

Department of Geography Alumni Newsletter

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH DAKOTA

Summer 2011

Special points of interest:

- Dr. Michael Niedzielski - New Faculty Member!
- News about Homecoming 2011
- Alumni News
- Student Accomplishments



Nick Schmitz—Spring 2011 B.L. Wills Scholar

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Chairperson's Corner

Dear Alumni and Friends,
It was a banner year for UND Geography! I feel privileged to chair a department comprised of talented teachers, gifted researchers, devoted and efficient staff, energetic and bright students, and loyal alumni. There are many successes to share with you, as well as several exciting events on the horizon.

In early October, we welcomed back Lee Okeson and his wife Marlene for homecoming. Lee was the 2010 recipient of our Distinguished Alumni Award. I am happy to announce that the Okesons have established the "Lee and Marlene Okeson Geography Graduate Student Fellowship Endowment." Their kind generosity will ensure the successes of future generations of UND Geography graduate students. I am also pleased to let you that another new scholarship for geography students is being established through estate of Virginia George.

The 2011 recipient of the Distinguished Alumni Award is Dr. Thomas L. Mote, who was recently named Head of the Department of Geography at the University of Georgia. Mote graduated from UND

in 1988, majoring in Geography and Communications. Dr. Mote will receive the award and be the featured speaker at our 2011 Homecoming Banquet on Oct. 21.

Another success came in November, when Drs. Paul Todhunter and Greg Vandenberg, along with Dr. Curtis Stofferahn from the UND Sociology Department, received a competitive, campus-side seed/planning grant for collaborative research from the UND Vice President for Research and Economic Development for their proposal "Multi-Disciplinary Study of the Devils Lake Basin as a Coupled Natural-Human System." In addition, Dr. Vandenberg is a co-PI on a \$600,000 NSF grant aimed at providing scholarships to talented undergraduate students with interests in environmental sciences. Geography is included in that grant along with the UND Departments of Chemistry, Biology, and Math.

We successfully completed two job searches this Spring and we are fortunate to have two outstanding new faculty members joining the department soon. Dr. Michael Niedzielski, a citizen of Poland who holds a Ph.D. in Geography from The Ohio State University, will fill our Urban Geography/GIS position. Dr. Christopher

Atkinson, who holds a Ph.D. in Geography from the University of Kansas (and an M.S. from UND), will tackle responsibilities related to our new position focused on online instruction. With the new position, our faculty will grow to eight full-time members starting in Fall 2011!

I am also pleased to report that Dr. Gregory Vandenberg and Dr. Enru Wang will be promoted to Associate Professor with tenure and I will be promoted to Professor, effective in August.

We continue to work to find ways to send students to conferences. For example, we sent four students to the Great Plains/Rocky Mountain Division of the AAG meeting in Lawrence, KS, eight to the Minnesota GIS/LIS conference in Duluth, four to the SDSU Geography Convention in Brookings, and four to the Midwest Undergraduate Geography Symposium at Gustavus Adolphus College. Several students made poster or oral presentations at each gathering. I am proud that UND Geography students comprised the majority of the winning Geobowl team at the SDSU Convention.

Several of our students were recognized for their outstanding accomplish-

CHAIR'S CORNER (cont.)

ments this year. For example, Matthew Fahrenbruch was awarded the Rechlin Scholarship from the International GTU office. Korey Southerland, was elected the first president of the new UND Women in Science group. Derrick LaPoint, an assistant captain on the 2010-11 hockey team, was named to the WCHA All-Academic Team and he won a share of the Archie Krum Memorial Athletic Scholarship. Graduate student Kimberley Hoppe won second place in the student poster completion at the SDSU Geography Convention. Graduate student Patrick Bright's undergraduate thesis, done at Bemidji State University, was published in the *Journal of Political Research*. Two of our students, Korey Southerland and Kristen Benidt, were featured in UND Discovery magazine (<http://discovery.und.edu/>).

Things won't slow down in Fall 2011! That's because the Department is hosting two conferences and organizing a trip to a third. The Prairie Division of the Canadian Association of Geographers will meet Sept. 16-18 in Devils Lake.

That meeting is being organized by Dr. Douglas Munski. Dr. Vandenberg is working with the State GIS Coordinator and the USGS to organize the 2011 North Dakota GIS Conference, planned for Oct. 11-13 at the Alerus Center in Grand Forks. Dr. Atkinson is making plans to take a group of students to the GPRM AAG, which is Oct. 6-8 in Denver.

As I write this at the end of Fall 2011, there are 51 students majoring in Geography, which is the highest since at least the 2000-2001 school year. The number of students enrolled in our Essential Studies courses (1,394 in 2010-11) is the highest since at least 2005-2006. Our overall Student Credit Hours are also on an impressive upward trend. Our M.A./M.S. program remains solid, as does our graduate GISc Certificate Program. We have 15 students finishing the graduate certificate and another 32 from all over the U.S. who will start this summer.

Please note that our new web address is <http://arts-sciences.und.edu/geography/>. That page was completely redesigned as part of a campus-wide effort last year. Let us know what you think.

Please keep in touch and consider returning to campus for Homecoming or at any time of the year to visit with faculty, staff and students. We are always happy to have alumni give guest lectures in classes or simply share some career advice with our students.



Nels Anderson presenting at the May 5, 2011 Advanced GIS Poster Session.

2010-11 Geography Department Forums

- Dr. Paul Todhunter:** The Terminal Dilemma: Eighteen Years of Flooding at Devils Lake, North Dakota. Professor of Geography, Department of Geography, University of North Dakota, 10 September 2010.
- Dr. Jeff Van Looy:** White Summer: Experience and Influence from the Juneau Ocefield Research Program. Assistant Professor of ESSP, Department of Earth System Science and Policy, University of North Dakota, 15 October 2010.
- Scott Abel:** Mapping Lakes and Forest Stands on the Red Lake Reservation. GIS Specialist, Red Lake Department of Natural Resources, Red Lake, MN, 17 November 2010.
- Wade Kline:** Understanding and Implementing the Metropolitan Planning Process. Executive Director, Fargo-Moorhead Metropolitan Council of Governments, 10 December 2010.
- Dr. Michael Niedzielski:** Livable Cities: Commuting and Urban Rail Perspective on Sustainable Urban Future. Visiting Assistant Professor of Geography, Department of Geography, University of South Florida, 25 January 2011.
- Dr. Rebecca Romsdahl:** Climate Change Concerns across the US Great Plains: What are Government Decision-makers Thinking? Assistant Professor of ESSP, Department of Earth System Science and Policy, University of North Dakota, 11 February 2011.
- Dr. Greg Vandenberg:** Water Quality Trends in the Upper Devils Lake Basin. Assistant Professor of Geography, Department of Geography, University of North Dakota, 10 March 2011.

Please Join Us for Homecoming 2011!

UND Homecoming is during the week of 17-23 October 2011. The annual Geography Alumni Banquet is scheduled for Friday, 21 October at the Hilton Garden Inn, which is just off campus (5 p.m. social hour, 6 p.m. supper). Dr. Thomas Mote will provide an after-dinner talk. If you are interested in attending, please contact Ms. Cindy Purpur (701-777-4246 or cindy.purpur@email.und.edu) by Oct. 12. The cost of the banquet is \$22 per person. We hope to see you there.



Matt Fahrenbruch presenting at SDSU Convention.



Proud Graduates at May 14, 2011 Commencement.

Dr. Tom Mote to Receive Distinguished Alumni Award

Thomas Mote is a professor of geography at the University of Georgia in Athens. He will begin serving as the new department head in July 2011 and has spent the last four years as associate head of the department. His research interests include the application of geospatial technologies to the study of hydroclimatic processes, particularly cryospheric (snow/ice) processes; the impact and fingerprint of climate change on components of the hydrological cycle; the role of the cryosphere in climate change and water resources; and the impact of extreme events in the hydrologic cycle.

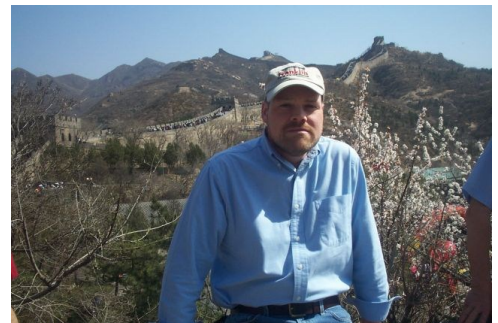
Tom was reared near Chicago in Chesterton, IN, where he attended high school. His family is originally from Grand Forks and Forest River, ND, and he spent many summers as a child in the Near North neighborhood of Grand Forks. He completed the B.A. with majors in Geography and Communications at UND (1988), and later earned the M.A. (1991) and Ph.D. (1994) in Geography from the University of

Nebraska-Lincoln. While at UND, Tom met his wife, Nancy Omdahl (B.A. UND '89, M.A. UNL '90). Nancy and Tom have two sons, Jeremy and Andrew, ages 15 and 10.

While completing his PhD, Tom worked for the Byrd Polar Research Center at Ohio State University and as a NASA Global Change Fellow. He has taught at the University of Georgia since 1994, except for one year as a member of the faculty of Space Studies at UND (1998-99). Tom has published more than 50 journal articles in climatology, meteorology, glaciology, and remote sensing, in addition to assorted reports, book chapters, and conference proceedings. He serves as director of the UGA Interdisciplinary Program in Atmospheric Sciences and as one of five executive directors of the Georgia Center for Climate and Society. His work has been supported by more than \$2 million in research grants from NASA, NOAA, NSF, USDA Forest Service, and U.S. Department of Energy. He has served on several NASA and NOAA review

panels, as well as a National Research Council panel. He currently serves as an associate editor for the *Journal of Applied Meteorology and Climatology* and a section editor for *Geography Compass*.

Tom has completed two Fulbright exchanges: a bi-national exchange with Ain Shams University in Cairo, Egypt, in 2004, and a semester at the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul in Porto Alegre, Brazil, in 2008. He has advised seven PhD students and 11 masters students, and has received both the Excellence in Teaching and Outstanding Academic Advising awards from the University of Georgia.



Dr. Mote by the Great Wall of China.

Geography Alumni News

(Your name here! Send us news!)

Erik Moe (B.S., 2004) recently took a new job as a 911 Dispatcher/Correctional Officer in the McLean County Sheriff's Department in Washburn, ND. Erik still lives in Bismarck, ND.

Jared Auch (B.S., 2010) was hired as a Field Manager with AWTY Maps of Dickinson, ND.

Scott Roper (M.A., 1993) is the stand-alone geographer in the Department of History, Geography, Economics, and Politics at Castleton State College in Castleton, Vermont. He teaches numerous pre-service Social Studies teachers. His courses include everything from Weather and Climate, Cultural Geography, and Map Use and Interpretation. Scott was recently named Coordinator of the Vermont Geographic Alliance. He is finishing up a 6-year stint as editor of PAST, the transactions journal for the Pioneer America Society, and this past October hosted the Society's annual meeting in Castleton. He and Stephanie built a house in the woods of New Hampshire earlier this year, and when they are not busy working, writing, or volunteering for local government, they can usually be found trying to finish building the library in the basement.

Tina Cummings (M.S., 2010) accepted a position as a GIS Analyst with PBS&J in Beltsville, MD. She will be working on FEMA contracts with GIS and Flood Mapping.

Bill Wetherholt (M.A. 2008) has been accepted into the Ph.D. program at Kansas State University.

Susan Wahl (M.S. 2009) is now working as a GIS Analyst at Kansas State University in Manhattan, KS.

Tina Cummings (M.S., 2010) recently passed the national certification examination (on her first attempt!) to become a Certified Floodplain Manager. The Certified Floodplain Manager Program is administered by the Association of State Floodplain Managers (ASFPM), Inc.

Sarita Pacchai (M.S., 2005) is working as a Senior GIS Analyst at PBS&J in Florida. She recently passed the examinations for both certified mapping scientist - GIS/LIS and Remote Sensing.

Michael DeMers (1980) is Associate Professor of Geography at New Mexico State University in Las Cruces, NM. Michael was recently presented with the 2010 Anderson Medal of Honor in Applied Geography by the Applied Geography Specialty Group of the AAG. The award recognizes exceptional accomplishments in applied geography education, research, and service to the profession and the wider public. Congratulations Michael!

Kevin McKinnon (B.S., 1994) recently accepted the role as President of the Greater Fargo-Moorhead Economic Development Corporation. Kevin recently moved from Eagan MN where he spent 5 years as the Director of Business Development with the State of Minnesota.

Kristen Benidt (M.A., 2010) was recently hired as a Remote Sensing Specialist with Five Rivers Services in Jamestown, ND.

Daniel Ollhoff (B.S. 2009) is working as a Neighborhood Project Coordinator with the Neighborhood Housing Services of Duluth.

Mitchell Schull (B.S. 2003) defended his dissertation (Application of Spectral Invariants for Monitoring Forests across Multiple Scales) in January in the Department of Geography & Environment at Boston University. He was married in June of 2009 and they are expecting their first child (a girl) in September.

UND Discovery Magazine

The Geography Department was well-represented in the spring 2011 issue of *UND Discovery*. Dr. Greg Vandenberg was mentioned for his involvement in the NSF US MASTER program. Undergraduate major Korey Southerland was featured in an article on her interdisciplinary interests. Graduate student Kristen Benidt and faculty member Dr. Devon Hansen were featured in an article on community development focused on Grafton, ND.

Graduate Student Achievements

Md Shahriar Pervez and Jesslyn F. Brown (2010) Mapping Irrigated Lands at 250-m Scale by Merging MODIS Data and National Agricultural Statistics. *Remote Sensing* 2(10), 2388-2412; doi:10.3390/rs2102388

Tina Cummings's M.S. Thesis was featured in a 2.5 page story by Patrick Miller in the Autumn 2010 issue of *UND-Discovery*. This magazine is published by the UND Office of the Vice President for Research and Economic Development, with assistance from the Office of University Relations. This issue of *UND-Discovery* focused on collaborations between UND and various communities and agencies across the state and nation. Tina used the FEMA HAZUS-MH Flood Model in collaboration with information made available by officials from the city of Minnewaukan, North Dakota to develop inundation maps showing the areal extent and damages resulting from a continued rise in Devils Lake from a water surface elevation of 1452 to 1460 feet asl. The information will be used by local officials in determining flood mitigation plans if Devils Lake continues to rise.

Nels Anderson, an M.S. student in the UND Department of Geography, received a \$500 North Dakota View 2010-2011 scholarship to help promote his professional development in remote sensing and other geospatial technologies. NorthDakotaView, led by the UND Department of Geography, is a member of the AmericaView Consortium and is dedicated to promoting remote sensing and geospatial technologies within North Dakota. The emphasis is on establishing and assisting with education and training curricula within colleges and universities throughout the state and enhancing technology transfer, applied research efforts, and workforce training.

Tina Cummings had an extended full-page abstract of her thesis published in the Spring 2011 Newsletter of the AAG Applied Geography Specialty Group. The abstract (HAZUS-MH and Flood Mapping: The Case of Devils Lake, North Dakota) can be found at: <http://agsg.binghamton.edu>, then navigating to Newsletter, 2011 Spring newsletter, page 9.

Undergraduate Student Accomplishments

Matthew Fahrenbruch gave a poster presentation "An examination of shifting economic conditions and changing vulnerabilities in San Juan del Sur, Nicaragua since the 1992 Nicaraguan Tsubnami" as part of the Ronald E. McNair Scholars poster session at the UND Graduate School Scholarly Forum, 8-9 March 2011.

Matthew Fahrenbruch has been admitted to the Masters program in geography in the Department of Geography and Geology at the University of Southern Mississippi, and has been awarded a graduate teaching assistantship and tuition waiver for the 2011-2012 academic year.

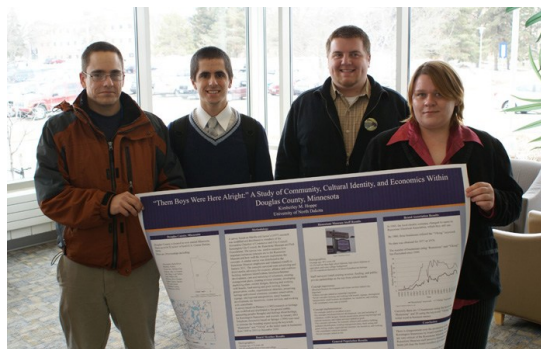
Undergraduates **Ben Carlson**, Kyle Economy, and **Matthew Fahrenbruch**, and graduate student **Kimberly Hoppe** were the winning team at the Geography Bowl competition at the SDSU Geography Conference in Brookings, SD on March 24-25, 2011. This is the first team from UND to win the competition in some time. Congratulations!

Nicholas Kludt gave a presentation titled "A Spatial Analysis of Buckthorn Distribution at Turtle River State Park" at the Midwest Undergraduate Geography Symposium (MUGS) in St. Peter, MN at Gustavus Adolphus College.

Matthew Fahrenbruch also gave a presentation at the Midwest Undergraduate Geography Symposium (MUGS) in St. Peter, MN at Gustavus Adolphus College. His paper was titled "An Examination of Shifting Economic Conditions and Changing Vulnerabilities in San Juan del Sur, Nicaragua, since the 1992 Nicaraguan Tsunami".



MUGS attenders at Gustavus Adolphus College



SDSU Convention Geobowl Champs!

Department Graduates

M.A.

Benidt, Kristen, M.A., "Geographic Perspectives on Youth Out-Migration from Grafton, North Dakota." (Chair: Hansen)

Iverson, Rodney, M.A., "Airline Service: Effects on Travel and Economic Development in North Dakota Following the Airline Deregulation Act of 1978." (Chair: Wang)

Hoppe, Kimberley, M.A., "Them Boys Were Here Alright: A Study of Community, Cultural Identity, and Economics within Douglas County, Minnesota." (Chair: Munski)

M.S.

Cummings, Christina, M.S., "Using the HAZUS-MH Flood Model to Assess the Physical and Economic Damages at the City of Minnewaukan, North Dakota, due to the Expansion of Devils Lake." (Chair: Todhunter)

Pederson, Erin, M.S., "Geographic Distribution of Natural and Anthropogenic Noise in Selected Grand Forks Parks." (Chair: Vandenberg)

Metzger, Peter, M.S., "High-Resolution, Low-Cost, Near-Infrared and Color Kite Aerial Photography as a Tool for Archaeological Site Prospecting and Recording." (Chair: Rundquist)

B.S.

Peter Aldrit (Summer 2010)

Anders Larson (Fall 2010)

Ian Schuler (Fall 2010, Cum Laude)

Craig Weber (Fall 2010)

Lori Young (Fall 2010)

Matthew Fahrenbruch (Spring 2011, Summa Cum Laude)

Christopher Flom (Spring 2011)

Joel Holweger (Spring 2011)

Blake Jackson (Spring 2011, U.S. Army Commissioning)

Derrick LaPoint (Spring 2011, Cum Laude)

Thomas Svobodny (Spring 2011)

Rachel Turner (Spring 2011)

Kyle Wikstrom (Spring 2011, Summa Cum Laude)

Geography Faculty Profiles

Dr. Chris Atkinson graduated from the University of Kansas in May 2010, and completed his first year at UND in a special Assistant Professor appointment with primary responsibilities for online instruction. This past year he served as both an instructor and as faculty advisor for GTU/Geography Club. This past year, he taught Cartography and Visualization, GIS, Urban Geography and Planning, Geography of North America, and Human Geography. Some highlights for the year were two conference trips with students. The first was in October, 2010, when he took a group of students to the Great Plains Rocky Mountain AAG in Lawrence, Kansas. The second trip involved going with four undergraduate students to the Midwest Undergraduate Geography Symposium at Gustavus Adolphus in St. Peter, Minnesota.

He and his wife Lisa, welcomed their first child, Miles Thomas, on August 27, 2010. He is enjoying picnics and swing rides in the park. Lisa and Miles enjoy other moms and children in the community from their weekly social activities at the library, local churches, etc. Miles also has enjoyed Arioso, a musical class for children of all ages.

Lisa has started back to work on a part-time basis, helping the City of Grand Forks revise and update the current land use plan. She enjoys her work and the opportunity to continue in the field of planning since her time as Associate Planner for the City of Blue Springs, Missouri.

Dr. Devon Hansen presented and/or co-authored papers at professional meetings including the AAG national meeting in Seattle, Washington and the CAG/PD regional meeting in North Battleford, SK. Her research interest assessing efforts to welcome refugee populations and to meet resettlement needs in ways that will help them integrate into North Dakota communities continues. She participated in the annual Building Bridges Conference in Fargo, ND on March 28-29, 2011. The conference focused on refugee health and well-being, English learners, and volunteering with New American families. It has been a year since Dr. Hansen began volunteering with the Global Friends Coalition and their work with refugee integration in the Grand Forks community.

Dr. Hansen's work connecting undergraduate and graduate student research activities with community needs in North Dakota was featured in the Spring 2011 issue of *UND Discovery*, which is published by the Office of the Vice President for Research and Economic Development. In December 2010, Dr. Hansen's graduate advisee, Kristen Benidt, had her research highlighted as part of *UND Discovery*. Dr. Hansen is looking forward to working with undergraduate students in a research component of her community development course in the fall semester. Finally, she participated in the fourth annual Community Connect Forum in Mountain, ND on April 30, 2011.

Dr. Douglas C. Munski continues to be engaged in teaching, service, research, and until recently, administration, in the UND GEOG DEPT, which means he has racked-up his 33rd year on the campus. This past year he was elected North Dakota Higher Education Association (NDHEA) president and remains highly active promoting geographic education in K-12 settings under the auspices of the North Dakota Education Association.. Dr. Munski also still participates as a chancellor-appointed faculty representative to the North Dakota University System's Adult Learners Council and remains the executive secretary of the North Dakota Council for the Social Studies. Locally, he was re-elected to represent UND on the Council of College Faculties and to the UND Senate.

Among Dr. Munski's highlights for 2010-11 has been the successful completion of one graduate advisee, Ms. Kimberley Hoppe, plus the outstanding participation of the GEOG 501 class at the 10th annual UND Graduate School Scholarly Forum. He co-authored with these graduate students four different posters, a record for GEOG 501. He co-chaired the fourth annual Community Connect Forum with Sen. Curtis Olafson (R-19) at Mountain, North Dakota, on April 30, 2011. He remains the member-at-large for the executive board of the Canadian Association of Geographers Prairie Division (CAG PD) and attended the 2010 national CAG Meeting in Regina where he presented two posters and chaired a session. The regional meeting of CAG PD is slated for September 16-18, 2011 in Devils Lake, North Dakota, so alumni are encouraged to come and to participate. Finally, Dr. Munski looks forward to seeing alumni and their families at UND Homecoming 2011!

Dr. Brad Rundquist was honored this year when elected Regional Councillor of the Great Plains/Rocky Mountain Division of the AAG. In that role, Dr. Rundquist will represent geography programs in the GPRM Region on the AAG Council. Dr. Rundquist was also honored when elected Vice President of the St. Louis Region of the American Society for Photogrammetry and Remote Sensing. Both terms begin in June 2011. He continues to serve as Managing Editor of *Geocarto International* and director of North Dakota View. His three-year National Science Foundation Advanced Technical Education grant, in conjunction with Turtle Mountain Community College, ends in July 2011. Dr. Rundquist presented a paper at the 2011 AAG Conference in Seattle and the 2010 AAG GPRM in Lawrence, Kansas. His son, Kendall (19) graduated from high school and will attend Baylor University. Riley (16) just got his driver's license and will soon be a high school junior. Ella (9) is finishing third grade and continues to be very involved in dance, choir, and stage classes, and Autumn (3), who is growing up too quickly for mom and dad, is also developing a love for dance.

Geography Faculty Profiles (cont.)

Dr. Paul Todhunter returned to his normal duties after a semester on developmental leave. Teaching continues to take more time than he ever dreamed would be possible at this stage of his career. Administrative demands for direct assessment of student learning, Quantitative Reasoning Special Emphasis Area documentation, and Essential Studies revalidation place new demands on faculty. His research article in *Disaster Prevention and Management* was finally published, a submitted paper on the assumptions of the flood flow frequency methods used to determine the regulatory flood (100-year flood) in the United States using data from the Red River of the North is being revised, and a co-authored paper based upon Tina Cummings thesis is also being revised. He presented a paper at the AAG Annual Meeting, and took his wife to their first professional meeting together. He didn't get to a lot of paper sessions! He is working with others (see Dr. Vandenberg's blurb) on a grant proposal involving Devils Lake, and is directing two Masters students (Emily Knish, Rhonda Fitzek-Devries). His three oldest kids are studying at Middle Tennessee State U. (music production and sound), West Virginia University (dietetics), and U. Minnesota-Twin Cities (biomedical engineering); a lone Red River High School senior (social interactions) remains.

Dr. Gregory Vandenberg was recently tenured and promoted to Associate Professor. He continues to conduct research on water and sediment quality and fluvial geomorphology. Dr. Vandenberg had an article: Spatial distribution of trace elements in floodplain alluvium of the upper Blackfoot River, Montana published in *Environmental Earth Sciences*. He is part of a team of faculty at UND that received a \$600,000 grant from the National Science Foundation to promote environmental science education, and received a \$65,000 seed grant with Paul Todhunter (Geography) and Curt Stofferahn (Sociology) to study coupled natural-human systems in the Devils Lake basin. He presented at the North Dakota Chapter of the Wildlife Society, and the Annual Meeting of the AAG in Seattle. He currently advises four graduate students conducting research on water quality issues. Dr. Vandenberg teaches courses in GIS, Global Physical Environment, GPS, Great Plains Physiography, Hydrology Field Methods, and Advanced Environmental Geography (Graduate Geography Seminar). He is also director of the online GISc Certificate.

Dr. Enru Wang stays busy with teaching, research, and service activities. He had four pieces of scholarly work published, including three peer-reviewed papers in international journals (*Habitat International*, *The Service Industries Journal*, and *Eurasian Geography and Economics*), and one entry in *Encyclopedia of Geography*. He also gave a presentation at the annual AAG meeting in Seattle, Washington in April. This time he traveled with the family (first time ever to an AAG conference). His wife, Dr. Juan Li, also presented a paper at the AAG meeting (as a linguist!). Aurora was very excited to visit the city

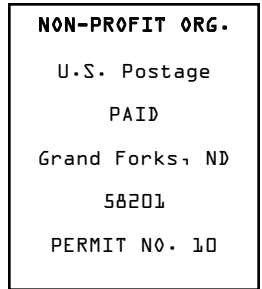
where she was born, while Austin enjoyed foods and following parents and sister around visiting friends and places.

A few things to highlight related to teaching: in the spring semester, he taught a new course GEOG 250 Introduction to Geopolitics, which attracted about 30 students; Rodney Iverson completed and successfully defended his thesis on Airline Industries in North Dakota; two Peace Studies students successfully complete their study at UND and graduated (one is going to a law school in the west coast, and the other is waiting to hear from some graduate school in the east), while two other motivated UND students chose Peace Studies as their (second) majors.

He looks forward to the trip to China in early August to visit families and conduct research with collaborators in China.

Dr. Michael Niedzielski will be joining the faculty in the fall. Michael is originally from Warsaw, Poland and has lived in London, England, Chicago, Illinois, Columbus, Ohio and Tampa, Florida. From constant migrations in his youth, he developed a love of traveling, maps and transit and this meant he could only become a geographer to satisfy his need to explore the world, its regions and cities, and understand how they are connected, all from a transportation point of view. In addition to traveling by bus, tram, train and plane, he enjoys photography, reading historical criminal novels, listening to his favorite music group, Madness, and supporting his favorite football club, Arsenal. In his spare time, he teaches and does research on topics that use Geographic Information Systems (GIS), spatial optimization, and other quantitative analytical techniques to investigate relationships between urban transportation, cities, land use patterns and sustainability. He is acutely interested in how integrated transportation and land use policy may help increase social, environmental and economic sustainability of people and cities. In one of his current research projects, Michael extends existing models to investigate the degree to which residential preferences matter in residential location decisions. This research helps us understand how to accurately measure the job-housing balance of a city and as a result provide an accurate foundation for policy-makers to make sustainably beneficial decisions. Another research project takes him on a virtual global transit journey to investigate the local and global mobility roles of urban rail transit in making cities more globally competitive by attracting highly skilled workers and companies. His research uncovers varying responses to recent global economic integration. Some cities invest more in local transit systems, while others such as Bangkok, Kuala Lumpur or Moscow invest in airport rail links to increase their connectivity to other world cities over the local accessibility needs of their residents. In his teaching, Michael strives to engage students through real world examples, community-based projects and service learning activities.

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Geography Fund / B.L.Wills Scholarship Contributions Total \$5,731 in 2010-11!

UND Geography on Facebook!

Dr. Gordon York
Drs. Douglas & Laura Munski
Dr. Joseph Nicholas
Barbara Serr
Dr. Greg & Lara Vandeberg
Dr. Roger Sandness
Steve Walker
Michael Philipp
Donn Baker
Gerald Rott
Dr. Christopher & Lisa Atkinson
Lee & Marlene Okeson
Harold Bergquist
Heather & Josh Jorde
Robert & Mavis Lund
Myra Kuhn
Dorothy Prusa
Barton & Evelyn Hayward

Your Name
Here!!

Thanks

Merci Gracias

Gam-Sa Takk

Danke Xie Xie

We maintain a Facebook site to promote information sharing and networking for UND Geography Department alumni, faculty, and students. If you are interested in being a part of the Facebook site, please visit <http://www.und.edu/dept/Geog/> and click on the Facebook link.

• < Key Numbers >

Spring 2011:

51 Undergraduate geography majors

13 Geography graduate students

20 Graduate GIS Certificate students