Priority #3: Engage Minnesota’s diverse communities

At GES, recruiting a diverse faculty and graduate student body is a priority as it enhances our research and teaching, leads to rigorous and relevant knowledge, and reflects the diverse and changing demographics of our state.

You can help us enhance diversity in our programs and make Minnesota a model for research and teaching that engages with, and responds to, the needs of diverse communities.

We’ve launched an annual recruitment weekend that brings talented prospective graduate students from underrepresented and under-resourced backgrounds to visit Minnesota and learn about our graduate programs. Your gifts can sustain and grow this program, and provide recruitment fellowships for students from underrepresented groups.

Postdoctoral fellowships in social justice provide emerging scholars an opportunity to develop their work, while providing cutting edge scholarship and helping GES develop a more diverse faculty in the field.

In the United States and abroad, this is a time of daunting social and environmental challenges: inequality and racial tensions in our cities; rapid urbanization globally; climate change and habitat loss; aging transportation and information infrastructures; the degradation of land and water. Today students need a diverse intellectual toolbox to solve complex problems that bridge the social and natural sciences.

The Department of Geography, Environment, and Society (GES) has that toolbox. With national leadership in the biophysical sciences, urban and economic geography, and spatial analysis and visualization, we have pioneered world-changing interdisciplinary research for almost 100 years. We prepare our graduates to succeed as professionals and leaders in a wide range of careers. They help plan your communities, manage your natural spaces, imagine tomorrow’s infrastructure, and improve your quality of life.

Our MGIS program trains professionals in geospatial analysis and is a model for the rest of the nation, while our world-leading PhD program trains researchers and scholars who will tackle tomorrow’s most pressing issues and teach in major universities and colleges around the world. Together, our graduates work with communities, students, non-government organizations, and political leaders to build healthy, equitable, and sustainable futures for all members of society, here and abroad.

Your philanthropic investment in key areas will help Geography continue to lead the way as we face new social, environmental, and political challenges.
Priority #1: Fuel research and innovation

GES is a world leader in geographical research that spans the natural, social, artistic and built environments, from the scale of local neighborhoods to the scale of planetary systems. Our faculty engage in pathbreaking interdisciplinary research on topics such as climate change and global health; housing and homelessness; urban infrastructure; transportation; land use and land change; economic globalization; and interlinked problems of resource development, environmental change, and indigenous land rights.

With your support, we can build on our success and face the challenges of the 21st century.

Your gifts to support faculty research will help us maintain and expand our innovative research programs. You’ll support faculty projects that bring undergraduates into the research process, enable collaboration with community stakeholders, or launch new national or international collaborative projects.

Gifts for endowed chairs will keep Minnesota competitive in recruiting field-shaping faculty experts advancing cutting-edge research.

Your gifts will help turn existing classroom and teaching space into a state-of-the-art geospatial research center that will provide a mixed-use activity hub for research, teaching and outreach, a geospatial technology space, and collaborative work areas for students, staff, and faculty with the latest technology at their fingertips.

Your gifts will help us leverage our metropolitan location to advance path-breaking research in urban studies and will enhance our long-standing reputation as a national center for urban analysis.

GES Assistant Professor Dr. Ying Song works with Metro Transit to assess and improve transit accessibility and service reliability in the Twin Cities. She is also now working with the car-sharing service HOURCAR and the bike-sharing program Nice Ride Minnesota to promote multi-modal accessibility in urban space.

Priority #2: Support student success

Our national reputation and urban location attracts exceptional students to our undergraduate and graduate programs. With your help we can strengthen our recruitment of talented students and prepare them for rewarding and productive careers after graduation.

UNDERGRADUATE SUPPORT

Gifts for undergraduate experiential learning opportunities help students connect classroom content with real-world applications.

Research awards provide opportunities for students to work with faculty on independent research projects, while internship scholarships provide critical access to learning opportunities with community organizations outside the university.

Faculty-mentored, field-based learning opportunities provide some of the most valuable learning experiences any student can have. We aim to have all our students experience another place and culture.

GRADUATE STUDENT SUPPORT

Your gifts will allow us to remain competitive with peer programs in recruiting the most talented MA and PhD students.

Graduate research fellowships give PhD students funds to conduct dissertation research on some of the most pressing challenges of our day. Fellowships support US-based and overseas field research, archival research, and the collection and analysis of geospatial data.

Experience shows that year-round support is essential for student success. Summer research funds ensure this success by providing students opportunities in field research, coursework, and preparation for qualifying exams.

Intellectual exchange with other leading faculty and graduate students from around the world helps keep our graduate students at the forefront of research in their fields. Your gifts to support regular forums and annual graduate conferences will help keep Minnesota graduate students at the center of dynamic academic exchange.

“Traveling to Florida, Georgia, and South Carolina to study environmental justice invigorated my geographical education. The concepts I learned in the classroom were grounded by the people I met and the places I visited. Hearing their stories and being able to contextualize them within places was an invaluable experience that brought new energy to my time in the classroom.”

— Erin Jones, Geography Senior