The Department of Geography at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville 1957 to 2019

Compiled by Wendy Shaw

I. The Kazeck Period (1957 to 1976)

For a number of years there were no academic departments at SIUE, as central administration did not subscribe to that model of academic divisions. Instead what existed were ‘faculties’, but eventually academic departments, headed by chairs, were established. Melvin E. Kazeck, as founder and chairman of the department was an Ed.D., former air weather officer with the U.S. Army Air Corp Weather Service during World War II, and was Chair of the Geography Department at North Dakota State before he came to SIUE.

He thought of geography as being closely tied in with Earth Science and Urban and Regional Planning so in a relatively few years, the department became the Department of Earth Science, Geography and Planning.

Melvin E. Kazeck

From the beginning, Kazeck always emphasized ‘credit hours produced” (which was far more critical at SIUE than after he retired) and as a result, that was one of the most, if not the most important criteria in hiring. He fought tooth and nail with the faculty senate curriculum council to have meteorology, climatology, the survey level courses in earth science and physical geography be counted as physical science general studies courses. He prevailed in his quest even over the objections of the Dean of the Social Sciences Division. Consequently, the Department of Earth Science, Geography and Planning had far more undergraduate students taking general studies geography courses than from any other department in the (then) Social Sciences Division as well as the Science and Engineering Division.
His vision of the department consisted of a graduate and undergraduate geography program, a master’s degree program in urban and regional planning, and an undergraduate degree program in earth science.

He structured the department into what he called programs with each program headed by a “coordinator”. He was the department head as well as the geography coordinator, Carl Lossau was the planning coordinator and Dean Marlow the earth science coordinator. Melvin wanted professional accreditation from the American Collegiate Schools of Planning (ASCP) ASCRP, so he hired a Ph.D. in planning to be the coordinator of planning (this was one of the minimum requirements to attain accreditation). He also brought in two joint faculty appointments from the Regional Research and Development Services (RRDS), the forerunner of the Center for Organizational and Research Development (CORD) (terminated in 1998).

In geography, Bob Koepke initiated an ‘Area Development’ option, which later proved to be an asset in many ways to all three programs. Kazeck wanted a geography program that was strong in cartography and applied economic geography. The ‘Area Development’ option was a “bridge of sorts” for those two goals. Dr. Kazeck also supported a strong cultural geography component and during the middle of this period he hired many new faculty in support of all the objectives previously mentioned. When he retired in 1976, the department had 18 full time faculty members and four joint appointment faculty members (with tenure).
The faculty who were a part of the Department by the end of this period included Dorothy Gore, Loran ‘Dean’ Marlow, Halsey Miller, and Ron Yarbrough in Earth Science (23 September 1964). Ron Yarbrough went on to win the first SIUE Great Teacher Award on May 17th, 1970.

Geography faculty included Bill Baker, Jim Bridwell, Don Clements, Charles Hess, Melvin Kazeck, Harry Kircher (Fall Quarter 1964), Bob Koepke, Fred Lampe, Noble ‘Dick’ Thompson, and Chuck Thornton.
The planning program was supported by Norman Johnsen, Carl Lossau, Phil Simon, and Don Strohmeier, while there were several joint appointment faculty, namely Dick Guffy (Geography and Director of Computer Center), Al Kahn (Planning and Director of RRDS), Bob Mendelson (Planning and RRDS), and Bill Woods (Geography and Director of Contract Archaeology).

On 1963 the first of June 1963 the Gamma Lambda chapter of Gamma Theta Upsilon, the international honor society in Geography, was chartered at SIUE. The ten charter members were J. Thomas Burk, Donald R. Dewey, Jeff C. Ezell, Robert D. Gergen, Theodore M. Hauser, Richard A. Heigert, Alfred W. Landers, Loretta J. Slaton, Kenneth
E. Spalding, and John D. Weaver. The chapter remains active today, with approximately twenty student members in Fall 2019.

II. The Post-Kazeck Period (1976-1984)

Jim Bridwell was the first chairman of the department after the retirement of Melvin Kazeck. The focus of the department did not change, but Bridwell was concerned with the viability of the planning program because the only Ph.D. in planning, Bill Weismantel, had resigned. Weismantel resigned for many reasons, but these included internal friction within the planning unit.

Following the ‘Kazeck period’ and Jim Bidwell’s term as Chair, Dean Marlow, Ron Yarbrough, Norm Johnson, Don Strohmeyer, Bob Frost (Fall Quarter 1977), Carl Lossau, (and we think Halsey Miller) all served as Chair. In addition there were multiple people
who were not tenure-line faculty, including Bob Frost an instructor in meteorology, and Don Wallace who filled in when needed.

![Bob Frost and Don Wallace](image)

We have other archival pictures of people who were involved in instruction within the department, but their precise roles are not known at this time. These people include Ira Fogel, Dennis Moellman, Dennis Mooherjee, James Collier, David Roth, Carrol Schwartz, and Roderick Scofield. Any information about these contributors to the department would be gratefully received.

![Other archival pictures](image)

Bob Koepke’s ‘Area Development’ option continued to expand securing scholarships and contract money for undergraduate and graduate students alike. In the process of acquiring contracts, he also involved geography, biology, and environmental science faculty. His contracts included projects for or with the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency, the
Missouri Botanical Gardens, the Army Corps of Engineers, Madison County, the Southwest Illinois Metropolitan Area Planning Commission (SWIMPCAC), the East-West Gateway Coordinating Council, and many other agencies and organizations.

This was a period in which the SIUE administration supported applied research/community service as it had to deal with severe budget cuts and was trying to expand its research grants office in the Graduate School. Bill Woods’ Contract Archaeology office as well as Bob Koepke’s area development option fit those needs.

The department also initiated an option in GIS and Remote Sensing with the support of CORD. Four courses were offered which included Introduction to GIS, Vector-Based GIS, Raster-based GIS, and Remote Sensing. The Introduction and Vector-based GIS were taught by Chuck Thornton, the Remote Sensing by Don Clements, and the Raster-based GIS by CORD’s Chuck Kofron.

In addition, the department also became more involved in teaching interdisciplinary courses with PAPA, Environmental Studies, and Philosophy. This involvement with other departments, and employment and funding of undergraduate students because of developments within the programs during this period had definite stabilizing effects. Throughout this period, the department had scores of graduate students coming to acquire degrees in either geography or planning with large number from Iran, Korea, China, and Kenya.

Many students were able to secure jobs with various government agencies (federal, state, regional and county levels) as well with some private businesses. Both Bob Koepke’s area development option and the GIS option proved to be effective when our students graduated and competed for employment. The cartography option continued to be popular with many students landing jobs with what was then called the Defense Mapping Agency (formally also known as the National Imagery and Mapping Agency (NIMA) and currently as the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency (NGA)). For a number of years during this period our department was the number one source of college graduates being employed by that agency.

This period was also the beginning of the association the department had with the Abandoned Mined Lands Reclamation Council. In Fall 1977 two graduate students – Bob Gibson and Paul Ehret - recruited three more students (John Fox, Jennifer Hines, and Rob Krumm) to work on the State Geological Survey and formal contractual ties were established with SIUE. In June 1981 the unit became the Abandoned Mined Lands Reclamation Council (AMLRC). They occupied part of our cartography area and in return paid ‘rent’ and furnished contract money to many of our undergraduate and graduate
students in geography and earth science. We were able to prevail over our dean’s idea that they should be attached to civil engineering rather than to geography and in 1984 they were contracted with Geography. In the mid-1990s the AMLRC became part of the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) within the Office of Mines and Minerals (OMM). Today they still operate under the leadership of Bob Gibson, with the assistance of Bruce Schottel, as the Abandoned Mines Division of the IDNR-OMM, and numerous students have been supported over the years by working on their projects.

By the end of this period, faculty included Dorothy Gore (22 September 1965), Dean Marlow (21 September 1966), Alan Stueber in Earth Science; Deipica Bagchi (Fall 1978), Bill Baker (19 September 1963), Don Clements (1966), Charles Hess (22 September 1970), Bob Koepke (Fall quarter 1964), Fred Lampe (24 September 1969), Dick Thompson (Fall Quarter 1968), Chuck Thornton in Geography (22 September 1970); Norman Johnsen (1961), Carl Lossau (1 July 1963), Phil Simon, Don Strohmeier in planning (September 1973); and joint appointments Dick Guffy (Geography and Computer Center), Alfred Kahn (25 September 1967. Planning and CORD), Bob Mendelson (1 February 1966. Planning and CORD), Bill Woods (Geography and Contract Archaeology).
III. The Geography and Earth Science Department (1984 to 1990)

The beginning of this time interval was marked by the termination of the master’s program in city and regional planning (1984). The causes were varied but three circumstances stood out: (1) lack of published research, (2) opposition from the departments of Political Science and Economics, (3) internal friction and dissent within the planning program and the rest of the department. In 1979 there had been a vibrant 36 majors in the City and Regional Planning program, by 1982 this number was 21 and the program phased out with the last recorded major in 1985.

The end of this period was also a time of transition for the earth science program. Three earth science faculty members (Ron Yarbrough, Halsey Miller and Dottie Gore) had resigned. The replacements were Alan Stueber, Tom Guensburg, and Phil Smith. During this period all three programs in the department were reviewed and evaluated by the faculty senate curriculum council. Six years later the Earth Science degree program was reviewed and received a negative evaluation. As in the case of planning, internal dissention played a role. In addition, Dean Marlow’s retirement was looming in the near future. Consequently in 1990, the earth science degree program was also terminated but remained an option within the geography degree program.
As the figure below illustrates both the City and Regional Planning and Earth Science programs were once quite vibrant in terms of the number of majors they attracted.

![Majors 1978-2014](image)

There was a time, until the early 1980s, when the City and Regional Planning program had significantly more majors than the Geography graduate program. Also in its heyday, in the early 1980s, the Earth Science program had more majors than the Geography undergraduate program.

By the end of this period the faculty in Earth Science were Dean Marlow, Alan Stueber; in Geography there was Deipica Bagchi, Don Clements, Charles Hess, Bob Koepke, Fred Lampe, Carl Lossau, Dick Thompson, and Chuck Thornton. Bill Woods was also a member of Geography on joint appointment with Contract Archeology.

IV. The Geography Department (1990 on)

This period began with the loss of several faculty members, especially ‘senior’ faculty. In addition to Dean Marlow retiring, Charles Hess, Bob Koepke, Fred Lampe, Bill Baker, Don Clements, Carl Lossau, Deipica Bagchi, and Chuck Thornton had retired by 1998. Key replacements were hired during this period and a new position was added. Francis Odemerho, a physical geographer, filled the new position in 1991. In 1994 Wendy Shaw replaced Charles Hess, in 1995 Randy Pearson replaced Chuck Thornton and Bin Zhou (ZB) replaced Bob Koepke. These replacement faculty members remain as current faculty members. In 1998 Mike Starr was hired to replace Don Clements and he retired in 2013.
By 1998, the character and focus of the department was more typical of geography departments throughout higher education institutions. ZB fortified the gap left by Koepke in economic geography and Clements and Thornton in quantitative techniques. Wendy Shaw filled in the gap in graduate and undergraduate cultural geography courses. Randy Pearson replaced some of the areas previously supported by Thornton and Clements and as well as expanding and updating the GIS option in geography. He began acquiring contracts with many metropolitan corporations, and government agencies. Dick Thompson remained as ‘senior faculty’ and served as chairman from 1994 through 1999 while maintaining the department’s strong cartography option.

The addition of new faculty and the focus on geography alone resulted in a degree of stability that was sometimes lacking in previous decades. It is worth noting that a series of Chairs were instrumental in moving the Department forward through sometimes troubling times. These individuals we think included Melvin E. Kazeck, James Bridwell, Dean Marlow, Ron Yarbrough, Norm Johnson, Don Strohmeyer, Bob Frost, Halsey Miller, Harry Kircher, Chuck Thornton, Charles Hess, Carl Lossau, Noble (Dick) Thompson, Wendy Shaw, Randy Pearson, Shunfu Hu, Gillian Acheson, and Susan Hume. In recent years Gillian Acheson served as Chair from July 1, 2011 until June 30, 2017, and Susan Hume took over departmental leadership on July 1st, 2017.
During the 1990s and into the first decade of the 21st century, there was some turnover of faculty, some of whom stayed in the department only a short time. When Noble Thompson retired the position was filled by Rick Bunch who moved on to a position in Central Michigan University. The position left vacant by Dr. Bunch was then filled by Rick Wolfel, who subsequently left SIUE to take up an academic position at the United States Military Academy at West Point. Jim Hanlon stepped into Dr. Wolfel’s shoes in 2009.

In common with the rest of SIUE Geography had a significant number of retirements in the mid 1990s to the early 2000s. In some cases replacements are easy to track, but in others positions were realigned as elements of positions were reconfigured to meet current needs. Wendy Shaw left her Geography home in 2003 to serve as Associate Dean in the College of Arts and Sciences and after 15 years of service returned to the department in July 2018. Her faculty line was filled by Gillian Acheson in 2004. Alan Stueber retired in 2003 and his position was filled by Michael Grossman. In 1997 Paul Berger joined the Department and moved to the University of Nebraska-Kearney in 2003. Dr. Burger was replaced by Lydia Bean who stayed at SIUE a short time before moving back to Texas to pursue further educational opportunities. Susan Hume joined us in 2003 filling the faculty position vacated by Dr. Bean, and she became Chair on July 1, 2017.
The retirements brought a need to hire someone to teach meteorology and climate. Leslie-Ann Dupigny-Giroux was hired but only stayed for a brief time, leaving SIUE to join the faculty at the University of Vermont. In 1999 Mark Hildebrandt filled the position.

While all these changes in faculty were going on, the work in GIS was also changing under the leadership of Randy Pearson. Now named the Laboratory for Applied Spatial Analysis (LASA), and located in newly renovated space in University Park, the unit has become very active on a variety of projects both large and small. Dave Clelland (1 August 1979) recently retired, but projects continue to forge forward supported by Randy Pearson, Nancy Davis, Kerry Doyle, Felipe Rivera, and Mick Watters. In addition, many students continue to gain valuable skills working on GIS projects.
Geography has both lost and gained positions over the years. When Dr. Cao did not return to the department after the summer of 1994 he was not replaced. However, the department gained a new position on joint appointment with the Office of Science and Mathematics Education (OSME - later disbanded). Cathryn Springer filled this new position in 2005. Dr. Springer left the department in 2010 and this position was then filled by Stacey Brown who remains with the department today. A second new joint appointment position was added in partnership with Environmental Sciences. This position was filled in 2009 by Elizabeth ‘Beth’ Walton. Beth left the position in 2012 and the position was filled by Adriana ‘Didi’ Martinez in 2013. In 2014 Michael Shouse joined the department to fill the gap left by Mike Starr’s retirement, but he left the department for a job outside academia during the spring 2019 semester. The newest member of the Geography faculty is Dr. Alan Black who specializes in weather and climate. Alan joined us in August 2018.
Of course, no discussion of the history and progress of the Department of Geography at SIUE is complete without recognition of the fundamental contributions of our clerical support staff.

This is where some early history becomes a little hazy. What we can gather is that Linda Meroni worked in the office in the early years. Janice Miller was hired November 16th 1978 by Jim Bridwell and for a short time worked beside Carla Culp who resigned after she got married. At that time the department was split between Alumni Hall (then called Building III) and Peck Hall and was supported by two staff employees. When Janice Miller was hired, she was to support Geography in Alumni Hall but when Carl Culp left she was moved to Peck Hall. During Charles Hess’ tenure as Chair, Janice Miller once again moved to Alumni Hall. Kennan Haynes was hired to work in Peck Hall but resigned sometime during the 1980’s. In the early 1980’s Janice Moore was also a staff person supporting the department but she eventually shifted to work for the Office of Mines and Minerals. The Office of Mines and Minerals is located in Alumni Hall but is not a part of the University, but instead is part of the Illinois Department of Natural Resources.

Janice Miller brought continuity and stability to the Department in terms of staffing, and current faculty remember her long commitment to Geography and her office lavishly decorated with ‘M&M’ memorabilia! She retired in Spring 2014. On August 2nd 2014 Catherine (Cat) Yurkovich became the staff support person for Geography.
So, where is everyone mentioned now? In some cases, we have ample information and in other cases we do not. Appendix A provides detail of what we know.

Where are we going as a Department? Of course, this is a complex question to answer. Whatever the challenges and directions in the future, we have a solid foundation to build upon provided by the by the contributors to our department over the last 60 years.

Appendix A.

At the time of this update (August 2019):

TENURED AND TENURE-TRACK FACULTY

**Gillian Acheson** (Ph.D. Texas A & M University, 2003)
Joined us in 2004
Professor - Geographical education, human geography (cultural landscape, population), social justice

**Alan Black** (Ph.D. University of Georgia, 2015)
Joined us in 2018
Assistant Professor - Climatology and climate change, extreme events, atmospheric hazards and impacts, weather and transportation

**Stacey Brown** (Ph.D. Oklahoma State University, 2011)
Joined us in 2011
Associate Professor - Medical geography, urban geography, human geography, Geographic Information Systems, quantitative methods

**Michael Grossman** (Ph.D. University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2003)
Joined us in 2004
Professor - Physical geology and geography, hydrology, fluvial geomorphology, floods, climate and the environment, environmental history of the Holocene, Japan and East Asia
James Hanlon (Ph.D. University of Kentucky, 2008)  
Joined us in 2009  
Associate Professor - Urban, cultural, and historical geography, public and affordable housing, urban redevelopment, racial segregation and inequality, social theory

Mark L. Hildebrandt (Ph.D. Arizona State University, 1999)  
Joined us 1999  
Associate Professor - Meteorology, climatology, hazards, statistics, polar and alpine environments.

Shunfu Hu (Ph.D. University of Georgia, 1998)  
Joined us in 2002  
Professor - Geographic Information Systems, multimedia, remote sensing, hydrology, meteorology, cartography, physical geography

Susan Hume (Ph.D. University of Oregon, 2005)  
Joined us in 2004  
Professor and Chair - Ethnicity and race, immigrant and refugee adaptation, migration studies, cultural geography, urban geography, geographic education (North America, Sub-Saharan Africa)

Adriana E. Martinez (Ph.D. University of Oregon, 2013)  
Joined us in 2013  
Associate Professor - Physical geography, fluvial geomorphology, riparian zones, GIS

Francis Odemerho (Ph.D. Clark University, 1982)  
Joined us in 1991  
Associate Professor - Geomorphology, physical geography and geology, regional geography of Africa, cultural impacts on geomorphic processes and forms, GIS applications in geomorphology

Randall Pearson (Ph.D. Indiana State University, 1993)  
Joined us in 1995  
Professor and Director of the Laboratory for Applied Spatial Analysis - Remote sensing and digital image processing, Geographic Information Systems, physical geology and geography

Wendy Shaw (Ph.D. University of Georgia, 1994)  
Joined us in 1994
Professor - Social and cultural geography, development, geographic education, urban geography, history and philosophy of geography. As of 30 June 2018 she will step out of administration and come back to the department full time.

**Bin Zhou** (Ph.D. University of Georgia, 1994)
Joined us in 1995
Professor - Financial and banking geography, monetary policies and exchange rates, trade, finance and world economy, productivity and efficiency in manufacturing and school, China

**FORMER FACULTY / STAFF (deaths noted when known)**

Deipica Bagchi
   Ph.D. Oregon State University, 1977
William B. Baker [Died Unknown date]
   Ph.D. University of Nebraska 1958
Lydia Bean
Paul Berger
James Bridwell [Died Tuesday, March 15, 2011]
Rick Bunch
C. Cao
Dave W. Clelland
   BS Southern Illinois University Edwardsville 1977
Donald William Clements
   Ph.D. Southern Illinois University Carbondale 1975
James Collier
Robert P. Frost
   MA University of Missouri 1963
Leslie-Ann Dupigny-Giroux
Tom Guensberg
Dorothy Jean Gore
   Ph.D. University of Wisconsin 1963
Richard E. Guffy
Charles Frank Hess [Died Monday, July 31 2017]
   Ph.D. Michigan State University 1964
Norman Conrad Johnsen [Died Sunday, July 1, 2012] [Born May 8, 1928]
   MA Syracuse University 1962
Alfred Kahn
   MS University of Denver 1954
Melvin Kazeck [Died 2 November, 2011]
Harry B. Kircher
Ph.D. Clark University 1961
- Robert L. Koepke [Died Thursday, February 17, 2011]
- Ph.D. University of Illinois 1966

Ph.D. University of Illinois 1969
- Carl S. Lossau [Died Monday, January 16, 2006]
- Ph.D. Northwestern University 1962

Ph.D. Southern Illinois University Carbondale 1973
- Loran Dean Marlow
- Robert E. Mendelson
  - M Urban Planning University of Illinois 1966

Ph.D. University of Kansas 1958
- Halsey Wilkinson Miller
  - Ph.D. University of Kansas 1958

Ph.D. Southern Illinois University Carbondale 1973
- Janice Miller
- Janice Moore
- Jim Royston
- Michael Shouse
- Phil Smith
- Cathryn Springer
- Michael Starr
- Dale Schaefer
- Donald K. Strohmeyer
  - MS Kansas State University 1962

Ph.D. University of Illinois 1966
- Alan Stueber [Died Saturday, October 24, 2009]

Ph.D. University of Tennessee 1970
- Noble Richard Thompson III [Died, Sunday, July 1, 2001]
  - Ph.D. University of Tennessee 1973

Ph.D. University of Tennessee 1973
- Charles Arthur Thornton

Ph.D. University of Tennessee 1970
- Elizabeth Walton
- William Wiseman
- Rick Wolfel
- William Woods [Died September 2015]

Ph.D. University of Tennessee 1972
- Ronald E. Yarbrough [Died Wednesday, April 29, 2015]