Greetings from the Department of Geography and Urban Studies

Dear Alumni,

Welcome to our first semiannual alumni newsletter. We have a lot of exciting news to share and hope to further engage with our alumni.

In the past few years, we have worked hard to update our undergraduate Geography and Urban Studies and Environmental Studies majors and launch new graduate and undergraduate programs in Geographic Information Systems (GIS).

We have hired several new faculty to support our new and existing programs and welcome them to the GUS community.

Our students continue to land competitive and meaningful jobs and fellowships. Tell us your story. Your experiences help inspire future GUS and ES changemakers.

Melissa R. Gilbert, PhD
Department Chair

Dr. Michele Masucci, named Vice President for Research Administration

President Neil D. Theobald has appointed Dr. Michele Masucci, a member of the GUS Faculty, to the new role of vice president for research administration. She is responsible for managing grant services, research development, regulatory compliance and technology transfer for all research activities across Temple’s Main and Health Sciences campuses and Fox Chase Cancer Center. Read the full story on Temple News.

Dr. Allison Hayes-Conroy receives NSF CAREER Grant

GUS Faculty Dr. Allison Hayes-Conroy was awarded an NSF CAREER grant for her project in Medellín and Bogotá, Colombia, examining the role of bodies, sensation, and body movement in youth-based creative activity and community engagement. Learn more about her research here.
What’s new in the GUS Department?

Learn about the new programs we have to offer!

Redesigned undergraduate programs
We recently updated our Geography and Urban Studies and Environmental Studies undergraduate programs. Our new curriculum is designed to give our students a rigorous training in social science research as well as technical skills. In addition to our fundamental courses, we have added dynamic new courses that equip our students to address the local and global challenges that the world is facing.

Undergraduate Certificate in GIS
We have added an Undergraduate Certificate in Geographic Information Systems (GIS), open to all undergraduate students at Temple.

New Graduate Programs in GIS
We have also added a new Professional Science Master’s (PSM) and Graduate Certificate in GIS. The PSM is designed to train a workforce that is highly competent to meet the challenges faced by public, regulated, and private sector industries. The curriculum integrates rigorous technical training with ethics, business, and professional development. We work with an advisory board of GIS professionals to ensure that we are teaching the skills needed to be successful in the job market. The PSM is open to anyone with an interest in GIS that has completed an undergraduate degree in any field.

Our Graduate Certificate in GIS is open to current Temple students or those not currently enrolled in a graduate program. Students must complete four courses, including Fundamentals of GIS and three courses that meet their professional or personal interests.

This year, we have eight students enrolled in the PSM in GIS. These students come from a variety of backgrounds including geography, computer science and political science. We also have students in the Graduate Certificate from public health, sociology, history, and dentistry.

GIS skills are in high demand, with 35% annual job growth, and applicable across many fields and in the public and private sectors. We are excited to be offering these new programs and to be giving our students an additional competitive edge in the job market.

New PSM in GIS Assistant Director
We have also hired new faculty to support the new Professional Science Master’s in GIS and serve as the Assistant Director for the program. Dr. Lee Hachadoorian received his PhD in 2011 from the Department of Earth and Environmental Sciences (Geography Track) at the Graduate Center of University of New York with a dissertation entitled “Tiebout Sorting and Jurisdictional Homogeneity: Empirical Validity and Ethical Implications.” He received his MA in Geography from Hunter College (2010) and his BA in Philosophy from Cornell University (1996). His area of expertise is GIS and his research interests broadly are in spatial data base design and geovisualization, with an emphasis on free and open source tools, while pursuing applied research in residential location, sprawl, and spatial inequality. Dr. Hachadoorian teaches courses in GIS Application Development, Geovisualization, and Spatial Databases.

Learn more about our new GIS programs.
Professional Science Master’s in GIS
Graduate Certificate in GIS
Undergraduate Certificate in GIS

Email psmgis@temple.edu.

Student Accolades

Alan Wiig, PhD, has accepted a tenure-track position in Community Development at the University of Massachusetts Boston, focusing on urban economic development.

Michael Schwebel, PhD, is working with the New Jersey Sea Grant Consortium and Monmouth University’s Urban Coast Institute as their community resilience and climate change adaptation specialist.

PhD candidate Ritwika Biswas has been awarded the 2015-2016 Harris Webber Graduate Fellowship.

PhD candidate Colleen Hammelman received a $1,300 award to support one-month of fieldwork in Medellin, Colombia.

MA students Bob McDermott and Caleb Fritz both received positions with the City Council of Philadelphia as GIS and Urban Planning Fellows, for Summer and Fall 2015.

GUS Alum Kevin Frech received a highly competitive Summer of Maps fellowship with Azavea. Kevin worked with the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society and the Public Laboratory for Open Technology and Science.

Pictured above: Dr. Rickie Sanders with her Spring 2015 Senior Research Seminar in Geography and Urban Studies students.
New Faculty

We have hired new tenure-track faculty, Dr. Jacob Shell, Dr. Allison Hayes-Conroy and Dr. Kevin Henry.

Dr. Jacob Shell employs critical theories of power and resistance to look at the evolving geographies of transportation and mobility systems. Recently, his research has brought him to Myanmar (Burma), to look at the use of trained elephants within the teak logging industry there. His frequently makes use of qualitative mapping techniques and thematic geovisualization and he collects and writes about paper maps, especially those that portray relationships between landscape, mobility, and power in inventive, stimulating or provocative ways. Dr. Shell teaches our Cartography courses and Geographic Inquiry and new courses Space and Place and Transportation and Culture.

Dr. Allison Hayes-Conroy received her Ph.D. in geography from Clark University in 2009. She has published widely on critical approaches to food-body relationships and the politics of food. Her current research projects include a project in Medellin, Colombia examining the role of bodies and bodily movement in a youth-based social movement; another project in Medellin exploring experiences of food insecurity among displaced women; and a student-driven exploration of critical nutrition in Philadelphia, PA. Dr. Hayes-Conroy teaches two new courses: Food Studies: A Geographical Perspective and Bodies in Geography.

Dr. Kevin Henry received his Ph.D. in Geography from McGill University and completed a post-doctoral fellowship in epidemiology at McGill University Health Centre. His research focuses on the application and development of geospatial methods and tools for investigating associations between health outcomes (e.g., cancer, ALS, obesity, tuberculosis infection) and neighborhood environments and access to care. He has led several research studies that utilized cancer registry and health survey data to describe racial/ethnic, socioeconomic, and geographic disparities in cancer incidence, treatment, survival and screening. Dr. Henry teaches Medical Geography and a new course GIS for Health Data Analysis.

Emeritus Faculty

In spring 2015, Dr. Carolyn Adams retired from the GUS Faculty. She joins Dr. Marilyn Silberfein as Emeritus Faculty. They are both invaluable members of the department and are missed.

In Memoriam: David Bartelt, PhD

July 31, 1944 – May 15, 2015

We at the Department of Geography and Urban Studies at Temple University are greatly saddened by the death of our friend and colleague, David Bartelt on May 15, 2015. David retired in 2012 after thirty-two years on the faculty at Temple University, but remained active in pursuing research. David was well known for his contributions to Urban Studies particularly in the areas of housing policy, neighborhood development and regional and community indicators. He was instrumental in building the Department of Geography and Urban Studies, including serving as Chair, and was a highly respected scholar, teacher, mentor, and friend to many in the department and in the larger academic community.

Recent Faculty Publications

Transportation and Revolt: Pigeons, Mules, Canals, and the Vanishing Geographies of Subversive Mobility by Jacob Shell (MIT Press, 2015)

From the Outside In: Suburban Elites, Third-Sector Organizations, and the Reshaping of Philadelphia by Carolyn Adams (Cornell University Press, 2014)


The Price of Land: Acquisition, Conflict and Consequence by Sanjoy Chakravorty (Oxford University Press, 2013)


Pictured above: Dr. Sanjoy Chakravorty (Professor), Dr. Liv Raddatz (PhD Alum), Sarah Heck (PhD Candidate), Dr. Sandra Zupan
A group of students in Dr. Allison Hayes-Conroy’s Fall 2013 Food Studies class were interested in making locally sourced and vegetarian food more accessible to the Temple Community. They approached Dr. Hayes-Conroy and she guided them through an independent study from which the Rad Dish, a student-run co-operative café, emerged. Opened Spring 2015 in Ritter Annex, the Rad Dish allows students from all backgrounds to get involved in running a café, from serving food, to working with local food sources, to planning events to be held in the space. The Rad Dish serves vegan- and vegetarian-friendly food and all food is sourced locally. Items that can’t be sourced locally, such as coffee, are fair trade and organic. In addition to serving food, the Rad Dish also provides a space for like-minded students to meet and collaborate as well as host events.

More information about the Rad Dish Co-op and it’s mission can be found here: https://www.facebook.com/raddishcoop.