even by tribes residing in the US.

Undergraduate Research

Drs. Saber Brasher and Peter Crank participated in the CAS program, Advancing Undergraduate Research and Creative Activity (AURCA) this year. They proposed research projects and sought undergraduate students interested in a mentored research experience. Both students presented the results of their research at the OSU Undergraduate Research Symposium this spring.

Drake Geeteh worked with Dr. Crank and gave a poster presentation titled, “Urban Heat Island (UHI) in Oklahoma: An Exploratory Analysis of the UHI in Tulsa.” His research incorporated weather and land cover data. He gained skills in data analysis and data visualization.



Abby Livingston presented her and Dr. Brasher’s research, “Linkages Between Oklahoma Water Availability and Irrigated Agriculture.” Drought conditions, specifically within the summer months (June – August) have increased in length and severity in Oklahoma creating a need to better understand the relationships between water availability, irrigation, and crop coverage. Her work aimed to explore two primary questions, both of which are still undergoing investigation: What is the relationship between corn and cotton (two of the most water demanding OK crops), irrigation, and climate (precipitation and temperature)? How has drought impacted cotton and corn production in Oklahoma, specifically in Spring and Summer?

ConocoPhillips Geography Career Spotlight Speaker

We were honored to host **Dr. Michael Scott** as our speaker this year. His presentation was titled, “Saving the World, One GIS Layer at a Time: The Case for Geographic Information Science in a World Awash in Spatial Data.”

Dr. Scott is Dean of the Henson School of Science and Technology at Salisbury University in Salisbury, Maryland.

His interests include Modeling environmental hazards with geographic information systems, particularly sea-level change and periodic flooding; local/state government applications of GIS; historical GIS. His areas of expertise include geographic information systems and environmental hazards.

Dr. Scott presented on April 10 and also visited classes, met with students, and toured the campus. His visit was made possible with the support of ConocoPhillips and the OSU Geography Club.



Departmental Colloquia

October 17, 2022—Dr. Jamey Jacob Director, Unmanned Systems Research Institute (USRI), Department of Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering at OSU. “UAS Applications in Geography.”

November 7, 2022—Dr. Elspeth Ready Senior Researcher, Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology in Leipzig, Germany (virtual). “Climate Change, Livelihood Risk and Resilience in the Canadian Arctic.”

November 14, 2022—Dr. Amy Malek Assistant Professor of Global Studies, Chair/Director of the Iranian and Persian Gulf Studies Program, School of Global Studies at OSU. “You Won’t Believe It! Iranian Vintage Photos & Clickbait Orientalism.”

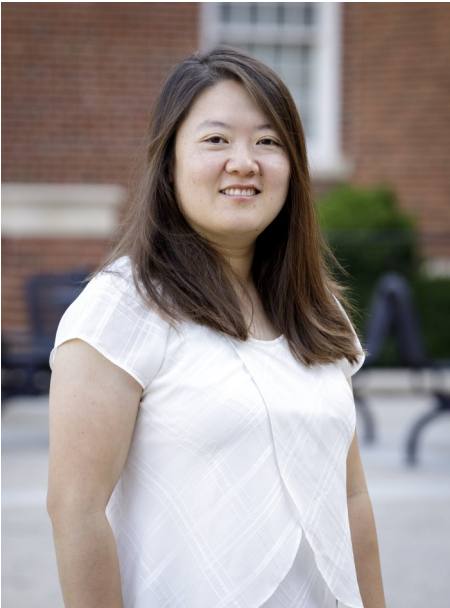
January 27, 2023—Dr. Saleh Ahmed Assistant Professor, Urban Studies and Community Development, Environmental Studies, and Global Studies Programs at Boise State University. “People, Places and the Environment: Navigating Complex Sustainability Landscapes in One of the World’s Most Climate Vulnerable Regions.”

January 30, 2023—Dr. Carrie Seay-Fleming Ph.D. Candidate, Department of Sociology, University of Colorado Boulder. “Seeds, Science, and the Politics of Food System Reform.”

February 3, 2023—Dr. Asif Ishtiaque Assistant Professor, Department of Geography, Geology, and Planning, Missouri State University. “Agricultural Sustainability in the Face of Climate Change: Lessons from South Asia.”

February 6, 2023—Dr. Rory Hill Senior Lecturer, Eastern Institute of Technology (EIT) Te Aho a Māui New Zealand. “It Tastes Like Nowhere Else on Earth’: Building a Sense of Place in a New Zealand Wine Region.”

Staff Updates



Jing Wang From 2022 to 2023 Jean Wang, the coordinator of CARS traveled a few times for projects, conferences, and outreach events. In the summer of 2022, Jean and a research student Chad Brazeel went to Little Sahara, the Salt Lake Plain, Black Mesa, Gloss Mountain, and Lake Eufaula to collect aerial and ground images using UAS and a camera. The selected sites each represent a unique landform of Oklahoma including desert, salt lake, plateau, the highest elevation, and the largest lake. Later in the fall she traveled to Denver, CO for the Pecora conference and led groups of K-12 students for the STEM demonstrations organized by AmericaView, as well as presented a research poster. The AmericaView consortium of remote sensing, to which OklahomaView belongs is awarded with the William T. Pecora Award from the Department of Interior and NASA.

In November, Jean flew to New Mexico and joined the AmericaView team to host a FlyHigh4Geo event at the ChiChil'tah Jones Ranch Community School on the Navajo Nation. The program is supported through a grant awarded by the National Geographic Society to promote the understanding of Earth Observation in the Four Corners region of the United States.

Jean traveled to Lafayette, LA in March, 2023 for the AmericaView Annual Conference, where the state view members from across the U.S. share their knowledge on research methods, and outreach ideas and discuss future development of the consortium.

In May, Jean led a group of graduate students to demonstrate remote sensing and data collection at the Outdoor Day at Skyline Elementary School. About 120 students joined the demo and had a blast building their own kites.



Faculty Updates



Dr. Saber Brasher is a new Assistant Professor in the Geography Department as of Fall 2022. She is a Climatologist, having received her PhD in Climatology from the University of Delaware, and she holds a BS and MS in Physical Geography from Texas State University. Her dissertation work centered on Northern Hemisphere cryosphere changes and linkages with larger atmospheric dynamics, but she also does work in broader hydroclimatology and environmental change. Currently she is juggling projects that pertain to snow/ice changes and atmospheric teleconnections, summer drought and precipitation changes in Oklahoma, water availability and agriculture under climate change, among other pending ideas waiting for their time to see the light! She teaches courses in Meteorology and Climatology and has enjoyed meeting faculty across OSU interested in how climate impacts their respective disciplines. She expects to have her first graduate students

joining her HyDRA (Hydroclimate and EnviRonmental Adaptation) lab in 2023/2024. Outside of work, she is an avid outdoorswoman and nature lover. She runs all the roads and trails in Stillwater, loves hiking, backpacking, kayaking, and met her soon-to-be husband (Erik) rock climbing. To move to Oklahoma, they loaded up the cars and camped their way across the country with their Australian Shepherd, River.



Dr. Jon Comer completed year 29 at OSU in 2023 and is sad to report another year has gone by without a European excursion. 2024 for sure! His travel has remained confined to semi-monthly trips to DFW, bi-annual trips to Clearwater, and gazing longingly at the travel brochures he receives weekly from various alumni associations. He and his family did travel to Indianapolis for the Indy 500 in May.

After a 6-year hiatus, he got to teach Meteorology (3033) in the spring due to high demand for that course. He continues to teach Europe (3723) online and Spatial Analysis (3333) in the fall. Spring 2023 marked the end of 28 consecutive years teaching Geographical Analysis (5303) to graduate students, due to low enrollments. It will return in 2024!

Jon remains active with the Applied Geography Conferences as a Board Member, but recently stepped down as Secretary. AGX looks forward to an in-person meeting in October 2023 (in Pittsburgh) for the first time since the

pandemic. He also has two PhD students, Fernanda Ramirez Sáenz and Ofuje Amune, powering towards completion of their dissertations.

Instead of slowing down as retirement looms, Jon is assuming the role of Interim Department Head effective July 1, 2023. Let the fun begin!



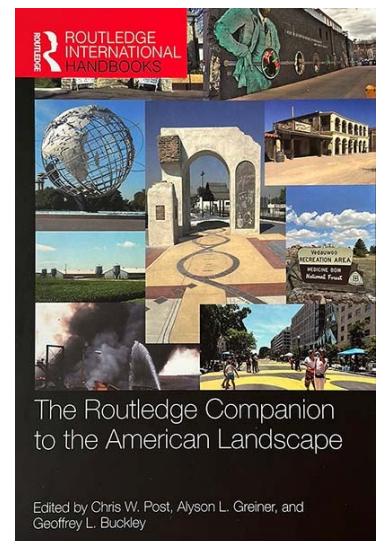
Dr. Carlos Cordova is currently doing research in Mexico and Jordan and spending quite a lot of time processing samples in the Geoarchaeology and Paleocology Lab (NRC 018). The main project is in former Lake Texcoco (see earlier story on Lake Texcoco Project). His book *The Lakes of the Basin of Mexico* (Springer) appeared in November 2022, and his edited volume *The Legacies of the Basin of Mexico: Ecological Processes and the Evolution of a Civilization* (U. Press of Colorado) will appear in August 2023. Carlos also collected information for his next book *Prehistoric Landscapes of Africa: The Pioneering Work of K.W. Butzer in Early Humankind Geographies*.

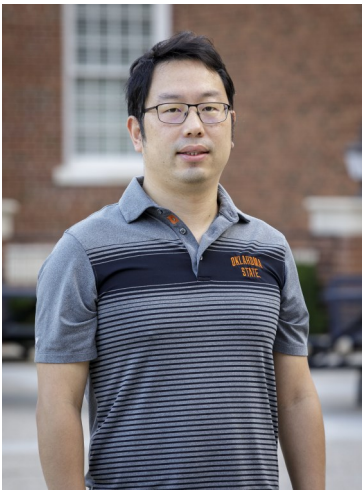
Cordova is currently working on various proposals to continue work in Lake Texcoco targeting the Wenner Gren Foundation, the NEH Archaeology and Ethnographic program, and the NSF Geomorphology and Land Use program.

Cordova taught Climate Change, Biogeography, and Current Geographic Research. He has also been coordinating the GEOG 1114 lab, where he worked with the most wonderful TAs. With Jaryd Hinch he wrote the GEOG 1114 Intro to Physical Geography Lab Handbook (Van Griner Publishers), which is in press and almost ready to be used in the Fall 2023.



Dr. Alyson Greiner wrapped up work on and happily welcomed the publication of *The Routledge Companion to the American Landscape*, co-edited with Chris Post and Geoff Buckley. The book includes sections on environmental, political, social/cultural, and urban/economic landscapes. She also very much enjoyed her first in-person AAG meeting in three years in Denver this spring. Navigating Denver’s very windy street canyons in March while trekking between the dispersed conference sites was...invigorating. Great to see folks in person again after so long! Last summer, Alyson and life partner, Luis, had a delightful trip to the Twin Cities and enjoyed exploring the many bike trails there.





Dr. Tao Hu has completed his second year in the department. One of his achievements is the development of a new online course titled ‘Web GIS: Principles, Applications, and Trends.’ Over the past year, Dr. Hu has published eight papers in prestigious GIS journals, including IJGIS, JAG, and IJDE. Remarkably, two of his publications were among the top 1% of ESI highly-cited papers in 2022 and another received the Best Paper award in the journal of Annals of GIS. Dr. Hu has also played an active role in academic conferences. He organized a session titled 'Geospatial Big Data for Public Health' and presented his work at the AAG 2023 Annual conference in Denver. In the summer of 2022, he was awarded a grant from the Rural Renewal Initiative (RRI). This funding will support his work to improve healthcare access in rural Oklahoma through optimizing mobile wellness unit locations. Additionally, he has submitted proposals to the OCAST health program and NSF to continue his research efforts. Lastly,

Dr. Hu happily shared that he is eagerly awaiting the arrival of his second daughter in June.



Dr. Thomas LaVanchy continues to regain momentum on his water research in South Africa following the COVID pandemic interruption to international travel. This included two successful trips to Cape Town to meet with collaborators, extend academic networks, and reconnaissance field data to support grant proposals (see pictures below). He is delighted now to be collaborating with Dr. Kevin Winter of the University of Cape Town on a project that evaluates the efficacy of nature-based solutions to improve water security and contribute to economic stability and social justice. He was able to submit two proposals to the NSF and continue to explore funding opportunities to support student involvement in my water research that aims to improve the human condition.

He published an article in *The Professional Geographer* and celebrated a successful defense by MS student Stephanie Grace of her creative project

“Designing a Water Sustainability Course for Secondary Education.” He also enjoyed serving as second reader on the senior honors thesis of Global Studies major Lydia Blew.

In addition to his normal teaching rotation, he offered a split-level (undergraduate and graduate) class on “Water Resources and Sustainability.” He also served as Chapter Advisor for Gamma Theta Upsilon Geography Honor Society.



Hiking a micro-watershed near Betty’s Bay, South Africa (photo by James Kerwin).



Helping Dr. Kevin Winter and students build test sites for wastewater sludge reuse at The Water Hub (photo by Thomas LaVanchy).



Touring University of Western Cape’s hydrogeology department with Dr. Thokozani Kanyerere (Photo by Mike Kerwin).



Dr. Rebecca Sheehan: Over the past year, she presented research concerning public space and memorialization at SEDAAAG in Atlanta (November 2022) and at the AAG in Denver (2023). In these papers, she examined the politics of regenerative memorialization associated with different government entities, NGOs, and citizens, particularly concerning contestation over meaning and working through different scales. She also explored ideas of artifact and art regarding memorial installations. This summer, she will be interviewing those at the Equal Justice Initiative (EJI) in Montgomery, Alabama about its role(s) in facilitating The Community Remembrance Project in local communities (EJI).

This past year, she went to the Grand Teton and Yellowstone National Parks! As, they say, a picture is worth a thousand words:

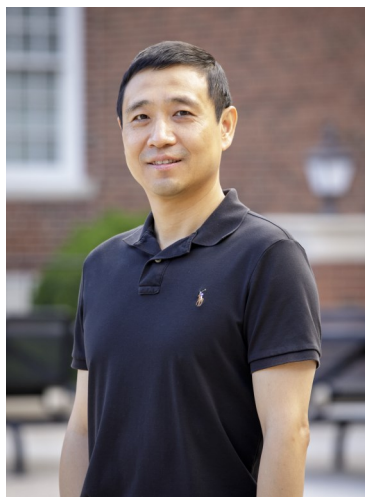
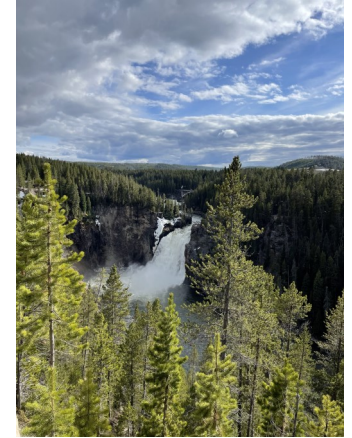


Grand Prismatic Spring, Yellowstone NP



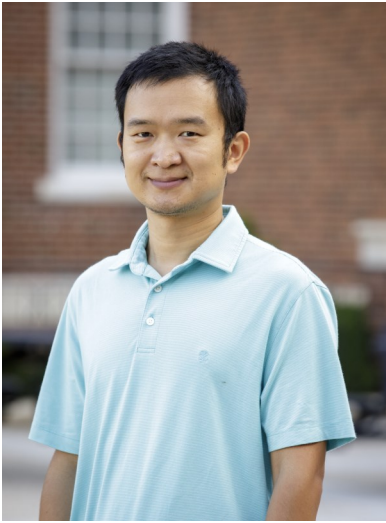
Left: Mammoth Springs, Yellowstone NP.

Right: Brink of the Upper Falls, Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone



Dr. Hongbo Yu continued to serve as the GIS Certificate Coordinator in the department. After resolving early issues with the Graduate College, the recently approved Graduate Certificate in GIS is finally running smoothly. This program has seen more graduate students successfully complete the application process and be admitted to the program. Hongbo has also been busy with several grant projects recently. He and his collaborators completed the USDA National Animal Health Laboratory Network Enhancement Grant project last December, in which they developed a web-based GIS platform that allows users to visualize the distribution of several livestock animals in the US and estimate animal populations within the proximity of a selected point of interest. This platform now is live and embedded as the “Animal Census Map” tab on the home page of Oklahoma Animal Disease Diagnostic Laboratory at (<https://oaddl.okstate.edu/>). Stephanie Grace, a recently graduated master’s student from geography,

worked as a GRA on the project and helped develop the web GIS platform. Early last year, Hongbo and his collaborators also started a new project supported by the Joint Funding Opportunity from the National Animal Health Laboratory Network and National Animal Disease Preparedness and Response Program. In this project, the team will develop a point of care (POC) foot and mouth disease (FMD) diagnostic assay and integrate its geolocation-enabled records to an interactive mapping system. The mapping system will have the capability to support wise animal movements decisions during a disease outbreak. Hongbo is supervising Ehsan Foroutan, a geography PhD student working as a GRA on the project, to complete the related tasks. In addition, Hongbo worked with Dr. Allen Finchum and Michael Larson on the Oklahoma Historical Society/ State Historical Preservation Office project in the new fiscal year. He also joined the team lead by Dr. Tao Hu on a two-year project supported by the Rural Research Initiative, in which they intended to evaluate the usage of mobile wellness units and investigate the accessibility issues related to the rural healthcare services in Oklahoma.



Dr. Yuting Zhou taught three courses during the last academic year: Digital Tools for Environmental Problem-Solving (Spring and Fall), Fundamentals of Geographic Information Systems (Fall), and Advanced GIS: Resource Management Applications (Spring). Dr. Zhou continued his role as PI for OklahomaView and Co-Director of the Center for Applications of Remote Sensing (CARS). This year, Dr. Zhou and the CARS Coordinator, Ms. Jing Wang, are using remote sensing to show the impacts of climate and human activities on agriculture and natural resources in Oklahoma, including red cedar encroachment, wildfire, tornado, intensive logging, large-scale irrigation, and oil and gas operations. Dr. Zhou is working with two undergraduate students to study the socioeconomic impacts of drought in Oklahoma with funding from the NSF Established Program to Stimulate Competitive Research (EPSCoR). Under Dr. Zhou's guidance, Ph.D. student Wenqi Liu has published two papers in peer-reviewed journals. Dr. Zhou also published another paper on the impacts of climate and management practices on vegetation phenology, which was featured as the cover article in *Remote Sensing*. Dr. Zhou plans to recruit another Ph.D. student for a newly funded project focusing on remote sensing of vegetation and fuels using machine learning algorithms.



Center for Applications of Remote Sensing (CARS)

By Dr. Hamed Gholizadeh

CARS co-director Dr. Hamed Gholizadeh concluded an OCAST project on using airborne hyperspectral data for mapping an invasive plant (*Lespedeza cuneata*) in grassland ecosystems. Dr. Gholizadeh and his team were also working on a NASA project to use remotely-sensed data to monitor plant diversity. As part of this effort, the team collected airborne hyperspectral data from their study site, the Joseph H. Williams Tallgrass Prairie Preserve, in summer 2022. The team had another successful field campaign which lasted about 4 weeks in July-August. The team collected in-situ data to validate their remote sensing models and understand the linkages between biodiversity, ecosystem functioning, and biological invasion. The lab also hosted a visiting scholar, Dr. Christian Rossi from the Swiss National Park.



Team members loading the equipment and taking a break after a long day of data collection.



Samuel Harris collecting soil samples.

The mission of the Department of Geography is:



- To provide an exceptional educational experience in a student-centered departmental community that emphasizes the value of lifelong learning, employs engaging instructional activities, and prepares student for careers in an increasingly globalized world;
- To conduct innovative theoretical and applied research that promotes discovery, cultivates interdisciplinary and collaborative partnerships, fosters socioeconomic development, and responds to the needs of society;
- To promote the importance and relevance of geography to the public and to provide geographic expertise to the university, community, and state.

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