



**Science
Societies**

Members reach impressive milestone for scholarly output

Weindorf and Chakraborty collaborate on 100 publications together

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David Weindorf (second from right) and Somsubhra Chakraborty (rightmost) evaluating Cerrado soils of Brazil with Dr. Nilton Curi (Federal University of Lavras) and Dr. Autumn Acree.

In 2008, an associate professor from Louisiana State and a doctoral student from India began a collaboration that has lasted more than 15 years.

Together, they pioneered innovations in soil sensing, AI-driven analysis, and sustainable land use and recently produced their 100th scholarly publication together. Their story is one of mentorship, collaboration, and the shared joy of discovery that transcends borders.

It was 2008 and David Weindorf was an aspiring Associate Professor at Louisiana State University's Agricultural Center. To grow his research program, he sought to add a talented new doctoral student. He put out a call and dozens of qualified applicants were received. In looking through the batch, he settled on a student from India named Somsubhra Chakraborty who had gone to Punjab Agricultural University. Little did they know at the time, but that singular decision would come to define a large part of both of their careers. A few months later, he arrived in Baton Rouge, his first time in America.

He called Dr. Weindorf one night and asked him to come over to talk. With some reassurance, Weindorf was able to connect Somsubhra (Som) with some students in the department. They also talked about expectations and the rules of engagement.

Som was expected to produce multiple top-notch peer-reviewed research papers as chapters of his dissertation and set a standard for research excellence. He did so with unswerving precision. Along the way, a friendship was forged that was different than anything Som had experienced in India. One of the informal aphorisms of the lab was – work hard and play hard. Som leaned into that in so many ways. He learned that it was ok to laugh and to be unconventional. He learned to help his lab-mates just as they helped him.

Research led to travel, which led to publications and the framework of his dissertation. His [first research manuscript](#) (Rapid Identification of Oil-Contaminated Soils Using Visible Near-Infrared Diffuse Reflectance Spectroscopy) was published in the *Journal of Environmental Quality*, just weeks before the Deepwater Horizon oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico. Immediately, Som's research was demonstrated for the U.S. Coast Guard and used in helping with restorations along the Gulf coast.

After graduating and working briefly as a post-doc at West Virginia University, Dr. Chakraborty returned to India to start his career as an academician. He spent years working at Ramakrishna Mission Vivekananda Educational and Research Institute and Uttar Banga Krishi Vishwavidyalaya before joining the Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur (IIT KGP—widely considered the Harvard of India). At the same time, Dr. Weindorf's career was also broadening. He moved to Texas Tech University to assume the BL Allen Endowed Chair of Pedology and continued expanding his research. But all the while, he and Chakraborty kept working together, half a world separating them. Their work struck such a cadence that their efficiency became legendary.

Step by step, paper by paper

Project by project, their collaborations went something like this: Weindorf and Chakraborty would meet once a year for a research retreat (e.g., Brazil, USA, Romania,

Italy, United Arab Emirates, India, China) to spend a few days of workshopping ideas, framing out papers, discussing novel ideas, etc. Then, Dr. Weindorf would work on field sampling and initial data collection. With the data in hand, he would send it to Dr. Chakraborty to analyze and model via machine learning and artificial intelligence. While Chakraborty was working on the statistics, Weindorf would further frame the paper, literature review, etc. They would then join the work together and finish out the real-world implications sections together. The exchange became so efficient that they would use time differences across the world to their advantage. As one slept on one side of the world, the other would be working on the other side of the world. Back and forth the work would pass, advancing step by step, paper by paper.



Drs. Weindorf and Chakraborty conducting research on catenas of the Transylvanian Plain, Romania with colleagues from University of Agricultural Sciences and Veterinary Medicine

of Cluj-Napoca.

Mentoring new graduate students, they developed a joint framework. Each dissertation under their direction should generate multiple peer-reviewed papers from the research. For the first paper, Weindorf and Chakraborty would provide heavy guidance and direction; for the second paper, the student would work more independently; and for the third paper and beyond, the student would truly manage and drive all aspects of the research. This approach worked time and again with graduate students gaining confidence and understanding in the process.

Along the pathway of their 15+ year partnership, Drs. Weindorf and Chakraborty have developed numerous patents with additional students as co-inventors. Those patents have now been commercially licensed and are powering a new generation of sensors with increased sensing capabilities. Most recently, Weindorf and Chakraborty (along with their third longtime collaborator—Dr. Bin Li), [edited a book for Elsevier](#) entitled “*Unlocking the Secrets of Soil—Applying AI and Sensor Technologies for Sustainable Land Use.*”

And so, 15 years later, they recently celebrated their 100th scholarly output together (and actually reached 103 as of this publication). Chakraborty is now an Associate Professor at IIT KGP, and Weindorf is Vice President for Research and Economic Development at Georgia Southern University.

“Working with Dr. Weindorf has been a journey of shared curiosity, trust, and friendship that transcends borders,” Chakraborty says. “Our collaboration has taught me that science becomes truly powerful when driven by purpose, humility, and joy in discovery.”

“Som has been such a wonderful research collaborator, and I’m so very thankful for his years of commitment to our shared lines of research which have literally redefined areas of proximal sensing in soil science. With deep gratitude, I also acknowledge Dr. B.L. Allen and Clem Weindorf for cultivating the roots of my own academic tree, allowing its branches to spread across the world.”

“Working with Dr. Weindorf has been a journey of shared curiosity, trust, and friendship that transcends borders. Our collaboration has taught me that science becomes truly powerful when driven by purpose, humility, and joy in discovery.”

Check out the 100+ joint publications

Journals

1. Nayak, A., Cean, R., Chakraborty, S., Bakr, N., Biswas, A., Li, B., Swain, D.K., & Weindorf, D.C. (2025). Combining proximal and remote sensors for regional soil characterization in rural Haiti. *Geoderma Regional*.
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- Chakraborty, S., & Ribeiro, B.T. (2024). Assessment of coffee leaves nutritive value via portable X-ray fluorescence spectrometry and machine learning algorithms. *Spectrochimica Acta Part B: Atomic Spectroscopy*, 106996.
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11. Mancini, M., Andrade, R., Silva, S.H.G., Rafael, R.B.A., Mukhopadhyay, S., Li, B., Chakraborty, S., Guilherme, L.R.G., Acree, A., Weindorf, D.C., & Curi, N. (2024). Multicontinental prediction of soil organic carbon and texture via proximal sensors. *Soil Science Society of America Journal*, 88(1), 8–26.
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