

PANTHER GEOGRAPHY

LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

Greetings from UWM Geography! Perhaps some of you saw Mark Schwartz's comments in the *Washington Post* in March about the unusual geography associated with the arrival of spring in the US this year. We're excited that spring finally seems to be on its way here in Milwaukee (knock on wood). Several of us recently returned from the American Association of Geographers Annual Meeting in Denver, which we're pleased to report is back in person. Ten current graduate students and four faculty members presented papers, participated in panels, or served as discussants, and it was very exciting to be in the company of so many geographers again.

We also had the pleasure of hosting Muki Haklay (University College London, Learning Planet Institute in Paris) as our virtual Harold and Florence Mayer speaker this spring. One of the good things about everyone's growing comfort with virtual meetings is that we can now host speakers from other countries – something that wasn't possible for us not that long ago.

The research of UWM geography faculty continues to garner national and international attention. To give just one example, Anne Bonds's collaborative research with Derek Handley (English) on "Mapping Racism and Resistance," using crowdsourcing approaches to examine the historical geography of restrictive covenants in Milwaukee County, has been the feature of multiple news stories this winter and spring, and earlier this week we were excited to see a film crew from PBS conducting an interview about the research in Anne's office – stay tuned!

We're also continuing to work on streamlining the curriculum and creating opportunities for our undergraduates and graduate students. We have now rolled out the new climate-environment track, and in the fall we will open our new human geography track. The Alpha Mu chapter of GTU remains highly active, and it is becoming a force to reckon with in local trivia contests!

As I mentioned in the fall, we're doing all of this in the face of ongoing challenges for UWM. UWM and the College of Letters and Science are once again trying to figure out how to manage major budget cuts in the coming year, and all departments and units across campus are facing constant pressure to do more with less. Again, even though we don't anticipate having any opportunities to grow our faculty and staff in the near future, we have remained stable and resilient. I want to express our deepest gratitude to those of you who have generously supported our work with your donations – at a time like this, they really make a huge difference. As always, we also encourage all of our alums to contribute your stories with us for this newsletter – and let us know if you'd be interested in coming to campus to share your experience and wisdom with our current students. They benefit tremendously from hearing about the career and life paths that UWM geography graduates have pursued, and I can't emphasize enough how gratifying to us it is to see the wonderful things you are doing with your degrees.

Have a wonderful spring and summer!
All best wishes,



Ryan Holifield
Chair, Department of Geography



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College of Letters & Science

DEPARTMENT NEWS

Guest Speaker Joseph Kerski from ESRI

Joseph Kerski is a renowned geographer who specializes in the utilization of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) in the field of education. He has held the esteemed position of President at the National Council for Geographic Education and has delivered two compelling TED Talks on the subject of “The Whys of Where”. Joseph possesses an extensive educational background in geography, with three degrees - a Bachelor’s, Master’s, and PhD. He was invited to the UWM Geography department to chat with students in mid-February!



Left to right: Kerski with graduate students Mathew Chidera Ugwuanyi, Ahya Rezaei, Matthias Schilli, and Alexandra Hamilton

Mayer Lecture Speaker Fall 2022



Heejun Chang, Department of Geography, Portland State University, presented “Urban Water Resilience in a Changing Environment and Society” as the Mayer Lecture in Fall 2022.

GIS Club

The GIS Club’s objective is to stimulate and broaden enthusiasm in GIS among the UWM and Milwaukee community at large.

The club’s spatial library is now open; datasets from Milwaukee, as well as national- and international-scale datasets, are available.

BECOME A FRIEND OF GEOGRAPHY!

We are exceedingly grateful for our friends and donors who support our students and faculty through their gifts.

Any donation of any size matters. Scholarships can help undergraduates with tuition and books at a time when many are struggling with these expenses. At the graduate level, fellowships support research and the creation of new knowledge in the discipline. Donors can also support faculty research activities. Contact us to match your passion to a funding need.

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To contribute by mail or another method contact Tom Bjornstad via phone at [414-229-3298](tel:414-229-3298) or email bjornsta@uwm.edu

STUDENTS & ALUMNI NEWS

2023 AAG Conference, Denver

The AAG is a professional organization for geographers and geospatial scientists. Their annual conference brings together scholars, researchers, students, and professionals from all over the world to share their knowledge and expertise on various topics related to geography.

The conference typically includes paper presentations, panel discussions, keynote speeches, workshops, and exhibits. Attendees have the opportunity to network with colleagues, learn about the latest research and developments in the field, and engage in discussions and debates about important issues related to geography.

This year the hybrid conference was held in Denver, Colorado. Multiple graduate students and faculty from the department gave oral presentations.



From left to right, graduate students Miracle Oluwasegun Mark, Matthias Schilli, Saeedeh Morassafar, Ahya Rezaei, and Mathew Chidera Ugwuanyi at the AAG meetings in Denver. Note two non-UWM attendees on the far left and right of the image.

Alumni Update - Jacob Holter '18 BA

Since graduation in 2018 I have been pursuing a career in GIS and in the past year I have found myself in a great position as a GIS Analyst working on a consulting team within the broadband space. After graduation I worked at the Milwaukee County Land Information Office before moving over to the telecom industry. I was working in the permitting and construction area of telecom for quite a while, but I knew that I wanted to return to a more GIS and spatial analysis focused position. I have always had an interest in using GIS to help communities in need, which was reflected in my senior project at UW-Milwaukee as I looked at bike share programs in relationship to low income, and black and brown neighborhoods.

My current work at Finley Engineering includes the utilization of data related to current funding programs, socio-economic and census, and environmental. My role is to use the available data to put together maps and conduct spatial analysis, to identify what technologies and funding already exists, what the socio-economic landscape looks like, and provide the data needed for federal and local grant applications. I also assist in designing high level fiber networks for cost estimation purposes. My team mostly works with underserved counties, municipalities, or electric co-ops looking to improve their infrastructure and better serve their communities. It is our job to identify the gaps in broadband service, gather the numbers, data, and maps needed for grant processes and help communities get funding to improve their infrastructure. We work on projects all over the country, but one of the most recent projects I am working on is with the Ho-Chunk Nation of Wisconsin to bring proper broadband service to their lands.

I am grateful to have discovered GIS at UWM, and it has proven to be a great career path for me, especially within my newest role at Finley.



FACULTY/STAFF NEWS

CIE International Advocate Ceremony Fall 2022

The inaugural International Advocate Award Ceremony was hosted by the Center for International Education on Wednesday, November 16, 2022. During the ceremony, 36 exceptional UWM faculty and staff members were acknowledged for their notable contributions to the lives of UWM international students and those who have pursued studying abroad. Ryan Holifield and Alison Donnelly from the Geography department were both recipients of the award, congratulations!



In Memoriam: Canute VanderMeer

Canute VanderMeer, a retired Geography Professor Emeritus at The University of Vermont, passed away on February 20, 2023, while residing in Atlanta, Georgia. He was 92 years old at the time of his passing. From 1961-1972 Canute worked as an Assistant Professor of Geography at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, serving as Acting Chairperson from 1970-1971.



UWM Geography Faculty Activities

Mark D. Schwartz was quoted in the *Washington Post* about the early arrival of spring in the southeastern USA.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/climate-environment/interactive/2023/spring-early-late-climate-change/>

Alison Donnelly received NSF Conference funding to host the NEON Great Lakes User Group kick-off workshop in September 2023 with Ankur Desai, UW-Madison, and Luke Nave, Michigan State University, as Senior Personnel. Alison was also invited to present her work as part of the AGSL's Academic Adventures lecture series where she gave a talk entitled "Monitoring Downer Woods by People and Satellites."

Anna Mansson McGinty has been named a Center for 21st Century Studies Fellow for the 2023-24 academic year.

Hyejin Yoon has received a Global Studies Research Fellowship for Fall 2023.



SHARE YOUR UPDATES!

We'd love to hear about what you are doing since graduating from the geography program.

Send updates to Ryan Holifield at holifiel@uwm.edu