

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

The 2018/19 academic year in G&G was highlighted by the much anticipated move back into the Strong building – a \$40 million renovation project discussed below. Now the G&G department occupies the entire main floor of the building and shares the new atrium and renovated auditorium as common use areas. The Department of Physics and Astronomy is housed on the lower floor and entire second floor of the building. An expanded and redesigned set of staircases join the Strong and Mark Jefferson buildings together to complete the Science Complex. As a result of the redesigned space, the entire G&G faculty and staff members are clustered together in a secure common office area. In addition, the Institute for Geographic Research and Education (IGRE) was relocated from the lower floor of the King building to Strong – a long held College of Arts & Sciences and departmental goal. *Continue on page 2*

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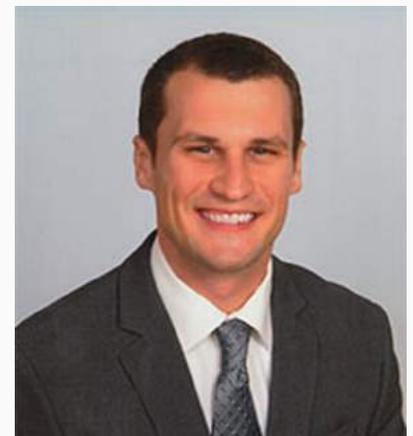
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G&G moved back into the renovated Strong building during the third week of December 2018 – in order to be ready for the start of the winter 2019 semester. The Official dedication Open House was held during the early evening of Thursday, February 7th, 2019 - where a number of individuals spoke about the importance to EMU of the newly renovated Strong building. Their comments are included as part of this newsletter, as well as an article from EMU today. The Open House was followed on Friday, February 8th by EMU's annual Because of You alumni donor event – also providing an opportunity to show off the new Strong building.

During the year several G&G faculty and instructional staff members were recognized in various ways, as follows:

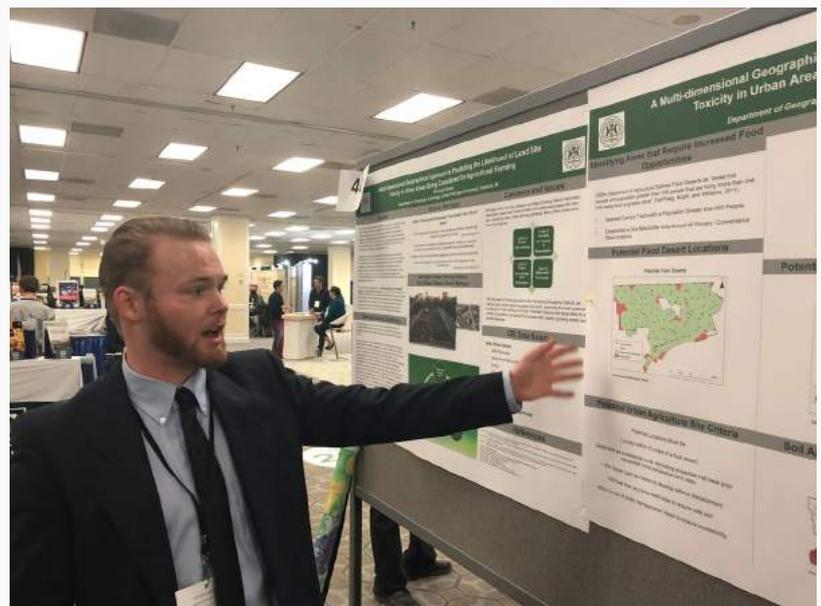
- In September 2018, Dr. Tom Kovacs was appointed by President James M Smith to serve as the first Chair of EMU's new Sustainability Commission.
- Also in September 2018, Dr. Ted Ligibel was recognized by the Association for Preservation Technology International (APTI) "for demonstrating a high level of education, experience, mentorship, and commitment to the APT code of ethics."
- In April 2019, Kelly Victor-Burke received an "Ambassador" award from the Great Lakes Women's Business Council at their 35th Annual Awards Ceremony.
- In addition, G&G alumni and current students were meritorious where Geography – GIS (2012 BS, 2014 MS) graduate Terry Kayser – now Team Leader, Engineering Capital Close-Out, NISource received an Outstanding Young Alumni Award in May, 2019.
- In November 2018, Kayla Bicknell, Max Fraleigh, and Emily Nowacki presented research posters at the Michigan AIPG Section meeting – where Max won best UG poster that included a \$1,000 cash award.
- In December 2018, Kelly Brown and Sloane Kennedy received Undergraduate Research Stimulus awards – where each student received \$2,000 to conduct research and their faculty member mentor received \$500.
- In February, 2019 Rachel Merz received funding from the Michigan Space Grant Consortium for research project Alteration of Neoproterozoic Ultramafic Rocks in Michigan's Upper Peninsula.
- In April 2019, GIS graduate student Richard Romer received recognition and a cash award for his poster on research relating to environmental concerns associated with urban gardens in Detroit at the annual meeting of the American Association of Geographers, in Washington D.C.



Notes Continued

Throughout the previous academic year G&G faculty members were successful in both the external and internal grants arena. A notable example is the participation of Dr. Xining Yang as a Co-Pi on the Center for Disease Control (CDC) grant “Evidence-based strategies to empower Asian Americans in reducing health disparities,” where funding for the five-year effort is expected to be around \$2.96 million. Dr. Tsu-Yin Wu – School of Nursing in CHHS is the PI on this interdisciplinary grant that is affiliated with the Healthy American Asian project (HAAP). Dr. Danny Bonenberger received a grant award for the Early Dwellings of North Wheeling Intensive Survey Phase II that included a stipend of \$19,680. Finally, Dr. Matt Cook was awarded a \$7,500 grant from Ford Community Corps Community Grant Program for a class based academic-service learning project working with Habitat for Humanity of Huron Valley.

G&G faculty members were active this past academic year attending both regional and national professional conferences, often in collaboration with students on research projects. Examples include the annual Geological Society of America (GSA) conference, the Michigan AIPG Section meeting, and the annual American Association of Geographers (AAG) conference. For example, for the annual AAG Meeting – April 3rd thru 6th – I drove to Washington D.C. with Dr. Hugh Semple and graduate students Kris Canty and Richard Romer. During the meeting Geography faculty members Dr. Matt Cook, Dr. Hugh Semple, and Dr. Xining Yang participated in an EMU Foundation alumni event outside of the conference. However, since G&G sponsored a booth in the exhibits area at the conference and had some entry passes, EMU President Dr. James M. Smith and his wife (Dr. Connie Ruhl-Smith) visited with our group for nearly two hours providing me the opportunity to walk through the exhibits area with him and explain the various Federal agencies and private sector firms who offer internships to and in many cases ultimately hire our graduates.



Saga of the Renovation of Strong Hall

By Richard Sambrook, Ph.D

The story of the renovation of Strong Hall inconspicuously began on May 31st, 1996 when College of Arts & Sciences Dean - Dr. Barry Fish called the first meeting of the "Science Facilities Board" (SFB). Well, actually there had been some prior discussion and study of the renovation of Strong Hall where a Report by Keck/PKAL Consultancy was presented on campus during March 4-5 of the same year - copies of which were distributed to those attending the first SFB meeting. Calling of the meeting generated much excitement and interest, since the new "science facility" had just been rated "EMU's next top priority for state capital outlay funding (noting that state government expects institutions receiving such funds to raise 25% of the cost of new buildings). Twenty-four individuals attended the first SFB meeting, including 11 members of EMU's Administration - G&G was represented by Department Head Drew Nazzaro; there were five members from the Great Grant Group - including Dr. Michael Bradley, and eight CAS faculty members who served on the SFP committee. At the second meeting of SFB on June 14th, 1996 - G&G faculty member Dr. Steve LoDuca was elected to serve as Chair - and he presented members with a plan that "advocated identifying curricular innovations and then taking inventory of the types of equipment and spaces needed to permit the associated pedagogical activities to occur." Ultimately, the "Committee was directed to use as operating assumptions an EMU of "comparable size" to today (1996) and a "sharing of facilities and equipment." That committee met for the next two years and presented a final plan to the administration.

Over the span of the next twenty-one years, the renovation of the Strong building remained among EMU's next top priority for state capital outlay funding. However, for various reasons far too complicated and frustrating to explain here, funding for the renovation project was finally in place for construction to begin in fall 2017. Many, if not most of G&G's faculty and instructional staff members who worked in the old Strong building over some or most of the past two decades never really believed they would ever see the renovation take place during their careers. Nevertheless, on December 20th, 2018 the entire Department of Geography & Geology faculty and staff moved back into the newly renovated Strong Hall building - approximately 22 years and 7 months after the first SFP planning meeting. Consequently, the following articles in this newsletter provide reflections of collective and individual reactions to the official opening and dedication of the renovated Strong Hall building. Included are comments from EMU President James Smith, College of Arts & Sciences Dean Dana Heller, G&G Representative on the College of Arts & Sciences Council (CAC) - Dr. Christine Clark, as well as comments from other G&G faculty members and our students. We extend an invitation to all of you who read this newsletter to come visit us in the new Strong Hall building and see for yourself the truly magnificent space we share.

What the Strong Hall renovation means to me...

by Kelly Victor Burke, Geography lecturer



The Department of Geography and Geology has been my academic home since I began attending Eastern Michigan University in 1980. While working on my undergraduate degree in Travel and Tourism in the department, I became a student office assistant for Dr. Elwood Kureth. The inspirational faculty convinced me to continue on for graduate work in Historic Preservation and I was awarded a graduate assistantship. During this time, I worked as Dr. Carl Ojala's GA, teaching earth science labs. In January 1990, I became an adjunct lecturer and was made a full-time lecturer a decade later (2000).

In 2008 I was invited to join the university's office of Government and Community Relations for their annual EMU Day in Lansing event which brings several dozen EMU employees, students, and alumni to Lansing to meet in small groups with legislators to advocate for issues important to EMU. One of the discussion items that year was advocating for capital outlay to renovate Strong Hall. I was so committed to the renovation of Strong Hall (and EMU) that I went to Lansing in 2009 and was asked to join the EMU Day in Lansing Planning Committee in 2010. I served as the official event "Cruise Director" until 2016. Throughout all of the years, I never gave up on Strong Hall and most importantly, I was able to work with many passionate and dedicated individuals (administrators, faculty, students and alumni) across campus.

When the renovation was nearing completion, my husband Barry & I decided we wanted to commemorate the momentous achievement with a lasting gift to Dr. Sambrook and the entire department. Our company, Burke Architectural Millwork (BAM) fabricated 2 custom walnut frames to hang interchangeable canvas photographs in the department's new reception area. It was really exciting to work with Kay Sekerak from the University's Facilities Planning & Construction office and Jeff Guyton, Senior Director of Development, College of Arts and Sciences. It was also a lot of fun working with colleagues in each of our departmental programs to come up with a photo representing themselves. The historic preservationist in me was thrilled to collaborate with Nancy Bryk and the university archivist, Alexis Braun Marks on selecting 4 vintage photos of Strong Hall for the largest frame. Construction of the custom walnut frames was done by our company's newest employee (in-house apprentice), Jacob DesRosiers, who graduated from EMU in December 2018 with a Bachelor of Fine Arts. Jacob had visited our shop with his advanced furniture making class lead by Professor John DeHoog earlier in the year and because of the shop tour wanted to join the BAM team. Barry & I thought this would be a meaningful first project for Jacob to tackle. It's hard to describe what a tremendous feeling of accomplishment it is for me professionally and personally to now work in an incredible state-of-the-art building after all these years. Plus, it makes me smile when I walk into the reception area, see the frames and say to myself, "#wemadeit", which is the social media hashtag we've appropriated @ BAM!

What the Strong Hall renovations means to me...

By Dr. Christine Clark, Geology Professor

When I first arrived at Eastern, 17 years ago, Strong Hall was already on the list of the forgotten. Dark corridors, single-pane glass, and asbestos-based tile abounded. Teaching and research experiments could be interrupted by mysterious oozes from pipes, and the temperature extremes were so bad that some of our rock samples actually degraded and fell apart. Old, outdated understandings were immortalized on the walls of the old Strong, and the ties to past mindsets overwhelmed any thoughts of the future.

I contrast that place to the light-filled, modern space we see today. The investment by the State and the University in science, both with this renovation and the completion of the Mark Jefferson Science complex, is an investment in our students as scientifically literate citizens of Michigan. The vast majority of students that move through this space will be encountering science as novices. The modern facilities allow for students to engage in 21st-century scientific pursuits. Labs range from introductory geology to GIS to digital historic preservation to plasma and laser. Strong Hall is now a welcoming space for our students, and shows the respect the University, the Board of Regents, and the State have for our scientists and their work.

After 63 years, Strong Hall is able to shed the shroud of the bygone era, and takes its first steps into the 3rd decade of the twenty-first century. There is no better analogy than the new light of Strong guiding us to the new light of scientific understanding.

I speak not just for myself, but for my fellow colleagues and the students when I say that Strong Hall now invites us to pursue our science and research into the new decade and beyond. I look forward to future generations of EMU placing their mark on Strong, and Strong Hall onto them.



Comments from Dana Heller, Dean of Arts & Sciences

One of the things I love about Eastern is our shared commitment to the integration of high impact instruction and effective learning--it's one of the defining features of this great university. Tonight we have the opportunity to acknowledge the essential role that physical space plays in supporting that commitment and enabling student achievement. In the College of Arts & Sciences we know that facilities are inextricably tied to our educational mission—we know that having updated facilities enables us to give faculty the state-of-the-art tools and cutting-edge technologies that help students succeed.

The new Strong Hall that we inhabit today is a wonder: not only does it stand as one of the most technologically advanced buildings on campus, providing modern classrooms, labs, and flex spaces—it is welcoming, comfortable, ambient, spacious, and conducive to collaborative learning, thinking, and innovation. The lovely architectural details, the major upgrades to all the building systems, and

Kelly Victor-Burke's beautiful art installation in the main entrance to the Geography & Geology department—a testament to the heritage of the original Strong building ----will make Strong Hall one of EMU's signature buildings for decades to come.” And it will be a fantastic student recruitment tool—students care about their learning environments, just as they care about their living environments. I cannot wait to see what sorts of projects, synergies, collaborations, and achievements this building will engender.



Selected Comments from President James Smith

The first thing that comes to mind is, “Wow.” I think we all felt great excitement over what Strong Hall would look like and what it would mean to our students, but seeing it open, a full month into classes, really brings home the exciting significance. This is a historic moment for Eastern and how we educate our students.

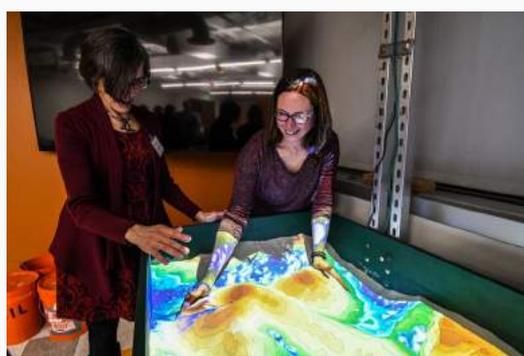
As some of you know, this project was supported by the state of Michigan and cost \$40 million. At a funding mix of 75 percent state and 25 percent University, Eastern's cost share was about \$10 million. We are so appreciative of the support we received from the state. The completion of Strong Hall marks the third and final phase of the Science Complex project, which the University began in 2008 with great vision and foresight. The goal was to become an absolutely top flight institution for educating students in STEM disciplines. I think we've succeeded!

Eastern's new Science Complex, with the completion of Strong Hall, establishes Eastern as having one of the finest settings for education in the sciences in the Midwest. That's a distinction we all should be aware of, and a distinction we should share widely. The entire Science Complex project – which includes the Mark Jefferson Building and the spectacular addition, encompasses 367,000 square feet. As I noted during my remarks at the Board of Regents meeting, that's equal to six and a half football fields, or five and a half White Houses, or about the same as three Manhattan city blocks. The Strong Hall project involved renovation of the entire 80,000 square foot structure – both the visually striking changes and additions along with the updating of architectural, structural, mechanical and electrical systems. The dynamic light fixtures in this delightful atrium call to mind images of the planet Saturn, and for good reason: Strong Hall houses the Department of Physics and Astronomy, along with the Department of Geography and Geography.

I can't resist a couple of other fun details about Strong:

- 1) It's a crucial academic facility on Eastern's campus; more than 25 percent of the University's STEM lab classrooms are in this building;
- 2) Construction on Strong Hall began in Fall 2017, and the building opened with the start of Winter classes one month ago;
- 3) The improvements were a long time coming. Strong Hall was built in 1957 and had not received any significant overall improvements since its construction.
- 4) Strong Hall had been Eastern's top capital outlay project since fiscal year 2010, the year after EMU received state funding for the Pray-Harrold renovation.
- 5) Strong Hall has been designed and constructed using principles of sustainability, and is seeking the United States Green Build Council LEED v4.0 certification;
- 6) The project makes use of the original building structure from the 1960s, thus saving on new building materials and greatly reducing landfill waste. It had, as builders say, good bones. But not a lot else could remain;
- 7) and, you can see how the design allows natural daylight to reach into the center of the building, reducing lighting costs. This is now one of the special gathering spots on campus for study or conversation or just taking a break between classes.

New Strong Hall Open House Photos



Watch the open-house video here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rMKrLBMm3vI&feature=youtu.be>

Chair of Sustainability Commission

EMU President James Smith appointed Meteorology Professor Thomas Kovacs as chair of the new President's Commission on Sustainability. In the announcement President Smith stated, "I want to announce a special new initiative, which is the President's Sustainability Commission, to be chaired by Thomas Kovacs, a distinguished professor of meteorology and an authority on our Eastern campus environment. The Commission will be charged with working with various units to assess Eastern's sustainability efforts and make recommendations on how to become more sustainable."

Sustainability promotes and maintains the responsible use of natural resources by current generations to ensure the availability and well-being of those resources for our future generations. The mission of the commission is to adopt the Sustainability Tracking, Assessment, and Rating System (STARS) as the framework for fostering sustainability at the university and measure, document, and publicly communicate the university's progress toward achieving each of the framework's criteria. The commission will develop a sustainability plan guided by this framework to strategically plan and implement measures through policy recommendations to the president for continuous improvement of our campus sustainability and to our STARS rating.

The commission will be composed of 18 faculty, administrators, staff, and students meeting each semester. For more information go to the website <https://www.emich.edu/sustainability> or on Facebook (@EMUSustainability).

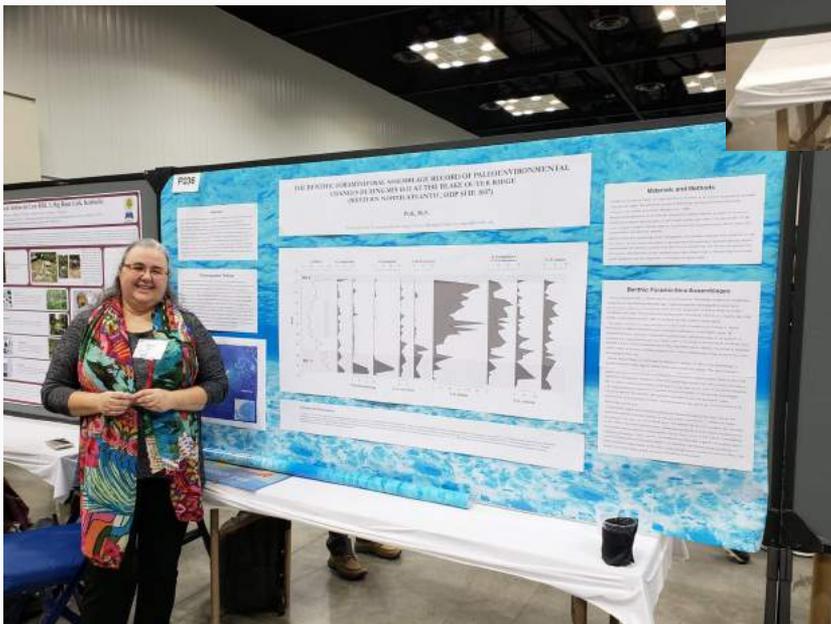
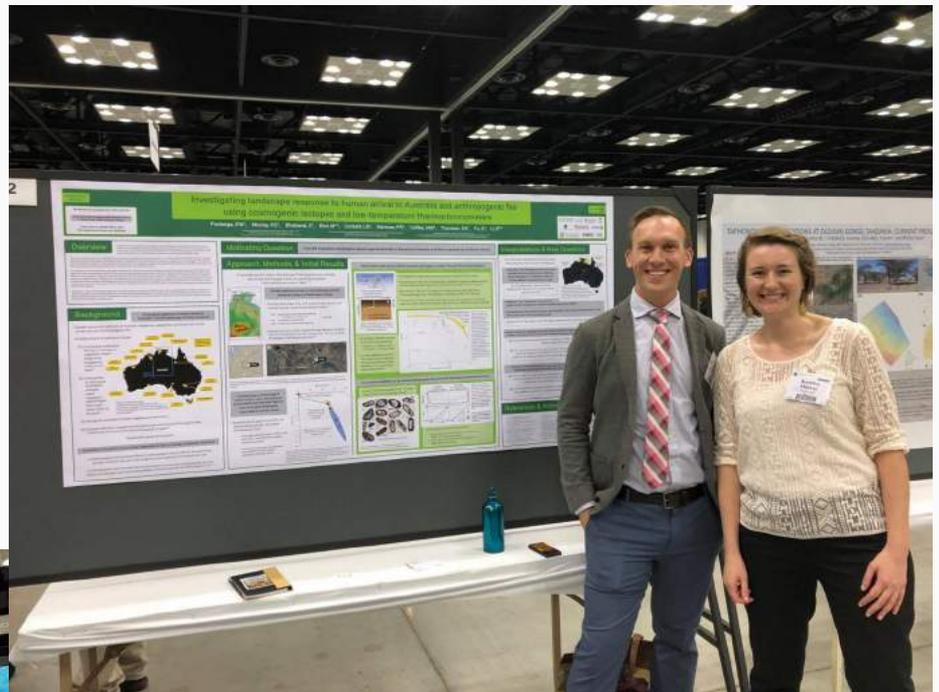


G&G at the Geological Society of American Meeting in Indianapolis



Top: Student Emily Nowacki's poster with Dr. Christine Clark and Dr. Katherine Ryker

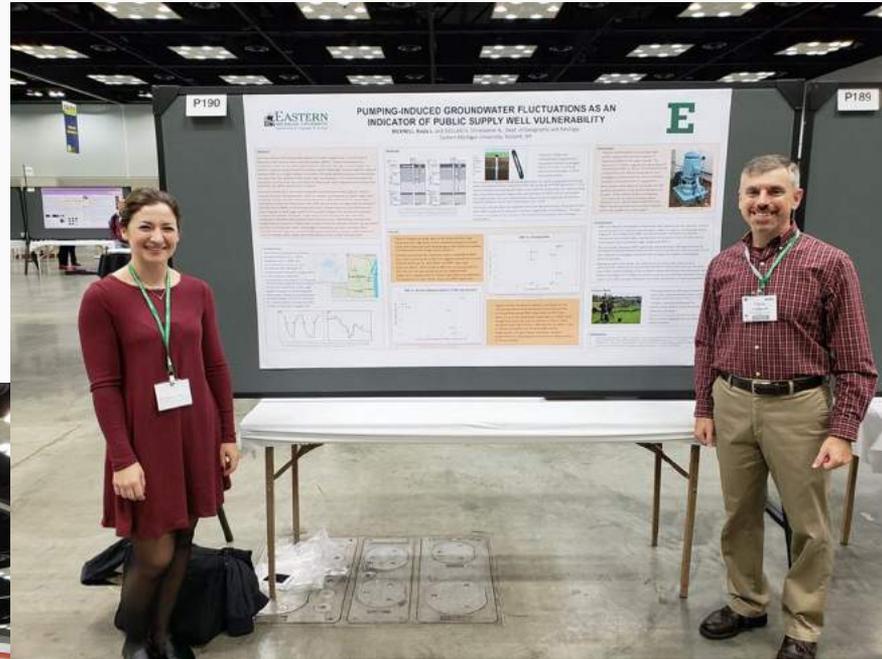
Right: Dr. Eric Portenga is standing with is Kendra Murray - now at Idaho State University



Left: Dr. Serena Poli standing next to her poster.

G&G at the Geological Society of American Meeting in Indianapolis

Right: Kayla Bicknell with Dr. Chris Gellasch



Left: EMU faculty alum, Dr. Katherine Ryker and her poster



The EMU faculty, students, and alumni at the alumni reception.

Letters to the Department

Hello Dr. LoDuca,

Last time we spoke, I thought my life would be taking a different path. I did not end up joining the army despite receiving a more than generous offer. As of two weeks ago, I accepted an offer from NTH Consulting and Engineering in Northville for what is quickly looking like my dream job. I will be joining their geotechnical team and my first project will be direct involvement in the construction of the Gordie Howe International Bridge. I wanted to say thank you for the motivation and fostering an environment in which my interest in geology could grow and prosper. I know the geology program at Eastern was not the largest or most funded, but your enthusiasm and passion for teaching more than made up for anything I would have missed. I want to say thank you again for everything, I am proud to have graduated from Eastern, and especially proud to represent our little geology program in the professional world.

I hope you have the most joyous of holidays,

Donovan Verge



Donovan is a graduate of the Department of Geography and Geology. His current projects include: Gordie Howe International Bridge (GHIB) – Working/worked on geotechnical explorations and foundation design for multiple building, ramp, and bridge elements. Once completed, GHIB will have the longest main span of any cable-stayed bridge in North America.

I-75 Modernization Phase III – Geotechnical explorations and preliminary geotechnical design for the planned 14 ft relief sewer.

Ongoing Multiple Projects - Preventing future sinkholes through sewer inspection and MASW (Multichannel Analysis of Surface Waves) Methods to seal and grout leaks.