



The AMERICAN ASSOCIATION of GEOGRAPHERS
Spatial Analysis and Modeling Specialty Group Newsletter
2026 <http://sam-aag.org/>

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FROM THE CHAIR

Dear SAM-SG members,

Welcome to the 2026 AAG Conference in San Francisco! I would like to begin by expressing my sincere gratitude to everyone who has supported and contributed to the Spatial Analysis and Modeling Specialty Group (SAM-SG) over the past year. As one of the largest Specialty Groups within the AAG, we are delighted to welcome our new members, and I am proud to see our community continue to grow.

As Chair of this specialty group, I would like to express my sincere thanks to our Board Members, who have served this community with dedication—through countless meetings, emails, and thoughtful decision-making—to strengthen the vision and activities of our group. I would like to highlight a few important activities during 2025-2026.

First, we finalized the approval of the bylaws at our March 2025 meeting, incorporating numerous updates to reflect our current needs and practices. These revisions included clarifying language throughout the document, expanding and refining the statements describing board members' roles and responsibilities, and increasing the size of the board. The new bylaws are available on our SAM-SG website for all members to review.

Second, we also approved an updated membership fee structure to better support our members—especially our student members, while ensuring a more sustainable budget for the group. I sincerely appreciate the efforts of our board members and all SAM-SG members who participated in the voting process for both changes.

This year, we are pleased to share several updates regarding the 2026 AAG Conference. We are sponsoring a total of 87 SAM-sponsored sessions, marking the second-highest number in our group's history. We are also delighted to host two sessions of the John Odland Student Competition (commonly known as the SAM Student Paper Competition). Congratulations to the winners and selected participants for the sessions, and special thanks to Dr. Jiannan Cai, our Academic Director, and all the judges for helping maintain this important tradition. These sessions will provide you with an excellent opportunity to witness cutting edge, high-quality research across various spatial analyses and modeling. The presentations were selected through a rigorous review process conducted by esteemed SAM scholars.

In addition, we are providing travel support for selected graduate students who were chosen through a rigorous evaluation and voting process by our Board Members—congratulations to all the recipients! We also extend a warm welcome to our newly elected board members: Dr. Tylor Oshan from the University of Maryland as Vice Chair, Dr. Ziqi Li from Florida State University as Academic Director, and Maya Lakshman from Johns Hopkins University as Student Representative. Our current Vice Chair, Dr. Salap Ayca, will begin the role of Chair immediately following the business meeting.

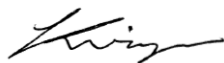
As a final note, I would like to highlight several SAM-SG events of particular interest. First, Dr. Mei-Po Kwan from the Chinese University of Hong Kong will deliver the 2026 GA/SAM Plenary Lecture, presenting her current research, “*Neighborhood Effect Averaging Revisited: Why It Matters in Geographic, Social Science, and Environmental Health Research.*” Dr. Kwan currently serves as the Head of Chung Chi College and Director of the Institute of Space and Earth Information Science and is a former editor of the *Annals of the AAG*. The GA/SAM Plenary Lecture will be held on Thursday, March 19, 2026, from 4:10 PM to 5:30 PM at Continental 6, Ballroom Level, Hilton Hotel. Following the lecture, you are warmly invited to attend the reception.

Finally, I warmly invite you to join the SAM Business Meeting, scheduled for Thursday, March 19, 2026, from 11:40 AM to 12:40 PM at Nob Hill 6 & 7, Hilton, Tower 3. During this meeting, we will announce the winners of the John Odland Student Paper Competition, Student Travel Awards, Emerging Scholar Awards, and Outstanding Service Award. We will also introduce newly elected board members and recognize the outstanding contributions of our members.

Thank you for your membership and for the many contributions you have made to our SAM-SG community. We always welcome your feedback, suggestions, and questions regarding our SAM-SG efforts, and we look forward to meeting you in San Francisco.

Best wishes,

Hyun Kim



Outgoing Chair, SAM Specialty Group

Upcoming Event: 2026 AAG

As we are approaching the 2026 Annual meeting of AAG, we would like to highlight the news of the Spatial Analysis and Modeling (SAM) Specialty Group.

For 2026 AAG, individuals will have the opportunity to present and learn from the Annual Meeting in person and online.

Thank you for supporting the SAM Specialty Group community and we are looking forward to meeting you at AAG 2026.

SAM Announcements

2026 SAM Plenary Speaker Dr. Mei-Po Kwan

Choh-Ming Li Professor of Geography and Resource Management

The Chinese University of Hong Kong

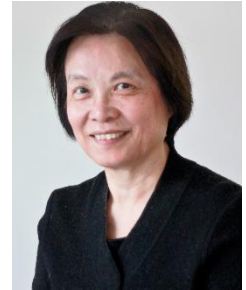


We are pleased to announce that Dr. Mei-Po Kwan is selected for the 2026 SAM Plenary Lecture. Dr. Kwan is the Head of Chung Chi College and the Director of the Institute of Space and Earth Information Science. Her research addresses health, transport, environmental, and social issues in urban areas through the application of innovative geographic information system (GIS) methods. Her lecture will focus on revisiting Neighborhood Effect Averaging and examine why it matters in geographic, social science and environmental health research

Congratulations, Dr. Kwan!

2026 SAM Outstanding Service Award Dr. Ling Bian

Professor
Department of Geography
University at Buffalo



Dr. Ling Bian is Director of the National Center for Geographic Information and Analysis (NCGIA). Her research has shaped the conceptual and analytical frameworks for representing spatial mobility, interaction, and networked geographic phenomena, with findings published in leading journals including the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, *Annals of the American Association of Geographers*, and the *International Journal of Geographical Information Science*. She is also a recipient of the Leica Geosystems Award for Best Scientific Paper in Remote Sensing from the American Society of Photogrammetry and Remote Sensing. Since 2018, she has served as Methods Section Editor of the *Annals of the American Association of Geographers*, further demonstrating her commitment to advancing geographic scholarship.

Congratulations, Dr. Bian!

Editor's column

Meet Dr. Geoff Boeing 2026 SAM Emerging Scholar

Associate Professor
Department of Urban
Planning and Spatial
Analysis
University of Southern
California



Dr. Boeing is an Associate Professor in the University of Southern California's Department

of Urban Planning and Spatial Analysis, the Director of USC’s Urban Data Lab, and a Nonresident Senior Fellow at the Brookings Institution. His research explores the spatial outcomes of urban planning through network analysis, geospatial data science, and machine learning. It has won several awards, including the Nobel Sustainability Award, the Stough-Johansson Springer Award, and the Zephyr Foundation’s Technical Achievement Award. Dr Boeing’s research is regularly featured in outlets such as *The Economist*, *The Guardian*, *The Atlantic*, and *The Washington Post*.

Meet Dr. Taylor Oshan 2026 SAM Emerging Scholar

Associate Professor
Department of Geographical
Sciences
University of Maryland



Dr. Taylor M. Oshan is an Associate Professor in the Department of Geographical Sciences and the Center for Geospatial Information Science at the University of Maryland, where he specializes in quantitative geography, spatial analysis, and geospatial data science. His research marries spatial and social science theory with methodological advancements in spatial regression, local modeling, and machine learning, with urban applications focused on transportation, crime, and health. His work has been supported by the NSF, private foundations, local government, and industry, and he has published in leading journals including *IJGIS*, *TGIS*, *GA*, and *Annals of the AAG*.

Announced Soon the John Odland Student Paper Competition Winners

This year’s SAM-SG Student Paper Competition received 34 submissions, reflecting continued

strong engagement from students across a wide range of institutions. After two rounds of external review, eight students have advanced to the final round of the competition.

- V. Irekponor, University of Maryland
- Zhenzhi Jiao, University of Georgia
- C. Maniyar, University of Georgia
- Qianqian Chen, Tongji University
- Chen-Lun Kao, Florida State University
- Bikram Parajuli, University of Oklahoma
- Devin Wu, University of Toronto
- Xinyang Zhang, Louisiana State University

The winner will be announced at the SAM Business Meeting at the Annual Meeting of the AAG.

We sincerely thank our external reviewers for their time and expertise for two rounds of reviews. This year’s judging panel included scholars from institutions in the U.S., Canada, the U.K., China, and Hong Kong, representing a diverse cross-section of spatial analysis expertise.

2026 Student Travel Award Winners

- **Chehyeon Lee**, Arizona State University
- **Min Jeong**, University of Texas at Dallas
- **Qian Cao**, University of Georgia

Congratulations to all of the 2026 student travel award recipients. Winners were selected from a pool of 36 applicants.

SAM-Sponsored Sessions at 2026 AAG Meeting

The SAM SG is sponsoring the sessions below. Click the link for your access to the detailed information of sessions.

- *Spatial Analysis and Modeling Specialty Group Business Meeting*
- *John Odland SAM student paper competition I*
- *John Odland SAM student paper competition II*
- *Spatial Analysis and Modeling (SAM) / Geographical Analysis Plenary: Mei-Po Kwan, The Chinese University of Hong Kong*
- AAG 2026 Symposium on Spatial AI and Data Science: Frontiers and Applications: Advancing Agricultural Monitoring through Remote Sensing (1)
- AAG 2026 Symposium on Spatial AI and Data Science: Frontiers and Applications: Advancing Agricultural Monitoring through Remote Sensing (2)
- AAG 2026 Symposium on Spatial AI and Data Science: Frontiers and Applications: AI and Spatial Networks - Part I
- AAG 2026 Symposium on Spatial AI and Data Science: Frontiers and Applications: AI and Spatial Networks - Part II
- AAG 2026 Symposium on Spatial AI and Data Science: Frontiers and Applications: Challenges and Opportunities of Mobility and Spatial Accessibility (Panel)
- AAG 2026 Symposium on Spatial AI and Data Science: Frontiers and Applications: GeoAI for Multi-source Geospatial Data Fusion and Analysis
- AAG 2026 Symposium on Spatial AI and Data Science: Frontiers and Applications: Harnessing Geospatial Big Data for Urban Studies
- AAG 2026 Symposium on Spatial AI and Data Science: Frontiers and Applications: I-GUIDE Platform
- AAG 2026 Symposium on Spatial AI and Data Science: Frontiers and Applications: Innovations in Spatial Accessibility (1)
- AAG 2026 Symposium on Spatial AI and Data Science: Frontiers and Applications: New Directions in GIScience Education
- AAG 2026 Symposium on Spatial AI and Data Science: Frontiers and Applications: New Directions in GIScience Education 2
- AAG 2026 Symposium on Spatial AI and Data Science: Frontiers and Applications: Pushing the Frontiers of Geospatial Analysis for Vegetation Remote Sensing
- AAG 2026 Symposium on Spatial AI and Data Science: Frontiers and Applications: Rethinking the Design and Application of Spatial Decision Support System
- AAG 2026 Symposium on Spatial AI and Data Science: Frontiers and Applications: Spatial AI and Data Science for Advancing Geographic Research
- AAG 2026 Symposium on Spatial AI and Data Science: Frontiers and Applications: Spatial AI and Foundation Models
- AAG 2026 Symposium on Spatial AI and Data Science: Frontiers and Applications: Spatial Representation Learning
- AAG 2026 Symposium on Spatial AI and Data Science: Frontiers and Applications: UCGIS Humans and Geospatial AI Book Club: Exploring Human Experience, Ethics, and Creativity
- Advancements in Population Synthesis for Human Dynamics Modeling
- Artificial Intelligence in Urban Climate Action: Integrating Data, Science, and Planning
- Causal Analysis in Geography 1 - Human Geography
- Causal Analysis in Geography 2 - Transportation Geography
- Causal Analysis in Geography 3 - New Methods and Approaches
- Causal Analysis in Geography 4 - Debates and Directions
- Fleming Lecture Reception
- GeoAI and Deep Learning Symposium: Advances and Potential Risks in GeoAI Research

- GeoAI and Deep Learning Symposium: AI Ethics and Spatial Equity
- GeoAI and Deep Learning Symposium: GeoAI for Spatial Analytics and Modeling
- GeoAI and Deep Learning Symposium: Geographic Biases and Transferability in GeoAI
- GeoAI and Deep Learning Symposium: Geosimulation and Its Emerging Directions with AI (1)
- GeoAI and Deep Learning Symposium: Geosimulation and Its Emerging Directions with AI (2)
- GeoAI and Deep Learning Symposium: Social Sensing and GeoAI for Public Health
- GeoAI and Health: Methods, Applications, and Innovations Across Domains
- Geographical Principles in Spatial Analysis and Modeling
- Geographies of Care in the Age of AI: Mapping and Modeling Homelessness and Public Health with Big Data Session I
- Geographies of Care in the Age of AI: Mapping and Modeling Homelessness and Public Health with Big Data Session II
- Geographies of Care in the Age of AI: Mapping and Modeling Homelessness and Public Health with Big Data Session III
- Geographies of Care in the Age of AI: Mapping and Modeling Homelessness and Public Health with Big Data Session IV
- Geospatial analysis and GeoAI for E-Mobility
- Geospatial Approaches for Understanding Landscape Dynamics
- Geospatial Health Research Symposium 10: Neighborhood Contexts of Health Behaviors and Outcomes
- Geospatial Health Research Symposium 12: Spatiotemporal Perspectives on Geographies of Mortality I
- Geospatial Health Research Symposium 13: Spatiotemporal Perspectives on Geographies of Mortality II
- Geospatial Health Research Symposium 9: Urban Green Space in the Environment-Health Nexus
- Geospatial Representations for Spatial Analytics, Prediction, and Explainability
- GIScience at Cal (1): Celebrating Dr. John Radke's Academic Career and Retirement
- GIScience at Cal (2): Celebrating Dr. John Radke's Academic Career and Retirement
- GISER Symposium: AI & Ethics in Geography Education
- GISER Symposium: Ethics in GIScience
- GISER Symposium: GIScience and Hazards I
- GISER Symposium: GIScience and Hazards II
- GISER Symposium: Human Networks and Data Science (Panel)
- GISER Symposium: Human-centered assessments of disaster risk and resilience
- GISER Symposium: Integration of AI and GIS for Smart Urban Management: Opportunities, Challenges, Education, and Workforce Development
- GISER Symposium: Less Is More? The Value of Small Geospatial Data in the Era of Big Data and AI
- GISER Symposium: Sensing Human Experiences with Emerging Geospatial Methods I
- GISER Symposium: Sensing Human Experiences with Emerging Geospatial Methods II
- GISER Symposium: Sensing Human Experiences with Emerging Geospatial Methods III
- GISER Symposium: Sensing Human Experiences with Emerging Geospatial Methods IV
- GISER Symposium: Urban Environmental Challenges and Mobility Dynamics
- GISER Symposium: Using Geospatial Technologies to Promote Human-Centered Urban Sustainability
- Movement analytics in the era of big data, AI, and open science
- Multiple Hazards, Shared Vulnerabilities: Measuring, Modeling, and Mitigating Urban Heat, Air Pollution, and Flood Risk

- Next-Generation Methods for Accurate and Timely Population Estimation
- Open Source Spatial Data Science: Government & Industry
- Place, Policy, and Precarity: The Geographies of Care for People Who Use Drugs
- Smart Urban Governance and e-Planning (1)
- Smart Urban Governance and e-Planning (2)
- Spatial Optimization and Analysis (1)
- Spatial Optimization and Analysis (2)
- Spatial Optimization and Analysis (3)
- Spatial Optimization and Analysis (4)
- Symposium on GeoAI for Sustainable Cities and Health Research: Integrating Indoor and Outdoor Environments in Geographic Research (Part 1)
- Symposium on GeoAI for Sustainable Cities and Health Research: Integrating Indoor and Outdoor Environments in Geographic Research (Part 2)
- Symposium on Human Dynamics Research & GISER Symposium: Humans in GIScience and GeoAI
- Symposium on Human Dynamics Research: New Frontiers in Human Dynamics Research
- Uncertainties in Big Data Analytics in Disaster Research
- Urban Morphology as Open Data Science: Advancements in Open Quantitative Assessment of City Structure
- Urban Remote Sensing and GeoAI: Advances in Urban Environmental Monitoring and Human–Environment Interaction Modeling (1)
- Urban Remote Sensing and GeoAI: Advances in Urban Environmental Monitoring and Human–Environment Interaction Modeling (2)
- Urban Remote Sensing and GeoAI: Advances in Urban Environmental Monitoring and Human–Environment Interaction Modeling (3)
- Urban Remote Sensing and GeoAI: Advances in Urban Environmental Monitoring and Human–Environment Interaction Modeling (4)
- WS 2-1: Mapping and Measuring Structural Racism and Discrimination in the US:

Advancing Place-Based GIScience for Health Equity

About Spatial Analysis and Modeling (SAM) Specialty Group

Our mission is to foster and maintain interaction, cooperation and community among individuals interested in the analysis of geo-referenced data, modeling of spatio-temporal processes and the use of analytical and computational techniques in solving geographic problems. The specialty group promotes the scientific study of physical, environmental and socioeconomic geography and the development, use and teaching of analytical cartography, GIS, remote sensing, spatial statistical, mathematical and computational techniques for spatial analysis. For more information, see the SAM-SG homepage (<http://sam-aag.org/>).

Membership Dues

Regular: \$10

Student: \$2

Submissions

This newsletter reaches many readers and is therefore an excellent venue for getting the word out on community news, departmental happenings, research findings, media appearances, and the like. It is also a good place to post calls for proposals, awards, grants, fellowships, and jobs. We also invite you to submit commentaries or features of broad interest to specialty group members.

The newsletter relies on volunteers to submit articles, so please take a moment to send along relevant items when they are solicited.

Current Officers (As of March 2026)

Out-going Chair

Hyun Kim

Professor

Department of Geography and Sustainability

University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Email: hkim56@utk.edu

Incoming Chair

Seda Salap Ayca

Assistant Professor of Practice

Brown University

Email: seda_salapayca@brown.edu

Incoming Vice Chair/Treasurer

Taylor Oshan (2026-2028)

Associate Professor

Department of Geographical Sciences

University of Maryland

Incoming Academic Director

Ziqi Li (2026-2029)

Assistant Professor

Department of Geography

Florida State University

Board Members

Jiannan Cai (Academic Director)

College of Surveying and GeoInformatics

Tongji University

Email: jncai@outlook.com

Peter Kedron (Outreach Director)

Associate Professor

Department of Geography

University of California Santa Barbara

Email: peterkedron@ucsb.edu

Atsushi Nara (Communication Director)

Associate Professor

Department of Geography

San Diego State University

Email: anara@sdsu.edu

Student Representatives

Jessica Embury

Ph.D. Student

San Diego State University

Maya Lakshman (Incoming)

Ph.D. Student

Johns Hopkins University