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### Spring 2019, Charting New Courses: From GEBCO Alum to Seabed 2030

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## UNH Global

# Charting New Courses: From GEBCO Alum to Seabed 2030

Kate Luksha

Monday, March 25, 2019

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Tomer Ketter, originally from Israel, graduated from the GEBCO (<http://ccom.unh.edu/gebco>) program at the University of New Hampshire in 2014 with a graduate certificate in Advanced Ocean Mapping. To put it succinctly, GEBCO is an international organization founded in 1903 that relies solely on the voluntary contributions of an international team of geoscientists and hydrographers from many countries to produce charts and digital grids of the world ocean. The GEBCO training program started in 2004 to train the next generation of ocean mappers.



Tomer Ketter (GEBCO '14) on one of his many excursions at sea

Tomer was initially drawn to UNH because of the prestige that the GEBCO program carries, but immediately fell in love with the beauty of campus. Arriving in late August, the days were long and the temperatures were warm, slowly leading us into fall. It was New England weather at its peak, with the promise of fall foliage right around the corner. How could you not fall in love?

Tomer shared with me that while the GEBCO program, a yearlong certificate program, was very intense, he managed to find ways to make the most of his free time. He learned to ice skate for the very first time during one of the Whittemore Center's free skates, happily reporting no broken bones and limited spills to the ice. Another memorable experience for Tomer that New England sports fans will appreciate, was his first experience watching an NBA game at TD Garden. Having grown up in Chicago until the age of 7, Tomer is a Chicago Bulls fan and he was lucky enough to be able to see the Bulls take on the Boston Celtics. Fortunately for Tomer, albeit not so fortunate for Boston fans, the Bulls managed to upset the Celtics that game, and Tomer checked another item off of his bucket list.

Along with soaking up as much of New England culture as he could in his short time in New Hampshire, Tomer often took advantage of the many Outdoor Adventures (<https://campusrec.unh.edu/programs/outdoor-adventures>) trips offered by Campus Recreation as a brief and much needed respite from the grueling coursework. These hiking and skiing trips also afforded Tomer the opportunity to meet new people and make some great connections. Many of these relationships have turned into lasting friendships. Even after leaving UNH, Tomer remained in contact with many of his colleagues.

The ocean mapping community is a relatively small and tightknit community. Tomer explained that being a part of this community has been invaluable for him. Many of the relationships that Tomer made while at UNH helped him to reach this pinnacle point in his career. He is now a data analyst with the Seabed 2030 project, which aims to map the entire ocean floor by the year 2030.

He is also a member of the Multibeam Advisory Committee, which is a program designed to oversee the performance of the mapping vessels of the U.S. academic fleet. The U.S. academic fleet consists of all the oceanographic research vessels from universities and institutions across the United States. Part of Tomer's job is to make sure the mapping systems on board these vessels are properly calibrated, maintained, and operated to ensure that each vessel is collecting the best possible data. This can entail a trip to sea from time to time to help the science teams with their data systems. Some of these cruises can last up to two weeks with anywhere between 20 and 40 people on board, depending on the size of the ship and the difficulty of the mission at hand.

The work that Tomer is doing with UNH has a national reach, with institutions all around the world working together to collect and share this data. I asked Tomer how his time within the GEBCO program prepared him for his current position as a researcher, contributing to projects with such massive impact. He said, "A lot of the skills and tools I use on a daily basis, and a lot of the

connections to different people and organizations are a huge part of my work today." Tomer believes that the GEBCO program opened doors for him and prepared him to take on an integral role in the mapping community, due in large part "to the goodwill and passion of the people involved."

Tomer concluded by saying, "I would love to keep contributing to the ocean mapping effort, and continue to be a part of this community that has played such a pivotal role in my career."

#### WRITTEN BY

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