

From the Chair:

It is already halfway through the Fall semester and time seems to be passing quickly. It is time to register, so see me to lift a registration hold. I will be teaching *Weather and Climate* (Geog 230) again over J-term, which usually fills, so sign up early. Bob Werner will be teaching a regional course, *Africa*, a topic which is near and dear to my heart. The rest of the courses are standard Spring semester fare, with two sections of both *World Geography* and *Human Geography*, which we hope will attract more undeclared majors to other courses in our department.

You may notice in this newsletter that we have placed a greater emphasis on doing activities as a group. As a department, we attended the MN GIS/LIS annual conference, went on a three-day field trip up north, and hosted an alumni dinner for current and former geography majors, all with the specific intent of developing cohesiveness and camaraderie. Our faculty have devoted their careers to student learning, and think that this is best accomplished if students feel a sense of support and collegiality from their teachers and their peers. We will continue on this track with opportunities every semester to build an esprit-de-corps among the people in our department.

Our department remains dynamic and engaged. 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?

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 that affect the common good. Student research is encouraged and enhanced by faculty who actively engage their discipline. Our faculty offer students opportunities for internships, service learning experiences, 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 to produce well-informed and morally responsible professionals.



The Geography Department visits Ely!



The Geography Department took a field trip in late October to visit the landscapes and ecosystems of the Boundary Waters area around Ely, MN. Faculty and students visited the Soudan Underground Mine State Park near Ely. We toured the underground mine and physics lab before making our way to a cabin on Snowbank Lake on the BWCAW.

What's Happening in Geography?

News Update

In late October, seniors Jim Moen and Kevin Hoffman got an all-expense-paid trip to Germany for a week to track down historical maps for certain parcels of land in present Germany that were once owned by family members of Minnesota citizen Larry Cerf, but were confiscated by the Nazis almost 75 years ago. If Jim and Kevin are able to establish similarities between their digitized parcels and the area measurements in Mr. Cerf's deeds, then he may be able to establish evidence of previous ownership that would hold up in a German court of law.

On October 24-26, 2008, the Geography Department took a mid-semester field trip to Ely, MN. We toured the Soudan Underground Mine, where iron ore was extracted for over 60 years before the mine closed in 1962. We also toured the underground physics lab there, which hosts the currently active MINOS neutrino detector and a dark matter search experiment. We spent the weekend at *Smitty's on Snowbank* resort on the BWCAW, owned by Catherine Hansen's family. On Saturday, we toured the ecosystems and geology of the northwoods with a hike along the Secret lake Trail, with stops at Ennis Lake and a National Weather Service climate monitoring station near the Fernberg Trail. It was a great time to get to know each other and visit a unique area of Minnesota.

The 2008 (11th annual!) $\mu \alpha \pi$ (mu-alpha-pi, or *map*) party was held Nov. 7 at Paul and Cindy Lorah's house. It was a time for current students, alumni, and faculty of geography to mingle, share food and beverage, and discuss similar interests in all things geographic. If you were there, it was good to see you; if not, I look forward to seeing you next time!



Alumni party at Paul Lorah's house, Nov. 7.

Who's Who in the Department

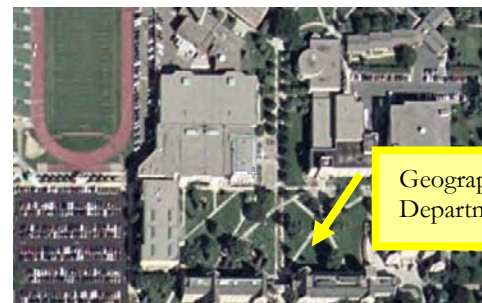
Chair: David Kelley, Ph.D. (Soil Science and Water Resource Science) University of Minnesota, 1998. David teaches Computer Skills in Geography, Physical Geography, Remote Sensing, and Weather and Climate. His primary research interests include the areas of environmental analysis, landscape evolution, 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. Dr. Werner's traditional interests are in GIS, but he now is pursuing regional studies and topics in pedagogy. His regional interests have been in Latin America and East Asia, but he is now pursuing an experiential knowledge base for Africa. In pedagogy, he has research interests in Inquiry-Based Learning (IBL), which is any teaching that puts a problem or issue first, then structures other teaching around pursuit of answers to the problem.

Catherine Hansen, M.A. (Geography) Minnesota State University, Mankato, 1998. Catherine teaches Applied GIS, GIS Customization and Programming, and Geography for Business and Planning, and manages the Center for Applied GIScience (GIS lab).

Jan Slaats, M.A., DipGIS (Geography) University of Guelph, Ontario, Canada, 1997. 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.



Faculty Activities

Ms. Catherine Hansen, has been busy preparing and teaching a new course for GIS majors, Geog 422: *GIS Customization and Programming*. This course replaces the old allied requirement for a Java programming course. She and her students are getting their fill of ArcObjects this semester. Catherine will be teaching a new graduate level course next semester for students in the M.S. in Real Estate program, Geog 730: *Geography for Business and Planning*.

Dr. David Kelley has one course release this semester to study the impact of ethanol production in the state on nitrate loading to groundwater underlying agricultural fields. He presented his preliminary findings at a regional conference in October, and is busy working on a manuscript for publication. His monitoring of ecosystem health in the Willow River (Hudson, WI) is completed for its 3rd season, and the results are posted outside his door.

Dr. Paul Lorah continues to serve on the Board of the Minnesota Nature Conservancy and chairs the Conservancy's Conservation Committee. This semester he is teaching *Geographic Analysis* with new projects on urban villages, the creative class and foreclosures in Washington County. He is also working with students on two research projects -- the first focuses on the potential of degraded forests to sequester carbon, and the second analyzes neighborhood changes associated with the creation of mass transit stations.

Dr. Robert Werner will be taking 26 students to South Africa over J-term in 2009. The course is called *Race & Ethnicity in South Africa* and will be co-taught with Dr. Mxolisi Mavi, who lives in Johannesburg. In the spring, Bob will be teaching his *Africa* course here at UST, with two terrific books: one that's a broad overview but that's also strong on pre-European Africa, and the other that emphasizes post-colonial Africa. Bob made a good Abe Lincoln at Halloween.

Center for Applied GIScience

The Geography Department maintains a state-of-the-art mapping laboratory in the far west corner of the fourth floor in JRC. Twenty Dell OptiPlex workstations running the popular ArcGIS software from ESRI, in combination with the collaborative faculty effort to use the techno-resource effectively, give students the professional edge in preparation for career work or graduate schools. The Center for Applied GIScience is used from introductory courses all the way to applied senior seminars, and for spatial research for a variety of disciplines.

If you have a map project and would like our help, we'd be happy to assist. Just fill out the [Mapping Request Form](#) (available on the Geography website) and send it to us.

CONFERENCE NEWS

UST at GIS/LIS conference



Dr. David Kelley and Ms. Catherine Hansen took six junior and senior geography students to the 2008 GIS/LIS Consortium annual conference in Rochester, MN, on Oct. 1-3 (above).



Senior Allison Seiwert was presented with a Consortium undergraduate scholarship award during the awards luncheon on Oct. 2 (left). She also competed in a second scholarship competition for undergraduates by presenting a talk on her original research titled: "Senior Citizens and Three Rivers Park Trails".

Dr. David Kelley presented a paper at the conference, titled: "A risk evaluation of nitrate loading to groundwater supplies in Freeborn county, MN, due to increased biofuel production." Dr. Kelley also served as a judge for the graduate scholarship competition.

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.

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.

Visit us on the web at:

www.stthomas.edu/geography

2009 GEOGRAPHY COURSES

J-Term: Geog 230 Weather and Climate

Spring:

Geog 111 Human Geography (2 sections)
Geog 112 Landscapes: Physical Systems
Geog 113 World Geography (2 sections)
Geog 221 Computer Skills in Geography
Geog 298 Africa
Geog 321 Geographic Info Systems
GEOG 330 Geog for Business and Planning

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www.stthomas.edu/geography

Center for Applied GIScience:

http://www.stthomas.edu/geography/gis_lab/