

## From the Chair:

As I sit and write the second issue of *Geographica*, I have the time to recall key events that have transpired in our department since the start of a new year. Our departmental website has been re-designed to give it a look and feel more inline with the University's online portal, and hopefully, more useful to current and prospective students. Our new web address is: [www.stthomas.edu/geography](http://www.stthomas.edu/geography). Our GIS lab has been renamed the Center for Applied GIScience, reflecting a growing trend in our department for applied, hands-on learning experiences and detailed analyses demanded by the many GIS projects that we receive. In relation to this, Catherine Hansen, Manager for the Center, developed a *Map Request Form* to facilitate any mapping or GIS analysis project submitted. This form can be accessed at: [www.stthomas.edu/geography/gis\\_lab](http://www.stthomas.edu/geography/gis_lab). In February, a recruiter for ESRI, maker of the popular GIS software ArcGIS®, visited our department to meet with students and discuss job opportunities with his company. Student turnout was good, and several students were interviewed for internships starting this summer.

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.

Have a wonderful spring semester and summer break.  
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. 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.*



## Data Analysis and Cartography in Geography

Each semester, the Geography Department hires qualified students to work on real-world projects requested from internal (students and faculty) and from external (such as neighborhood groups, state agencies, or other special interests) customers. In particular, marketing and business students are keen to utilize the demographic mapping resources we can provide. It is a goal of ours to make the request process and scheduling smooth in order to meet the ever-increasing mapping expectations of our clients.

Consequently, we have implemented the following protocols for GIS requests:

1. Any mapping requests should be made using the *Map Request Form* (posted on our geography web site).
2. Mapping requests will be assigned to the appropriate student assistant by the manager or a faculty member.
3. Direct contact with the client and the center assistant is expected after assignment.
4. Any GIS mapping requests should expect no less than a two-week turn around; some requests may take longer.
5. Not all projects are guaranteed completion. Projects are assigned on a first come, first served basis. Project schedules and due date expectations are to be arranged between the student lab assistant and the client.

Please let us know how we can assist with YOUR map project!

## What's Happening in Geography?

### News Update

There will be a new regional course taught in the Fall semester 2007: **Africa** (Geog 298-01) by Dr. Bob Werner (Tuesday afternoons, 3:30-6:30). 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. In preparation for this course, Bob will be traveling this summer to South Africa, Zambia, and Malawi to gather photos, stories, and experiences to share.

A second new course, **Conservation Geography** (Geog 298-02) will be taught by Dr. Paul Lorah in the fall semester (TTh 1:30-3:10). This course will use basic GIS to study the relationships between the economic, political and environmental processes shaping our landscapes. Class projects will include siting wind farms, assessing the ecological importance of Forest Service roadless areas, designing a Yellowstone-to-Yukon wildlife corridor and modeling grizzly bear habitat. Students will also work with partners such as the Wilderness Society and the Great River Greening.

### 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. Bob just celebrated his 15<sup>th</sup> year teaching at St. Thomas. Congratulations Bob!

**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 helping the Geography Department go carbon neutral by organizing a map sale to raise funds to purchase carbon credits. Paul is collaborating with a climatologist from the Univ. of WI on a paper about the impact of climate change on the location of the jet stream. He is also working with a geographer at the University of Idaho on the relationship between environmental amenities and cultural change.

In addition to his duties as Geography Chair, **Dr. David Kelley** was named interim Director for the Environmental Studies program for the spring semester. Dr. Kelley spent his winter break teaching the Weather and Climate course and re-designing the Geography and Tommie Weather websites. New to his Physical Geography course this spring, the Geography department has adopted the Minnehaha Creek as part of the Citizen Stream-Monitoring Program of the MN Pollution Control Agency. Students in the course will start collecting biotic and abiotic data to monitor the long-term health of this stream and its watershed.

## 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 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 (see *Spotlight* for more on Jan).



## **SPOTLIGHT: JAN SLAATS**



**Jan Slaats**, GIS Instructor

Jan is an adjunct instructor on the Geography team and we are fortunate to have him with us. Jan has a M.A. in Geography from the University of Guelph, Ontario, Canada (1992) and a GIS Diploma from the College of Geographic Sciences, Lawrencetown, Nova Scotia, Canada (1997). Currently, Jan's full-time job is as the GIS Manager for the Central U.S. Conservation Region of The Nature Conservancy (TNC), located in Minneapolis, MN. He has been a GIS practitioner for more than 15 years and an adjunct instructor in our department since 2001. Jan teaches Geographic Information Systems (Geog 321) every spring semester, a course which appeals to students inside and outside of the Geography major. His interests are GIS training and course development, conservation GIS, spatial analysis techniques, coordinate systems, cartography, remote sensing and GPS. In his spare time he likes to sail. If you don't know him yet, you should – so stop by and say hello!

## **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**

Last year, our department hosted the 2<sup>nd</sup> annual Midwestern Undergraduate Geography Symposium. This year the conference returns to Macalester College with 21 institutions invited to participate. The 3<sup>rd</sup> annual MUGS conference will take place April 14, 2007, and 15 students and faculty from UST's geography department are registered to attend and present their original research in a series of oral or poster presentations.

Our GIS manager Catherine Hansen and graduating senior Kaleb Stromberg will be attending the 7<sup>th</sup> Annual ESRI Education User Conference, June 16-19 in San Diego, California. Their papers have been accepted for presentation at this conference, which is a forum for members of the education community to come together and share their experiences and knowledge to start or to grow GIS activities and 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**

Our department will be graduating 8 majors at the May commencement, one of them Summa Cum Laude (Dan Thiede). These students will be joining the many successful graduates from our department, such as:

**Christina Nichols (Brandel)** (2004), who has taken a job with the Main Street project in Cleveland, Ohio. After leaving us and heading to the University of Vermont to study urban planning, Christina finished her M.A. in geography/urban planning at Kent State University.

**Mao Vang** (1998), a geography and education major, who left us to take a full-time job with the Minnesota Literacy Council, where she wrote and published books to help teach Hmong children to read. She is now married, has 2 children, and works for the Sacramento (CA) School District.

## **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/>

Visit us on the web at:

[www.stthomas.edu/geography](http://www.stthomas.edu/geography)

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## 2007 GEOGRAPHY COURSES

Summer Session II: Geog 111 Human Geography

Fall:

Geog 111	Human Geography
Geog 113	World Geography
Geog 221	Computer Skills in Geography
Geog 223	Remote Sensing
Geog 298-01	Africa
Geog 298-02	Conservation Geography
Geog 421	Applied GIS

## CONTACTS

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Visit us on our website at:

[www.stthomas.edu/geography](http://www.stthomas.edu/geography)

### Center for Applied GIScience:

[http://www.stthomas.edu/geography/gis\\_lab/](http://www.stthomas.edu/geography/gis_lab/)