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GIS as a New Powerful Tool:
An Interview with Dr. Meimei Lin

It is very natural for one to compare their hometown with a new place she or he encounters in life. To Dr. Meimei Lin, Xiamen, her hometown in southern China, and Savannah, the coastal city in Georgia where she just started her new job three months ago, are “very similar.” Palm trees, hot and humid summers, close to the beach, same latitude, and of course the ocean. For the new geography professor of Armstrong State University, such a topic always comes back to geography.

Dr. Lin hails from China where she earned an undergraduate degree in Ecology. After college, she came to the United States and earned a Master’s Degree and Doctorate from Miami University in Ohio. She wasted no time in pursuing her academic career, but with an unexpected twist. She initially studied Botany to be a landscape ecologist until she took a GIS (Geographic Information Systems) class. “I fell in love immediately!” she admitted. After that, there was no stopping her. Dr. Lin’s research is to adopt GIS to study land use/cover changes in the Corn Belt of the United States. She explained that using the statistical analysis, she can help determine if farmers are utilizing their land efficiently in order to produce the most food per acre for our nation.

Dr. Lin is obviously very excited about having the opportunity to teach at Armstrong. She said the most exciting offer was the chance to “build up the discipline at Armstrong to offer students a minor in Geography.” That proposal is now a reality, as students at Armstrong can now earn a minor in Geography with Dr. Lin, alongside her colleague Dr. Amy Potter, offering all of the necessary courses. GIS, a critical aspect of geographic studies, is the specialty that Dr.

Lin brings with her to Armstrong. “I love to teach something that I’m good at,” she said. She also wants to “help students find a career path.” Offering the Geography minor at Armstrong is important to Dr. Lin, because she understands how one opportunity can cause a student to switch majors to something that they never knew they would love. Emphasizing what was most important to her, she confessed, “I just want to teach, and to become a better teacher to always help students.”

Dr. Lin’s goals are not restricted to academics at Armstrong. “I really want to serve the Savannah community,” she stated. With a smile, she explained that it would be wonderful if she were able to “contribute GIS knowledge to help Savannah’s city planning.” One way she could do this would be to serve on the Savannah GIS Board. If she were able to successfully map the urban and regional planning of Savannah, it could be a “tool for students.”

(Interviewed by Tarl Lancaster)

About the author

Tarl Lancaster is a senior at Armstrong working toward his History major. His research interests are Colonial and Revolutionary America and Medieval Commerce. Mr. Lancaster will pursue a master degree in Education following the completion of his B.A. degree in December 2017.