

Mission Statement

I am a candidate for the Interdisciplinary Geosciences Section President of AOGS. I am an historian who has been working for the past ten years on projects that cross the humanities and sciences. In particular, I have been working with the international Atmospheric Circulations over the Earth (ACRE) initiative in order to locate and recover sources of historical observational weather data used for reconstructing past climates and long-term climate modeling. This has involved interdisciplinary collaborative research with specialists across many different fields, including historians, archivists, archaeologists, paleo-reconstruction experts, climate scientists. In order to achieve access to, and greater knowledge of, the sources, I have worked with meteorological services, government departments, academics, and various public organizations. In addition, I have been working on instances of extreme weather and nature-induced disaster, especially to help recreate particular nature-induced events, including floods. This has enabled me to work across fields including disaster studies, geography, and history, as well as the sciences.

In line with the Interdisciplinary Geosciences Section of AOGS mission statement, I believe firmly in opening better avenues for cross-disciplinary collaboration and discussion. This is essential in the Anthropocene. Climatic and environmental processes are not distinct from society and culture. Indeed, the Anthropocene is the perfect example of the interconnection between man and nature. Climate, and changes to climate, cannot be distanced from complex social, political, economic, and even cultural, processes. Disasters resulting from extreme weather, for example, are only nature-induced; their scale and impact is exacerbated by social processes including urbanisation. Climate, earth, and environmental studies thus require responses from different research communities and necessitate closer inter-disciplinary working relationships for a more integrated approach.

Therefore, I would seek to explore how to enhance interdisciplinary research: especially by drawing attention to certain practical issues which may discourage successful joint-working; including differences in style, terminology and output across discipline. One important way of doing this is by encouraging more discussion – formal and informal – and, by highlighting the benefits of joint working through examples of successful case-studies. As part of the AOGS committee I would promote the uses of humanities disciplines to the sciences.

Another matter to which I would strive to draw attention to is bringing more diversity into the geosciences community, especially to champion more women in geosciences and, at higher, more visible positions. It is utterly essential in the twenty-first century that the gender balance in geoscience, as well as in other fields, be addressed.

Dr Fiona Williamson
Asia Research Institute
National University of Singapore
10 Kent Ridge Crescent
Singapore
119260
Ariwfc@nus.edu.sg
F.williamson@uea.ac.uk