

December 17, 2014

Dear GIST Students and Alumni:

As we wrap up a very exciting year in the USC Spatial Sciences Institute, I'm pleased to share with you some summer and fall semester highlights from the GIST Graduate Programs.

We have many reasons to be proud of GIST student accomplishments:

- Trang M. VoPham's thesis investigating pesticide exposure at different scales, combining traditional spatial units such as ZIP codes and census tracts with remotely sensed data, was recognized by an Award of Excellence from UNIGIS International Association, the world-wide consortium of online GIS academic programs. Trang also presented her thesis work in a poster at the Association of American Geographers Conference in Tampa, Florida. In addition to her M.S. in GIST degree, Trang holds a Master of Public Health in Epidemiology and has just completed a Ph.D. in Epidemiology at the University of Pittsburgh. Her work at USC is emblematic of the research opportunities found in a close integration between spatial analysis and public health.
- Brian P. McDonald, Ricardo Montijo, Trevor Pickering, Yonatan Rosen, Jamen Underwood, and Adrianna Valenti from Dr. Kirk Oda's SSCI 589: "Cartography and Visualization" course were selected in a competition to present their maps at the 2014 Esri International User Conference Map Gallery in San Diego. Their maps represented a range of approaches and analyses to data across the hemisphere, ranging from flood boundaries in Colorado to invasive species mapping in Los Angeles to murder rates in Honduras. GIST students Tierney O'Dea Booker, William Ferguson, Jared Hyneman, Michael Wahl, and Luke Wenschhof also presented papers in 2014 Esri International User Conference sessions.
- Spiridon Katehis and Brian P. McDonald presented papers with Dr. Jordan T. Hastings at the Annual 2014 HAZUS Conference in Indianapolis, Indiana. Professor Hastings also presented with Ryan Reeves at the 2014 Digital Mapping Techniques Workshop, University of Delaware, in Newark, Delaware, and with Megan Oyarzun at the Nevada Anthropological Conference, in Minden, Nevada.

We are on pace to graduate more than 50 students from the M.S. in GIST Program in 2014. As our GIST students graduate, they are assuming more responsibilities in their current positions, as well as stepping into exciting new jobs. By way of example, Christopher Beattie recently started as Senior Imagery Technician at Skybox Imaging + Google, and Emily Frazier became a Geographic Analyst I with Nokia Corporation's HERE Maps.

Our faculty are similarly bringing world-wide recognition to the Spatial Sciences Institute:

- Hearty congratulations go to Dr. Karen Kemp, who was named a Fellow in the National Center for Supercomputing Applications. Among her many conference presentations internationally this year was her talk at the 9<sup>th</sup> European GIS Education Symposium in Cork, Ireland.

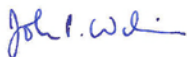


- Kudos also go to Research Professor and Institute faculty affiliate Craig Knoblock, who received the 2014 Robert S. Engelmere Memorial Lecture Award from the Association for the Advancement of Artificial Intelligence, an award in honor of an artificial intelligence research pioneer.
- Working closely with Dr. Knoblock, Dr. Yao-Yi Chiang presented posters at the 8th International Conference on Geographic Information Science in Vienna, Austria. He and Dr. Knoblock lead a team developing applications for digital map processing and geospatial data extraction and integration.
- Along with Dr. Chiang, Drs. Jennifer Swift, Daniel Warshawsky, and Kirk Oda presented papers at the 2014 Esri International Education and User Conferences, contributing to the development of online GIS pedagogy. Dr. Su-Jin Lee presented a paper at the annual Cartography and Geographic Information Science conference in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.
- In addition to his contributions in the GIST Graduate Programs, Dr. Darren Ruddell leads our undergraduate programs in GeoDesign and Spatial Studies. This summer Dr. Ruddell led a group of talented undergraduates on a highly successful research field course in Amsterdam, the Netherlands. With Dr. Thomas Garrison, a faculty affiliate from the USC's Archaeology program, Dr. Ruddell led our on-campus celebration of GIS Day with students demonstrating spatial data acquisition techniques as if they were on a dig in Central America for ancient Maya artifacts. He was featured in *Time* magazine for his views on how urban centers need to anticipate environmental disasters with "Chief Resilience Officers." Dr. Ruddell joined me in Zagreb, Croatia, as we represented the Institute at the 2014 annual UNIGIS business meeting.
- Dr. Travis Longcore is conducting a state-of-the-art environmental assessment of Baldwin Hills, an area of Los Angeles with parks and open spaces surrounded by homes, a cemetery, and one of the most active petroleum fields in L.A. County. His research is funded by the Baldwin Hills Conservancy and the Baldwin Hills Regional Conservation Authority, with technical support from the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles.
- At the 9th International Workshop of Geographical Information Science presented by the Chinese Academy of Sciences in Beijing, China, I delivered the keynote address "Building a Vibrant and Enduring Spatial Science." I am spending more time in China as a Visiting Senior Professor with the Chinese Academy of Sciences Institute of Geographical Sciences and Natural Resources Research.

Please take advantage of Institute travel support to attend our annual Geospatial Summit on Friday, February 27, 2015, our annual one-day conference providing professional development and networking opportunities around emerging GIS trends. Registration and program information is available on the SSI website.

On behalf of the Spatial Sciences Institute faculty and staff, we enclose a small token of appreciation for your work with us and send best wishes for happy holidays and a healthy and prosperous new year.

With kind regards,



John P. Wilson  
Director and Professor