

November 2019 News Notes

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Alumni Change Lives

Brittan Wogslund is a graduate student in SES, advised by Dr. Elizabeth Griffith. Here, she shares how Friends of Orton Hall helped further her studies.

This summer and early fall, Friends of Orton Hall (FOH) supported my thesis research and travel to GSA 2019 in Phoenix, AZ to present my poster entitled “Organomineralization of Microbial-ites from Storr’s Lake, San Salvador Island, Bahamas: Calcium, Carbon, and Oxygen Stable Isotope Analysis.” This was my first time attending GSA and in addition to presenting my poster, I was able to network and make friends with other early career scientists. The breadth of knowledge available at GSA was incredible.

My research is focused on understanding microbial-mediated carbonate structures (microbial-ites) in a hypersaline, turbid lake using mineralogy, elemental composition, and stable isotope studies. Funds from FOH have allowed me to expand my data set to include nine new microbial-ites in addition to the previously studied two.

Over the summer, I prepared samples and measured their mineralogy using X-Ray Diffraction through the Subsurface Energy Materials Characterization and Analysis Laboratory (SEMCAL) within SES. I will continue to utilize FOH funds to measure the elemental composition of the carbonate samples using ICP-OES through the Trace Element Research Laboratory, also within SES.

I am extremely grateful that FOH helped further my research through the expansion of my data set and allowed me to not only connect with other scientists at GSA 2019, but also to present my research.

If you are interested in giving to support the Friends of Orton Hall or other funds, please visit our [giving page](#).



Fall Alumni Board Meeting

The Fall Alumni board meeting took place on October 25th, and included student-alumni mock interviews, a lunch with students and alumni and a showcase of our Field Camp with our new Arts & Sciences Dean, Dr. Gretchen Ritter. In addition, we also hosted a get together before the Wisconsin game in Orton Hall, right below our famous Cryolophosaurus.

If you are an alum who wants to get more involved with the School of Earth Sciences, please contact Dr. Ann Cook (cook.1129@osu.edu). We are starting a new mentoring program next fall, and would love to have more alumni volunteers.



From left to right: alum Mackenzie Scharenberg, student Brittan Wogsland, alum Ale Hakala and student JJ Kim.

Alum Joe Studlick (left) and student Jack Dechow (right).



Alum Rob Swift enjoys a beer with Cryolophosaurus.



SACNAS in Hawaii

From October 31st to November 2nd, five graduate students and one faculty member from the School of Earth Sciences attended the Society for the Advancement of Chicanos/Hispanics and Native Americans in Science (SACNAS) National Diversity in STEM Conference in Honolulu, HI. They were supported by funding from the National Science Foundation, College of Arts and Sciences, and the Center for Energy Research, Training, and Innovation (CERTAIN).

Two students gave oral presentations (Casey Saup and Allison Chartrand), one presented a poster (Adolfo Calero), and another student (Melisa Diaz) co-chaired a session with Berry Lyons on climate change in polar regions. This was the largest SES group to ever attend a SACNAS conference and SES had more representatives than any other Ohio State department.

Increasing our presence in national diversity initiatives is a goal of the SES Diversity Committee, of which Berry, Melisa and Casey are members. Melisa Diaz accepted an award on behalf of The Ohio State University SACNAS Chapter for “Outstanding Professional Development” from the national organization. A tree will be planted in their honor on the island of Oahu.



To read more about the goals of the SACNAS chapter at OSU, please visit their webpage [here](#).

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WHERE HAS YOUR DEGREE TAKEN YOU?

After graduating from Ohio State, I moved to Baltimore to attend graduate school at Johns Hopkins University. I always assumed that I would complete my Ph.D., but after getting my Masters, I needed a break from school and research. A fellow Ohio State alum had moved to Los Alamos, and after visiting the small town in the mountains of northern New Mexico, I knew it was time for me to move away from the East Coast and try something new! I interviewed and was selected for a Post-Masters position at Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL). After a 1-year Post-Masters, I was offered a permanent staff member position with the Earth and Environmental Sciences Division at LANL, where I have now been working for almost 10 years.

Most of my time at LANL is spent studying the role of geology in nuclear test signatures and detection. I am also currently in charge of a project that is studying cliff retreat rates at a low-level radioactive waste disposal facility. I love that I get to spend time doing both field and office work, and it's really fun and exciting to apply geology to real-world problems!

HOW DID YOUR EXPERIENCE AS AN SES STUDENT AT OSU PREPARE YOU FOR YOUR CAREER?

My time as a geology student at OSU taught me to have fun while working hard, which is the philosophy that I still apply to my life today!

ANY ADVICE YOU HAVE TO OFFER TO FUTURE STUDENTS?

There's a few things: take advantage of all of the awesome SES professors. Talk with them about their research, ask questions, etc. Volunteer for research projects as often as possible –you never know where they might lead you! Network as much as possible! You never know how the relationships you're building today might help in the future.

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