

The Jeffersonian*

Department of Geography & Geology Newsletter

Fall 2017

NOTES FROM THE DEPARTMENT HEAD

Rick Sambrook, Ph.D. Dept. Head rsambroo@emich.edu (734) 487-8489

This past academic year, once again, featured a number of changes in G&G's faculty, as follows: 1) We welcomed Dr. Matthew Cook and Dr. Xining Yang as new faculty members to our academic community. Cultural-Historical Geographer Dr. Matt Cook came to campus from the University of Tennessee Knoxville to serve in our Geography and Historic Preservation programs. Dr. Xining Yang accepted our offer to return to EMU to serve in our GIS Master's – as well as our new Geographic Information Science Technology (GIST) STEM major. We are proud to note Dr. Yang is a graduate of our GIS Master's program and was among our first cohort of students from the International School of Software – Wuhan University, China. After graduation from EMU, Xining Yang earned a Ph.D. in GIS at Ohio State University. He joined EMU after a year of service as an Assistant Professor at Chico State University, in California; 2) Dr. Michael Kasenow officially retired after 27 years of dedicated service to the department, including serving as Department Head. He continued to teach online during the FY2016/17 school year; and finally 3) Dr. Robert (Bob) Jones and Dr. Ted Ligibel officially announced their intent to begin three-year phased retirement options (ERO) beginning in the fall 2017 semester.

G&G faculty members received a number of awards and recognition during the past academic year including: 1) Professor Danny Bonenberger was awarded a two semester sabbatical beginning in September 2017 that will enable research on 3D modeling of vernacular landscapes and evaluation of the latest virtual reality headsets such as the Oculus Rift, Gear VR, and HTC Vive as tools to enhance heritage interpretation and promote historic preservation; 2) Professor Nancy Bryk received a grant from Women in Philanthropy at EMU in the amount of \$4450 for the project "Creating a World-Class Exhibit;" 3) Dr. Christine Clark was awarded \$525.00 from the College of Arts and Sciences to support professional travel to the Geological Society of America Annual Meeting in Denver, CO.; 4) Dr. Heather Khan-Welsh was notified by Bonnie Wessler (Ypsilanti Planning Department and EMU URP Program Alum) she has been nominated to serve on the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) for the City of Ypsilanti, which is a three year term of office. Also, Dr. Khan-Welsh continues to serve as a member of the Michigan Tourism Strategic Plan, in December 2016, Dr. Khan-Welsh was appointed to serve a three year term as a faculty representative to the Women's Commission, where she was notified by the President's Office of her appointment that began on September 1st, 2016 and will continue through September 1, 2019; 5) Dr. Michael Kasenow was approved for emeritus faculty status by the Board of Regents at their November 1, 2016 meeting;

Continue on Page 2



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

NOTES	1
NEW FACULTY	4
STRONG EVENT PHOTOS	5
STRONG MURAL PHOTOS	6
STUDENT SPOT-LIGHT	7

**The Jeffersonian title is a dedication to former EMU Geography & Geology Department Chair, Dr. Mark Jefferson. No copyright infringement intended*

Notes From The Department Head Cont.

6) Dr. Tom Kovacs was awarded \$425.00 from the College of Arts and Sciences to support professional travel to the Earth Educators' Rendezvous Conference/workshop in Madison, WI. In addition, Dr. Tom Kovacs was appointment to the Sustainability Commission of the City of Ypsilanti for a one year term of office; 7) Dr. Steve LoDuca was awarded \$525.00 from the College of Arts and Sciences to support professional travel to the Geological Society of American National Conference in Denver, CO. ; 8) During FY2016/17 Dr. Katherine Ryker was recognized for the following a) awarded \$425.00 from the College of Arts and Sciences to support professional travel to the Earth Educators' Rendezvous Conference/workshop in Madison, WI.; b) accepted to ORDA (Office of Research and Development Administration) Culture of Research Excellence CoRE Grant Writing Program; c) Katherine Ryker and Amy Johnson (Chemistry) received acceptance by the Faculty Development Center (FDC) of their Program Request entitled "Thank-a-Teacher" that was funded for an amount of \$675; d) Katherine and her student Stephanie Porcari received a "special recognition award for the success of their unique learning relationship" created by the FDC - specifically by the Liggitt Family and Friends Teaching & Learning Partnership Scholarship. Each received a certificate and \$250; e) Katherine was nominated to serve as Vice President of the Geoscience Education Research division of NAGT (the National Association of Geoscience Teachers). The position is a three year commitment, in which she will be the next President (2018-2019) then Past President (2019-2020); f) Katherine received an EMU Woman of Excellence award from the Women's Resource Center; and finally g) Katherine was recognized as a Mentor of Excellence in the College of Education Celebration of Excellence, 2016. Nominated by her student Stephanie Porcari; and finally 9) Dr. Xining Yang received a Brickley Award, which included \$1,000 in support for his research project, "Human-Geospatial Data Interaction: Leveraging Virtual Reality to Extend Teaching and Learning in GIST."

We also should recognize examples of G&G student success over the course of FY2016/17 as follows: 1) Haley Schneider – CAS Dean's Office approved her application for the Dean's Student Travel Award in the amount of \$400, where these funds supported travel to attend the Geological Society of America Annual Meeting that took place in Denver, CO. ; 2) Stephanie Porcari (with Katherine Ryker) received a "special recognition award for the success of their unique learning relationship" created by the FDC - specifically by the Liggitt Family and Friends Teaching & Learning Partnership Scholarship. Each received a certificate and \$250; 3) Yuchen Li – CAS Dean's Office approved his application for the Dean's Student Travel Award in the amount of \$400, in support of travel to attend the AAG Annual Meeting that took place in Boston, MA.; 4) In April, Geology major Conor Odowd – recognition for completion of a Honors Senior Thesis.; 5) Geography major graduates Kristofer Canty and Steven Munn were awarded Mark Jefferson Scholarships in the amount of \$1000 at the G&G departmental awards event; 6) HPP graduate student Jacqueline Matheny - Winter 2017 Marshall McLennan Scholarship Fund awarded \$400 scholarship for expenses related to participation in the HistoriCorp Adobe Wall reconstruction training; GIS Master's Graduate student Wendy Dorman was selected as a recipient of the [National Association of Geoscience Teachers Outstanding Teaching Assistant Award](#). This award honors undergraduate and graduate students who have demonstrated excellence as teaching assistants. She was nominated by Dr. Katherine Ryker, who emphasized how she had gone above and beyond the standard GA duties to improve the quality of education for her students; and finally, 7) Stephanie Pocari (with Katherine Ryker) - Undergraduate Research Stimulus Award for the Winter 2017 semester - where she received one of eight awards among fourteen applications.

Continue on page 3

Notes From The Department Head Cont.

G&G faculty members also are regularly cited by local media, where for example: 1) in April 2017, Professor Nancy Bryk was recognized at the Grand Opening for a new exhibit at the McKenny Gallery on the history of Greek Life at EMU, where artifacts are on display that show the traditions and transformations of Greek Letter Organizations. Displays were designed by graduate students in a class in Historic Preservation; 2) In May 2017, Katherine Ryker was featured in a press release on the Thank-A-Teacher program Amy Johnson (Chemistry) and Katherine Ryker organized: [EMU students show appreciation toward 144 educators during Thank-A-Teacher celebration](#). This year was the pilot run of the university-wide program that received 184 nominations. The program provides students the opportunity to thank EMU teachers who have gone above and beyond to make a difference in their lives; 3) Also in April, Katherine Ryker was interviewed with Amy Johnson (Chemistry) for WEMU <http://wemu.org/post/marching-science-washtenaw-county>, where they spoke about the importance of supporting science, funding, and women in STEM; 4) Gin (Ping) Zhou, a Part -Time Lecturer (PTL) represented the G&G department at this year's TED Talk! <http://www.tedxydl.com/2017-speakers/>

During the 2016/17 academic year a great amount of time and energy was invested in the planning and the actual move out of the Strong Building. Both the Geography and Geology programs were among the original occupants of the Strong Building when it was first opened in the fall of 1957 – but they were not in the same department. It was not until 1965 when Geography and Geology were joined as a blended department of equal status. Over the span of 52 years the G&G department has grown to include twenty tenure-track faculty members, a Full Time Lecturer, and over a dozen dedicated Part Time Lecturers, who collectively participate in the department's 14 degree programs, including certificates. After 57 years of service as a classroom building, Strong Hall will benefit from a nearly 40 million dollar renovation to complete the Science Complex project, hopefully by the start of the Fall 2018 semester. During the renovation, swing space laboratory classrooms were constructed on the 5th floor of the Mark Jefferson building to hold laboratory sections of the department's General Education courses in ESSC. A permanent new rock room and research laboratory is being built on the lower floor of Mark Jefferson, increasing the department's foot print in the building. The temporary G&G department office (311 King) was relocated to the venerable King Hall dormitory building (constructed in 1939), some of you may remember. Most G&G faculty members have temporary offices on the fourth floor of King, while some others are located in the Mark Jefferson Building on the third floor. Over the next year or so during the renovation process, we will keep you posted of the progress of our new departmental home. For those of you thinking about supporting one of the department's programs through a donation, you can contact me to discuss our existing scholarships and the opportunities to make a contribution to our development fund that can eventually be used for the new equipment we anticipate will be purchased for the Strong renovation project. In spite of the disruption, the G&G department is hosting the annual meeting of the [East Lakes Division of the American Association of Geographers](#) from the October 12th evening reception at the Freighthouse in Depot Town through the full day conference paper and poster sessions in the Student Center on Friday, the 13th – and including some suggested field trips to both local and regional museums reflecting Ypsilanti and the region's automotive, aviation, and other transportation heritage on Saturday, October 14th. We anticipate over 200 faculty and student members from Geography programs in Michigan and Ohio, and perhaps Wisconsin, will travel to campus for the conference. Guests are welcome, so if you are looking for a good reason to come to campus to see all of the changes taking place, take a look at the registration materials on our departmental website.

Thank you – Dr. Rick Sambrook –

Department Head & Professor

([Video](#) of Dr. Richard Sambrook's farewell to Strong Hall speech/presentation)

New Faculty

Christopher Gellasch, New Geology Professor



Dr. Christopher Gellasch is a geologist with a focus on groundwater (hydrogeology) and water quality. He received his B.S. in Geology from Eastern Michigan University, M.S. in Geological Sciences from Indiana University, and Ph.D. in Geology from the University of Wisconsin – Madison. He returns to EMU after more than 20 years serving as a U.S. Army Environmental Science and Engineering Officer.

His previous academic experience includes serving as an assistant professor at the U.S. Military Academy in West Point, NY and the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences in Bethesda, MD. His research combines aspects of hydrogeology and environmental engineering to determine the most likely pathways for chemical and biological contaminants to migrate through the subsurface and impact either public supply wells or surface water bodies.

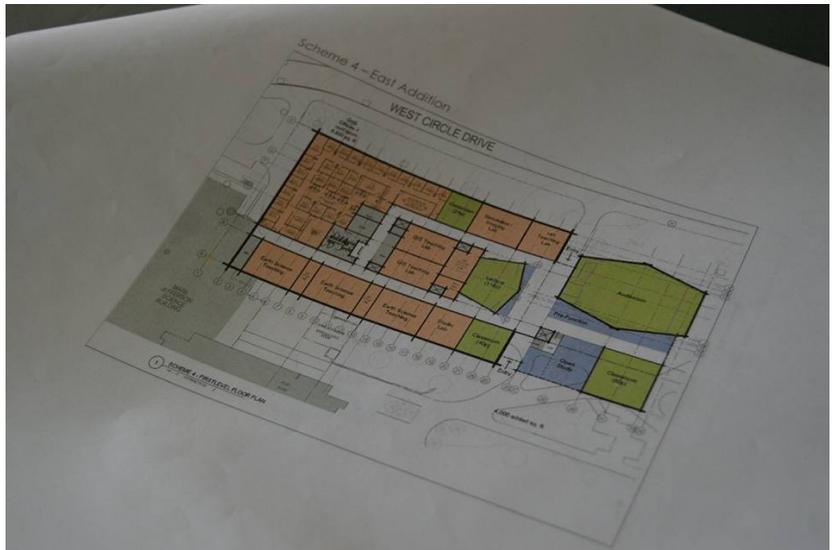
Eric Portenga, New Geomorphology Professor



Dr. Eric Portenga is a geomorphologist from west Michigan specializing in understanding how our planet's surface evolves over historical and geological timescales. After completing his B.S. in Geological Sciences at the University of Michigan, Dr. Portenga received his M.S. in Geology from the University of Vermont, and then he completed a joint-Ph.D. in Earth Science at the University of Glasgow in Scotland and Macquarie University in Australia. He returned home to Michigan for a Postdoctoral Research Fellowship at the University of Michigan.

Dr. Portenga has studied long-term landscape evolution of the Appalachian Mountains, landscape response to human land-use practices in Australia throughout the Holocene, uplift and erosion of the Santa Monica Mountains in California, deglaciation in Greenland, and erosion in Bhutan and South Africa. He looks forward to sharing his knowledge and working with colleagues and students at EMU as well as expanding his research to include untangling parts of Michigan's glacial history.

Come Home to Strong Hall Event Photos



Remembering Strong Hall: The Murals



Spotlight: Students & Alumni

Wendy Dorman, GIS Master's Alum



Wendy was originally a biology graduate from EMU. When she was in graduate school at Winthrop University, she started working with GPS and ArcGIS as part of an internship in Costa Rica. The experience prompted her to apply to our department's GIS program upon her return.

While working on her M.S. in GIS at EMU, she interned as a climate researcher for The College of Menominee Nation Sustainable Development Institute and The University of Michigan Biological Station. As part of her graduate project, Wendy worked with the Michigan Nature Association, Fish and Wildlife, Great Lakes orchids, LLC, and U of M to successfully help reintroduce the endangered Eastern Prairie Fringed Orchid. She presented her research at the Stewardship Network Annual Meeting and attended AAG conferences. While teaching Earth Science labs as a graduate student she received the [Outstanding Teachers Assistant Award from the National Association of Geoscience Teachers](#).

At the start of her second year in the GIS program, Wendy was immediately hired by a local environmental company as a GIS Analyst. Currently, she is working at MDA Information Systems as a geospatial analyst II. She is fascinated by drone technologies and hopes to obtain her sUAS license soon. In her free time she enjoys hiking with her dog Atreyu, reading science fiction, and bird watching.

Ally Racisz, Urban Planning Student



Ally is currently majoring in Urban and Regional Planning with a minor in Sustainability at Eastern Michigan University.

Ally chose geography as her field of study because of her fascination of how different cultures, environments and ideas live, evolve, and relate to the world. She also travelled throughout her childhood and geography helps fuel her passion to seeing more of the world. She is specifically interested in studying urban planning because as she visited different cities, she realized she wanted to become part of the process that made them the way that they are.

Ally recognizes the importance of geography to the growing generation and plans as part of her career to help responsibly gentrify conditions in cities. Her starting goal being Detroit itself. After receiving her bachelor's degree, she plans to move onto Wayne States' master program and hopes to get an internship with the city. Specializing in Environmental Planning, a majority of her work will be specified to eliminating toxic conditions such as brownfields and creating resource productive and economically sound spaces with a sense of place.

Removed from her studies, Ally can be found at one of her part-time jobs as a florist, a waitress, and a supplemental instructor for entry level geography courses. In her free time she enjoys antiques, travelling, studying astronomy, gardening, fashion and volunteering as a cheerleading coach.

The Jeffersonian

203 Strong Hall
Eastern Michigan University
Ypsilanti, MI 48197

Phone:

734-487-0218

Website:

<http://www.emich.edu/geo>

Department Programs:

Geography
Geography Teaching
Geology—General
Geology—Professional
Geology—Hydrology
Earth Science
Earth Science Teaching
Earth Science Education GR
Urban & Regional Planning
(Undergrad & Grad)
Historic Preservation
Geotourism
GIS (GR)
GIST

The Department of Geography and Geology has a long tradition and an exciting future. We have seven programs to service those interested in the Geo-based arts and sciences. Along with our undergraduate programs in Earth Science, Geography, Geology, and Urban and Regional Planning, we have secondary teacher certifications in Earth Science and Geography, minors in Geotourism, Geographic Information Systems (GIS), Historic Preservation, and master's programs in Earth Science Teaching, GIS, Historic Preservation, and Urban and Regional Planning.

G&G on the Web!

Interested in learning more about our department? Visit us on the web!

If you are looking for general information, such as faculty, program curriculums, or calendar of events, please see our newly renovated official page at: <http://www.emich.edu/geo>

Are you a social-networking enthusiast? So are we! The Department of Geography & Geology has both fan and group pages on Facebook! So go "Like" a page or join a group today!

Geography Honor Society (Gamma Theta Upsilon) was reactivated in 2016 - see your Geography adviser for further information!

Fan pages

[EMU Geography & Geology](#)

Group pages

(Please search  for us!)

- Eastern Michigan University Department of Geography & Geology Group
- Preservation Eastern
- Eastern Michigan University Historic Preservation Alumni
- GIS Club
- Travel & Tourism Club
- Eastern Michigan University Geotourism Program
- GeoClub at EMU
- P.L.A.C.E
-

