

7 December 2015

Dear GIST Students and Alumni:

As we wrap up an action-packed fall semester, I wanted to take this opportunity to share with you many exciting updates from the Spatial Sciences Institute.

Congratulations are in order to:

- ~ Our **Summer 2015 and Fall 2015 graduates** from the GIST Graduate Programs upon their successful completion of their theses and degrees, and upon receiving job offers from across industry sectors;
- ~ **Adrianna Valenti** (M.S. GIST '15), for receiving the 2015 UNIGIS International Association Academic Excellence Prize third place award for her thesis "Estimating populations at risk in data-poor environments: a geographically disaggregated analysis of Boko Haram terrorism";
- ~ M.S. GIST students **Cora H. Chong, Julia L. Goldsworth, Robert L. Grotefend, Kevin W. Klemens, Jason I. Martin, and Dustin L. Sunderman** for their poster presentation "Dredging the Detroit River: A Geodatabase Prototype for Past, Present, and Future Information Regarding Dredging in the Great Lakes" at the Annual Meeting of the Association of Pacific Coast Geographers in Palm Springs, California;
- ~ **Anthony Leimeister** (Graduate Certificate in GIST '14) for his presentations "Applying GIS Database Design and Management for Survey Control Monuments, Preserving Historic Values Spanning Multiple Spatial Reference Systems for Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority, United States National Capital Region" and "Applying GIS to Survey Monument Management" at URISA's GIS-Pro & NWGIS 2015 Conferences in Spokane, Washington;
- ~ **Luke Wenschhof** (M.S. GIST '14) for his presentation "Getting a Handle on Underground Injections with ArcGIS" at the Esri Electric & Gas GIS Conference in Providence, Rhode Island;
- ~ **Yao-Yi Chiang**, assistant professor (research) of spatial sciences, for winning the first place best visionary award for his presentation "Querying Historical Maps as a Unified, Structured, and Linked Spatiotemporal Source" at the 2015 ACM SIGSPATIAL International Conference on Advances in GIS" in Seattle, Washington, and for his contribution to the article "Rethinking Anti-Immigrant Racism: Lessons from the Los Angeles Vote on the 1920 Alien Land Law" by Dr. Lon Kurashige, USC associate professor of history, published in the *Southern California Quarterly*, which won the 2015 Carl I. Wheat Award for the best demonstration of scholarship in that journal from 2012-2014 by a senior historian;



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- ~ **Wei Yang**, lecturer of spatial sciences, for her presentation “Effect of Climate and Seasonality on Depressed Mood Among Twitter Users” at the Annual Meeting of the Association of Pacific Coast Geographers in Palm Springs, California;
- ~ **Su Jin Lee, Travis Longcore, Katsuhiko (“Kirk”) Oda, Jennifer Swift, and Robert Vos** who join **Karen Kemp** as SSI faculty who have received their certifications by the GIS Certification Institute (GISCI) as Certified GIS Professionals (GISP®); and
- ~ **Melissa Salido**, Institute Events and Office Manager, for receiving one of the four Dornsife Dean’s Awards for Outstanding Staff Achievement.

Within the GIST Graduate Programs, we are working closely with our colleagues at the **U.S. Geospatial Intelligence Foundation (USGIF)** and the **National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency (NGA)** as a designated Center for Academic Excellence in Geospatial Sciences to develop a pipeline for the professional GEOINT workforce. Stay tuned for upcoming SSI podcasts and webinars with **COL [R] Steven Fleming**, professor of the practice of spatial sciences, on the power of GEOINT to address issues of human security which concern all of us today.

The Spatial Sciences Institute also has become the first educational institution member of **URISA** (Urban and Regional Information Systems Association), the primary professional development organization for GIS professionals and IT professionals who need to support GIS within their agencies and businesses. SSI Associate Director **Susan Kamei** is leading our work with URISA leadership to develop synergies between URISA’s GIS Management Institute and its Leadership Academy with our Graduate Certificate in Geospatial Leadership.

As for news from our other academic programs, this fall we welcomed our first **M.S. in Spatial Informatics** students, who are preparing to be data scientists as they study and work with faculty from both SSI and the USC Viterbi School of Engineering’s Department of Computer Science. We now are considering the applications for the first cohort of students in our new **Ph.D. in Population, Health and Place** who will join us in August 2016.

Our undergraduate program now has almost 50 **GeoDesign majors** and **Spatial Studies minors**, continuing an exciting trajectory which speaks to the resonance which our pre-professional scholars and researchers have with spatial sciences. These undergraduates, which include a high percentage of merit scholarship awardees and Dean’s list honors students, are combining spatial sciences with disciplines such as urban planning, landscape architecture, environmental studies, public health, and earth sciences to tackle issues of environmental sustainability and human well-being.

In many ways, the Spatial Sciences Institute is transforming the University of Southern California into a spatial university. We are fostering a spatially-enabled campus through our large-scale spatially-inspired General Education courses and academic programs at every higher educational level, our development of a geospatial workforce, our incubation and conduct of geo-enabled

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research, and GIS support for our campus administration.

As we undertake this transformation within the university, we concurrently are building upon and expanding our worldwide footprint. **Darren Ruddell** and I continue to work with our colleagues in the [UNIGIS International Association](#), a global network of higher education institutions dedicated to recognizing international standards in the design, development, and delivery of distance learning GIS programs. I recently represented the Institute and Dornsife College at the [2015 USC Global Conference in Shanghai](#), and we recently hosted **Dr. Kongjian Yu**, FASLA, dean of architecture and landscape and professor at Peking University and president and principal designer of [Turenscape](#), as the SSI Fall Colloquium speaker. Watch his colloquium address [here](#).

In recognition of the increasing impact of the Spatial Sciences Institute, Dornsife College has identified the Institute as one of its flagship units. You can read more about our initiatives and accomplishments in our new [brochure](#).

As eventful as our 2015 has been, we are looking forward to an even more ambitious 2016. I hope to see you at our annual **Geospatial Summit** on Wednesday, February 24, 2016. In addition to student “lightening talks,” this year’s program will feature case studies the use of GIS in business analytics and the energy, utilities, and water industries, and a panel on building a geospatial career. Look for program updates by SSI social media, and on the [SSI website](#).

I close by giving you my thanks for the countless ways in which SSI students, alumni, faculty, and staff give me reason to be proud, and by wishing you very happy holidays and all the best in the new year.

With kind regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "John P. Wilson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

John P. Wilson
Professor and Founding Director
Spatial Sciences Institute