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. He worked in the Department for 23 years. 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). Dr. Kazeck retired in 1976.

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 Yarborough 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.

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.
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 (SWIMPAC), 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 as 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 (AMLC). 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 dissention 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.

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 became very active on a variety of projects both large and small. Dave Clelland (1 August 1979) recently retired, but projects continued 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. Dr. Changyong Cao was also a faculty member in technology related areas. In summer 1994 he went to a Nasa facility in Mississippi and chose not to return. When he 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. Dr. Alan Black who specializes in weather and climate joined us in August 2018.
In the Fall of 2018 Wendy Shaw returned to the department after serving as Associate Dean in the College of Arts and Sciences since 2003. Dr. Shannon McCarragher, who is a Biogeographer, joined us in August 2020 during unusual times where all courses were being delivered online because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Shannon received her PhD from Northern Illinois University in 2015. Before coming to SIUE she was an Assistant Professor in the Geography, Social, Cultural, and Justice Studies Department, at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga. In September 2020 the Department officially changed its name to the Department of Geography and Geographic Information Sciences, which reflects the increasing role of GIS within our curriculum.

This was a challenging time for everyone. Sadly, after a battle with COVID-19 Dr. Francis Odemerho passed away of December 4th, which was a shock and sadness to us all as he was only 68 years old. A native of Aragba-orugun, Nigeria, Odemerho joined the SIUE College of Arts and Sciences faculty in 1991 as an assistant professor in the Department of Geography. He was promoted to the rank of associate professor in 1996 and awarded tenure in 1997. Prior to his arrival at SIUE, he taught at the University of Benin in Nigeria for 10 years. Mark Hildebrandt left SIUE in January 2022 and Kerry Doyle retired in Fall 2021. Michael Grossman retired from the Department at the end of August 2022 after being here since 2004; he moved to Tokyo Japan after his retirement.
During recent years GIS and related technologies have become more important within Geography as a discipline and more of a focus within our Department. On September 29th 2020, a change in our department name was officially approved. We are now the Department of Geography and Geographic Information Sciences. Reflecting this increased focus on GIS we have a new faculty member who joined us in August 2022. Dr. Tianyu Li earned a Ph.D. in Earth and Atmospheric Sciences from Mississippi State University in 2017, and amongst other things his interests focus on GIScience, cyber GIS, and big data. In Spring 2021 LASA was moved from Geography to be under the administration of the Graduate School. LASA became an official SIUE Center and was renamed GeoMARC. Randy Pearson continues to direct GeoMARC but it means that he teaches less in the Department. Beginning in the Fall 2022 semester we welcomed our first Instructor in the Department. Instructors focus on teaching and this hire will bring stability especially to our lower division physical geography and earth science courses. Susannah Oettle, a graduate of our undergraduate program, will fill this instructor role.

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. Cat moved on to a position outside SIUE in 2019. In February 2020 Claire Miles became the Office Support Specialist for the Department of 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 65 years.

I plan to retire on June 30th 2023, so I hope someone else will keep this history going.

Appendix A.

At the time of this update (May 2023):

**TENURED AND TENURE-TRACK FACULTY**

**Gillian Acheson** (Ph.D. Texas A & M University, 2003)
Join 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 Amilian** (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

**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

**Tianyu Li** (Ph.D. Mississippi State University, 2017)
Joined us in 2022
Assistant Professor - Geospatial sciences, remote sensing, and data science

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

**Shannon McCarragher** (Ph.D. Northern Illinois University, 2015)
Joined us in 2020
Assistant Professor - Conservation Biogeography, Geographic Information Systems, Cartography, and STEM Education
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 Retired 1977 [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-Anne Dupigny-Giroux
Tom Guensberg
Dorothy Jean Gore
Ph.D. University of Wisconsin 1963
Richard E. Guffy
Charles Frank Hess Retired 1994 [Died Monday, July 31 2017]
Ph.D. Michigan State University 1964
Mark Hildebrandt
Ph.D. Arizona State University, 1999
Norman Conrad Johnsen Born May 8, 1928. [Died Sunday, July 1, 2012] []
MA Syracuse University 1962
Alfred Kahn  
MS University of Denver 1954

Melvin Kazeck  Retired 1976  [Died 2 November, 2011]

Harry B. Kircher  
Ph.D. Clark University 1961

Robert L. Koeck  [Died Thursday, February 17, 2011]

Fred Allen Lampe  Retired 1992  [Died Sunday, July 1, 2012]

Carl S. Lossau  Retired 1994  [Died Monday, January 16, 2006]

Loran Dean Marlow  [Died Saturday, October 14, 2017]

Robert E. Mendelson  
M Urban Planning University of Illinois 1966

Halsey Wilkinson Miller  
Ph.D. University of Kansas 1958

Janice Miller  
Janice Moore

Francis Odemerho  Born 1952.  [Died Friday, December 4th, 2020]

Jim Royston

Michael Shouse

Phil Smith

Cathryn Springer

Michael Starr  Retired 2014

Dale Schaefer  [Died Wednesday, September 22nd 2021]

Donald K. Strohmeyer  
MS Kansas State University 1962

Alan Stueber  Retired December 2003  [Died Saturday, October 24, 2009]

Noble Richard Thompson III  [Died, Sunday, July 1, 2001]

Ph.D. University of Tennessee 1973

Charles Arthur Thornton  
Ph.D. University of Tennessee 1970

Elizabeth Walton

William Wisemantel

Rick Wolfel

William Woods  Retired December 2004  [Died September 2015]

Ronald E. Yarbrough  Retired 1993  [Died Wednesday, April 29, 2015]

Ph.D. University of Tennessee 1972