Special points of interest:

- Dr. Graham Tobin presents series of hazard lectures on campus
- News about Homecoming 2013
- Alumni News
- Student Accomplishments

These columns are easy to write thanks to the outstanding talent, hard work, and dedication of our students, staff, and alumni. With limited column space, the challenge is deciding what to leave out.

There are many student successes to report this year. For example, senior Amber Boll was named the Grand Forks University Woman of the Year by the local chapter of the American Association of University Women. Amber also presented her research at the national AAG meeting in Los Angeles. Senior Marcus Wax completed his undergraduate honors thesis and presented his research at the Midwest Undergraduate Geography Symposium. Garrett Jepsen completed the McNair Postbaccalaureate Achievement Program. Undergraduate Laura Harmon was crowned Miss North Dakota and will compete in Miss America 2014. Graduate students Melissa Wygant (White Bear Lake, MN) and Rick Thalacker (Westminster, CO) were awarded fellowships from the North Dakota Water Resources Research Institute to support their thesis projects. Graduate student Zach Braun (Sleepy Eye, MN) was selected to participate in the 2013 NASA CI-PAIR Program at NASA Ames in California. Graduate student Mikel Smith (Gillette, WY) is an intern with the Grand Forks/East Grand Forks Metropolitan Planning Organization.

A few other highlights from the past year include our alumni banquet where we welcomed back distinguished alumnus Brian Walters (BA 1994), Director of Economic Development for the City of Winter Springs, FL. We also hosted a visit by Dr. Graham Tobin, a well-known hazards researcher based at the University of South Florida. Dr. Vandeberg and I organized a student volunteer effort to georeference remote sensing images of the New Jersey shoreline taken soon after Hurricane Sandy. Ten students participated in the effort to assist storm recovery planning.

We continue to be aggressive about maintaining high enrollment in our Essential Studies offerings. In 2012-2013 we taught more than 1,700 students in sections of Global Physical Environment, Introduction to Global Climate, Human Geography, World Regional Geography, and Geography of North America. Compare that to just 900 students in those courses in 2007-2008. Our upper-division technical courses are also in demand by students in several majors (Wildlife Biology, Civil Engineering, Geology, Public Health, and Earth System Science and Policy). Our Introduction to GIS sections, for example, enrolled 85 students last year. When we first offered that course in 1997-1998 we had 30 students. Cartography has increased from about 20 students per year in the late 1990s to about 60 per year now. We are looking at options to expand our GIS course offerings with plans to offer a Python Programming and Spatial Database Development course in Spring 2014. We also hope to offer Business Applications and Web-Based GIS courses in the near future. Our Graduate Certificate in GIS continues to attract 40+ applications each year.

I am also excited about the increasing emphasis more of our faculty and students are placing on community-based service and research. Some of their efforts were recently highlighted in the UND Discovery and also Community Connect: The Journal of Civic Voices published by the UND Center for Community Engagement. Geography is a discipline that has much to offer in terms of community outreach and I am pleased that we are strengthening an already solid record.
Graduate Student Accomplishments

Rhonda Fietzek-DeVries gave the paper “Historical Hydroclimatic Changes at Theodore Roosevelt National Park: 1895-2011” at the Great Plains/Rocky Mountain Division Annual Meeting of the AAG in Park City, UT on 12 October 2012.

Rick Thalacker was awarded a North Dakota View scholarship to help promote his professional development in remote sensing and geospatial technologies.

Zachary Braun was selected to participate in the 2013 NASA CIPAIR Program at NASA Ames Research Center at Moffett Field, CA. Braun, a native of Sleepy Eye, MN, and a 2012 graduate of the Minnesota State University Mankato, will mentor and collaborate with two students from United Tribes Technical College and NASA researchers on an Earth science research project during the summer.

Melissa Wygant and Rick Thalacker received 2013 Graduate Research Fellowships from the North Dakota Water Resources Research Institute. The fellowships will support their graduate research projects. Wygant’s study is titled “A Place Vulnerability Analysis of Flood Hazard Risk at Grand Forks: 1990-2010” and Thalacker’s is “Mapping Techniques for Soil Erosion, Using Digital Camera LiDAR and GIS.” Wygant is a native of White Bear Lake, MN, and a 2012 graduate of Gustavus Adolphus College. Thalacker is a native of Westminster, CO, and a 2012 graduate of the Metropolitan State University of Denver.

Mikel Smith is serving as an intern with the Grand Forks – East Grand Forks Metropolitan Planning Organization. She is working with the MPO to update the portion of their long-range transportation study that deals with rail and freight. Smith is a native of Gillette, WY, and a 2010 graduate of Boise State University.

Brett Sergenian received funding from the North Dakota Space Grant Consortium to complete a summer research project on using remote sensing for precision agriculture. Sergenian is a native of Madison, WI, and a 2012 graduate of the University of Wisconsin-River Falls.

Dr. Vandeberg New Graduate Director

Dr. Vandeberg assumed the position of Graduate Director in July of 2012, taking over from Dr. Munski, our first Director. The department had six new graduate students in the Fall of 2012; six students completed their program between August 2012 and May 2013. Many of the graduate students presented research at regional or national meetings this past year, and impress us with their work ethic and dedication.

Dr. Rundquist Receives UND Seed Grant

Dr. Brad Rundquist was a Co-PI on a Collaborative Research Seed Grants from the UND Division of Research and Economic Development for 2013. The proposal is “The Impacts of Climate-Change, Landscape Change and Weather on Bird Population Trends,” Dr. Brett Goodwin, Biology, and Dr. Brad Rundquist, Geography. The amount of the grant is $22,512.

2012-13 Geography Department Forums


Dr. Debasree Chatterjee-Dawn: “Effects of Climate on Slope Morphology and Hill Slope Development,” Kennesaw State University, Kennesaw, GA, 10 October 2012.


Dr. Graham Tobin: “Chronic Hazards: The Cascading Impacts of the Volcano Disaster in Ecuador.” Department of Geography, University of South Florida, Tampa, FL, 21 March 2013.

Dr. Jacob Sowers: “Residential Place Making/Experience/Identity within the Changing Rural Landscape of the U.S.” Department of Social Science, Minot State University, Minot, ND, 16 April 2013.
Please Join Us for Homecoming 2013!

The annual Geography Alumni Banquet is set for 22 November 2013 at the Eagle’s Crest Grill at King’s Walk Golf Course, 5301 S. Columbia Road (5:30 p.m. social hour, 6 p.m. supper). Dr. Michael DeMers 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 15 November. The cost of the banquet is $20 per person. We hope to see you there!

Dr. Michael DeMers to Receive Distinguished Alumnus

Dr. Michael N. DeMers, Professor of Geography at New Mexico State University, has been named the UND Geography Department’s Distinguished Alumnus for 2013. He will accept the award during National Geographic’s Geography Awareness Week, which begins Nov. 17. DeMers received his B.S.Ed. degree in Earth Science from UND in 1974 and his M.S. in Geography in 1980. He went on earn his Ph.D. from the University of Kansas. Dr. DeMers specializes in Geographic Information Science, Landscape Ecology, and Geographic Education. He is the winner of the 2010 Anderson Medal of Honor in Applied Geography awarded by the Applied Geography Specialty Group of the Association of American Geographers (AAG). He has published nearly fifty articles and four texts on geographic information systems. Two of the texts have been translated into Russian, Simplified Chinese, and Arabic.

Geography Awareness Week Activities


Dr. Michael DeMers, 2013 Distinguished Alumnus Award Recipient

(Left) 2012-2013 North Dakota View Scholarship winners Amber Boll and Rick Thalacker; (Center) Celebrating Cindy Purpur’s 25 year anniversary as the Geography Department Administrative Assistant; (Right) GTU President Marcus Wax presenting 2012 Distinguished Alumnus Award to Mr. Brain Walters, Director of Economic Development for City of Winter Springs, FL.
Geography Alumni News
(Please send us news!)

Nick Schmitz (B.S., 2012) is now enrolled as a law student at Regent University in Virginia Beach, VA.
Nicholas Roehrdanz (M.S., 2012) has taken a position as a GIS Specialist with Technical Design Services of Minnesota in Duluth, MN.
Jason and Lindsay Danielson (B.S. 2000, M.S. 2000) continue to live in Helena, MT and work for Lewis and Clark County. They recently added a second lab named Windsor to go with their other lab named Sebastian. Is Bert the bird lobbying for a second bird?
Tom Chambers (B.S, 2005) completed his MGIS from U of MN in June, and is now living in the north Minneapolis suburbs, where he started his own GIS consulting company Real Estate Mapping and Data LLC.
Keith Gendreau (B.S. 2001) is a site location consultant with Cushman & Wakefield in Minneapolis. He advises corporations on optimal facility location strategy on issues concerning labor, infrastructure, market access, supply chain, environmental and real estate considerations. He and his wife Jen (also a UND graduate) recently moved back to the Midwest having lived in NYC for 10 years.
Brooks Hansen (B.S., 2010) is now Assistant to the Senior Deputy Executive Director of Planning, for the Chicago Regional Transportation Authority in Chicago, IL. The RTA serves a six-county metro area through its three transit operators: The Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) bus and rail system, Metra commuter rail, and Pace suburban bus service.
Rachel Turner (B.S., 2011) completed a GIS-Certificate from UC-Riverside, and is now in the process of finishing her thesis for the MS GIS program at the University of Redlands. She was recently hired for an internship at ESRI, in Redlands, CA.
Peggy Sammons (B.S., 1998) is now working as a Planning Coordinator for the Stearns County Human Services Department in St. Cloud, MN.
Matt Fahrenbruch (B.S., 2011) completed his Masters degree in the Department of Geography at the University of Southern Mississippi in May 2013. The thesis title was “Waves of Change: Tourism and Vulnerability in San Juan del Sur, Nicaragua”. He and Melissa have since moved back to Colorado, where Matt is working as a seasonal recreation technician for the Forest Service in Steamboat Springs. He is investigating and considering possible doctoral programs as well.

Undergraduate Student Accomplishments

Amber Boll was awarded a North Dakota View scholarship to help promote her professional development in remote sensing and geospatial technologies.
Amber Boll was elected a member of Phi Beta Kappa (PBK).
Amber Boll was admitted to and will receive funding to attend graduate school in the Geography Program in the Department of Geosciences at Georgia State University, in Atlanta, GA. She will work in community geography.
Marcus Wax presented the paper “Integrating Select Industry into New Urbanism” at the 15th Annual UND Honors Program Undergraduate Research Conference, University of North Dakota, 24 April 2013.
Amber Boll was a co-presenter on the poster “Remembering Forgotten Landscape by Commemorating the Red River Ox Cart Trails” at the Annual Meeting of the Association of American Geographers in Los Angeles, CA on 11 April 2013.
Garrett Jepson presented the paper “Ruptures and Seismic Gaps of the Sundra Megathrust” at the UND 19th Annual McNair Forum at the University of North Dakota on 18 April 2013.
Marcus Wax presented a paper based upon his undergraduate Honor Program Thesis at the 105th Annual Meeting of the North Dakota Academy of Sciences at the University of North Dakota on 11 April 2013.
Amber Boll won an award for the outstanding undergraduate (senior) woman from the American Association of University Women (Grand Forks Branch) in honor of her efforts in education and community.
Garrett Jepson was admitted to the graduate program at the University of Northern Iowa in Cedar Rapids, IA, with funding support.
Department Graduates

M.S.

**Fietzek-DeVries, Rhonda**, “Historical Hydroclimatic Change at Theodore Roosevelt National Park: 1895-2011.” (Chair: Todhunter)

**Dinger, Matthew**, “Identifying Locations of Highly Eroded Agricultural Land in the Devils Lake Basin, ND using GIS Terrain Analysis Modeling.” (Chair: Vandeberg)

**Knish, Emily**, “The Relationship between Atmospheric Circulation Patterns and Water Surface Elevation in Devils Lake, North Dakota: 1965-2010.” (Chair: Rundquist)


M.A.

**Smith, Lori**, “Is There a Disconnect? Comparing North Dakota and National Geography Standards.” (Chair: Munski)


**Kitzen, Angela**, “Impacts of Transportation and Population upon Western North Dakota School Consolidation.” (Chair: Hansen)

B.S.

**Summer 2012**

Jeremy Bancroft
Benjamin Carlson
Korey Southerland
Timothy Winter (minor)

**Winter 2012**

Phillip Brenna
Derick McNally
Mark Remfort (cum laude)

**Spring 2013**

Logan Barnett
Amber Boll (summa cum laude)
Matthew Elbert
Thomas Hutchens (cum laude)
Garrett Jepson (magna cum laude)
Seamus Kolb
Daniel Lissick (cum laude)
Matthew Myrfield
Tyler Narum
Roger Quinn (cum laude)
Nathan Sem
Joshua Tweeton
Marcus Wax (summa cum laude)
Mitch Wilmer
Dr. Chris Atkinson is involved in online education, service, and research. He teaches a number of online courses including regional geography (Europe, North America, World Regional), GIS, and Global Physical Environment. During Fall 2013, he offered Geography of Europe face-to-face for the first time. Dr. Atkinson co-mentored second-year McNair Scholar Garrett Jepsen and his research focused on the Sunda Megathrust. Dr. Atkinson also serves as second reader on Ms. Lori Young’s MA thesis committee. Currently, Dr. Atkinson advises two master’s degree students: Mr. Zachary Braun and Mr. Lawrence Burkett. Dr. Atkinson also serves as faculty advisor for the Geography Club/GTU students. Another year welcomed several new international members. The GTU-sponsored annual picnic was held again this past spring in Sertoma Park on May 3rd. Dr. Atkinson’s research into blizzards as extreme weather events continues. He presented a paper on blizzards at the 2013 AAG Annual Meeting in Los Angeles. Lastly, Dr. Atkinson’s family (Lisa and Miles) looks forward to welcoming a new member in October.

Dr. Devon Hansen continues her work on refugee integration research in the Grand Forks community. She is working on a paper with Dr. Jill Shafer (UND Teaching and Learning) based on data collected from focus groups and individual interviews with refugees from Bhutan, Burundi, Iraq, and Somalia. Over the past two decades, refugee resettlement has made a substantive impact in total capita residence in North Dakota, which illustrates the importance of better understanding the specific conditions of refugee groups as they arrive in our communities. This research has extended to include a project to investigate if there is evidence of adaptation or accommodation at the community level to the refugee presence in Grand Forks. The results of a survey conducted last year by Dr. Hansen and several geography colleagues concerning perceptions of the oil boom among long-term residents in northwestern North Dakota were published in several local papers, including Dr. Hansen’s hometown weekly, the Ransom County Gazette. The reporter for that story just happened to be Dr. Hansen’s sister-in-law Jan Hansen, who won a North Dakota Newspaper Association award for her work. This past academic year, Dr. Hansen, Dr. Munski, and graduate student Mikel Smith have been attending the neighborhood meetings in the Near Southside Neighborhood (NSS) as part of the Mayor’s Urban Neighborhood Initiative in Grand Forks.

Dr. Douglas Munski continues to be engaged in a substantial amount of teaching, an extensive amount of service, and a limited amount of research. This past year he offered courses in human geography, regional geography (North America, and Canada), historical geography, and geographic education as well as in heritage tourism and the graduate course in Geographic Thought through Time. His service obligations at the state level included being faculty representative of the Council of College Faculties to the North Dakota University System State Board of Higher Education while he also was re-appointed a commissioner to the Grand Forks Historic Preservation Commission and continued with duties on the board of the Grand Forks County Historical Society. He was heavily-engaged in activities of the East Grand Forks (MN) Heritage Village, and was busy with the UND Center for Community Engagement. Much to his surprise, he was honored at the April 2013 Timeout and Wacipi with a blanket and an honor dance in recognition of his work with American Indian Student Services. His chapter contribution on the Prairie Provinces for a reader in Canadian regional geography has been published by P.I.E. Peter Lang of Brussels. Dr. Munski, who started at UND in January of 1978, is beginning his 37th year as a member of the department.

Dr. Brad Rundquist completed his second year as Regional Councillor of the Great Plains/Rocky Mountain Division of the Association of American Geographers, with meetings in Washington, DC, and Los Angeles. He also served as President of the St. Louis Region of the American Society for Photogrammetry and Remote Sensing, and continues to serve as Managing Editor of Geocarto International and director of North Dakota View. He is managing grants from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and North Dakota EPSCoR, and is co-organizer of the 2013 North Dakota GIS Conference (and he hopes to see lots of UND Geography alums at that event!). Dr. Rundquist presented research at the 2013 AAG Conference in Los Angeles and the 2013 ASPRS conference in Baltimore. Dr. Rundquist’s family recently enjoyed a vacation to Disney World immediately followed by a trip to Houston and Galveston to celebrate the high school graduation of his son Riley. His son Kendall (21) successfully completed his sophomore year at Baylor University majoring in Business Information Systems. Son Riley (18) will attend the University of Houston and plans to major in psychology. Ella (11) finished fifth grade and continues to be very involved in dance (on competition dance lines now!), orchestra (violin), and gymnastics (to improve her dance). Autumn (5) is involved with gymnastics and she will begin kindergarten in the fall.

Dr. Paul Todhunter and his wife, Debbie, are enjoy-
Geography Faculty Profiles (cont.)

ing their lives as empty nesters. Nathan graduated with an MFA in Recording Arts and Technologies from MTSU and is looking for employment in the music production field. Emily graduated with an MS in Nutrition and Food Science from WVU and is employed as a registered dietician at a hospital in Ocala, FL. Ryan graduated with a B.S. in Biomedical Engineering from UMN, married a local girl - Lexi Mattson, and began medical school at UMN in the fall. Rachel finished her first year at that school down south whose name cannot be uttered. Paul and Debbie did a 3700 mile trip in May to attend the two Masters graduations. A trip highlilte was a visit to Monticello in VA. He presented a paper on Devils Lake at the GPRMD Meeting in Park City, UT, and is working on manuscripts based upon Emily and Rhonda’s theses. He is currently working with Melissa Wygant on a flood hazard thesis topic.

Dr. Greg Vandeberg is working with Rick Thalacker on an erosion study of western Grand Forks County funded in part by a fellowship from the North Dakota Water Resources Research Institute and the North Dakota State Water Commission. Dr. Vandeberg also spent part of last summer studying the hydrology and volume changes of the continental glacier in the Wind River Range, Wyoming with Dr. Van Looy of the Department of Earth System Science and Policy at UND, and a team from the Univ. of Utah. He presented research at the Applied Geography Conference in Minneapolis, MN, the AAG Annual Meeting in Los Angeles, and a water quality modeling workshop on the Red River basin in Grand Forks. He is co-author on a paper with Dr. Rundquist, to be published soon in the Journal of Geography. Dr. Vandeberg recently completed a two week class on Teaching with Technology sponsored by the Center for Instructional and Learning Technologies, and a two day workshop on active learning in large classes sponsored by the Office of Instructional Development. The Vandeberg-Dando family continues to be busy and active. Lara has been conducting research and helping to assemble two new book volumes on famine recently edited and published by former Department chair William Dando. Our children have been busy with soccer and theater, and of course school. Our daughter starts driver training this summer, so we are a bit nervous about that.

Dr. Enru Wang has focused his research on changing jobs-housing relationship and excess commuting in Chinese cities using Beijing as a case study. He presented papers on these topics at two national meetings: the AAG Annual Meeting and the Applied Geography Conference in Minneapolis. He had a co-authored paper on China’s information and communication technology published in Eurasian Geography and Economics. Dr. Wang continues to direct the Peace Studies Program.

Students in Peace Studies had impressive achievements in the past year. One student interned at Song Ching Ling Memorial Residence in Beijing, China in summer 2012, and was honored as a “Top Ten Volunteers”. Two other students had wonderful experiences studying abroad: one spent the fall semester with Semester at Sea and the other spent the entire academic year studying in India. He continued serving as the faculty coordinator for the monthly UND Forum for Contemporary Geographic Issues and started as Director of the online Graduate Certificate in GISc. His daughter, Aurora, is a happy 7-year old second grader. Aurora enjoys playing piano and has attended several recitals and competitions. She is also actively involved in skating, dance and drawing. His son, Austin, 4-years old, still goes to the Minnesota Chinese Daycare and Learning Center and enjoys mimicking (and sometimes debating with) his sister in English. After having served at UND for eight years, Dr. Wang is looking forward to his first developmental leave during the 2013-14 academic year to revamp his research. His wife, Dr. Juan Li, also looks forward to her sabbatical leave in Spring 2014.

Dr. Michael Niedzielski continues his service-learning approach to GEOG 471/L: Cartography & Visualization. During Fall 2012, students worked with Lutheran Social Services New American Services to produce a series of maps to help refugees find basic services in Grand Forks. After improvements, these maps were printed and given to LSS NAS to pass out to New Americans. The maps, which can be viewed here http://arts-sciences.und.edu/geography/maps4community/index.cfm, were highlighted in the Spring 2013 issue of UND Discovery. He was invited on a panel to discuss strategies for incorporating service-learning into teaching at a roundtable in February, 2013. He regularly teaches GEOG 151, GEOG 457, and GEOG 474/L, and started preparing for a new course slated for Spring 2014, GEOG 476: Python Programming and Spatial Database Development. Marcus Wax completed his undergraduate thesis on New Urbanism and presented it at the UND Honors Undergraduate Research Conference. Amber Boll presented a poster on Ox Cart Trails in Minnesota and North Dakota at the AAG Annual Meeting in Los Angeles. Michael presented his work in the commuting and urban form realm at two conferences: at the Institute of Geography and Spatial Organization of the Polish Academy of Sciences in Warsaw, Poland and the AAG Annual Meeting in Los Angeles. He had papers published in the Annals of the Association of American Geographers and in the Journal of Geographical Systems. He spent research time during the past year developing new ideas. Dr. Niedzielski was the 2013 ND Spirit Faculty Achievement Award Recipient.
Alumni Contributions Total $16,055 in 2012-13!

2012-2013 Donors (some multiple times)

Ms. Heather Jorde
Ms. Dorothy Prusa
Drs. Douglas & Laura Munski
Mr. Gordon Langlie
Mr. Jon Stika
Ms. Kate Overmoe
Dr. Thomas Mote
Dr. Roger Sandness
Mr. Michael Philipp
Mr. Mark Kuhn
Mr. Kenneth Jensen
Mr. Gerald Rott
Mr. & Mrs. Lee & Marlene Okeson
Mr. Steve Walker
Mr. Donn Baker
Mr. Mark Kuhn
Mr. Josh Jorde
Dr. Joseph Nicholas
Mr. John Rutten
Ms. Barbara Serr

UND Geography on Facebook!

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.

Thanks

Merci Gracias Gam-Sa Takk Danke Xie Xie - to our Donors!

< Key Numbers >

May 2013:
46 undergraduate geography majors
8 Undergraduate minors
12 Graduate students
37 GISc Certificate students
4 Graduate minors