

New Faculty Spotlight

David Moss

Department of Geology



Dr. David Moss is a new faculty member in the Sam Houston State University Department of Geography and Geology. Dr. Moss teaches Historical Geology, Oceanography, Invertebrate Paleontology, Stratigraphy and Sedimentation.

Kyra Rost

Sam Houston State University

College of Science & Engineering Technology

Dr. David Moss received his bachelor's degree from Centenary College of Louisiana in Shreveport, Louisiana. He earned his master's degree at the University of Oklahoma, then obtained a doctoral degree from Syracuse University in Syracuse, New York.

Dr. Moss's current research is on the life span of modern and fossil bivalves. If you cut open a clam, you will see growth increments, similar to tree rings, which can be used to determine their lifespan. Dr. Moss looks at the fossil records of bivalves to determine their age and then works to find out what influenced their growth. He questions if and how their life-spans have changed over geologic time. Are they living longer or growing faster?

Dr. Moss knew, even while he was working towards his bachelor's degree, that he wanted to get his PhD and teach at the college level. He loves and values the research aspect of science, but ultimately knew that he wanted to be at a University where teaching is the highest priority. Which is exactly what SHSU offers, making Sam Houston an easy choice. He expressed vividly that Sam was the one for him.

Dr. Moss has even recruited a couple of students that will be starting research projects this semester. He believes that the best part about Sam is the balance between educating, what he refers to as the "State of Texas", and the research aspect. He enjoys teaching students about the Earth, how it works, and its history.

Even though Dr. Moss is relatively new to his career, he already has two academic achievements on his record. In 2014, Dr. Moss was awarded the Outstanding Teaching Assistant Award at Syracuse University. Then in 2015, he was awarded another Outstanding Teaching Assistant Award from the National Association of Geoscience Teachers, also while at Syracuse. He expressed that he highly values being honored and recognized for his efforts.

Fun things to know about Dr. David Moss

Favorite Tv show?

“I know a lot of people don’t like it but I think The Walking Dead is my favorite right now. Yes, it does need to end very soon but I’m just holding on until they finally wrap it up. My favorite of all time would be Breaking bad though, just because they had a good story, got to the point, and wrapped it up”.

Did you participate in any organizations/ clubs in college?

“In college, for my first two years, I was on the swim team at Centenary and that kept me extremely busy. Then I stopped swimming and focused more on my major, which lead to an internship for an oil and gas company”.

What was your first job?

“My first job was Lifeguarding in High School and it continued a little into college. It was a pretty easy job and I was at the pool a lot anyways. I had also started teaching swim lessons”.

What do you do in your free time/ hobbies?

“Mostly right now I’m spending time with my family, my wife and our son. We try to be really active with him, get him outdoors. We go on hikes and spend a lot of time at the Houston zoo, he loves it there, and at museums. I enjoy watching college football. I’m from Oklahoma so I’m a Sooner’s fan. I try to go fishing every now and then, but that’s been a bit difficult lately. My 2-year-old’s not ready to go out fishing yet.”

Who is your favorite band or artist?

“I go back and forth between a lot of different music; it just kind of depends on how I feel that day. Lately I’ve been listening to the Foo Fighters a lot, who are now getting old, they are all in their 50s. I like more rock music and red dirt country, such as Turnpike Troubadours and Pat Green, some Texas country music”.

If you could change history what would you change?

“I don’t think I would change anything, because everything would be so different. There are a lot of bad things that have happened, that I wish would not have. Though from the view point of a paleontologist, I believe if you rerun the tape of life, it would not all repeat the same way because so much of it is up to chance”.

Do you have any Undergrad Advice?

“My advice to all undergrads would be just go to class, it’s the first step to succeeding! Online slides are never enough compared to the in-class lecture. I encourage incoming freshman to start thinking about the transition from high school to college. That period is hard for most, to go from guided learning to being a self-learner”.

What is your typical daily schedule? How do you start your day?

“My daily schedule is usually: I wake up, get ready, quickly check my emails from any students that have emailed me, and attempt to respond before I get to campus. I typically work from 8am to 4pm and between classes I do some research, then I go pick up my son from daycare. I get home and enjoy family time, they go to sleep and then I continue to work”.

Is there any extra information you would like to add?

“I just want to encourage people to take my historical geology class, it’s a real fun class. We talk about dinosaurs, evolution, and climate change. I hope that class continues to grow and I see more students in there”.