

10 May 2016

Dear GIST Students and Alumni:

As we prepare for this week's Commencement ceremonies, I wanted to take this moment to share with you the many recent accomplishments of our Spatial Sciences Institute faculty, students, staff, and alumni which give us cause to celebrate.

Congratulations are in order to:

~ the 60 students who have earned their M.S. in GIST, the 31 students who earned their Graduate Certificate in GIST, and our first student who earned the Graduate Certificate in Geospatial Intelligence this academic year.

~ this year's thesis prize winners, their faculty chairs, and faculty committee members:

1<sup>st</sup> Prize: **Nathan Novak** (\$1,500)

*Predictive Habitat Distribution Modeling of Sperm Whale (*Physeter macrocephalus*) Within the Central Gulf of Alaska Utilizing Passive Acoustic Monitoring*

Committee Chair: John Wilson | Committee Members: Jennifer Swift, Daniel Warshawsky

2<sup>nd</sup> Prize: **Mallory Graves** (\$1,000)

*Spatial Narratives of Struggle and Activism in the Del Amo and Montrose Superfund Cleanups: A Community-Engaged Web GIS Story Map*

Committee Chair: Robert Vos | Committee Members: Jennifer Swift, Daniel Warshawsky

3<sup>rd</sup> Prize: **Valerie Anderson** (\$500)

*Historical Ecology of the Split Oak Forest East Central Florida*

Committee Chair: John Wilson | Committee Members: Travis Longcore, Darren Ruddell

~ M.S. in GIST student **Benjamin Brock** for his third place award for his paper "Geospatial Data Enrichment Using IBM's Watson Natural Language Processing Application Programming Interface (API)" in the Robert Raskin 2016 Student Competition, sponsored by the AAG Cyberinfrastructure Specialty Group. Fellow M.S. in GIST student **Krista Marie McPherson** was a competition finalist for her paper "USC Emergency: Utilizing GIS for Disaster Response," as was **Katherine A. Wright** for her paper "Modeling GIS as a Disease Management and Eradication Strategy: The Chigoe Flea Eradication Project."

~ the 19 Spatial Sciences Institute faculty, students, post-doctoral research associates, visiting scholar, and alumni who participated in 26 sessions at the **2016 American Association of Geographers Annual Meeting** in San Francisco.



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~ **Dr. Jennifer Swift**, Associate Professor (Teaching) of Spatial Sciences, for being honored by the National Association of Professional Women (NAPW) as a 2015-2016 inductee into its VIP Woman of the Year Circle.

~ **Ken Watson** of our Institute team upon his promotion to Academic Programs Director.

As part of our designation as a **Center for Academic Excellence in Geospatial Sciences** by the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency (NGA) and the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), we hosted a delegation of leaders from the NGA, USGS, and the U.S. Geospatial Intelligence Foundation (USGIF) to discuss collaborative initiatives. We anticipate increased access to subject matter expertise, data, and other resources which will enrich our curriculum, expand our capacity for research and scholarly work, including in master's theses, and promote job placement for our graduates.

We have launched a podcast series "USC GIST Presents" which will feature commentary from our SSI faculty, staff, and affiliates. You can [watch a podcast](#) of **COL [R] Steven Fleming, Ph.D.**, professor of the practice of spatial sciences, with his preview of the upcoming GEOINT Symposium presented by the USGIF. Look for **COL Fleming** and SSI Associate Director **Susan Kamei** on the GEOINT Symposium program, and **Ken Watson** staffing the SSI booth in the exhibit hall. The Spatial Sciences Institute is a sustaining partner of the USGIF, which also has accredited our Graduate Certificate in Geospatial Intelligence. We thank **COL Fleming** and **Dr. Karen Kemp**, professor of the practice of spatial sciences, for their continuing service on the USGIF Academic Advisory Board.

To share with you other Institute news, our 2016 Geospatial Summit was another successful occasion for GIST alumni and students to learn from and network with industry professionals and representatives from other organizations and academic programs. Please calendar **Friday, January 24, 2017** for next year's Geospatial Summit.

This August we will be welcoming our first three doctoral students in our new **Ph.D. in Population, Health and Place**. They bring interdisciplinary strengths in health promotion and health policy, sociology, spatial analysis, environmental science, urban planning, and geography.

Our **M.S. in Spatial Informatics** program jointly offered with the USC Viterbi School of Engineering Department of Computer Science had a solid first year, and we see growing validation for the relevance of preparing data scientists with spatial computing and analytical capabilities in today's workplace.

Our undergraduate program continues its growth trajectory, with 60 **GeoDesign majors** and **Spatial Studies minors**. These talented and engaged students are winning research and other academic awards and are interning at institutions which range from The Huntington Library, Art Collection, and Botanical Gardens to Metro. This fall we are launching a new **minor in Human Security and Geospatial Intelligence**, which will provide new opportunities to intersect with faculty and students engaged in international relations, political science, and military sciences.

Our summer promises to be as busy as ever, with many of our faculty, students, and staff representing the Institute at conferences around the world. I will be giving a keynote address at the **Community Health Mapping Conference** hosted by the National Library of Medicine in Washington, DC, and Dr. Kemp and I will be participating in the **University Consortium for Geographic Information Science (UCGIS)**

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**Symposium** in Phoenix, Arizona.

For those of you who will be attending the **Esri User Conference** in San Diego, please come by our booth in the Exhibit Hall and please join us and RSVP to [Melissa Salido](#) for our **annual reception at Roy's** on Tuesday, June 28<sup>th</sup>, starting at 6:30 pm.

In closing, I am proud to announce that **Dr. Daniel Warshawsky** has accepted the position of Assistant Professor in the Department of Urban Affairs and Geography at Wright State University in Dayton, Ohio. On behalf of all of us with the Spatial Sciences Institute, we thank Dr. Warshawsky for the tremendous contributions he has made here, especially in his role as Director of Graduate Studies, and wish him well in his tenure-track position, which he will begin in the fall. We also thank **Dr. Robert Vos**, Assistant Professor (Teaching) of Spatial Sciences, for assuming the role of Director of Graduate Studies later this summer.

With kind regards,



John P. Wilson  
Professor and Founding Director  
Spatial Sciences Institute