



# **Geography student Charles Pelo receives award during Illinois Geographical Society Annual Meeting**

by Megan Wieser  
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EDWARDSVILLE - Southern Illinois University Edwardsville geography major Charles “Chuck” L. Pelo, of Staunton, received the Illinois Geographical Society (IGS) Four-Year College Outstanding Senior Geographer Award at the IGS Annual Meeting, hosted by SIUE Friday-Saturday, April 27-28.

Pelo turned to SIUE after being displaced from his job as a steelmaking production supervisor in 2016. He had worked at Granite City Steel for 19 years.

He returned to SIUE with federal funding from the Trade Adjustment Assistance program to complete his bachelor's degree in geography. Upon graduating on Saturday, May 5, Pelo will be employed as a geospatial analyst at the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency in St. Louis, where he interned in summer 2017.

The IGS Annual Meeting brought together geography faculty and students from universities and community colleges across Illinois.

At the conference, the SIUE Department of Geography had the opportunity to recruit new students to SIUE by showcasing the undergraduate and graduate programs. SIUE has the largest undergraduate geography program in Illinois, with 81 majors and 18 graduate students.

During the Annual Meeting, IGS held its Awards Banquet on Friday, April 27 at the University Restaurant. Aaron Young, sustainability and planning manager from the East-West Gateway Council of Governments, was the keynote speaker.

The IGS poster and paper sessions were held Saturday, April 28 on the first floor of Alumni Hall. Thirteen SIUE students and five faculty members participated in these sessions, which demonstrated some of the innovative geography research of University faculty and students. The lunchtime keynote speaker was SIUE geography alumnus Dean Gunderson, who is the garden program manager for Gateway Greening in St. Louis.

Founded in 1957, the Department of Geography at SIUE offers an undergraduate major in Geography, and minors in Geography, GIS, and Meteorology/Climatology, and a master's degree in Geography. The department offers a variety of courses in human, physical, and regional geography, as well as geospatial techniques. The faculty conduct research on a wide variety of topics at the local, regional and global scale. Students at

both the undergraduate and graduate levels have the opportunity to work closely with faculty on current, groundbreaking projects or gain experience through internships. Students are prepared for careers in a wide range of fields. For example, recent graduates have taken positions as park rangers, urban planners, retail location analysts, resource managers, climate scientists, and geospatial analysts.

The Illinois Geographical Society's mission is to "promote scientific research in geography, encourage better teaching of geography at all levels, diffuse geographic knowledge, and unify geographic interest in the state."

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Photo: SIUE geography major Charles "Chuck" L. Pelo received the Illinois Geographical Society (IGS) Four-Year College Outstanding Senior Geographer Award at the IGS Annual Meeting.