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MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR, MURRAY GINGRAS

What's in a Name?

This month, our department voted on a proposal brought forward by Sasha Wilson to rename us Geoscience, Geography and Planning (GGP). The support was near unanimous. The decision made me pause and think about the history of our department, and how names both shape and reflect identity.

The Department of Earth and Atmospheric Sciences was born in 1995, the result of a merger between the Departments of Geology and Geography. The vision came from then-Dean Dick Peters, a decisive, street-fighting administrator who believed that smaller units would be stronger together. Brian Jones, who later became Chair of the new department, pushed hard for the merger. Still, resistance was real. Faculty and students felt that departmental names anchored their identities, research directions, and pedagogical goals.

The name itself never felt particularly inspired, and everyone sensed it didn't quite capture who we were as a department. Looking back, I wonder why the merger did not result in the Department of Geology and Geography. What I do understand is that the choice of name was no easy discussion, and I can only offer kudos to those who ultimately found consensus on the new department's name.

I remember this well as a senior undergraduate and president of the PS Warren Geological Society. At the time, I was as geology-focused as one could be, and the thought of diluting that identity didn't sit right. We had just made new "Geology" caps, and Brian pulled me aside to suggest we drop the word "Geology" from the society's name in favor of something more inclusive. We refused, and to this day the PSWGS remains part of our undergraduate culture. Sometimes I wonder if we made the wrong choice—but then again, distinct student groups like the Paleontology Society or the Geography and Planning Students' Society still serve important purposes in building professional networks.

Over time, the merger proved its worth. As a PhD student, I formed close collaborations with colleagues who, before 1995, would have been in a different department entirely. Those collaborations led directly to the founding of ATLAS in 1996, under first President Astrid Arts (with me as the first Treasurer). That experience showed me that science thrives not in silos, but in the spaces where ideas and people converge.

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR, MURRAY GINGRAS CONT'D...

Name changes can be tricky. Think of Dunkin' Donuts, which shortened its name to Dunkin' in 2018 to highlight coffee—but eventually circled back to donuts in 2024, because the pastry was simply inseparable from their identity. However, when Facebook rebranded as Meta, they weren't just changing a name; they were signaling a shift in what they wanted people to see them as. "Facebook" tied them to one product,

but "Meta" was about identity in a bigger world, the metaverse. For us, GGP feels like the latter: a natural, forward-looking evolution that better projects who we are.

After thirty years together, no one can deny that our department is cohesive, dynamic, and filled with potential. The new name, Geoscience, Geography, and Planning, captures the reality of our work, from the natural world to urban landscapes, and from human interaction with the Earth to the science beneath our feet. It will, I believe, encourage cross-border "shopping" between our programs, inspire new collaborations, and set us up well for the decades ahead.

Here's to GGP—both a continuation of our history, and a name for our future.



NEW - Faculty of Science General Safety

The Faculty of Science has just launched a new safety orientation that is now available to everyone. The General Safety module covers useful information on mandatory safety training through HSE, how to use HSE as a resource, how-to videos on incident reporting and hazard assessments, and information on general hazards everyone faces such as working alone, psychosocial safety, and ergonomics. This course is mandatory for newcomers and a useful safety resource for those who have been at the UofA for some time. Please [follow the link](#) to get access to the course material.



2025 EAS Summer Field Season

Thank you all for your hard work on field safety this year and we hope you all had a productive summer field season. With your assistance, we had a number of reports of various field incidents which we've been able to use as learning experiences. We had a couple of trailer detachments; one of which you can read up about in the Field Research Office newsletter - June issue. We had three incidents related to accommodations - two of which involved unsafe situations. These highlighted the importance of getting information from locals on safe hotels, as online reviews can be inaccurate, and being vigilant when answering the door when staying in accommodations. We also had a truck collision with a deer and a hospitalization due to heat stroke. All the aforementioned incidents were handled well by all those involved and we commend you for your quick actions, commitment to safety, and reporting your incidents so we can all learn from them.

Weekly Yoga

Did you know that EAS provides a lunchtime self-guided yoga practice each week?

Where: ESB 2-18

When: Wednesdays from 12:05-12:50pm

Mats provided, no experience required, and no special clothing needed. Contact Sarah Woodland, at swoodlan@ualberta.ca for more information.



Personal Hygiene Lockers

Lockers 301 and 321 on the 3rd floor of ESB contain personal hygiene items, such as toothbrushes/toothpaste, dental floss, deodorant, soap, and more.

These items have been generously donated by EAS staff and faculty, and are intended to be used by graduate students.

Locker combinations can be found on the EAS Intranet site, or by scanning the QR code located on the locker door. Please take what you need!



Grad Pantry

The Grad Pantry provides food staples for graduate students in need. The pantry is generously stocked by our EAS staff and faculty, and includes items such as canned goods, dry foods, produce, meat, and more.

The Grad Pantry is located in the Grad Lounge (ESB 3-01A).



How Batteries Will Save the World (Kind Of)

Join Dr. Matt Labbe for an interactive lecture where he will explain the crucial role of energy storage in supporting clean, renewable energy. You will also participate in engaging activities, such as sorting energy types, exploring energy sources across Canada, and learning the difference between rechargeable and non-rechargeable batteries. This event is in partnership with Future Energy Systems and is part of the Sustainability Council's ongoing Lecture Series. Register [here](#)

October 22, 2025 | 4:00 - 5:00pm
Room 1-330, University Commons (UCOMM)



October 7, 2025 | 1:00 - 2:00pm
Tory 3-36

Department Talk: Maija Raudsepp

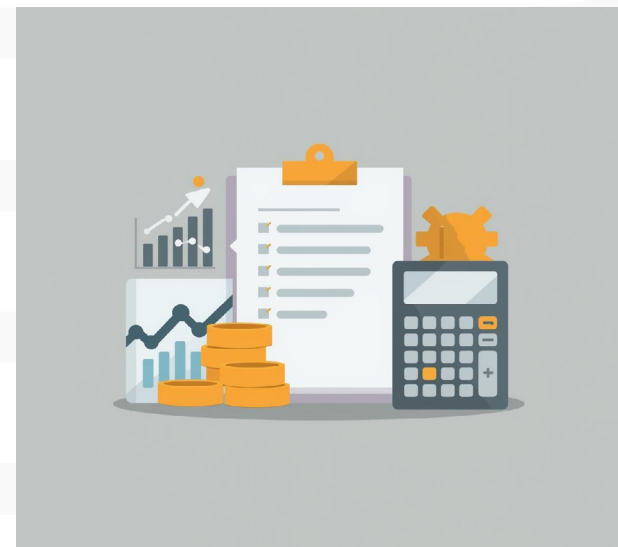
The fate of Ca, Mg and CO₂ after terrestrial rock weathering: Constraining the carbon cycle

Over geologic time scales, the silicate-carbonate cycle controls atmospheric CO₂ concentrations and moderates Earth's climate. Geochemical carbon dioxide removal (geoCDR) seeks to use this geochemistry to remove some of the anthropogenic CO₂ that has been emitted into the atmosphere. However, predicting controls on Ca and Mg carbonate precipitation after rock weathering has remained challenging. In my recent work published in Geology, I have demonstrated that there are empirical limits to the solubility of Ca and Mg carbonate in the fresh to hypersaline lakes of central British Columbia. This research also suggests there is a single geochemical control for Ca and Mg carbonates, which is key for understanding natural and anthropogenic inorganic carbon storage and cycles.

Department Administration Information

Air Booking Mandate Update: Low-cost Carriers

There are international regional low cost carriers that operate intra-country only. Many of these carriers cannot be ticketed by the UofA Travel Management Company. In these circumstances, claimants can now book directly with the airline. A list of carriers are available [here](#). Payment methods can include P-Card and personal payment (ex: credit card and cash). If an airline is required that is not on this list, please contact smstrvl@ualberta.ca



2027 Budget Development Project

The 2027 Budget Development Project information is available to view [here](#).



Have you met...

[Sophia Jewell]

What do you do in the department?

I am a PhD student in Human Geography, working with Dr. Sandeep Agrawal and Dr. Rob Shields. My research investigates the mobilization of care networks in the context of humanitarian aid for political refugees. I'm really interested in developing relational approaches to community-driven research (my latest obsessions are ethics of care and narrative cartography). I am looking forward to contributing to the Bridging Divides project.

I am also the Human Geography Rep for Atlas and the Mentorship Coordinator for the Grace Anne Stewart Initiative – so if you see me, be sure to say hi :)

What's your favourite distraction?

When I'm not distracting myself with a side research project, I enjoy participating in competitive sheepdog trials with my border collie, doing calligraphy, textile arts, and learning languages (eg. Polish, Ukrainian, Korean, Mi'kmaq, Spanish and Greek). I also really love daydreaming about future research projects and going for walks in the river valley.

What's something your coworkers might not know about you?

I took my first course at the University of Alberta when I was 14. I liked it so much, I ended up staying for an undergrad degree instead of going to high school. I've been addicted to learning and research ever since.

If you were enrolling in one course, program or degree right now, what would it be?

Only one? That's difficult... I'm really interested in qualitative GIS, so I would love to take some courses on that. I would also love to take Cree – I would love to learn more about the cultures and languages that are so deeply connected to this land (and Cree syllabics are just incredibly cool...). It would be fun to take a class on world philosophies or a class on the politics of human rights.

What advice would you give your 18-year-old self?

Don't wait for the chance to make a difference – create your own chances. Don't be afraid to take your creativity outside of academia to advocate for the issues you care about most.

What's one thing you can't live without?

Couldn't live without my dog. She's always there to interrupt me when I get wrapped in my own world (or am 5 minutes away from finishing an assignment...). We keep each other busy, and love every minute of it.

What's something that makes you happy to come to work?

I love the breadth of perspectives and approaches found within geography – its inherent interdisciplinarity. To work in a department which draws together experts in oceanography, affordable housing, glaciology, immigration policy and GIS just creates such an incredible interdisciplinary environment. The potentials of working at this unique intersection really excites me. I am really looking forward to being part of this community and adding my own background and research interests to this mix.

Contact Sasha Wilson (sawilson@ualberta.ca) to suggest an EAS member to be profiled, or if would like to be profiled yourself!

STUDENT EVENTS, RESOURCES, & ANNOUNCEMENTS

ATLAS Morning Coffee

Join us in the Grad Lounge (ESB 3-01A) on Mondays at 9:30am for coffee, tea and treats. Come socialize with grad students, staff, and profs! [Volunteer](#) to bring in a baked good to share with your colleagues. Bring your own mug! Organized by [ATLAS](#) and supported by the Wellness Committee.



GASI Mentorship Program

Register [here](#) for the Grace Anne Stewart Initiative Mentorship program- limited spots available!

GRACE ANNE STEWART INITIATIVE MENTORSHIP PROGRAM: 2025-2026 COHORT

- One-on-one support from an expert in your field
- Participate in special networking events with specialists
- Share your research at our department-wide poster presentation event at the end of the program
- Guidance on networking, fieldwork, career development, internships, conferences and more!

**A total of 6 (once a month) Zoom meetings
scheduled at your convenience.**

*Open to both
undergraduate and
graduate students!*

**Limited spots available
– sign up now!**



STUDENT EVENTS, RESOURCES, & ANNOUNCEMENTS CONT'D...

Research Funding Opportunities

Polar Knowledge Canada: Polar Knowledge Canada Scholarship

Polar Knowledge Canada (POLAR) sponsors the [Polar Knowledge Canada PhD Scholarship](#) annually, valued at \$10,000.

RAS Full Application Deadline: November 24, 2025

Sponsor Deadline: December 1, 2025

Polar Knowledge Canada: Northern Scientific Training Program

The primary objective of the [program](#) is to encourage Canadian universities and Northern post-secondary institutions in their efforts to foster an interest in northern research among graduate students and, in doing so, enable them to acquire practical experience in scientific research in the North. The deadline for students to submit an application (including supervisor recommendations) is November 10th, 2025.

Pre-Application Deadline: November 10, 2025

RAS Full Application Deadline: November 24, 2025

Sponsor Deadline: December 1, 2025

Be sure to check out the [database](#) for the full list of funding opportunities.

Call for Submissions

If you would like to submit an event or information to be included in next month's issue, please email s.hemrick@ualberta.ca by 12pm (noon) on October 29, 2025.



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