



# Getting to know...

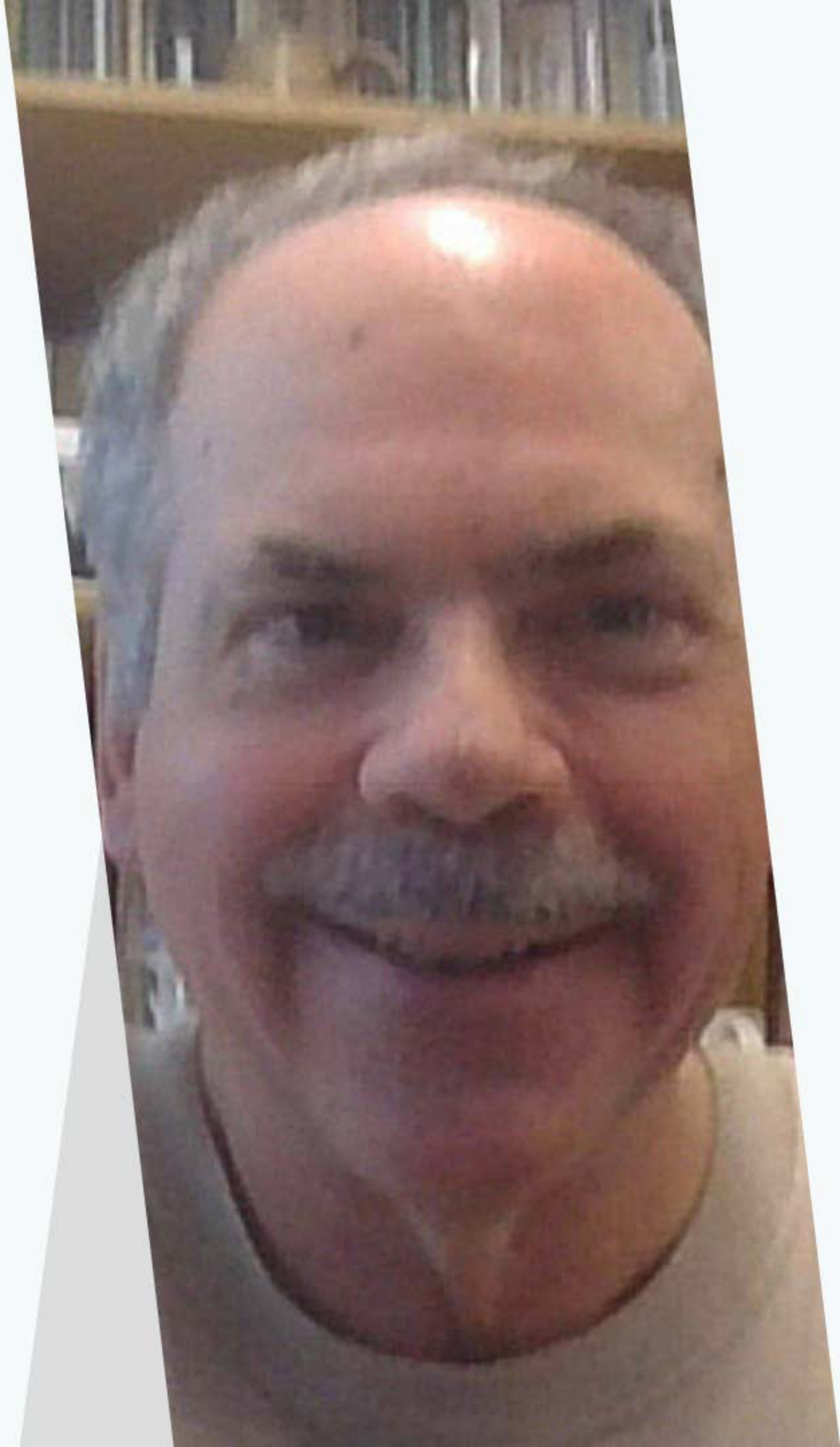
## **Peter Knuepfer**

Delegate; member  
State-wide UUP Future  
of Higher Education  
Committee

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**Associate Professor and  
Chair**

Department of Earth  
Sciences





*Originally from San Francisco, I did my doctoral work at the University of Arizona. I've been in upstate New York for nearly 40 years, and a faculty member at Binghamton since 1986. I'll be retiring at the end of August when my term as department chair ends.*

## QUESTION & ANSWER

### **Tell me about your job and why you love what you do?**

*I'm a geology professor, specifically a geomorphologist who studies geological hazards like earthquakes, floods and coastal erosion, as well as more technical topics like how the incision of rivers in their valleys informs us about the rate at which mountain ranges are building. My research has taken me to New Zealand, Taiwan, the Philippines, the western US, and here in New York. I teach about geological hazards and processes that are operative at the earth's surface like glaciers, coasts, and rivers. Other roles I have had include Director of the Environmental Studies Program; Graduate Director, Undergraduate Director and Chair of what is now the Dept. of Earth Sciences; and extensive involvement in "faculty governance" which culminated in election as President of the University Faculty Senate for the SUNY System (during which I also served on the SUNY Board of Trustees). Through all these roles I have loved working with and mentoring students, whether in the classroom, as an academic advisor, or research supervisor. The opportunities to make a difference through research and working with students are why I love this job.*

### **How did you get involved with UUP?**

*Recognizing the importance of UUP's role in protecting faculty and professionals, and the overlap with my interests and commitment to shared governance, I ran for and was elected to the Executive Board in 2005. I served until 2013 (when I became President of the SUNY University Faculty Senate). I worked with UUP Statewide President Fred Kowal to re-establish a strong working relationship between UFS and UUP. I rejoined the Binghamton UUP Exec Board from 2017-2021, stepping aside when I took on the department chair role, only to be convinced by Brendan to run again in 2023.*

### **How do you make a difference?**

*I hope I have made a difference in the lives of many students over the years through one-on-one advising of innumerable Environmental Studies and Geology majors for both academic and career guidance. I continue to offer my experience in a number of roles on campus and at the State level, as I have throughout my career.*

### **What about your community engagement; any hobbies?**

I have played keyboards at Our Lady of Good Counsel church in Endicott for more than 15 years. I serve on the board of the Network for a Sustainable Tomorrow (NeST), a non-profit group that serves a coordinating and incubating function for some sustainability-associated non-profits (such as the Southern Door Community Land Trust) as well as clean energy workforce initiatives and projects focused on clean energy opportunities for homeowners, especially from low-income backgrounds. My hobbies include traveling, camping, reading, watching sports.