



EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

Department of Geology & Geography



2021-2022  
Annual Newsletter

# Greetings from the Chair

A warm hello to our esteemed alumni...there has been much afoot in our department this past year, some wonderful and one, in particular, very sad. As you may have heard, Dr. Jim Stratton suddenly passed away just a few months ago. His devotion to Geology, Paleontology and the Department was unflinching. In tribute, we have gathered submissions from you, his loved ones and others to remember him and his life. I hope you enjoy that section of this newsletter.



We have undertaken a fair bit since the last newsletter, including revising our Professional Science Master's degree (PSM) to be a completely online program, being involved in an Illinois Innovation Network (IIN) project to evaluate urban growth possibilities for Arcola, IL, and having staff, faculty and students recognized for their achievements with awards and scholarships both locally as well as nationally. Thankfully, pressures and protocols related to COVID are relaxing, and it is wonderful to see our halls once again bustling with students.

I hope that you and yours are healthy, happy and enjoying some quality time doing what you love. This has been quite a year with many challenges, although it has been a true pleasure to see so many of you reaching out to share your stories with us. While Eastern may be a part of your past and not necessarily the first entity that pops to your mind to keep up to date on your successes, it really does bring joy to our hearts to hear of your achievements, big and small. If you are ever in the area, please stop in so I can chat with you and give you a tour of "your old stomping grounds."

My absolute best to you all,  
Diane

# Greetings from the Dean



For everybody at EIU, the 2020-2021 academic year was full of problems and challenges, but also full of successes. The Department of Geology and Geography is certainly one of those units that will persevere and find opportunities for faculty and students even in difficult times! Working with high school students on climate change, having students garnering impressive awards, recognizing faculty with a Faculty Laureate as well as service awards and maintaining the highest standards of teaching and research, the Department has again demonstrated their dedication to high professional standards and to student success.

I congratulate Dr. Burns and her colleagues for their achievements over the past year and am looking forward to celebrating their successes this year!

Barbara Bonnekessen  
Dean, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

# Michelle Rhine, Office Manager

Hello to all Geo Alumni!

Wow, what a year it has been! This year has flown by full of challenges and learning experiences. Even though we continue to have issues with the pandemic, it is wonderful to see more students and faculty in the building this academic year.

The main office in the Geology and Geography Department is in the process of making a few improvements by updating/adding a few visuals in the main hallway. We have been very fortunate to have a wonderful student worker, who is pursuing a marketing degree, to assist us. The main goal of these improvements is to not only to attract majors, but to display what the department offers our ongoing projects.

On a personal note, I was so thankful to take a family vacation in July. The Family was able to celebrate July 4<sup>th</sup> in downtown Chattanooga. We spent time at Ruby Falls, Rock City and even did a little horseback riding! We also had the opportunity to see the second largest aquarium in the world which is located in Atlanta. We ended the trip by making a quick stop in Nashville on the way home. These were all new experiences for us; not only did we see part of this beautiful country, but made wonderful memories too!

Please stop by the Physical Science Building to see the updates as we continue to learn, grow, and succeed!



# Department Alumni

## Spotlight On... **Geno Persico** (Geography and Geology, 2018)

Hello from Albuquerque, New Mexico!

Upon graduating from EIU with my B.S. in Geology and Geography in the Fall of 2018, I went on to graduate school at Illinois State University in the Fall of 2019. Graduate school was a roller coaster ride with the pandemic forcing my last year of classes, thesis work, and teaching labs (as a TA) to be online. However, the energy and ambition to finish strong and transition into looking for a job paid off soon after graduating with a Master's in Hydrogeology. I accepted a job with Golder Associates as a Hydrogeologist in May and moved out to Albuquerque, New Mexico in June where I began working! The office I now reside has a focus in mining environment. Although I have only been working for two months, my colleagues integrated me into various projects already! I have been travelling to various parts of New Mexico working in mines, doing geochemical risk classification of tailings, monitoring groundwater, and collecting soil, groundwater, and surface water samples for laboratory analysis. I also have had the opportunity of using my GIS skills for various projects when building reports.

Outside of work things are going well. It was a surreal (and anxious) journey to move over a thousand miles away from friends and family to a state I had never been to. However, my decision to follow my dreams and start a career in the region of the U.S. I wanted to be reassured everything works out in the end! Whether I am driving, hiking, or camping in the mesmerizing geology out here, I cannot help but look back at where I started! The Geology and Geography Department at EIU and all the professors who encompass it are the reason for where I am now! Thank you to all professors and colleagues of the department! As I become more seasoned in the consulting industry, I hope to serve as a guide and to assist any students exploring the ideas of graduate school, internships, or consulting upon graduating! Best wishes to my EIU family!!



That's me working at the Questa Mine in Questa, NM.

**Kevin Jeanes** (Geography, 2010)

Congratulations to Kevin Jeanes, '10, who had two outstanding events happen for him this past year!! Not only did Kevin receive a Regional Emmy Award for Weather Presenter for his work at station WXYZ in Detroit, MI, but he and his wife welcomed their first-born child. May they have a wonderful life growing together as a family.



## Recent Graduates

**Fall 2020**

- Phillip K. Collins (GEG)
- Tomas D. Delgado (GEG)
- Phillip Garrett (PSM)
- Jessica N. Marvin (GEG)
- Veeran Naidu Poola (PSM)
- Sushma Saragadam (PSM)
- Raju Manchakkal Thupran (PSM)
- Veda Saranya Vemulapalli (PSM)
- Micah J. Williamson (PSM)
- Kwang il Yoo (PSM)

**Spring 2021**

- Christopher C. Borroff (GEG)
- Tanner C. Jones (PSM)
- Everett C. Lau (GEG)
- Skylar M. Redmond (GEG)
- Heaven Leigh Richey (GEG)

**Summer 2021**

- Kristen N. Ames (GEL)
- Kimberly A. Clark (GEL)

# Student Award Winners, Spring 2021

## Geology Awards

- Dewey H. Amos Scholarship: **Emilia McGuire**
- Jon and Diana Griffin Geology Scholarship: **Nathaniel Foster**
- Errett & Mazie Warner Presidential Award: **Kristen Ames, Emily Bosworth, Kim Clark**
- Geology Alumni Award: **Madalin Evans**
- John Popp Field Geology Scholarship: **Kristen Ames, Emily Bosworth**

## Geography Awards

- Errett & Mazie Warner Presidential Award: **Everett Lau**
- Walter H. and Dorothea V. McDonald Scholarship: **Xander Richards**
- Grace Markwell Meier Award: **Kody Reuter**
- Ruby M. Harris Award: **Harvey Norris**
- Troyt York Memorial Scholarship in Geography: **Stephen Elmore**
- Annie L. Weller Scholarship: **Gabrielle Pierce**
- Richard Wise-Lester & Stoner Undergraduate Scholarship in Geography: **Ryan Raef**
- Vincent P. & Pamela R. Gutowski Award for Excellence in Geography: **Kody Rueter, Jacob Watson**
- Belayet Khan Geography Award: **Gabrielle Pierce**
- Geography Alumni Award: **Kevin Galindo**
- John George Wozencraft, Jr. Memorial Award: **Michael Otwirk**

# Student Organizations

## Gamma Theta Upsilon (GTU)

Gamma Theta Upsilon's 2020-21 was very slow, but productive. Under the leadership of Michael Otwirk, we continued to rebuild the club from the unavoidable Covid apocalypse. Our main service project for the year has been mapping new trails out at Lincoln Log Cabin. The site now has several new, roughed-in walking paths, and we're using GPS and GIS to update maps for visitors. We hope to be able to take a trip (at least a weekend outing) sometime this Spring. Most importantly, we look forward to welcoming new members and celebrating the success of our graduates!

## Geology Club & Sigma Gamma Epsilon (SGE)

Despite COVID, the students soldiered on in keeping our stretch of Highway 16 between Mattoon and Charleston clean for the Illinois Department of Transportation through the Adopt a Highway Program. Gamma Chi students joined forces with Neoga High School/Amy Grant to help with a NOAA-sponsored "fields to forests" effort. We helped plant over 2,000 trees and shrubs one crisp morning in March. We found other service projects to keep them engaged as well, notably recycling used t-shirts into dog rope toys to donate to animal shelters as well as collecting plastic bottle caps and lids to divert those items from landfills and using them to create park benches. The honors society chapter won the Outstanding Chapter and Service Awards for the tenth year in a row – best record of any student chapter in the nation.



*Partnering with the Life Academy in Mattoon, IL, Geoclub students collected plastic caps to divert them from landfills and having them fashioned into park benches.*



*Dog rope toys were created from recycled t-shirts and donated to local animal shelters to give the dogs some joy.*



*Gamma Chi members suit up in the midst of the pandemic to help carry out the planting of 2,000 trees and shrubs in a NOAA-sponsored "fields to forest" project with Neoga High School's Earth Science teacher, Amy Grant, and her students. L-R: Grace West, Michael Otwirk and Nathan Foster.*



*Giving up a Saturday to keep our highway clean! L to R: Tony Kilber, Grace West, Michael Otszwick, CJ Karns, Madalin Harper, Nathan Foster and Paige Palombizio.*

# Professional Science Masters (PSM) in Geographic Information Science

The PSM in GIScience continues to contribute to our department, with six students currently working toward their professional degree (spread the word—we are always looking for more!). The past year saw five graduates. We also welcomed several new students aboard, including alumnus Scott Medlin.

We have instituted new classes (Lidar, Web Mapping, etc.) this year, shaken up the curriculum, and most importantly **moved the degree fully online**. We are looking to make the program as relevant as possible to working professionals. If you know someone looking to further their education in GIScience, and looking to study in a small, personalized environment, we'd love to hear from them.



*For more information on the PSM program, scan this.*

# In Memoriam

## Dr. James (Jim) Forrest Stratton



Published by Journal Gazette & Times-Courier on May 8, 2021:

“CHARLESTON - James "Jim" Forrest Stratton of Charleston, IL passed away unexpectedly on April 28, 2021 at Carle Hospital in Urbana, IL. He is survived by his wife, Debbie (Loveless); son Jim, his wife, Megan, and granddaughters, Maggie and Emma of Lafayette, IN; stepchildren, Liam and Liv of Charleston, IL; niece, Holly (Tryon) and her husband Ed Kuykendall of Visalia, CA; and his eternally loyal Dalmatian, Sugar. He has preceded in death by his father, James Westbrook Stratton; mother, Evelyn Juanita Stratton (Hasty); and sister, Sharon Elbert Tryon.

Jim was born in Crete, IL but raised in Clinton and Dana, IN. He attended graduate school at Indiana University (Bloomington) where he completed two master's degrees and a PhD. For nearly 45 years, Jim was a Professor of Geology at Eastern Illinois University, where he taught courses in oceanography, paleontology, geology, and hydrogeology, and led the summer field school program in the Black Hills of South Dakota. Jim's love for earth science led him to research partnerships with the Monterey Bay Aquarium Research Institute (MBARI) in Moss Landing, CA and the Monterey Bay Aquarium, where he was an active member, regular visitor, and dedicated philanthropist.

Jim loved good food and good wine. He relished in planning and hosting the annual summer cookout for his extended family-the Cahokia Lane neighbors. Of an evening, he could be found in the kitchen, cooking with his wife; on the weekends, in his shop, fixing unbroken things with his son; and in-between, in his woods, hiking, mushroom hunting, and conserving the natural woodlands. Jim was so full of life and energy, as well as immense love for those closest to him. For those lucky individuals, the world has forever dimmed in his absence.

Memorials in his name can be made to the Monterey Bay Aquarium.”

## Memories of Jim

### Robert Page, '86

Dr. Stratton (Jim) was my favorite teacher at EIU, and he helped me get my first geology job after graduation. I started at Law Engineering, then went to Earth Tech. Earth Tech was eventually purchased by AECOM, which was buying up a lot of smaller environmental companies. I like working at AECOM, its much like the other high-quality environmental firms I've worked with, only much larger. I don't know what the current number of AECOM employees is but at one time is was about 100,000 employees around the world.

It's a shame about Jim, but I was pleased and proud to see that he spent so much of his retirement working at EIU. He was a great teacher and was funny as well. I still recall laughing at some of his jokes, which at times were informative, too. I remember him describing that shelled ammonites, cephalopods, and their kin regulated their buoyancy with squid farts 😊 He was one of a kind.

During my time at EIU (in the 1980's), I collected many local fossils from the local Charleston store quarry and donated them to EIU. Many of the Paleozoic shark teeth I donated had never been found at that location before. I also donated many crinoid, trilobite, and other fossils from the quarry. Doctor Stratton was amazing. I've collected fossils from all over America and he could always identify the fossils that stumped everyone else. He will be missed.

## David Goldsby, '88

I am sorry to hear of Jim Stratton's passing. I took a couple of classes from him somewhere between 1983 and 1987. I didn't stay connected with him after leaving EIU, but recently became Facebook friends.

Some thoughts: I took Hydrogeology from Jim as an undergrad at EIU. The program then was generally not very quantitative. Jim was the first person I took classes from who used calculus to solve geology problems, and it helped steer me toward geophysics and grad school. I will always be grateful for his influence.

I also recall a picnic that Jim had at his house for students (maybe it was Hydrology students), in which he introduced us to the art (science?) of water witching. I didn't believe it worked (then or now), but I was nonetheless impressed by how hard the y-shaped tree limb twisted in my hands as I walked over a supposed water source. I think Jim was probably pulling our legs!

Finally, I took a paleontology course from Jim, and became interested in bryozoa (his specialty, as I recall). The class visited a local limestone quarry, and I collected samples, identified a species of fenestrate bryozoa, and wrote my term paper about them on one of the first box-shaped Macs. Great fun!

I would be interested in contributing to a scholarship fund in Jim's name, if it exists or gets created. My best to his family and friends.

## William Bandy, '79

Here is an amusing pic of Dr. Stratton from field camp in 1979.



We were on our way back from South Dakota, and had a very short night of sleep. We stopped in Des Moines, IA for breakfast, and Dr. Stratton decided to sack out on one of the vehicles. I took the picture without his knowledge. In 1982 or 1983, I came up one evening and spoke on carbonates. As

a joke, I asked the students how many had been to field camp. I then asked if they wondered where the professors were at all day while they slaved away in the field, because the professors would often disappear for hours. A LOT of nodding heads.....so I told them I had an incriminating photo of what they were doing while we were working. It proved quite a hit. Dr. Stratton told me after the presentation "that wasn't fair, that picture was in Des Moines!" Had some fun at his expense, but he was a good sport about it

### **Tom Larson, '80**

I was sad to hear of the passing of Dr. Stratton from my Midland, Texas colleague, J.B. Young ('76 or '77). Jim was a very kind person, and I will always fondly remember his lectures and what he meant to the EIU Geology Department. I graduated from EIU in 1980 with a BS majoring in geology. My experience as a geology major at EIU was outstanding because of professors like him! Dr. Stratton and Dr. Gary Wallace were just starting out in their careers at EIU, and they had such a strong respect for each other and you could tell they were excited about their positions. I remember when Dr. Stratton was building his log cabin home; he was nice enough to employ me to drive stakes into the logs and haul lumber around the site – can't beat that cheap student labor (he had a good plan...)! Another memory involved his Paleontology course – it was well known that Dr. Stratton 'took no prisoners' in Paleo and held all to high standards – getting an A was almost impossible. The lecture was well-outlined and your notes had to be impeccable in order to get through the class. No monkeying around, serious business. Thing was, I was able to get my hands on a swell set of class notes.... During one lecture, Dr. Stratton was opining away on Haeckel's 'Recapitulation Theory' (you can look THAT up yourself). After his summation, he asked the class, not expecting an answer – "Does anyone know what this is an example of?" I responded, "ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny" (correct answer btw). He did a big double-take, hilarious! I think he probably figured out I had some 'help' regarding my response.

Of course, his passion for fenestrate bryozoans was undeniable. Dr. Wallace used to like to needle Stratton about that, but it was always good natured and for fun. Here is a picture of the Class of 1979 at the EIU Field camp at South Dakota School of Mines.



Pretty easy to pick him out in that picture. He was animated about the campers getting the picture shot in front of the Longhorn Saloon, which I recall had sawdust on the floor and very low ceilings. We mapped and drew a strat section of the Badlands formations which were full of fossils. I brought my stratigraphic section, geologic maps of Bear Butte and Lange Ranch to my first job interviews in Midland in June 1980 – that’s all I had....! I have hung that picture in my offices over the past 40 plus years with pride and good memories. We had so much fun working in the field and studying (and partying too!) at night. For field lunches we would have an apple and the sandwich sometimes was just a piece of cheese. Other campers outside of EIU were primarily from Pennsylvania. Dr. Stratton let us have our fun, was a good-natured chap and shared his knowledge and wisdom to the benefit of all who shared time with him. He will be missed and my deepest condolences to his family and closest friends. EIU Geology/Geosciences et al. departments are a better place because of the legacy he leaves behind.



Geoclub picnic at Jim's house, sometime in the late 1990s (?).



Jim leading an Oceanography trip to Monterey Bay. Jim is the one in the middle with the white jacket.



Jim's Oceanography class of 2004 documenting, as Leslie O'Neil said in her journal from where this photo came, "an unbelievable trip!"

# The Faculty

## Diane Burns

Hello to all! Another year has passed all too quickly and – looking back – it seems like we have travelled so many different roads. This year, however, most of those roads have been virtual or figuratively. I have jumped back into writing up past research and have gotten one published with three others either in press or in review. It has been quite refreshing to get back to this part of my job – I have been pulled to the administrative side so strongly in the past many years, I almost forgot what this was like! One of these is a culmination of collaborative work with Dave Viertel that investigated the changes in morphology along the Little Wabash River since the mid '30s. This project spanned many years itself and was the basis of many wonderful alumni's independent research studies. Thanks so much to Jenna Happ, Bill LaVeau, Abbey Warner and Geno Persico for their contributions over the years! This project has revealed some interesting data, such as river cutoffs clustering into chute cutoffs (most frequent), neck cutoffs (less frequent) and anomalous ones that are most likely the result of manmade constructions. As it has raised more questions than answered, Dave and I are looking forward to identifying the next river that we will study in a similar fashion.

On the home front, Jasper the Wonder Dog is doing fine and keeping himself entertained by chasing anything that moves in my backyard. I added several trees to my area, including two pear. Any year now, I expect to be having delectable fruit, barring unforeseen theft from the varmints that are plaguing my apple trees. I tried raising a variety of vegetables this time, but this year has been terrible for backyard and larger farmers all the way around. Glad I do not have to actually live off of what I grow, that's for sure! I hope you all have a most wonderful coming year.

## Mike Cornebise

Greetings and Salutations! A hearty welcome from EIU and the G/G Department. As I begin my 22<sup>nd</sup> year at Eastern, I continue to serve as Associate Dean in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. We're pleased this year to see a return to live events that span the arts and sciences. If you plan to be in the area, check out all the activities we have going on and be sure to visit us at Homecoming: the parade and Tent City return this year and we'll be in full swing! On a personal note, I'm excited to offer a section of the Geography and Culture of Middle America: Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean this semester. It's the first time I've taught the class since 2003 and it's been interesting to note the changes that have impacted the region based on my previous class notes. I also find it interesting because my son, Sam, was born in 2003 and he has just entered his freshman year at EIU where he plans to major in Finance (we'll make sure he takes a few courses in the department, though!). Roxanne and Sofia are also doing well. Whatever you're up to, I wish you a happy and safe year.

## Cameron Craig

Salutations! All is well and in great spirits for another year to serve my university, department, and students! I continue to teach Weather & Climate, Spaceship Earth, Broadcast Meteorology, Cultural Geography, and next semester I have been asked to teach my course in the Honors College entitled, “Our Goozle-Goggle: Exploring Unknown Landscapes.” I also continue to work closely with my broadcast meteorology students at WEIU’s EMMY award winning news program, “NewsWatch.” We continue to have a strong team of Broadcast Meteorology students who keep viewers informed across the region. Stephen Elmore is in his final year with us who also plays on the Panther football team! Last spring, I finished my Master of Arts in Conducting in the Music Department and continue to enjoy making music with the Eastern Symphony Orchestra.

## Jay Gatrell, Provost

Just a quick note to let you know of my recent publications:

Hoalst-Pullen, N., Gatrell, J., & Patterson, M. 2021. Applied geography: A problem-solving approach. *Applied Geography* 128:4 pp.

Gatrell, J., Bierly, G., Jensen, R., & Thakur, R. 2020. *Research Design and Proposal Writing in Spatial Science*, 3rd Edition. Heidelberg: Springer.

## Belayet Khan (emeritus)

More than five years into retirement, I am happy to reflect on my delightful experience as a faculty member in the Department of Geology and Geography at Eastern Illinois University. Over the course of 35 years, I had the wondrous opportunity to interact with colleagues and students who made for a truly special career. Throughout the years, my fellow faculty members provided immense encouragement and support. I learned so much from others in the University, beginning when I was a newcomer and extending throughout my tenure. My involvements on various committees allowed me to strive for a positive impact on campus, and this meant a lot to me as someone deeply invested in EIU. Collaboration was key to our success on many fronts over the course of more than three decades. The chairs of the department were great leaders from whom I felt endless support and comfort. These factors made for a joyous work environment that I will always cherish. Eastern is a great place!

Certainly, the highlight of my time at Eastern was the privilege of teaching our incredible students. I sincerely looked forward to teaching every one of my classes. Each semester, I was thrilled to teach students who greeted me with genuine curiosity and enthusiasm for the material. I found myself thriving off their engagement, and this made me feel a strong sense of purpose in my role as a teacher. For years, I looked forward to weekends for a reason different than most: I was excited to teach

off-campus classes through the School of Extended Learning (Continuing Education). Teaching has always been a passion of mine, but it was over the years at Eastern that it became my calling. I am so honored now to be able to consider it my life's work. Beyond the classroom, I am eternally grateful to God for the blessed life I have had in Charleston with my wife and three children. It was undoubtedly a challenge for us as immigrants from across the world to settle in a new place. It is amazing to think that Charleston is now a beloved home to all five of us.

By the grace of the God, our three children are doing well and remain busy with their academic and professional responsibilities. Our older daughter serves as a Financial Advisor for Edward Jones Investments with her office in Indiana. The younger daughter is an Emergency Medicine doctor and an Assistant Professor of Medicine at the Emory University Hospital in Atlanta, Georgia. She graduated from the University of Chicago and Rush Medical College in Chicago. Our son, after graduating from Northwestern University and Rush Medical College in Chicago is currently a 3rd year Resident Medical doctor at University of Illinois Medical School, Chicago. I must say, the Charleston schools provided excellent education for our children, and we found a strong sense of community here that we know is unique to our charming small town. As we each pursue our respective endeavors, my wife devotes her efforts to caring for our family, and we would certainly be lost without her support.

With our lifelong love for traveling, my wife and I have already made some trips since my retirement. In recent years, we ventured east to visit Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia, Brunei, and Bangladesh. We have recently traveled to Sweden, Finland, Spain, Saudi Arabia, Bangladesh and Morocco. We also traveled to Tunisia and Czech Republic to see historical places. We recently went to Ecuador and was thrilled to visit the Equatorial Landmark in Quito. Although we are always seeking new adventures, we love coming home to Charleston, and our children know that home is the best place for all of us to converge whenever possible. The gratifications of my career at EIU will forever stay with me. Although I am retired, I periodically teach a class or two for our department. Having spent an extended period at the institution, I have been present for Eastern's successes and its struggles at times. I can say without hesitation that despite occasional hardships, EIU is now stronger than ever. Eastern's community at large has always remained positive and confident. I am confident that EIU will continue to prosper moving forward as it always has in the past. Early in my career I have hoped for an academic position where I would feel a sense of belonging and Eastern has been that place for me. I imagined myself sharing my love for geography and earth science with new students each semester. I must say, I had no premonition of the tremendous passion and fulfillment I would find at Eastern. I humbly want to state that by God's grace, my vision has come to fruition, and I remain optimistic that the future will continue to provide treasured adventures.

# Barry Kronenfeld

Well what a strange year! With online courses and remote conferences it was a difficult time for many students. But you know something – this created some opportunities as well. Many national and international conferences were now online, open to anybody willing to put in the effort. PSM student (now alumnus) Jason Yoo took full advantage of this, presenting an investigation of Covid-19 Map Dashboards at the 23rd International Research Symposium on Cartography and GIScience ([AutoCarto 2020](#)). Go Jason! I also presented research on multiscale geospatial data characterization at the USGS Center for Excellence in Geographic Information Science annual meeting (also online). Even the International Jugglers' Association festival was free and online - you could just slip in and learn the latest clay-motion juggling tricks on a zoom workshop with the best jugglers in the world! What can I say, there wasn't a whole lot else going on... We made it through, though, and now that we've learned to teach through Zoom and virtual desktops guess what? The PSM in GIScience is now fully online! We're making hillshades and story maps together, and we're doing it all interactive, with (mostly) live synchronous sessions to create the community and comraderie you expect from a face-to-face program - but also the benefits of screen-sharing and the convenience of studying from home. I'm glad to be teaching Quantitative Methods for undergraduate students face-to-face this year, but for grad students especially, online isn't so bad after all – it's actually quite enjoyable! Enjoy the screen captures from Jason's AutoCarto presentation below.

**An Evaluation of COVID-19 Dashboards from Cartographic and Epidemiological Perspectives**

KWANG-IL (JASON) YOO  
BARRY J. KRONENFELD  
EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

Examples of improper symbolization

- 14 out of 39 (36%) followed basic cartographic principles
- 16 out of 39 (41%) did not follow basic cartographic principles
- 9 out of 39 (23%) had two or more map themes and followed basic cartographic principles in one map theme but did not follow in other themes.

## Christopher Laingen

August 2021 marked the start of my thirteenth academic year at EIU. The previous year was enjoyable, both professionally and personally. Professionally, I continue to teach courses that focus on human-environmental geography. I've also begun teaching my courses in ways that focus on how humans have positively impacted societal and natural environments. We are all bombarded daily with almost nothing but negatives, but we have done a lot of good over the past few decades to make things better, too. Students are tired of problems, negativity, and being told that humans are ruining everything, so I'm trying to show them our successes.

Along those same lines, my family and I have tried to place our focus on health and happiness and have largely ignored the all-too-common daily barrage of negativity. In June we took our annual family trip to the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness of northern Minnesota. We continue to be thankful for kids who are adventurous, tough, don't need 'screens,' and can entertain themselves for hours on end playing with sticks in the woods and games of UNO at night.



*Kenny (9) & Edy (7) on Slim Lake in the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness, northern Minnesota, June 2021*

For the second consecutive year, my wife and I hiked the ~80-mile Solitude Loop Trail that circles the Cloud Peak Wilderness area of the Bighorn Mountains in north-central Wyoming. In 2020 we did it clockwise, and this year we did it counterclockwise. We also ventured off-trail for a day this year, going up and over Exit Pass on our way from Lake Elsa to Kearney Lake Reservoir. When we crested the pass, we were thankful that it was mid-July and most of the snow had melted.



*Lake Elsa (left) at ~10,100 feet in the Cloud Peak Wilderness, Wyoming, June 2021.*

## Katie Lewandowski

I know I said it had been a strange year last year, but it continues...it looked like things were getting better as school ended, we were able to get vaccinated, etc. But, then the Delta variant evolved!

I often talk of my travels in my blurb, but I haven't travelled to any meetings. I did attend NC GSA, because I was co-chairing an education session with my colleagues, Dave Voorhees from Waubensee Community College and Beth Johnson from UW Osh Kosh. The meeting was conducted via Zoom. The trouble with that was I had to teach lab the same morning that our session was scheduled. So, I was able to attend ½ of my session. It's definitely a different experience than taking time off and going to a meeting. I am co-chairing a session at NC GSA next spring with Allen Driggers from Tennessee Tech. We hope it's not a Zoom meeting, but that it actually takes place in Cincinnati.

The number of students wanting to be science teachers continues to plummet, unfortunately. It's really a shame, because there are plenty of jobs. But, especially during a pandemic, it can be a hard sell. We really do need more passionate, enthusiastic, smart, engaged science teachers in Illinois and elsewhere in the USA. I only have 1 student in undergraduate Science Methods this semester.

Last spring, Emily Bosworth did an independent study with me and I was able to connect her with an internship with the Coles County Soil and Water Conservation District. It was a GIS project (so I was not the best adviser for her on that project...). In addition to that, we sampled along the grass/sidewalk interface along 4<sup>th</sup> street to look at heavy metals, with some interesting results. This year I actually have a student who is working with me on more paleontologically related matters, which is fun!

We have been very fortunate to have some fossils donated to our EIU paleontological collections recently. Steven Graves, a Charleston resident, found them along the Embarras River banks on private property. One of the specimens is quite a large coral. They are consistent with the bedrock here in Charleston.

My husband and I did get to travel a little this summer. We visited family, whom we hadn't seen since the pandemic started. In addition, we did get some beach time in in Bermuda, which was lovely.

Be safe and healthy,  
Katie Lewandowski

# James Riley

Simplify, simplify.



*Picture is of Walden Pond, a glacial kettle-hole lake.*

## Dave Viertel

Greetings. It has been a busy year with me taking the reins of the PSM program for the long term. It has, as always, been gratifying to see students succeed and move on to successful careers.

I have continued to teach many familiar classes, while adding offerings such as Land Use Planning and Lidar to my repertoire. I continue to teach a mixture of face-to-face and online classes, to support both our undergrads and the PSM program.

Life for my family has been great. My daughter is eleven now and has declared her intention to be a meteorologist (Thanks, Cameron!). My wife, who is an academic advisor over in education, continues to flourish at EIU. We've finally been able to travel again with lockdowns lifted. Trips to Michigan and Texas recharged the batteries. I look forward to the coming year.

# Support the Department and the Students!

**We are so grateful for all of your various types of contributions!**

We have great students, solid programs and meaningful impact on people's careers. You have experienced it, and your support helps to keep it going. Support comes in many guises – passing along job opportunities and internships, visiting the department to give colloquia, equipment and specimen donations and, of course, monetary contributions. These funds are used to afford educational and research materials for student investigations, fund travel to present their projects at conferences now that this is permitted again, provide scholarships for deserving individuals and more. They have many more opportunities due solely to your generous support.

If you are interested in a monetary contribution to our department, please visit <https://www.ciu.edu/giving.php>. Once you have pulled up that page, you will see the first part where you enter the amount you will be given and a drop down menu to the right of that to direct your gift to Geology and Geography. It is on the second page of the menu under the “College of Liberal Arts and Sciences,” about one third of the way down on that second page. Unfortunately, the Foundation has reworked the website and made it a little more difficult to navigate, but we Geoscientists will not be dissuaded! If you are directing it to a specific scholarship/fund, please make note of it at the bottom where it asks if it is in memory of someone. As always, checks made payable and sent to the Geology and Geography Department will be processed exactly as you direct.

Existing scholarships and funds:

- General Gift Account – unrestricted use towards student support, recruiting, etc.
- Geography Alumni Award – sophomore or junior in Geography
- Geology Alumni Award – sophomore or junior in Geology
- Dewey H. Amos Scholarship – outstanding junior in Geology or Earth Science
- Robert G. Buzzard Scholarship in Geography – junior or senior in Geography
- Jon and Diana Giffin Geologist Scholarship – at least sophomore Geology major with plans to continue in geology
- Vincent P. and Pamela R. Gutowski Scholarship – any student majoring in Geography
- Ruby M. Harris Award – senior in Geology, Geography or Earth Science
- Belayet Khan Geography Scholarship – junior or senior Geography student
- Walter H. and Dorothea V. McDonald Scholarship – junior in Geography or Earth Science
- Grace Markwell Meier Award – outstanding member of Gamma Theta Upsilon (GTU)
- John Popp Field Geology Scholarship – seniors in Geology attending field camp

- Dalias and Lillian Price Memorial Endowment – supports student observers in obtaining daily climate data for the National Weather Service
- Errett and Mazie Warner Presidential Award – juniors or seniors in Geology, Geography or Earth Science
- Annie L. Weller Scholarship – junior or senior in Geography
- John George Wozencraft, Jr. Memorial Award – either Mathematics (even years) or Geogrpahy (odd years)
- Troyt York Memorial Scholarship – junior or senior in Geography
- Wise and Stoner Undergraduate Scholarship in Geography – junior or senior in Geography
- Others – establish your own scholarship or memorial fund!

We would especially like to encourage alumni to check for the possibility of matching funds from their employer, as any donation is then multiplied. For example, some large petroleum companies offer a 3:1 match. Gifts-in-kind of equipment or specimens are appreciated, but please contact the department beforehand to ensure optimal use as well as conformance to University regulations. If you have any questions or comments, please do not hesitate to email or call me – thank you so very much!

Diane M. Burns, Chair  
 Email: [dmburns@ciu.edu](mailto:dmburns@ciu.edu)  
 Phone: (217) 581-2626



*Everett Lau, '21 and Stephen Elmore, students minoring in Broadcast Meteorology, receive donations to support their studies from Kevinetta O'Brien, '77.*

# Feeling social? Come see what is going on in social media!

We have Facebook pages and groups – pages are public, but the groups need to have you invited to join. Besides “shout outs” and various GEO-related postings, we also use the groups as a clearinghouse for all job opportunities and internships that come to our attention. If you are looking for a position, you should definitely join! If you know of opportunities, you can either join the group and pass along the information or just send along in an email and we’ll get it posted. To join or to send job opportunities, please email Diane at [dmburns@eiu.edu](mailto:dmburns@eiu.edu).

Coming soon – Instagram and YouTube!!

More information on the department, faculty, and student opportunities can be found on our website:

[eiu.edu/geoscience](http://eiu.edu/geoscience)