

From the Chair:

Welcome to the first edition of the University of St. Thomas Geography Department newsletter! I hope to publish this every semester to keep our students, alumni, and friends informed about the successes and opportunities in this dynamic department.

Our department started in 1990 with only one full-time faculty member and a handful of majors. We now boast three tenured faculty, two long-term adjuncts, dozens of majors, and offer a major and minor in Geography, a major with a concentration area in Geographic Information Systems (GIS), and a minor in GIS for non-geography majors. Our state-of-the-art GIS lab has a Lab Manager (see *Spotlight* in this issue) who oversees paid teaching and research assistants capable of tackling the many sophisticated geographical problems that make their way to our door.

Members of our department are actively engaged in our discipline and our commitment to student education and futures. If we can be of service to you in your education, career choices or profession, please let us know.

Geographically yours,

David Kelley, Chair



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What is Geography?

For those of you new to the discipline, Geography is the science of place and space. Geographers ask where things are located on the surface of the earth, why they are located where they are, how places differ from one another, and how people interact with the environment. Geographers also study the linkages between human activity and natural systems, and how these are changing.

Our approach to research and education in Geography is best expressed in our department's **Mission Statement**:

The mission of the Geography Department is to provide both the highest quality liberal arts education and applied, career-oriented preparation. Our students learn to integrate concepts from the broad discipline of geography and gain the depth of expertise in specific technical areas to prepare them competitively for professional life and/or graduate school. We value the application of theory and research to real-world problems. Student research is encouraged and enhanced by faculty who actively engage their discipline. Our faculty offer students opportunities for internships, faculty/student collaborative research partnerships, and presentations of their original research at professional conferences. The Geography Department at the University of St. Thomas is a community wherein faculty and students collaborate in the pursuit of knowledge.



How do you know if you want to be a Geographer?

If you answer **yes** to a majority of these questions, you may have a bright future in Geography.

1. Are you curious about **places**?
2. Do you like to study **maps**?
3. Do you prefer the **window seat** on airplanes?
4. Are you interested in **foreign areas**?
5. Do you like to work **outside**?
6. Are you a **problem solver**?
7. Are you good at seeing **connections** among seemingly unrelated processes?
8. Can you adapt to rapid **technological change**?
9. Do you try to see the **big picture**?
10. Are you interested in connections between people and the **environment**?

What's Happening in Geography?

News Update

There is a new regional course offered in Spring semester 2007: **Latin America** (Geog 298). Dr. Bob Werner will be teaching this course Thursday afternoons from 3:15-6:15. The reason for this time slot is that Bob teaches the course in seminar format, which allows students to do independent research and present their findings to the class as part of the coursework. Bob is a wealth of information about Latin America, and has traveled there many times, most recently to Bolivia, Peru, Chile, Argentina, and Paraguay. He incorporates stories, pictures, and music from his travels to make the course more colorful and interesting. Bob has recently completed a new manuscript for a book, titled: *"Mucking about in paradise, with several layovers in hell: a guided and misguided tour of Bolivia"*.

Dr. Kelley will be teaching his Weather and Climate course (Geog 230) during J-term this year. The course covers the causes and consequences of weather and climate, from global-scale processes of climate dynamics, the greenhouse effect and El Nino, to regional and local-scale processes of fronts, thunderstorms, hurricanes, and tornadoes. Students are introduced to weather map analysis and simple forecasting and observational techniques through hands-on exercises, software tutorials, field trips to local weather sites of interest, and our department weather station (Tommy Weather!).

Faculty Activities

Dr. Robert Werner has been the Director of UST's Bush Foundation Program grant since 2002, and will continue in this role until the end of the grant period in 2008. The purpose of the grant is to improve students' higher-order thinking skills by employing more inquiry-based instruction and faculty/student collaboration.

Dr. Paul Lorah continues to serve on the Board of the Minnesota Nature Conservancy. He also chairs the Conservancy's Conservation Committee. He just published a book chapter on landscape change in the Rocky Mountain West. This semester Paul is also working with UST biologists to model wolf habitat and to analyze factors affecting fish populations in Minnesota lakes.

Dr. David Kelley just had his second publication accepted with The National Center for Case Study Teaching in Science (<http://ublib.buffalo.edu/libraries/projects/cases/ubcase.htm>). The case study, "Toxic Releases: Fate & Transport", uses GIS and inquiry-based learning to help environmental studies students understand the scope and treatment of environmental problems.

Who's Who in the Department

Chair: David Kelley, Ph.D. (Soil Science and Water Resource Science) University of Minnesota, 1998. David teaches Computer Skills in Geography, Physical Geography, Remote Sensing, Humans and the Environment, and Weather and Climate. His primary research interests include the areas of environmental analysis, landscape evolution, and environmental management. He is particularly interested in working with students and other researchers to explore hydrologic and topographic surface processes related to environmental quality, and in the application of geographic information science for land assessment and management.

Paul Lorah, Ph.D. (Geography) Indiana University, 1996. Paul teaches Human Geography, Geographical Analysis, Humans and the Environment, and Seminar in Geography. Paul's research focuses on sustainable development and the links between environmental amenities and economic security. He also has served as a consultant to the Oregon Natural Resources Council, the World Wildlife Fund and the Great Plains Restoration Council.

Robert Werner, Ph.D. (Geography) University of Minnesota, 1990. Bob teaches World Geography and select regional courses. He is also interested in how students are actually taught at UST, and what teaching methods are most effective. Bob would like to spend his later years writing works that bring a geographic perspective to the general public, but has struggled lately with how hard it is to make it in the public publishing market.

Catherine Hansen, M.A. (Geography) Minnesota State University, Mankato, 1998. Catherine teaches Applied GIS and Geography for Business and Planning, and manages the GIS lab (see *Spotlight* for more on Catherine).

Jan Slaats, M.A., DipGIS (Geography) University of Guelph, Ontario, Canada, 1996. Jan has been employed as the GIS Manager for the Midwest Resource Office of The Nature Conservancy. He is a long-term adjunct and has been teaching GIS spring semesters at St. Thomas since 2002.



SPOTLIGHT: CATHERINE HANSEN



Catherine Hansen, GIS Lab Manager at UST

Catherine is the newest member of the Geography team and we are delighted to have her with us. She brings a wealth of experience and expertise to our program, and has become an invaluable asset to our lab. Catherine has a Bachelor of Arts in Geography from the University of Wisconsin, Eau Claire (1994) and a Masters of Arts in Geography from Minnesota State University, Mankato (1998). She was the first GIS specialist with the Mower County Soil and Water Conservation District, a GIS analyst with SRF Consulting Group, and most recently a GIS consultant with Rowekamp Associates, Inc. She has been teaching GIS for 9 years. She has been an adjunct instructor with St Thomas since 2001 and teaches Applied GIS (Geog 421) and Geography for Business and Planning (Geog 330). Her duties also include managing projects that come into our GIS lab, mentoring and advising students, and overseeing our pool of student teaching assistants. Catherine is also a technology instructor for the University of Minnesota's Masters of GIS program. If you don't know her yet, you should – so stop by and say hello!



Tommie Weather



The Department of Geography maintains St. Thomas' weather station, situated atop the John Roach Center for the Liberal Arts on the St. Paul campus. This station was installed in the summer of 2002 by faculty and students from the department, and has gathered and archived daily meteorological data since. There is a web page dedicated to the station (*Tommie Weather*), as well as other weather-related information such as a 5-day forecast, radar and satellite images, and a Quad Cam image of the St. Paul campus. The site gets ~35,000 hits/year and can be accessed at: www.stthomas.edu/geog/wx_station/wx_station.html

CONFERENCE NEWS

Geography student Eric Langsev and Dr. Paul Lorah attended the Joint Annual Meeting of the Great Plains-Rocky Mountain Division and the West Lakes Division of the Association of American Geographers (AAG) Oct. 5-7, 2006 in Lincoln, NE. Eric presented a poster titled "*Demographic Stress of the Frontier*", while Paul presented a talk titled "*Locating the Buffalo Commons: Using Spatial Filtering to Site Large-Scale Preserves*".

Three Geography faculty took students Kevin Hoffman, Justin Troupe, and Kaleb Stromberg (in spirit) to the 2006 Annual Minnesota GIS/LIS conference in St. Cloud, MN, Oct 4-6, 2006 to attend workshops and presentations on the use and availability of geographic information science in Minnesota. Kaleb was a 2006 recipient of the MN GIS/LIS Student Scholarship Award, an award that honors students for their outstanding achievements in GIS programs.

Students are welcome to attend these or other professional conferences, either as a presenter or a participant. Department funds are available for fees, transportation, and lodging. Conference announcements are usually posted in the GIS lab well in advance – just see a faculty member for details.

ALUMNI NEWS

Jake Smestad '02 isn't exactly using his geography skills, but is learning his way around the inside of a mouth – he is enrolled in the Dentistry program at the U of M. **Nathan Aamot '03** works as a GIS specialist for SEH Consulting Group in St. Paul, and just found out he and his wife are expecting their 3rd child. **Steve Jakala '04** is employed as a GIS specialist for Scott County. **Nathan Tift '05** is back from his travels to Europe where he worked in GIS mapping in Ireland and England, until his work visas ran out and he had to come home. He is now looking for work on this side of the pond. **Adam Berland '05** is currently enrolled in a doctoral program for Geography at the U of M, and is studying landscapes around the Big Woods area of south-central Minnesota. Recent graduate **Drew Moore '06** is enrolled in the M.S. GIS program at MSU/Mankato, where he is the only incoming student to receive funding.

JOBS/INTERNSHIPS

We periodically get job, internship, and scholarship announcements sent to us. If the item is time-sensitive, we email them out to our majors – so make sure we have a current email address for you! Otherwise, we post announcements on the bulletin board in the hallway next to the lab.

Another good source of **GIS jobs** can be accessed via the Minnesota GIS/LIS Consortium job listings page: <http://www.mngis.org>.

If you are interested in outdoor **internships** you might want to visit the student conservation association at: <http://www.thesca.org/internships/>

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www.stthomas.edu/geog

2007 GEOGRAPHY COURSES

J-Term: Geog 230 Weather and Climate

Spring:

Geog 111 Human Geography
Geog 112 Physical Geography
Geog 113 World Geography
Geog 298 Latin America
Geog 221 Computer Skills in Geography
Geog 321 Geographic Information Systems
Geog 330 Geography for Business and Planning
Geog 480 Seminar in Geography

Summer Session II: Geog 111 Human Geography

CONTACTS

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Visit us on our website at:

www.stthomas.edu/geog

Tommie Weather:

www.stthomas.edu/geog/wx_station/wx_station.html