



**KENNESAW STATE  
UNIVERSITY**

# Department of Geography and Anthropology

2024-2025 Year-in-Review Newsletter

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## Table of Contents

<a href="#"><u>Department reaches new heights...</u></a>	2
<a href="#"><u>You will be missed...</u></a>	3
<a href="#"><u>Awards</u></a>	4
<a href="#"><u>Promotions</u></a>	8
<a href="#"><u>New Faculty and Staff</u></a>	9
<a href="#"><u>New Student Scholarship</u></a>	10
<a href="#"><u>Research</u></a>	11
<a href="#"><u>High Impact Practices</u></a>	14
<a href="#"><u>New Department Infrastructure</u></a>	16
<a href="#"><u>Innovative Teaching</u></a>	17
<a href="#"><u>Community Engagement</u></a>	18
<a href="#"><u>Events</u></a>	20
<a href="#"><u>Looking forward...</u></a>	23

## Department reaches new heights...



Last year, the Department of Geography and Anthropology reached new heights! As you may have heard, our Geography and Geospatial Sciences programs won the most prestigious USG award, the **Regents' Teaching Excellence Award for Department or Program**. A big shout out to Drs. Paul McDaniel and Vanessa Slinger-Friedman for pulling together the stellar award application. Additionally, *Forbes* magazine named GSS the second-best Online GIS Degree Program in the country. Our very own Christine Jacobs won the Radow College Outstanding Advisor Award. Dr. Mark Patterson was awarded Tenured Faculty Enhancement Leave for the upcoming fall. Dr. Vanessa Slinger-Friedman will become a CETL Faculty Fellow for Teaching Excellence in Sustainable Communities and Dr. Susan Kirkpatrick Smith will be an Honors Faculty Fellow. You may have seen our alumnus Raymond Goslow successfully compete again this year on Jeopardy's Invitational Tournament. Thanks to the hard work and fundraising efforts of Dr. Terry Powis, we added a sixth student scholarship to the department this past year. Hannah Wallace was the inaugural recipient of the **William W. Davidson International Archaeology Scholarship**. She used the funds to participate in the Sanisera Archaeology Institute field school, studying the Funerary Crypt of San Miguel Church in Spain. Congratulations to Paul McDaniel and Ken Williamson, who were promoted to full professors while Uli Ingram was promoted to Principal Lecturer and Nick Ellwanger became the department's newest Senior Lecturer. Darrell Montgomery, who received his degree in anthropology, is returning to the department to serve as our new Office Manager. We also hired a new faculty member, Dr. Kyusik Kim, who is starting as a new assistant professor of GIS. Coming to us from a postdoc at Florida State University where he received his PhD, Dr. Kim's work focuses on geographic bias in spatial access to healthcare and human reactions to natural hazards using human mobility data. The department faculty published nine journal articles this past year and were awarded almost \$250,000 in external grants and contracts from NSF, USDA, Alphawood Foundation, and Affordable Learning Georgia. As a department, we taught more than 10,000 students in 2024-25 and provided high impact experiential learning opportunities to hundreds through internships, directed applied research, practicums, assistantships, and much more. With a focus on student success, our graduates find fulfilling employment, go on to graduate school, win awards, and have a meaningful impact on the world. We are proud of all our graduates and wish them tremendous success once they leave the nest!

-Brandon D. Lundy, Chair

# You will be missed...

## Retirement

### **Dan Branham**



Congratulations to Dan Branham on his well-deserved retirement! As a lecturer in land surveying with a master's degree in construction management and certification as a Georgia Professional Land Surveyor, Dan taught Surveying I, Surveying I Lab, Surveying II, Land Development Design, Project Cost analysis, Geographical Info Sys Practice, Ethics of Engineering, Introduction to Mapping, and

Construction Measurements to more than 3,000 undergraduate students since he started teaching in 2006. I wish to thank Dan for his 19 years of service first at Southern Polytechnic State University and then at Kennesaw State University. As a senior member of the surveying faculty, Dan helped with the transition of the degree program and helped establish five surveying and mapping student scholarships with industry partners. Dan has mentored many students and junior faculty throughout his career with professionalism, encouragement, and grace. Dan leaves behind a tremendous legacy of teaching and supervisory excellence that will not be forgotten.

To see some of Dan's most recent accomplishments, please check out:

[Daniel Branham Has Been Elected to Serve as a Director of the Surveying and Mapping Society of Georgia](#)

[Georgia's 200-year-old border blunder resurfaces during droughts](#)

## Moving on

### **Erinn Bariteau**

It is bittersweet to announce that Erinn Bariteau is moving on to her next big adventure and will not be joining us next year. We wish to thank Erinn for her tremendous professional service and exceptional teaching! Erinn began teaching as a part-time instructor for the department in 2015 and became a fulltime lecturer in 2017. She was later promoted to senior lecturer in 2025. In those 11 years, she taught more than 2,500 students!



Erinn contributed to the core of the university's liberal arts mission, providing both geography and non-geography majors the opportunity to engage with a geographic perspective. She has been recognized by RCHSS and CETL for her Innovative Pedagogy. In the department, Erinn was the founder and leader of the GeoAnth Teaching Circle providing resources to teaching faculty and serving as a safe space to discuss pedagogical issues. Over the last year, she expanded the scope of this important initiative. Erinn has also served as a judge for the K-12 ESRI StoryMap competition.

Erinn taught physical geography and GIS content with a focus on natural hazards and disasters and applied meteorology. Her education includes a B.S. in Geology from the University of Albany, New York, M.S. in Secondary Education from Lemoyne College, New York, and M.S. in Geoscience & Geospatial Certificate from Mississippi State University, Mississippi. She has experience chasing severe storms on the Plains and is the local manager for Weather Challenge, KSU's weather forecasting group. She further coordinated oversight of the KSU on-campus weather station with UGA Automated Environmental Monitoring Network.

We will miss her and wish her all the best in whatever comes next!

## Awards

### Regents' Teaching Excellence Award for Department or Program

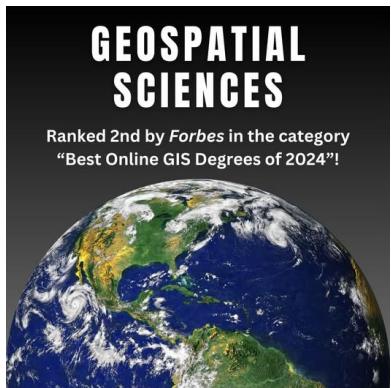


When the Board of Regents met in Atlanta on May 15, 2025 at their regularly scheduled meeting, they recognized the Geography and Geospatial Sciences programs as the winners of the [Regents' Teaching Excellence Award for Department or Program](#).

The programs were praised for their interdisciplinary approaches to learning by integrating research, technology, and hands-on experiences to prepare students for emerging challenges in their fields. This award adds to the programs' honors, which include the 2021 American Association of Geographers' Award for Bachelor Program Excellence. The Board of Regents award is designed to

showcase an outstanding department or program that promotes, supports, and recognizes excellence in teaching and innovative approaches to serving students. The following was shared by the Boards Award Committee:

*“Kennesaw State University’s Geography and Geospatial Sciences (GSS) programs excel in the use of experiential learning, collaborative research, field studies, and internships to prepare students for real-world challenges. Student learning is assessed through updated outcomes, digital portfolios, and rigorous program reviews that enhance student readiness and achievement. Faculty collaborate on interdisciplinary initiatives, and affordable learning resources to create a supportive academic environment. The program’s success is evident in students’ internships at NASA and the CDC, national scholarships, and placements in top graduate programs. Nationally recognized, the program received the American Association of Geographers’ Award for Bachelor Program Excellence, showcasing its commitment to innovation and student success.”*



*Forbes* ranked our BS in Geospatial Sciences degree program 2nd in the category "[Best Online GIS Degrees of 2024](#)"! Geospatial Science and Geographic Information Science (GIS) professionals help build sustainable communities, track the spread of infectious diseases and leverage geospatial data to address diverse problems. Many industries rely on professionals who know how to collect, analyze and display geographical information. Our Bachelor of Science degree program in Geospatial Sciences (GSS)

aims at producing high caliber graduates who are well trained in the theory and application of geospatial technologies, including GIS, remote sensing, and land surveying. Students receive fundamental knowledge of geospatial skills, along with specific content in one of three concentrations: human-environment systems, information systems, or land surveying. Geospatial Sciences provide students with a set of skills to manipulate, analyze, assess, and visualize data by way of digital maps and/or map imagery to solve problems. Graduates of the major have obtained geospatial jobs related to crime analysis, emergency services, engineering, epidemiology, environmental management, forestry, housing, marketing, military sciences, sustainability, land surveying, transportation, urban planning, and utilities, among others.

## Radow College Outstanding Advisor Award



Our very own Christine Jacobs is the first recipient of the Radow College Outstanding Advisor Award. Christine is a favorite among our GSS, Geography, and Anthropology students. The Selection Committee chose Christine for her mentoring, advocacy, and outstanding service to advisees, faculty, and staff. She has a mastery of regulations, policies, and procedures. She is an encourager to our students to pursue scholarships and fellowships while helping them integrate their undergraduate/graduate education, curriculum, and experiences into their overall personal and professional journey. Christine continues to be an indispensable team member in the Department of Geography and Anthropology.

## Students



Congratulations to our student award winners at the RCHSS Awards Ceremony!

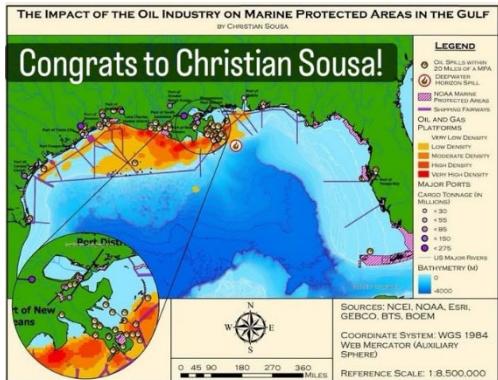
Lyric Mikenzie Rosser, Outstanding Senior in Anthropology.

Jessica Owens, Outstanding Senior in Geography.

Tristan Bollenbaugh, Outstanding Senior in Geospatial Science.



Huge congratulations to Nguyet Le! As the 2nd place winner in the GGA (Georgia Geospatial Association) **2024 Virtual Map Competition**, Nguyet Le presented her research on "Spatial Associations of Lung Cancer Rates with Health, Socioeconomic, Environmental Factors in Georgia" in GGA September Lunch & Learn Webinar on September 10, 2025. This research was part of her DAR (Directed Applied Research) project supervised by Dr. Jun Tu in spring 2024. Well done!



Congratulations to Christain Sousa, a GSS major who won 3rd place in the annual GGA Virtual Map Competition. His project focused on the environmental vulnerability of Marine Protected Areas in the Gulf of Mexico, using spatial analysis of bathymetry, oil infrastructure, spill data, and protected zones.

Chanice Brown was the 2024 recipient of the **Gamma Theta Upsilon (GTU) Buzzard**

**Undergraduate Scholarship!** This scholarship is awarded to a college senior to be used toward graduate school expenses. All applicants were reviewed based on the following criteria: cumulative GPA, geography GPA, letters of recommendation, applicant's contribution to local GTU chapter and the department, as well as the applicant's own appraisal of how the scholarship will help them personally and professionally. Chanice graduated from KSU in Spring 2024 with a Bachelor of Arts in Geography and a Certificate in Geographic Information Sciences. She was a student assistant for the Department of Geography and Anthropology, awarded the Outstanding Student in Geography in 2024, and is a member of KSU's Mu Upsilon chapter of GTU. Chanice is currently pursuing a Master's in GIScience at Florida State University.



Congratulations to former anthropology student, Meya Hemphill-Hodges who successfully defended her dissertation on October 24, 2024, at the University of South Florida. Her dissertation is titled "Beyond the Mask: Challenging the Strong Black Woman Trope in Their Journey to Heal in the South." This dissertation explores Black women veterans and their connections between place and identity. The purpose of this dissertation is to emphasize and highlight notions of citizenship and accessibility as experienced by

Black women Veterans.

## Promotions

### Dr. Paul N. McDaniel



Dr. Paul N. McDaniel, who joined the department in 2015, was recently promoted to Professor of Geography. His research explores immigration to urban regions, with emphasis on the southeastern United States, and scholarship of teaching and learning in geography education. He is the lead editor of *Integration and Receptivity in Immigrant Gateway Metro Regions in the United States* and has published in many peer-reviewed journals, including *Professional Geographer*, *Journal of Geography*, *Geographical Review*, *Southeastern Geographer*, and *Journal of Urban Affairs*. As a broadly trained geographer, he enjoys teaching many regional and human geography courses, informed by his extensive travels, in diverse formats, including face-to-face courses, fully online, and in study abroad programs, such as in France, Italy, and Spain. He is the recipient of the 2024 RCHSS Outstanding Online Teaching Award and the 2020 Early Career Award for Scholarship, Teaching, and Service from the Ethnic Geography Specialty Group of the American Association of Geographers. He currently serves as Vice President of the Southeastern Division of the Association of American Geographers (SEDAAG). He holds degrees in geography from Samford University, the University of Tennessee, and the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, and in higher education leadership from the University of Alabama at Birmingham.

### Dr. Kenneth Williamson



Dr. Kenneth Williamson was recently promoted to Professor of Anthropology—jointly appointed in the Departments of Interdisciplinary Studies and Geography and Anthropology—and is the Black Studies Program Coordinator. He earned his PhD from UNC-Chapel Hill. As a Black Feminist scholar, Dr. Williamson teaches courses that intersect Black Studies, Anthropology, and Gender Studies.

## **Uli Ingram**



Congratulations to Uli Ingram on her promotion to Principal Lecturer, effective Fall 2025! Uli began teaching at Kennesaw State University in 2006, joined the faculty full-time as a Lecturer in 2012, and was promoted to Senior Lecturer in 2019. Her continued dedication to teaching, service, and student success has made a lasting impact on the Department of Geography and Anthropology and the GSS program.

Uli also takes over as the GSS Program Coordinator in Fall 2025.

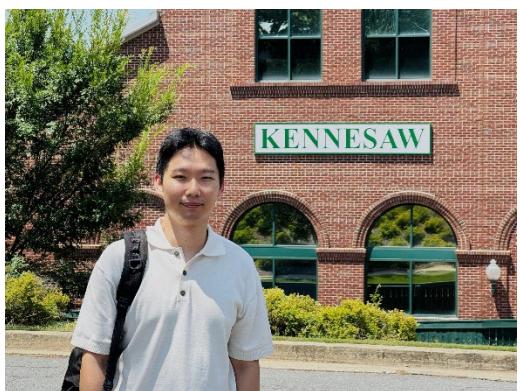
## **Dr. Nicholas Ellwanger**



Congratulations to Dr. Nicholas Ellwanger on his promotion to Senior Lecturer. Dr. Ellwanger is a Biological Anthropologist whose work focuses on primate behavioral ecology and human evolution. He teaches general education upper division courses focused on Biological Anthropology. Additionally, Dr. Ellwanger is a faculty member in the KSU Journey Honors College, where he leads the President's Emerging Global Scholars Cohort.

## **New Faculty and Staff**

### **Dr. Kyusik Kim**



Dr. Kyusik Kim is our new Assistant Professor of Geographic Information Science. He is a GIScientist focusing on transportation and health issues. Dr. Kim received his Ph.D. from Florida State University. His research projects focus on geographic bias in spatial access to healthcare and human reactions to natural hazards using human mobility data. At our department, Dr. Kim will teach GIS-related courses, including Introduction to Cartographic

Processes, Programming GIS, and others.

## Darrell Montgomery



Darrell Montgomery is our new Office Manager. He is a recent graduate of the anthropology program here at Kennesaw State University. He has been married for 13 years and has three amazing kids, two daughters and a son, ages 10, 8, and 2. Darrell loves hiking, backpacking, and camping with his family. He is passionate about all kinds of music and concerts, especially heavy metal, and he is a huge Star Wars fan.

## New Student Scholarship

### William W. Davidson International Archaeology Scholarship



Congratulations to Hannah Wallace on her selection as the inaugural recipient of the William W. Davidson International Archaeology Scholarship. This scholarship funded her participation in the summer Sanisera Archaeology Institute for International Field Schools'

bioarchaeological site. Hannah helped excavate an underground funerary crypt of San Miguel Church, Jerez De La Frontera, Spain. The work was a mixture of bioarchaeology and funerary archaeology, and the beginnings of the first investigation ever done by archaeologists in the principal crypt that was in use during the 17th-18th centuries. We know this opportunity will have a tremendous impact on her future success. According to Hannah, "Overall, my experience at this field school was life changing. I went into it completely unaware of how much it would make me realize that I have found my true passion in life. I have emerged from this experience with an incredible amount of knowledge and with confidence that I have what it takes to be successful on future projects."

# Research

## USDA Grant

Drs. Slinger-Friedman (Geography), Rhodes (Geography), and Gruss (Environmental Engineering) were awarded a two-year, \$50,000 USDA SARE (Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education) grant. The grant activity includes the development of online modules, workshops, and field trips for Sustainable Agriculture for Food, the Environment, and Economic (SAFE) opportunities. In Spring 2025, under the support of this USDA SARE grant, the SAFE project propagated fig, mulberry, grapes, currents, mullen, strawberry, and current plants from existing plants on the KSU Food Forest for use in the workshops and the building of food forests over the period of the grant. These new food forests will provide fresh and nutritious food to local communities who are food insecure. In 2025, this project led to a collaborative effort between My Green Earth, Habitat for Humanity, and Kennesaw State University's KSU Food Forest to transform an undeveloped Habitat for Humanity home site in Cobb County into a sustainable, community-centered food forest. Originally deemed unsuitable for residential construction, this site is now being repurposed into a productive, ecologically beneficial landscape that will provide fresh food access and environmental education opportunities for an underserved community. Through the USDA grant, the KSU Food Forest Team supported the initiative by purchasing additional plant materials needed to complete the food forest. Additionally, KSU hosted and co-led over 25 participants in a food forest workshop in partnership with Good Food Green Cities (GFGC), to provide:

- Hands-on education for community members and local educators.
- Service-learning opportunities for KSU students and volunteers.
- Practical training in urban agroforestry and sustainable land management.

The work of this grant will continue into its second year in 2025-26.



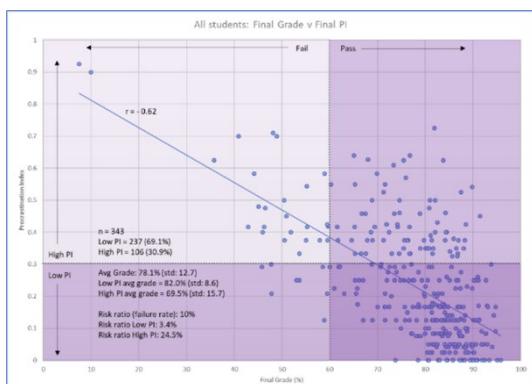
Supported by USDA SARE grant, a collaborative effort between My Green Earth, Habitat for Humanity, and Kennesaw State University's KSU Food Forest to transform an undeveloped Habitat for Humanity home site in Cobb County into a sustainable, community-centered food forest.

### Collaboration with the British Museum

Over the past 25 years, Dr. Terry Powis has focused one area of his archaeological research on the origins of chocolate in the New World. In the Spring of 2023, he was invited by archaeologists and molecular scientists from the [Department of Africa, Oceania, and Americas at the British Museum](#) to help them in their efforts to document the history of chocolate in the New World. The results of their research will be displayed in a new exhibit at the museum. Most of Dr. Powis' initial research with them involved compiling a list of archaeological sites (and cultures) across South and Central America that exhibited evidence of early cacao consumption spanning some 5,500 years. In June of 2025, he was invited to the British Museum to help researchers begin a new phase of their research, which was designed to sample and test a few hundred pottery vessels for the presence of cacao from different sites in different countries across Central America, including Belize, Mexico, and El Salvador. This molecular phase is ongoing and will involve testing residue samples collected from inside the pots to determine if they once held cacao. It is hoped that the presence of cacao from this study can be combined with previous ones in order to provide the most complete picture of ancient use of cacao in the New World.

### SoTL Research

Drs. Teresa Raczek and Mark Patterson found that science general education courses maintain high DFWI rates ("Comparing effectiveness of teaching interventions in online lab-based physical geography general education courses," *Journal of Geography in Higher Education*, 2024). Based on their research, the department improved pass rates in general education courses by developing Affordable Learning Georgia funded open-access resources and investing in paid peer-tutors.



Building on the success of their initial student success study, they explored how procrastination affects academic performance. By computing a procrastination index based on student submission times, they discovered a moderately strong inverse correlation ( $r = -0.62$ ) between procrastination and grades—indicating that increased procrastination generally leads to lower

grades. They also tested the impact of bi-weekly time management email reminders, finding that students who received these emails earned higher average grades than those who did not. Finally, they developed a statistical model to predict student success based on procrastination, achieving an 88% accuracy rate in determining pass/fail outcomes from submission timing.

### Affordable Learning Georgia Grant

Course	Quiz Grades	Lab Grades	Course Grades
<b>Geog 1110</b>	Mean Fall 2024: 84.13 Mean Spring 2025: 90.08 <b>Spring Higher</b>	Mean Fall 2024: 87.74 Mean Spring 2025: 89.58 <b>Spring Higher</b>	Mean Fall 2024: 85.96 Mean Spring 2025: 90.11 <b>Spring Higher</b>
	Median Fall 2024: 91.54 Median Spring 2025: 96.15 <b>Spring Higher</b>	Median Fall 2024: 100 Median Spring 2025: 100 Same both semesters	Median Fall 2024: 92.25 Median Spring 2025: 94.38 <b>Spring Higher</b>
<b>Geog 3305</b>	Mean Fall 2024: 85.62 Mean Spring 2025: 93.53 <b>Spring Higher</b>	Mean Fall 2024: 87.98 Mean Spring 2025: 91.6 <b>Spring Higher</b>	Mean Fall 2024: 86.09 Mean Spring 2025: 91.44 <b>Spring Higher</b>
	Median Fall 2024: 90.83 Median Spring 2025: 96.25 <b>Spring Higher</b>	Median Fall 2024: 99.77 Median Spring 2025: 99.55 <b>Spring Lower</b>	Median Fall 2024: 93.02 Median Spring 2025: 95.55 <b>Spring Higher</b>
<b>Geog 3315</b>	Mean Fall 2024: 89.90 Mean Spring 2025: 88.53 <b>Spring Lower</b>	Mean Fall 2024: 88.11 Mean Spring 2025: 86.18 <b>Spring Lower</b>	Mean Fall 2024: 80.58 Mean Spring 2025: 82.99 <b>Spring Higher</b>
	Median Fall 2024: 94.17 Median Spring 2025: 94.17 <b>Spring Higher</b>	Median Fall 2024: 98.75 Median Spring 2025: 99.58 <b>Spring Higher</b>	Median Fall 2024: 87.05 Median Spring 2025: 91.60 <b>Spring Higher</b>

In 2024–2025, Uli Ingram, Erinn Bariteau, Dr. Ranbir Kang, and Dr. Mark Patterson collaborated on an Affordable Learning Georgia grant to enhance Geog 1110, 3305, and 3315. Working with three student assistants, they added AI-generated quiz questions, removed consistently missed quiz questions, implemented transparent assignment design (TILT), and ensured all

materials met accessibility standards—improving both equity and engagement across the courses. As part of the project, they compared quiz, assignment, and course grades between Fall 2024 and Spring 2025, and in most cases, student performance improved after the changes.

### Office of Research Grand Challenges Seed Grant Awardees



**Title:** i-Bacteria Forecast: Intelligent Bacterial Forecasting Cyberinfrastructure Using AI-Enabled Self-Optimizing LoRaWAN for Sustained Water Quality Monitoring

**Team:** Ahyoung Lee, Hoseon Lee, Amy Gruss, Allen D. Roberts, Carl Saint-Louis, and Soon Goo Lee

Through a new KSU seed grant via the Office of Research awarded in June 2025, Dr. Allen Roberts is part of a research team that is planning to deploy a scalable, artificial intelligence (AI)-enabled smart water system that will integrate real-time environmental sensing, intelligent forecasting, and civic decision support to improve water safety, public health, and regional economic resilience in all communities.

## Expert Witness



Dr. Alice Gooding, ABFA Diplomate and Forensic Anthropologist for the state of Georgia testified to the recovery and analysis of the burned remains of Mr. Gary Farris. Dr. Gooding's forensic anthropological expertise played a significant role in the investigation of his death. She [testified](#) on the stand as an expert

witness in the case.

## High Impact Practices

### Study Abroad

#### Montepulciano, Italy



In May and June, Dr. Paul N. McDaniel had the privilege of teaching again in the transformative KSU in Italy 5-week summer study abroad program in Montepulciano, in the Tuscany region of Italy. Students from his Introduction to Human Geography and Geography of Europe courses experienced immersive learning through the high-impact practice of study abroad, connecting geographic concepts to real-world landscapes and cultures.

This unique opportunity fostered critical thinking, cross-cultural understanding, and a deeper appreciation for global interconnectedness. Beyond the classroom, their exploration of Italian landscapes in Montepulciano, Orvieto, Pisa, Rome, Florence, and Bologna, provided invaluable, hands-on geographical insights, building skills for student success that extend far beyond students' time abroad. It was an incredibly rewarding experience for all.



One of the first things Dr. Susan Kirkpatrick Smith did after being hired as a new assistant professor of anthropology at Kennesaw State University was to apply to teach on a study abroad program. She was selected to teach on a program in Thessaloniki, Greece, and hasn't looked back. Dr. Smith continues to be amazed at the transformation she sees in students after they complete a study abroad program. Summer of 2025 found Dr. Smith in

Montepulciano, a lovely hill town in Tuscany, Italy where she spent 5 weeks with 44 students and four other faculty members. Her students learned so much about the world around them, and more importantly they learned about themselves. This high impact practice affects many students for the rest of their lives. She is excited to continue to foster their intellectual and personal growth.

## Local Opportunities

### Forensic Anthropology Field Lab



Forensic anthropology at KSU provides students with real-world applications in our classroom and field labs. This year, students took advantage of an immersive three-course series to explore forensic science. In the fall, they were introduced to skeletal anatomy. In the spring, many chose to apply their anatomical knowledge to the analysis of bones of real cold cases for the

GBI. They also gave back to the community through forensic science lectures at metro Atlanta K-12 schools. During the summer, the field methods course at the Forensic Anthropology Field Lab (FAFL) was packed. This intensive two-week course is similar to an internship, resulting in three students hired in the medicolegal field as a result of their training!

## Material Life of Museums class



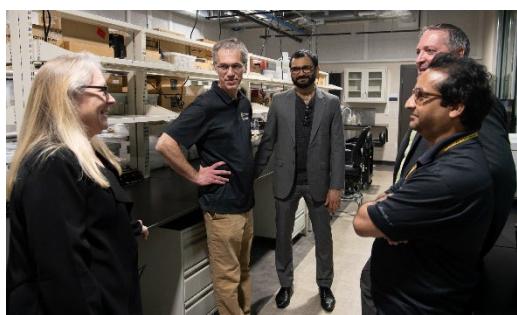
For the second time this May, Dr. Teresa Raczek offered “Material Life of Museums” as a career focused Maymester course. Students visited 9 museums and met with 21 museum staff to learn about museum careers and best practices in curation, visitor engagement, exhibition, development, and marketing. Importantly, the class was completely free as all admissions and transportation to museums was covered by the

Department of Geography and Anthropology. Students who took the class appreciated learning about the many career paths in the field of Museums. One student wrote, “I am very appreciative of the wide range of places we were able to visit within the course and the amount of professionals in the field we were able to talk to ... [Dr. Raczek’s] planning and scheduling really made this class so fun and engaging.”

## New Department Infrastructure

### Lab Renovations

The department boasts more than 14 [lab and field research spaces](#) that offer faculty and undergraduate students opportunities to cultivate collaborative research opportunities, three of which were renovated in 2024-2025 – the Geomorphology Lab (VA 108), the 3D Printing Lab (Pilcher 112), and a GIS Computer Lab expansion (SO 3032).



On April 25, 2025, we celebrated the opening of the RCHSS Multidisciplinary Research Lab, home of the new Geomorphology Laboratory in the Visual Arts Building, room 108. The lab is well equipped for soil and sediment analysis, and Drs. Brad Suther and Ranbir Kang use the space to study stream, river, and soil systems within the Southeast and beyond. Both

Suther and Kang heavily involve undergraduates in their research and are excited about the prospect of increasing student involvement in this work within the new, larger lab space.

We are excited to announce the opening of a new 3D printing lab in the Pilcher Building. The lab features 2 dual-color printers, 10 multi-color printers, and 2 large-format single-color printers. It supports a wide range of geography and anthropology projects, including the printing of maps, terrains, landscapes, geocache containers and trinkets, and bones—enhancing hands-on learning and research opportunities for students and faculty alike. For more information, check out this [StoryMap](#) about a geocaching project based on the lab.



The department has opened a new GSS Computer Lab on the 3rd floor of the Social Science Building in room 3032. Eight double monitor stations installed with ArcGIS Pro are in the lab. Open access will be granted to students enrolled in GIS courses during a given semester and those completing their coursework in GSS. The lab is managed by Uli Ingram. If you have any questions, please email her at [uingram@kennesaw.edu](mailto:uingram@kennesaw.edu).

## Innovative Teaching



Dr. Susan Kirkpatrick Smith was invited to be the Provost's Visiting Scholar at Georgia College and State University for a week in April. In addition to her campus lecture, she also met with anthropology and honors students and taught in four different classes.

The Department of Geography and Anthropology faculty once again were recognized for their [innovative pedagogy](#) more than any other department in the college.

# Community Engagement

## KSU Food Forest



In AY 2024-25, the KSU Food Forest hosted 31 events including Friday in the Food Forest and several Community engagement events with Ernst & Young, KSU's Division of Global Affairs, KSU's Division of Organizational Effectiveness, Midtown High School, Alpharetta Parks and Recs, the USG Sustainability Group, KSU's Leadership and Institutional Development, and YSELI (Young Asian Leaders). With the collaboration of the Office of

Sustainability, the KSU Food Forest hosted 19 volunteer days: engaging over 130 KSU students and Cobb County community members for 280 hours in hands-on sustainability. The KSU Food Forest continued to contribute fresh fruit and vegetables to KSU's CARES pantry to help students experiencing food insecurity. The KSU Food Forest provided a Living Learning Lab space for KSU Professors in geography and English classes who used the food forest to engage their students in experiential learning related to sustainability. In Elizabeth Hetzel's ENGL 1102 course, students researched sustainability, exploring the interconnectedness of social, economic, and environmental wellness. This class partnered with the KSU Food Forest to grow kale, lettuce, and spinach that was donated to the KSU CARES pantry. Students' seed-care also fostered personal growth and mindfulness of how small actions contribute to larger sustainability efforts. We appreciate the kind donations to the KSU Food Forest on KSU's Giving Day providing over \$900 of support for this sustainability initiative!

## OwlSwap



OwlSwap hosted or participated in 33 events during AY 2024-25, including OwlSwap clothing swaps and community engagement events such as Toys for Tots at Austell Community

Center, Lunch for Homeless with Austell PD, and the Community Give Away at Surplus. OwlSwap also offered two internships and hosted eight volunteer days to engage KSU

students in hands-on sustainability and expanded its impact through collaborating with Pebblebrook and Allatoona High Schools to build closets for their students.



In AY 2024-25, 6,545 items were donated to OwlSwap's two closets (estimated value \$47,807.90) and 3,841 items were selected and reused from the closets directly with an estimated value of \$28,490.50. Over 2,000 students, staff, and faculty checked into and participated in the OwlSwap closets or at OwlSwap events. OwlSwap's collaboration with KSU's Career Planning and Development

Department continued, making professional clothing available to students meeting with potential employers and internship locations at all the KSU Career Fairs; 238 professional items were provided to KSU students at career fairs (estimated value = \$1,992). OwlSwap's clothing swaps in AY 2024-25 attracted the participation of 1,034 students, faculty, and staff and generated a total of an additional 2,155 incoming (est. value = \$15,407.20) and 2,420 outgoing (est. value = \$17,963.30) clothing items across these events.

OwlSwap continued or expanded its collaboration and partnerships with – KSU's CARES, KSU's Children & Family Programs, The Center Helping Obesity in Children End Successfully, Inc. (C.H.O.I.C.E.S.), MustMinistries, ReHome, Princess Academy, Haven for Help, and the Austell PD, Marietta Landscape Crew (KSU), Coles College Showcase, the NFRSA Shoe Drive, USG Sustainability Offices, and KSU's Office of Sustainability. For the first time ever, OwlSwap was featured on KSU's Giving Day page resulting in donations of over \$800. We appreciate this generous support!

["WHERE DOES IT GO?" - a look into OwlSwap and sustainability \(MICRODOCUMENTARY\)](#)

## Events

### International Archaeology Day



Dr. Terry Powis hosted another successful International Archaeology Day event on October 19-20, 2024, at the archaeological site called the Cummings Site. It is located on private property two miles NW of the Etowah Indian Mounds in Cartersville. The site dates from about 300 BC-AD 1400 with the major occupation from AD 1325-1400, which is when Etowah was the preeminent site in the Southeast. Dr. Powis has been digging at

Cummings with his students since 2018. He runs an archaeological field school at the site every fall semester with 20 undergraduate students plus 6-8 student staff. The student staff took the field school the year before and help him train current students in the methods and techniques of field archaeology. Every year International Archaeology Day is celebrated during the third Saturday in October. Dr. Powis has been celebrating this event annually for the past 15 years. Over the two-day event, the public comes out to dig at the site and enjoy a cookout with hot dogs, chips, drinks, and desserts. This year hosted 135-140 people. It was a true collaboration between our department (Geography and Anthropology), the Etowah Valley Historical Society (located in Cartersville), and the Greater Atlanta Archaeological Society. In attendance were 26 students from the Principles of Archaeology course, 14 students from the archaeology field school, and about 80 guests, including dozens of family members of the students from both classes, and members of the EVHS and GAAS. Additionally, about a dozen alumni come out to talk to students about their archaeology jobs in Cultural Resource Management (CRM). Ages ranged from 1.5 years to 77 years old. They ended the event with spear throwing, which involved using an atlatl. It is something that Paleoindian people used some 12,000 years ago to hunt megafauna like wholly mammoths and saber-toothed tigers.

## GSS Night



GSS Night is the biggest event of the Department of Geography and Anthropology. It was celebrated with huge success on November 11, 2024, at the Horned Owl Brewery in Kennesaw. While celebrating various awards, it was an excellent gathering of our alumni and industry partners from various sectors. It showed the true spirit of our department's relationship building with our

community. The following awards were announced at this year's event: *Outstanding GSS Student*, Ethan Manigbas; *Outstanding GIS Certificate Student*, Zaren Youngblood; *GSS Community Engagement Award*, INTERDEV; *The Rebecca Mattord Outstanding Achievement Award*, Laura Bailey. GSS student scholarships were also announced at the event. These included: *Rebecca Mattord Scholarship*, Whitney Gregory; *John C. Gaskins Endowed Scholarship*, Sam Johnson, Pete Jones, and Jose Gamez-Herrada; and the *Rochester Scholarship*, Zaria Dunn. Sponsors included: *Platinum*, Esri; *Gold*, GeoSurvey; *Silver*, Atlas Surveying, InterDev, Langan, Subsurface Utility Mapping; *Compass*, Carola and Herb Mattord.

## KSU Drone Flight Day



Thanks to Gamma Theta Upsilon (GTU) students who helped with KSU Drone Flight Day! In partnership with the Georgia Geospatial Association (GGA), the Drone Flight Day at the KSU Field Station was a resounding success! Thanks to Dr. Nancy Hoalst Pullen and Thomas Chappel for helping

with all aspects of the event. It was great being able to bring together both students and industry professionals from the Atlanta area to talk about drones. Students interacted and networked with GIS community members and learned about drones and drone piloting licenses. GGA (who provided the drones and the food/drink) said it was their largest attended event since COVID-19.

## UnCANny Creations Competition



This was our third year participating in the UnCANny Competition that supports our students by stocking the KSU Food Pantry. The theme was Mental Health Awareness. We chose the butterfly which is the emblem of Mission Mental Health Awareness. The butterfly's cocoon represents the internal struggles of mental illness, while the butterfly itself represents hope for a better future.

We combined efforts with Psychological Science, History and Philosophy, and Sociology and Criminal Justice. Our collection consisted of 750 cans and 1333 total items, and we won the competition!

## Atlanta Science Festival



KSU Anthropology joined the Atlanta Science Festival in Piedmont Park for the 8th time this year, with a booth named, "Archaeology in Action: What is that tiny artifact?" We offered a tabletop excavation, microscope games, and a game where participants guessed whether or not an artifact was a bone. Thousands of festival goers visited the booth, which was staffed by Student Anthropology Club volunteers. We were pleased that KSU had a big turnout for the first time this year, with 12 booths total.

## Jonesville Cemetery

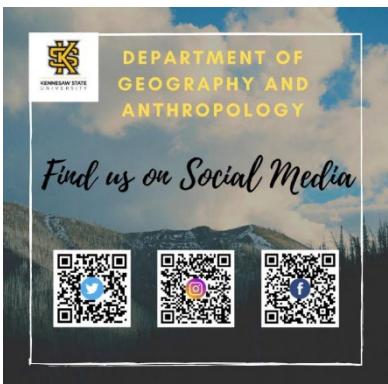


KSU students, faculty, and staff continue to help with the preservation of the Jonesville Historic Black Cemetery, located on the Dobbins Air Reserve Base in Marietta, GA. One Saturday every quarter, we picked up our rakes and weed whackers to help maintain the cemetery and keep it clean. Alumni are welcome to join in the next cleanup. Contact Dr. Teresa Raczek [traczek@kennesaw.edu](mailto:traczek@kennesaw.edu) to sign up.

## Looking forward...



In the coming year, the Department of Geography and Anthropology will continue to improve success rates in critical courses through evidence-based approaches. According to published SoTL research carried out by our own faculty, Mark Patterson and Teresa Raczek, science gen-eds maintain high DFWI rates. We are working to improve pass rates in gen ed courses by developing Affordable Learning Georgia funded open-access resources and investing in paid peer-tutors. The average GPA in our general education courses increased from 2.98 in 2022 to 3.17 in 2024. Pass rates increased from 81% in 2022 to 85% in 2024. Second, we will increase the number of high impact practice offerings to our students. Between 2023 and 2024, we saw a 20% increase in the number of students enrolled in HIPs courses. We also expanded the number of local and international field schools and study abroad opportunities, currently offering more than 10 throughout the year. Third, we will increase financial support for undergraduate and graduate research. Through our intradepartmental research initiative, we have funded six undergraduate research assistants with seven different faculty on projects like the “GIS Analysis of Forensic Body Dump Sites Across Georgia Over a Ten-Year Period” and “Assessing Student Engagement through 3D Printed Geocache Containers and Geocaching Events.” Fourth, we will increase the number of students participating in student programs and activities. From 2023 to 2024, we saw a 44% increase in the number of hosted events and a 27% increase in the number of participants in those events. Finally, we will expand our research infrastructure to support existing faculty and attract future hires. These research spaces offer faculty and undergraduate students opportunities to cultivate collaborative research.



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