

From the Chair:

Well, summer is upon us, though most days it doesn't seem so – it's been a cold spring! It was certainly chillier than usual when our department visited St. Peter, MN, for the 4th annual MUGS conference, hosted by Gustavus Adolphus College. It was also a brisk visit to the north shore of Lake Superior when we took our first departmental field trip to the Lutsen Resort and Sugarloaf Cove Scientific and Natural Area. Read about these trips in this issue and plan to join us on our next series of trips in the fall.

The GIS lab will be getting new computers in July (backup your stuff if you haven't already!). You shouldn't see much change – they'll just be faster and have more storage capacity. Also, ArcGIS 9.3 will be released by ESRI in June, so we should have this new version of our GIS software installed and ready to go by the start of the fall semester. Also new for the fall is a redesigned Geography department brochure, featuring students and faculty on the cover. Be sure to see one of the faculty for copies and hand them out to friends!

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 Lutsen!



The Geography Department took its first field trip this semester. Faculty and students spent a weekend touring the landscapes and ecosystems of the north shore of lake Superior around Lutsen, MN. Don't we look chilly but happy?

What's Happening in Geography?

News Update

The Geography Department has recently added new courses and revised its majors to better meet the needs of our students. These changes will first be felt in the Fall semester, 2008. As you all know, QMCS 230 *Software Design Using the JAVA Language* is dropped as a required course for the GIS concentration and replaced with Geog 422 *GIS Customization and Programming*, a course specializing in customizing GIS applications. One course that has not been taught for a few years, *Geographical Analysis*, will be back in the fall, taught by a new adjunct Alison Slaats (Jan's wife) and relabeled Geog 322 to reflect its content as a junior level course. Also, we are offering two sections of *World Geography* in the fall instead of one to make our course times more-flexible for freshmen.

This semester, seniors Jim Moen and Kevin Hoffman produced several significant maps for Virgil Wiebe, Director of Clinical Legal Education & Associate Professor of Law in the University of St. Thomas School of Law. These maps (one of Zagreb, Croatia and two of Al Hosh, Lebanon) were featured in a briefing Mr. Wiebe gave in early February, 2008, to U.S. Senate staffers and NGO (non-governmental unit) organizers.

On May 2-4, 2008, the Geography Department took its first field trip to Lutsen, MN. Three faculty and eleven students stayed at the Lutsen Resort on the north shore at a huge discount thanks to the contacts Dr. Lorah has made through his service with The Nature Conservancy. We toured Sugarloaf Cove State Scientific and Natural Area with one of its interpreters and learned about the unique nature of this fragile ecosystem and the impacts that have occurred as a result of north shore logging in the recent past. If you missed this trip, don't worry. We are already planning on another field trip to northern Minnesota in the fall, so stay tuned.

The 18th Annual MN GIS/LIS Consortium Conference and Workshops will be held October 1-3, 2008, in Rochester, MN. The conference features workshops, technical sessions, panel discussions, technology demonstrations, project updates and local and national speakers all focused on the use of geographic information systems and land information systems technology in Minnesota and beyond. As part of this event, a Scholarship Award is given to one student at each Minnesota post-secondary college and university having a recognized GIS program. Our department's award winner this year is Allie Seiwert, who not only gets free admission to the conference and a \$200 scholarship award, but is eligible to compete for a best presentation prize at the conference. Congratulations Allie and good luck at the conference!

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, was awarded a summer research and networking grant through the Bush Foundation so students can gather with each other, faculty, and community guests to discuss project updates and present results. In June, Catherine will be presenting the newest business library database “Business Decisions” for a UST faculty e-learning course. Summer projects include mapping and data management for the District Council 13, working on a routing application for Open Arms, lots of georeferencing for the Whitewater River Watershed and the PCA, some land use mapping for the Friends of the Boundary Waters, and programming with python and MapServer for ThomTech Design.

Dr. David Kelley continues to monitor the ecosystem health in Minnehaha Creek and the Willow River in Hudson, WI. He received a Research Assistant Grant from St. Thomas for the fall to study how the ethanol production boom in Minnesota is impacting the amount of protected acreage in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) and how leaching of nitrate fertilizers under corn and soybean acreages are affecting the quality of groundwater sources underlying our agricultural lands.

Dr. Paul Lorah continues to serve on the Board of the Minnesota Nature Conservancy and chairs the Conservancy’s Conservation Committee.

Dr. Robert Werner: In preparation to teach a course called *coffee*, Bob and his wife will be touring Central America this summer by bus – in to Guatemala City, to Copán in Honduras, and on to San José in Costa Rica, the site of the spring 2009 *coffee* course. The *coffee* course will be a history of coffee, a study of producing conditions (climate, soils, sun), and an examination of the politics and economics of the coffee trade. It will include the topics of coffee production by large and small producers, distribution by cooperatives and large commercial firms, fair trade, and ecological considerations.

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

The 4th annual Midwestern Undergraduate Geography Symposium (MUGS) conference was held April 26, 2008, at Gustavus Adolphus College in St. Peter, MN. Dr. Lorah, Dr. Werner, and Catherine Hansen took six students from UST's geography department to present research and mingle with colleagues. Senior Stacie Rominski presented “UST Student Housing Location,” and junior Allison Seiwert spoke on “Senior Citizens and Three Rivers Park Trails.” Other students presented posters: Jim Moen: “Mapping for Political Action: Hezbollah Rocket Launches and Israeli Cluster Munition Strikes”; Nathalia Roberts: “Population Distribution and the Creative Class in the Rural West”; Stacie Rominski and Allison Seiwert: “Ideal Locations for Environmentally Friendly Recreational Expansion in Itasca County, MN”; Abigail Krause and Scott O'Donnell: “The Most Valuable Habitat for White-Tailed Deer During the Winter Months in Itasca County, MN.” Our Geography department will host next year’s conference, which draws students and faculty from local colleges and universities in Minnesota and Wisconsin.



Dr. David Kelley attended the 2008 Association of American Geographers (AAG) annual conference April 16-20 in Boston. He presented a paper, "Nitrate loading to groundwater supplies in the Midwestern United States due to increased biofuel production: a GLEAMS modeling study in Minnesota."

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.

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2008 GEOGRAPHY COURSES

Summer I: Geog 111 Human Geography

Fall:

Geog 111 Human Geography (2 sections)
Geog 113 World Geography (2 sections)
Geog 221 Computer Skills in Geography
Geog 222/322 Geographical Analysis
Geog 421 Applied GIS
Geog 422 GIS Customization/Programming

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Visit us on our website at:

www.stthomas.edu/geography

Center for Applied GIScience:

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