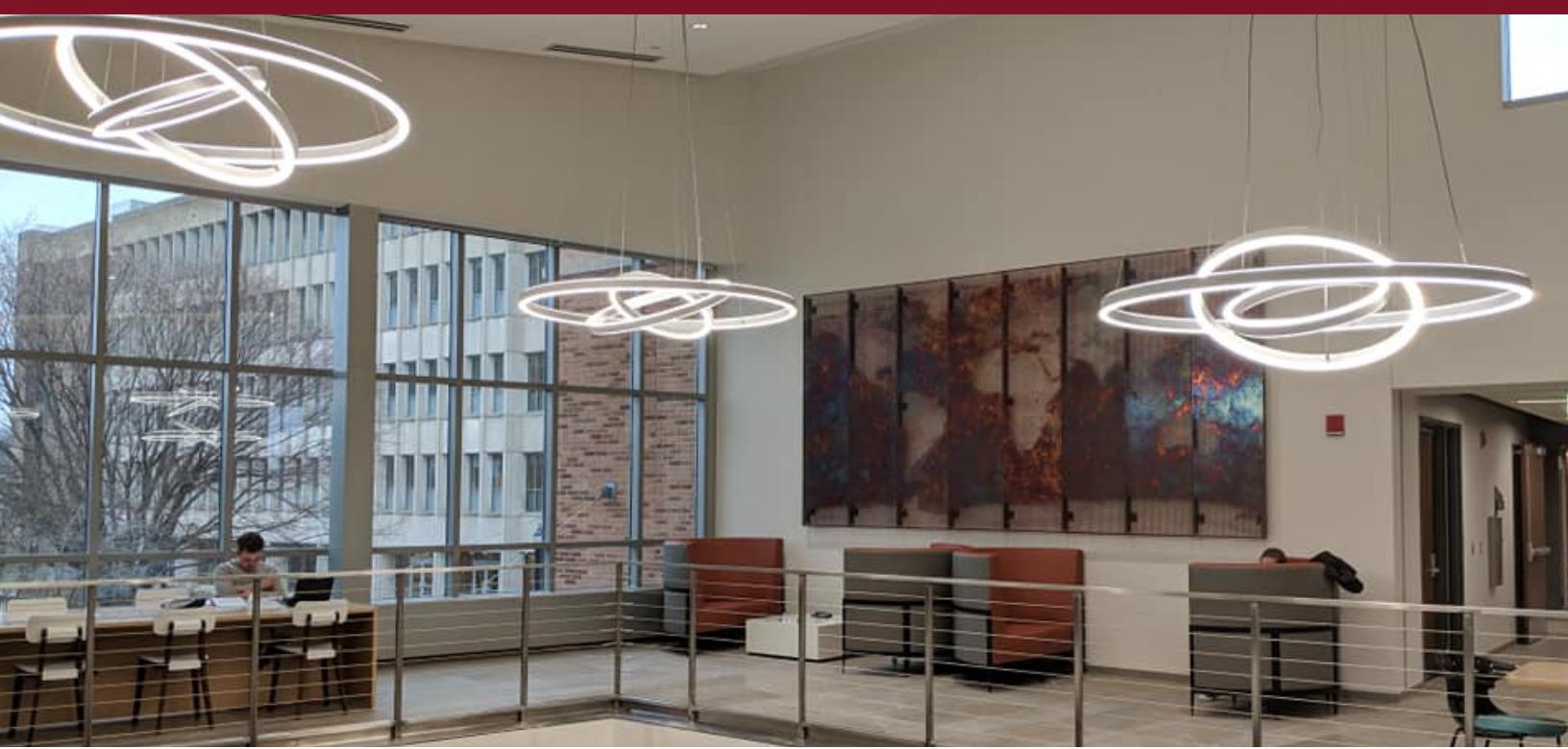


# THE JEFFERSONIAN

*The Official Newsletter of  
Eastern Michigan University's Department of Geography & Geology*



## NOTES FROM THE DEPT HEAD

BY DR. RICHARD SAMBROOK, DEPT. HEAD

Within the Department of Geography & Geology, 2020 will be remembered most for the dramatic disruptions during the winter semester in mid-March when all EMU classes transitioned to online delivery, as a consequence of the COVID-19 virus pandemic.

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# Notes Continued

G&G faculty members and staff are to be congratulated for the outstanding effort put forth to deliver high quality instruction under the most difficult health crisis anyone working at EMU can remember in their careers. G&G is among a small number of academic departments on campus able and willing to offer courses to our students in the various modes of teaching available to faculty members, including COVID-19 socially distanced face-to-face, asynchronous online, and the newly created remote synchronous online option that takes advantage of Zoom meeting technology

As alumni, you can be proud to know G&G faculty members were at the forefront providing EMU higher administration with critical information (data and maps) necessary to make decisions regarding the safe operation of EMU's campus under COVID-19 constraints.

During the summer, Dr. Yichun Xie assembled a team of both graduate and undergraduate geography students with GIS expertise tasked with modelling socially distanced classroom capacities on campus, as well as plan efficient one-way routes through the buildings. Their important work for administrative planners served as a point of departure for the physical laying out of classrooms and posting of social distancing signage.

In terms of monitoring the spread of COVID-19 between and among EMU students living on campus, Dr. Chris Gellasch proposed wastewater sampling to monitor COVID-19 cases. Consequently, EMU is one of a small number of college campuses using this innovative technique to monitor campus housing for COVID-19 by testing wastewater. When a spike in wastewater Coronavirus concentrations is detected from a residence hall, EMU will focus on testing those students to prevent an outbreak from spreading. Recently, other organizations across the country have reached out to Dr. Gellasch for advice on how to implement this type of wastewater sampling.

# Faculty Updates

Like most years there are both departures and new additions to the G&G faculty, as follows: Dr. Robert Jones – a faculty member who served in the Urban & Regional Planning program retired after 16 years of service in August of 2019. During his career, Bob served the department as Interim Department Head from 2007-2009, and as Director of the URP program's accredited undergraduate program. Bob Jones was active in AAUP, serving for one year as Grievance Officer and many years as Steward in G&G.

In addition, Dr. Ted Ligibel retired after more than two decades of teaching in the Historic Preservation program – "Dr. Ted" will be remembered for his role as Director of the program – which is among the founding programs in the National Council for Preservation Education (NCPE). Throughout his long and distinguished career, Dr. Ted Ligibel was recognized for many professional achievements and he received numerous academic awards. He developed a highly successful summer field school program and worked to establish several ongoing internship opportunities for H.P. graduate students – where the Ypsilanti Historical Society interns and the Historical Marker Program internship with the State of Michigan are examples.



## Faculty Updates cont.

Full-time Lecturer Kelly Victor-Burke also retired after 30 years of service to the department. Kelly will be remembered for her enthusiasm for teaching in the geo-tourism program and most particularly for being among the first on EMU's campus to develop online courses. Kelly was truly a pioneer in this evolving mode of course delivery.



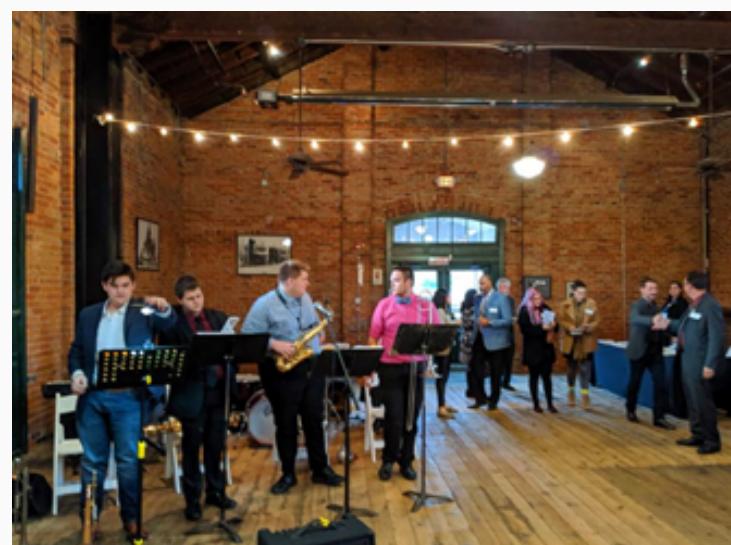
Finally, this fall (2020) semester, we are proud to announce that Dr. Michael R.J. Koscielniak – a recent graduate of the University of Michigan's Urban & Regional Planning program – has joined G&G's Urban & Regional Planning program as its newest faculty member.



## 2019/2020 Events

In September 2019, the Historic Preservation program worked jointly with the EMU Foundation in successfully bringing over 200 alumni and emeritus faculty members of the Historic Preservation program to campus to celebrate the 40th Anniversary of the founding of the HP program and the retirement of Dr. Ted Ligibel. Highlights of the event included a slide presentation put together by Norm & Ilene Tyler documenting many aspects of Dr. Ted's career – with many images of field school over the years. Sarah Marmson, a graduate of the program gave a brief presentation about future directions in the field of Historic Preservation. Professor Nancy Bryk is currently serving in the capacity of HP Program Director.

In October 2019, the 100th year anniversary of the signing of the Treaty of Paris – ending World War I – was recognized on EMU's campus with a jointly sponsored symposium between the History & Philosophy, Geography & Geology, and Political Science & Government departments. The two days symposium provided an opportunity to celebrate the distinguished (39 years at EMU) career of Dr. Mark Jefferson and the role he played in the treaty process. Two guest speakers – geographers Jeffrey Crampton and Wesley Reisser – were invited to talk about their research involving Jefferson's career. The symposium was very well attended – including by local members of the Mark Jefferson family.



# G&G Grants

During the FY2019/20 academic year, G&G faculty members were successful in external grant activity, including:

- 1) Eric Portenga – January 2020 - NSF award grant of \$221,014 for the project "RUI: Quantifying the effects of wildfire burning on 10Be concentrations in river sand - A study of the 2018 Woolsey Fire, Santa Monica, CA." The award started January 1, 2020 and ends December 31, 2023.
- 2) Yichun Xie, 2019 - Lead PI: Proposal Title: Marshall Plan for Talent: Geospatial Technologies Talent Consortium (GTTC) - Proposal No.: 20-0083 - \$239,928.00.
- 3) Xining Yang – 2019 - Grant award for \$25,000 - lead-PI proposal titled "Safe Routes to School Active Transportation Programs" funded by Michigan Fitness Foundation and Michigan Department of Transportation for the school year 2019-2020. A colleague from Nursing (Tsu-Yin Wu) and Xining implemented a variety of programs in city of Hamtramck and their partners from Hamtramck Public Schools to promote walking and biking as a healthy lifestyle using geospatial technology and citizen science.

Success in internal grant activity included:

- 1) Eric Portenga, 2019 - James H. Brickley Faculty Professional Development and Innovation Award, which includes \$1,482 in support of his project, "Erosion of the Santa Monica Mountains after the 2018 Woolsey Fire."
- 2) Eric Portenga, 2019 - Provost's Research Award of \$2,285 with G&G matching funds of \$995 for a total of \$3,980 for his project "Dating Zircon Minerals from Northern Australia to understand early aboriginal use of fire."
- 3) Xining Yang - selection to participate in ORDA's Culture of Research Excellence CoRE grant writing program for his project, "Toward geography-health-environment nexus for understanding active living."

Joint student and faculty member accomplishments included:

- 1) Chris Gellasch and student Dillon Kilroy Undergraduate Research Stimulus Award (URSA) for winter 2020.
- 2) Eric Portenga and Joel Harris upon news of an URSP award that is now in place for the Fall 2020 semester.
- 3) Bill Welsh and Marcus Whitters upon news of an URSP award that is now in place for the Fall 2020 semester.

# Geology Field Experience Fund

It is critically important for geology students to have field experiences to gain an appreciation for the scale of geologic processes. All Professional Geology majors are required to attend a 5-6 weeks geology field course, normally in the Western U.S., to complete their degrees. This field course costs thousands of dollars in tuition, fees, and lodging and is a substantial expense for most EMU students who are working their way through school.

The Geology Field Experience Fund was created by EMU Geology Faculty in 2019 with the goal of providing financial support to undergraduate students attending a geology field course or other geology field experiences like the new ESSC 255 Regional Geology Field Trip course.

Dr. Gellasch has pledged to match the first \$1,000 in donations to this fund. Double the impact of your donation and support our students attending geology field camp and other field experiences like our new ESSC 255 Regional Geology Field Trip course. See the website for more details and to donate. Even small donations add up and help us reach our goal by December 31st, 2020.

<https://donate.emich.edu/project/23998>

