Message from Chair

I am delighted to announce the first-ever edition of the annual newsletter of the Department of Geography, Geomatics and Environment (GGE) at the University of Toronto Mississauga (UTM)! The newsletter highlights recent updates and accomplishments from our students, staff, faculty, and alumni this past year. Thank you for taking the time to hear what we have been up to!
Dr. Tingting Zhu will join us on July 1, 2021, as an Assistant Professor, Teaching Stream (67% in the Dept. of Geography, Geomatics and Environment and 33% in the Dept. of Mathematics and Computational Science). Dr. Zhu obtained her M.Eng in Earth Exploration and Information Technology from Nanjing University in 2012, and her Ph.D. in Environmental Science at UofT in 2017. She has been working in GGE as a sessional instructor and a GIS CLTA over the past couple of years. We all know that her exceptional pedagogical research and teaching expertise will make significant contributions to our GIS and CS programs at UTM.

Professor Harvey Shear is retiring at the end of June 2021 after 15 years of outstanding teaching and service in GGE. Luckily for us, Professor Shear will stay active at UTM after his retirement. For example, he will teach a stipend course in ECO next year (2021), and he also hopes to be working with a postdoctoral fellow from Mexico who is planning to come to UofT as a visiting scholar. In addition, Dr. Shear will continue to supervise Master of Science in Sustainability Management (MScSM) students on their SSM1100 Research Paper projects and be actively involved in the annual MScSM case competitions.

Our Geographic IT Specialist Bruce Huang is a recipient of the 2019-2020 Principle’s Staff Award for Creativity and Innovation. While no one could have predicted the current chaotic and complex circumstances we are facing, Bruce’s vision to develop a suite of teaching, research, and service-related online systems enabled the department to make a rapid and smooth transition to online delivery right from the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Congratulations Bruce on this well-deserved award!
UTM professors find ways to engage with students online. Faced with the necessity of teaching courses entirely online, Professor Barbara Murck found ways to keep her lectures interesting and engaging. Click here for the full story.

ENV311 (Environmental Issues in the Developing World) taught by Barbara Murck started a Global Classrooms initiative funded by GGE. Students in ENV311 connected with people working, living, and researching in Ecuador. These included the manager of a biodiversity research station in the Amazon Rainforest, who also works with Venezuelan refugees; a primatologist, who also works with street animals in Quito; a water quality engineer, who also promotes women in science and engineering; a specialty coffee producer in Galápagos, who is also a UTM grad; and a mountaineer and naturalist guide who lives at high altitude in the Andes, who is also an award-winning documentary filmmaker. Check here for the course details.

**Experiential Learning**

GGR379 (Physical Geography Field Methods) taught by Professor Trevor Porter received an Experiential Learning Development Grant from the Office of the Dean, Experiential Education Unit, to provide a unique learning opportunity to our students in the midst of the pandemic. The funding was used to purchase portable air pollution sensors, one for each student in the course, which allowed the students to gain independent fieldwork experience (in their own neighbourhoods) and technical training in urban air pollution monitoring.

ENV330 (Experimental Design in Environmental Science) taught by Professor Monika Havelka
also received funding from the Dean's office for hand-held water quality meters for students to collect data on the conductivity of urban runoff in the various substrates. Students in ENV330 collected data around the globe using the sensors. Jamsheed Mistry, pictured left, is collecting data in San Jose, California. Check [here](#) for the full story.

**ENV332** (Practicum in Environmental Project Management) taught by Tingting Zhu has students participating in the Climate Change Youth Challenge organized by the City of Mississauga. Students formed groups to tackle the challenges connected to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. Each group is assigned one or two industrial mentors. **Project ALSET** (Mentor: Alex Legrain, City of Mississauga) won first place (team members: Michelle Kowalczyk, Shiyi Liu, Bowen Ouyang, Racquel Pate, Aidan Rando, and Rongxi Liu), **Project Garlic Mustard from the Creditview Wetland** (Mentor: Amber-Lynne Lammers, City of Mississauga) won second place (team members: Farhia Mohamad, Fathima Safia Saboor, Maha Wadud, Neha Merchant, Valerie Lin, and Dilpreet Toor), and **Project Electric Vehicle Action Plan** (Mentor: Leya Barry, City of Mississauga) won the third place (team members: Ali Raza, Chenchang Shi, Daniel Boyomo Yakana, Jiawen Wu, Jordan Bowness-Linegar, Melissa Croft, and Moe Kyal). Their project descriptions are posted [here](#).

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**Faculty Spotlight**

Professor [Kathi Wilson](#) received the 2020 UTM Desmond Morton Research
Excellence Award in recognition of the breadth, impact, and excellence of her research. She is known internationally as a leading scholar in Health Geography, making vital contributions to two areas of studies - Indigenous Health and Immigration Studies.

**Professor Laura Brown** was awarded the 2020 UTM Annual Research Prize in the Sciences for her outstanding contributions to the study of the impact of climate change on high latitude lakes.

**Professor Matt Adams** made the front page of the UofT news! Learn about Matt’s upcoming MITACS Accelerate Project with the City of Toronto by clicking [here](#) for the full article.

**Professor Alan Walks** showcased his new book Changing Neighbourhoods: Social and Spatial Polarization in Canadian Cities at the 2021 Annual Celebration of Books! Find out more about his book [here](#).

**Professor Nicole Laliberté** discussed how to explore feminism and anti-oppressive pedagogy on UTM in *The Medium*. Check [here](#) for the full article.

**Professor Igor Lehnherr** talked on UofT News about climate change slowing the decline of methylmercury levels in the Arctic. Click [here](#) for the full article. The study is published in the journal *Environmental Science & Technology*. 
Student Spotlight

2020-21 GGE Awards Ceremony

Many undergraduate and graduate students received our internal Department awards. See our departmental awards page for the 2020 and 2021 award recipients.

External Awards

Shoutout to undergraduate student Scarlett Rakowska (Supervisor: Dr. Matthew Adams), who was the runner-up in the AAG Geographic Information Science and Systems Best Student Paper Competition.
Graduate student Priya Patel (Supervisor: Dr. Matthew Adams) received the Society of Woman Geographers Evelyn L. Pruitt Minority Fellowship, the Toronto and Region Conservation Foundation's Bull Scholarship, and the Canadian Federation of University Women - Dr. Alice E. Wilson Award.

Graduate student Sophie Roussy (Supervisor: Dr. Matthew Adams) received the School of the Environment John R. Brown Award.

Graduate student Annie Yuan (Supervisor: Dr. Tenley Conway) was awarded the Eric David Krause Graduate Fellowship through the School of Environment.

Graduate student Chandula Fernando (Supervisor: Dr. Matthew Adams) received research funding from the Imperial Oil University Research Awards for their project.

Graduate student Leah Marajh (Supervisors: Dr. Amrita Daniere and Dr. Yuhong He) won the 1st place Student Presentation Award in the Geographies of Asia panels at the 2021 CAG conference. Leah presented part of her PhD research project with the title: Examining local temperature through people and sensors in the Greater Angkor Region of Cambodia.

Graduate student Shuhong Shi (supervisor: Igor Lehnherr) was awarded the 2021 General Motors Women in Science and Mathematics Award.

Graduate student Lily Zhang (Supervisors: Dr. Vincent Kuuiere) received a paper presentation award from the Canadian Association of Geographers GIScience Study Group, for her presentation at the 2021 CAG Annual Meeting. She presented a paper with her co-authors (Sanewal Singh and Minal Waqar) and her supervisor (Vincent Kuuiere) titled: Is the Andersen framework useful in explaining traditional medicine use in the Ghanian context?

Undergraduate students Lauren Ead, Simran Persaud, Nikki Wong and Fatima Tasabeihi, graduate student Sophie Roussy, and postdoctoral fellow students Dr. Egide Kalisa and Dr. Camilo Ordonez received funding from the Centre for Urban Environments to support their research.

Post-doc student Dr. Egide Kalisa received the UTM Postdoctoral Leadership Award.

SAGE was awarded UTM Student Group Principal's Award of Excellence for its overall contribution to the UTM community this past year, specifically in collaboration and sustainability. SAGE has taken initiative to
create a positive, supportive community at UTM while leading the campus's environmental goals. Link to the award announcement [here](#).

**SAGE won UTMSU Green Award** to recognize SAGE's a heavy environmental advocacy role at UTM. This year SAGE carried out multiple events that broke down sustainability in all facets – social, economic, and environmental, discussing the topics in hopes of discovering new insights for all students.

**Undergraduate Research**

**Melissa Heppner** received a UofT Excellence Award to participate in research on bison conservation in Professor Andrea Olive’s [Wildlife, Land, and Sustainability lab](#) this summer.

**Carolyne Qiang** received an NSERC USRA to study the impact of covid in urban environments in Professor Yuhong He’s [Remote Sensing and Spatial Ecosystem Modeling laboratory](#) this summer.

**Graduate Research**

Our master’s student **Sydney Clackett** (Supervisor: Dr. Trevor Porter)’s paper (Clackett et al., 2020) generated a lot of public interest, including print and radio media coverage by northern programs (e.g., [CBC Radio One – Morning Show](#), [Cabin Radio Yellowknife](#)) and U of T News and [UTM News](#).

Shoutout to Ph.D. candidate **Mitchell Bonney** (Supervisor: Dr. Yuhong He), whose research on the [Kangaroo Island Bushfires](#) was showcased in Australia’s [The Advertiser](#).
Meet the Alumni

SAGE hosted its “Meet the Alumni” event for the second time this year, where students were able to network with alumni who graduated from a variety of streams under UTM GGE. Student could see first-hand potential career pathways that have been enabled by being a part of UTM GGE. Big thanks for the 5 UTM GGE alumni for attending our “Meet the Alumni” event! Link to the alumni profiles here.

What Are They Up to Now?


Karl Chastko, M.Sc. in GIS, 2019, Data Analyst in the Centre for Demography at Statistics Canada


Bing Lu, Ph.D. in Remote Sensing, 2017. Tenure-track Assistant Professor in the Department of Geography at Simon Fraser University.

Priyanka Patel, B.Sc. in Environmental Science, 2016. Mining Project Manager at Golder Associates Ltd.


Martine August, Ph.D. in Planning, 2014. Tenure-track Assistant Professor in the School of Planning at the University of Waterloo.


Namrata Shrestha, Ph.D. in Geography, 2012. Senior Research Scientist in
Ecosystem and Climate Science at the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority.

Spotlight On...

SAGE collected food donations from November 4 to December 6 to give back to the local community with Mississauga food bank!

SAGE successful clothing swap event where students could exchange clothes and raise money for Ecosource was profiled in the Medium: See the full news here.

Students, don't forget! The Office of the Registrar is here to help you succeed at UTM. You can access helpful articles 24/7 or speak with an advisor online through AskRegistrar. Click here for details.

Our Donors

The Department of Geography, Geomatics and Environment has dedicated scholarship funds in honor of our past faculty members and to promote and recognize excellence among our students. We thank the generous contributions from alumni and friends, and welcome donations which can be made online here.

Your Thoughts

Share your stories and photos
We want to hear about what our GGE community is up to during these unprecedented times, whether it's finding creative ways to work and play, rallying to support the community, or taking time to snuggle with your pup. We will be happy to include you in our next newsletter. You can send your story tips and photos to us by emailing at geography.admin@utoronto.ca.

Following us on social media (see below) and stay tuned.

[Social media icons]