A Regional Response to the Opioid Crisis

Just before the Fall break, Geography and Urban Studies faculty Dr. Jerry Stahler and MA in Geography and Urban Studies alumna Silvana Mazzella participated in “A Regional Response to the Opioid Crisis,” a symposium held at Temple University. The purpose of this event was to address one of the growing health crises of opioid addiction in Pennsylvania, how lives are impacted, and steps moving forward. Opioid addiction is a crisis that has affected friends and family near Dr. Stahler and he has put it at the center of his research.

Nearly 400 attendees came to participate in the symposium. The day included a welcome from Dr. Stahler, an address by Kim Rubenstein, executive director of Be a Part of the Conversation, a panel discussion with local experts in the field, and workshops.

Dr. Stahler received a Master’s and PhD in Clinical Psychology from Temple University before joining the Geography and Urban Studies Faculty. He currently leads Temple’s Substance Abuse Research Consortium, is a member of the city Overdose Task Force and teaches an Inside-Out course, Drugs in Urban Society a course taught within a prison where half the students are inmates and half are Temple undergraduate students. In addition, just this month, Dr. Stahler was selected to participate in Mayor Jim Kenney’s task force to combat the opioid epidemic in Philadelphia.

Read the full story on Temple Now.

Greetings from the Chair

Dear Alumni,

Greetings from the Department of Geography and Urban Studies! It has been an exciting semester.

This newsletter highlights some of the accomplishments of our faculty, students, and alumni in the realms of research, teaching, service, and careers. We are a vibrant community with many activities such as GIS Day, lectures such as the Benjamin H. Kohl Social Justice Lecture, and career days for our undergraduates.

It was great to see some of you at our alumni panels and GIS Day. We would welcome more involvement from our alumni in departmental events and would like to facilitate alumni networking. Please contact me if you have any suggestions or questions. I’d love to hear from you.

Happy Holidays!

Sincerely,
Melissa R. Gilbert
Professor and Chair
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215.204.7833
GIS Day 2016

Making a Difference in Communities with GIS and Spatial Analysis

On November 16th, Temple University participated in GIS Day, part of an international celebration of Geographic Information Systems and how it can make a difference in our society. The event was cosponsored by the Department of Geography and Urban Studies, the Spatial Analytics Lab at Temple, and the Temple University Libraries. After last year’s success, we were excited to host it once again.

GIS Day at Temple was an all-day event on campus. Our Geography and Urban Studies and Environmental Studies Undergraduate Student Association leaders kicked off the day with geocaching around Temple campus. Lauri Dafner, a Solutions Engineer with Esri lead a workshop for students interested in learning more about WebApp builder and careers in GIS.

Dr. Paul Torrens from NYU’s Tandon School of Engineering gave our keynote address, “Simulating Streetscapes.” In his research, Dr. Torrens is trying to show how people will behave during a crisis, such as a building collapse, using 3-D simulation. His research faces many interesting challenges about how humans interact in open spaces. Through this, he has studied how simulations will change with human influence that respond individually and differently to a wide range of stimuli.

We showcased a wide range of GIS applications, as used by researchers and practitioners from Temple University and the Philadelphia region. Following the keynote address, we held two sessions of lightning talks and a poster session. Faculty and student presenters in Geography and Urban Studies included Dr. Bradley Gardner, Dr. Kevin Henry, Dr. Jeremy Mennis, Steve Spindler (MA alum, 1994), Shrobona Karkun (PhD student), Daniel Wiese (PSM in GIS alum and PhD student), Stewart Scott (GUS alum, 2015) and Carlos Bonilla (GUS alum 2016). PhD students Andreea Ambrus, Daniel Wiese, and Alexis Saenz also presented posters.

In addition, we also had presenters from the Rehabilitation Sciences, History, and Computer Information Sciences at Temple University as well as from Villanova University, Haverford College, and the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission. See the full schedule here.

GIS Day was a great success, with a large turnout throughout the day, including several alumni and community members. Much credit is due to GUS faculty Dr. Hamil Pearsall who planned and coordinated the event. We hope you can join us next year.

GUS Faculty Dr. Bradley Gardener presents visualizations of gentrification.

PhD student and PSM in GIS alum Daniel Wiese presents two posters on his Capstone project with the City of Philadelphia Office of Innovation and Technology and an ongoing project on land use in Kyrgyzstan.

Remembering Dr. Ben Kohl

Ben Kohl Social Justice Lecture

The Department of Geography and Urban Studies holds an annual Benjamin H. Kohl Social Justice Lecture, in memory of Dr. Ben Kohl. Ben was beloved member of the Geography and Urban Studies faculty who had an unparalleled commitment to students and social justice in all aspects of his life.

This year, we were pleased to welcome his wife Linda Farthing as our speaker. Linda is an independent writer, educator and activist. She gave the talk “Habeas Coca: Bolivia’s Community Control of Coca,” discussing the history, politics and social context of coca leaf in Bolivia.

Continuing Ben’s Work

MA in Geography and Urban Studies alumna Charlotte Castle was inspired by Dr. Kohl’s graduate course “Critical Issues in Social Justice, Globalization and Sustainability” to incorporate social justice into her work. In that class, they discussed making city streets accessible to everyone and focusing on local solutions. In her current position as a Transportation Systems Program Planner at the City’s Office of Transportation & Infrastructure Systems, she helped organize Philly Free Streets this Fall and seeks to continue to make social justice a priority in her work.

Read more about Charlotte’s work with the City of Philadelphia.
New Research Projects and Publications

We have several exciting new research projects going on in the department. Current and ongoing projects include:

- **Zika in Southeastern PA:** Dr. Victor Gutierrez-Velez and Dr. Kevin Henry are examining the climatic, environmental, and social risks associated with the transmission of Zika and other mosquito-borne diseases in Southeastern Pennsylvania.

- **Breast Cancer Prevention and Mortality:** Dr. Kevin Henry is researching multiple forms of healthcare access using GIS techniques and statistics. His research includes working to understand access to mammography facilities, the diffusion of their technological upgrades, and how this relates to breast cancer prevention.

- **ElAtlas:** ElAtlas is a scholar-activist initiative that seeks to enhance the potential for connection and collaboration between scholars and activists. This project grew out of collaborations enabled through an NSF CAREER grant awarded to Dr. Allison Hayes Conroy. ElAtlas seeks to take the skills and theory of diverse sub-fields of geography back to the “base” – the ever-changing foundation of informal groups, small collectives, self-organized crews, and lesser-known alliances that provide the roots of the ‘grassroots.’ You can visit the online platform here: [http://www.elatlas.org/](http://www.elatlas.org/).

- **bITS Program:** Temple University continues hosts the Building Information Technology Skills (bITS) program each summer at Main Campus. Faculty involvement includes Dr. Hamil Pearsall, Dr. Michele Masucci, and Dr. David Organ. PhD students Sarah Heck and Alec Foster helped organize the program and several undergraduate students participated as mentors. Learn more about Dr. Pearsall’s Internship groups’ projects [here](#).

- **New Book:** Dr. Tina Rosan recently published a new book titled *Governing the Fragmented Metropolis: Planning for Regional Sustainability* with Penn Press. Read the synopsis [here](#).

- **New Book:** Dr. Sanjoy Chakravorty published a new book titled *The Other One Percent: Indians in America* co-authored Devesh Kapur and Nirvikar Singh with Oxford University Press NY.

**Pictured above:** Environmental Studies major Darion Porter was featured on the College of Liberal Arts Newsroom. Read the full story [here](#). Photo credit: CLA Communications.

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**Yoonhee Jung awarded 2016-2017 Harris Webber Fellowship**

Each year, the Department of Geography and Urban Studies grants a fellowship to a PhD student pursuing urban research that requires fieldwork, and/or has policy implication. The fellowship is made possible by the generosity of Temple alumnus Harris Webber (CLA, ’65), founder of Harris Webber Ltd. This endowed Fellowship expresses Mr. Webber’s commitment to the importance of preparing researchers to understand and shape livable, sustainable, socially productive and more equitable metropolitan communities of the future. That commitment marks his entire professional career as a community planner in many different settings. This Fall, Yoonhee Jung received the Harris Webber Fellowship for Fall 2016. Her research will examine how urban sustainability is defined, conceptualized, and translated into practice in Seoul, South Korea. This study will provide a valuable case study of the processes and the effects of urban environmental policy practice for other Asian megacities.

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**Xi Wei and Daniel Wiese, PSM in GIS Graduates**

Our first two students to graduates from the Professional Science Master’s in GIS completed their hands-on capstone experience during Summer 2016.

- **Xi Wei:** Xi worked with the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society, focusing on ways that PHS Tree Tenders and Plant One Million could strategically focus their tree planting efforts, including a GIS-based model for prioritizing areas for plantings and a report detailing the criteria, process, analysis, results, and notes on potential deterrents to tree plantings in priority areas.

- **Daniel Wiese:** Daniel worked with the City of Philadelphia Office of Innovation and Technology (OIT). His project focused on creating a comprehensive shapefile with a complete list of landmarks in the City of Philadelphia and to develop a methodology to capture building footprints of landmarks and public spaces using documentation from various city offices, to incorporate in the city’s basemap.
Meet our new PhD Students
We are excited to welcome a large cohort of PhD students into the Department of Geography and Urban Studies.

Andreea Ambrus
BS in Geography, Babes-Bolyai University, Romania
MS in Community and Regional Planning, Temple University

Michael Henderson
BA, Biology, Lincoln University
MS, Neuropharmacology and Experimental Molecular Medicine, Dartmouth College
JD, Villanova School of Law

Freddy Hsu
BA, University of California Berkeley in Mathematics and Geography
MA, California State University Los Angeles in Geography

Monika Jelić
BA, Sociology, University of Pennsylvania
BSN, University of Pennsylvania
MPH, Boston School of Public Health
MSN, University of Pennsylvania

Shrobona Karkun
Bachelors in Architecture and Planning, Maulana Azad National Institute of Technology, India
Masters in Urban Spatial Analytics, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia

Dirk A Kinsey
BA, The Evergreen State College, Geography and Cultural Studies
MA, Portland State University, Geography

Jeronimo Rodriguez
B.Sc in Economics from the Univerisdad Nacional de Colombia
M.Sc. in Agricultural Economics from the Humboldt University in Berlin (Germany)

Heather Squire
BA, Sociology, CUNY Brooklyn College

Daniel Wiese
Bachelor’s, Geography and Public Law from the University of Hamburg, Germany
PSM in Geographic Information Systems, Temple University

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Keep in touch!
We are starting an Alumni of the Month showcase on our website.
Send us your updates!
guses@temple.edu