I am proud to report that at the annual Center for Community Engagement Stone Soup Awards luncheon, held in November 2013, UND Department of Geography faculty and staff won in three out of the four categories in which they were nominated: 1) the Department won the Engaged Department Award; 2) Dr. Michael Niedzieski won the Faculty Service-Learning Award; and 3) Hannah Bahnmiller won the Undergraduate Student Civic Engagement Award. Graduate student Mikel Smith was nominated for the Graduate Student Civic Engagement Award. The awards were presented by UND Vice President for Academic Affairs/Provost Thomas DiLorenzo and Grand Forks Mayor Michael Brown.

A few other highlights from the past year include the UND Geography Bowl team placing second at the Great Plains/Rocky Mountains Division of the Association of American Geographers conference in Omaha, NE. Graduate students Zach Braun, Brett Sergenian, and Rick Thalacker presented their research at that meeting. UND Geography co-organized and hosted the 2013 North Dakota GIS Users Conference held at the Alerus Center in Grand Forks. After three straight meetings in Grand Forks, the 2015 NDGIS Users Conference will be held in Fargo, but UND Geography continues to have an active role in the planning of the conference. The Department also held a campus-wide photography contest during Geography Awareness Week that was well-received. At our alumni banquet we welcomed back distinguished alumnus Michael DeMers (BS Ed. 1974; MS 1980), Professor of Geography at New Mexico State University and author of several highly regarded and internationally known GIS text books. We made our first scholarship awards from the Virginia George Memorial Scholarship fund. The inaugural winners are Lori Young, Mikel Smith, and Hannah Bahnmiller.

We continue to be aggressive about maintaining high enrollment in our Essential Studies offerings. In 2013-2014 we taught nearly 1,600 students in sections of Global Physical Environment, Introduction to Global Climate, Human Geography, World Regional Geography, and Geography of North America. Our GIS and other geospatial analysis courses are also in great demand. In Spring 2014, we offered our first Python Scripting and Geodatabase Management course to 11 students. We are working to add a 200-level course to serve as an Introduction to Geospatial Technologies and we have a small internal grant to carefully integrate that into what is evolving into a problem-based-learning sequence of GIS courses. We have proposed a new undergraduate minor in GIS and are awaiting final approval. Our Graduate Certificate in GISc continues to attract students from across the U.S. In summer 2014 we admitted more than 40 new students into that program.

I want to thank the alumni, faculty, staff, and students of the UND Department of Geography for making my “job” as Chair these past six years an enjoyable experience. I am proud of the strong history and reputation of our department, as well as our recent impressive accomplishments. Let’s keep working to advance the Geography program to even higher levels of excellence!
Graduate Student Accomplishments

**Derrick LaPoint** (M.A., 2014) accepted a position as Manager of Land Entitlement with TMI Hospitality in Fargo, ND.

**Mikel Smith** (M.A. 2014) accepted a position as Assistant Donor Development Manager with the Northlands Rescue Mission in Grand Forks, ND.

**Mikel Smith**, was nominated for the Graduate Student Civic Engagement Award for the 2013 Stone Soup Awards. These awards recognize significant service learning accomplishments and are awarded by the UND Center for Community Engagement.

**Brett Sergenian**, **Rick Thalacker**, and **Zach Braun** attended the Great Plains/Rocky Mountain AAG meeting in Omaha. They teamed up with Alum **Matt Fahrenbruch** and his wife Melissa to form a Geobowl team that won second out of 6 teams, having been cheated out of first place. We have to call them as we see them!

**Marla Striped Face-Collins** is a Chief’s Scholar and Tribal Relations Specialist on the Mark Twain National Forest in Rolla, MO.

**Meilssa Wygant** (M.S., 2014) was accepted into the PhD Program in the Department of Journalism and Communication Technology at Colorado State University in Fort Collins, CO. Her program of study will emphasize communicating natural hazards and the societal impacts of weather/climate.

Faculty/Department Awards

**Dr. Michael Niedzielski** was the recipient of the Faculty Service Learning Award for the 2013 Stone Soup Awards. These awards recognize significant service learning accomplishments and are awarded by the UND Center for Community Engagement.

**The Geography Department** was the recipient of the Engaged Department Award for the 2013 Stone Soup Awards. These awards recognize significant service learning accomplishments and are awarded by the UND Center for Community Engagement.

Graduate Director and Acting GISc Certificate Director Report

Dr. Vandeberg served as both Graduate Director and acting GISc Certificate Director this past year. There were a total of 6 students who completed their MA/MS degrees this spring and summer. Our graduate students have been active in pursuing funding, and also presenting at regional and national meetings, and we are very proud of them. We currently have 10 students who are in their second year, or working on their research, and an additional 3 new MA/MS students coming this Fall. One of the year’s major accomplishments was the completion of a self-study review of our graduate program that required the analysis of five years of statistics on graduation rates, GPA’s and many other factors.

The GISc Certificate Program remains very popular, with the majority of students being online. A total of 49 students applied for the program for summer 2014 and 46 enrolled for the first course this summer. There were 18 students enrolled this summer for the final directed study in the Certificate.

Geography Alumni News

**Dr. Julie Winkler** (B.S. 1975) served as President of the Association of American Geographers (AAG) for the 2013-2014 academic year.

**Dr. Michael DeMers** (M.S. 1980) served as President of the National Council for Geographic Education for the 2014 calendar year.

The Geography Department co-hosted the 2013 ND GIS Users Conference in September at the Alerus Center. The conference drew 196 attendees from state agencies, counties, cities, higher education, utilities, and the private sector. It was rewarding to see so many UND Geography alumni making significant contributions to GIS activities in our state.

**Md. Shariar Pervez** (M.S., 2005) successfully defended his PhD dissertation earned at South Dakota State University. The dissertation was entitled “Assessing the impacts of climate and land use and land cover change on freshwater availability: applications in the Ganges and the Brahmaputra River basins.” Congratulations Dr. Pervez!

**Tina Cummings** (M.S., 2010) is working as a GIS Analyst at the Wood Mackenzie office in Houston, TX. She produces GIS maps and provides data for Insights, Key Play Reports, and Consulting projects in North and South America. She is currently taking an online “Introduction to SQL Database Administration” course.
Please Join Us for Homecoming 2014!

The annual Geography Alumni Banquet is set for Saturday, 15 November 2014 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). Mr. Ross Keys will provide an after-dinner talk. If you are interested in attending, please contact Ms. Cindy Purpur (701-777-4246 or cindy.purpur@und.edu) by 5 November. The cost of the banquet is $22 per person. We hope to see you there!

Mr. Ross Keys to Receive Distinguished Alumnus Award

Ross Keys is currently Deputy State Director for U.S. Senator Heidi Heitkamp (D-ND). He received his M.A. in Geography from UND in 1987 and his B.S. in Geography and Spanish from UND in 1983.

Ross served as Outreach Director and later State Director for 18 years with Congressman Earl Pomeroy and has worked for U.S. Senators Kent Conrad and Quentin Burdick. Senator Byron Dorgan thinks to this day that Ross worked for him as well, but Ross has never chosen to correct him.

Ross traveled to Bogota, Colombia on a Fulbright scholarship to conduct research for his Master’s thesis. While finishing his thesis back in North Dakota, Ross taught Geography and History at Valley City State University. Ross fully expected to teach for many years, but took a detour into politics that has kept him busy since 1988.

Ross has since had the good fortune to be involved in a wide variety of issues across the state of North Dakota. When Devils Lake began flooding, Ross was the first delegation representative to visit the community, meet with local officials, and begin a dialog with federal agencies to address the crisis. He was later involved in the creation of the FEMA Interagency Task Force and the current version of the Task Force – the Devils Lake Executive Committee – helping direct over $1 billion to the region.

Other projects and problems – working the Grand Forks, Valley City, Missouri and other floods, coordinating efforts in Base Realignment and Closure rounds, Farm Bills, Crime Bills, grasslands, and many other issues – have provided Ross with many challenges and many rewarding experiences over 26 years of government service.

Ross is married to Linda (Wanner) Keys, a 1988 graduate of UND and they have two children – Jessica and David. Jessica is a senior at UND and has taken several Geography courses in her pursuit of a Secondary Education major with a Social Science composite. Dr. Munski is looking for opportunities abroad so that he doesn’t have to deal with a potential 3rd generation of Keys family in his classroom.

Mr. Ross Keys, 2014 Distinguished Alumnus Award Recipient

Lt. Col. Scott Dubsky, Instructor in Geography United States Air Force Academy
Even More Geography Alumni News!

Lucas Rengstorf (B.S., 2007) achieved certification as a GIS Professional by the GIS Certification Institution. Lucas works as a GIS Specialist with AE2S at their Fargo office.

Rob Derringer (B.S., 2009) worked for two months as an AmeriCorps volunteer during Hurricane Sandy. He was made an honorary firefighter for the FDNY at a ceremony in Breeze Point, NY for his work. He is also a wildland firefighter for the State of New Hampshire Division of Forests and Lands, and an Environmental Technician for the New Hampshire Army National Guard Environmental Office.

Scott Dubskey (M.A., 2004) is now a geoscience instructor at the Air Force Academy in the Department of Economics and Geography. Scott, now a Lt. Col., is course director for Geo 351: Introduction to Physical Geography.

Daniel Lissick (B.S., 2013) was hired as Assistant Ditch Inspector / GIS Technician at Stevens County, MN.

Rachel Turner (B.S., 2011) is working at Esri in Redland, CA as a Database Analyst with their AGOL Content / Imagery team.

Bill Wetherholt (M.A., 2008) is currently ABD in the Geography Program at Kansas State University. Bill is currently serving as a Student Representative for the AAG Rural Geography Specialty Group. He was also the recipient of a 2014 Robert Guy Buzzard Scholarship from Gamma Theta Upsilon.

Lisa Kuchy (M.S., 2007) and Alex Fiedler (M.A.) were married Saturday, 12 October 2013 in a ceremony at the Hunter House in Nottoway Park in Vienna, VA.

Jean Eichhorst (B.S., 1989; M.A., 1991) is now a Ph.D. student in the Department of Geography at the University of Kansas.

Jared Auch (B.S., 2010) is now a GIS Technician with Houston Engineering, Inc. in Bismarck, ND.

Matthew Fahrenbruch (B.S., 2011) is currently working as a Geospatial Technician I at CACI Incorporated in Ft. Collins, CO. Matt was admitted to the Ph.D. Program at the University of Kansas in Lawrence, KS. He will be working as a graduate research assistant under Drs. Peter Herlihy and Jerry Dobson on their project “Central America Indigena”, which is funded by the American Geographical Society and the Foreign Military Studies Office.

Nick Hinnerichs (B.S., 2008) earned his M.S. in Transportation from Iowa State University in 2013, and is now employed as an International Logistics Analyst with Polaris Industries in Medina, MN.

Kyle Wikstrom (B.S., 2013) is enrolled in the Masters of GIS program at the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis, MN. Kyle served as a GIS-IT Intern for the City of Brainerd in the summer of 2014.

Spencer McGrew (M.S., 2013) is now the Invasive Species Project Coordinator with the Red River Basin Commission in Fargo, ND.

Brett Sergenian (M.A., 2014) accepted a job as an assistant planner in the GIS Department with the Community Planning Association of Southwest Idaho. He will be living in Boise, ID.

Md. Shariar Pervez (M.S., 2005) successfully defended his PhD dissertation earned at South Dakota State University. The dissertation was entitled "Assessing the impacts of climate and land use and land cover change on freshwater availability: applications in the Ganges and the Brahmaputra River basins." Congratulations Dr. Pervez!

Undergraduate Student Accomplishments

Hannah Bahnmiller, an undergraduate double major in anthropology and geography, was the recipient of the Undergraduate Student Civic Engagement Award for the 2013 Stone Soup Awards. These awards recognize significant service learning accomplishments and are awarded by the UND Center for Community Engagement.

Hannah Bahnmiller, an undergraduate double major in anthropology and geography, was named the Youth Ambassador for the State of North Dakota for Youth Service America.

Benjamin York was the B.L. Wills Scholarship recipient for the fall semester 2013.

Hannah Bahnmiller, Mikel Smith, and Lori Young all received awards from the Virginia George Inheritance Fund in the fall semester 2013.

Mitch Braget was the B.L. Wills Scholarship recipient for the spring semester 2014.

Hannah Bahnmiller, Karl Bauer, Austin Braget, and Stephanie Schaub all received awards from the Virginia George Inheritance Fund in the spring semester 2014.

Luke Gaugler (B.S., 2014) accepted a job as a GIS Analyst with Hyalite Engineers, PLLC in Dunn Center, ND.
Department Graduates

M.S.
Striped Face-Collins, Marla, M.S., “Evaluation of Selected Vegetation Indices in Senescent Rangeland Canopy using Landsat Imagery.” (Chair: Brad Rundquist)
Braun, Zach, M.S., “What Stages in the Phenology of Corn are the Most Correlated with Rainfed Corn Yields in the Corn Belt Using Remote Sensing?” (Chair: Chris Atkinson)

M.A.
Smith, Mikel, M.A., “Neighborhood Perceptions in the Near South Side Neighborhood of Grand Forks, ND.” (Chair: Devon Hansen)

B.S.
Winter 2013
Christopher Dahl
Brian Osowski

Spring 2014
Luke Gaugler (summa cum laude)
Shafique Khan
Joseph McMenemy

Amber Rocks in Georgia

And we knew her when …. . Geography alumnus Amber Boll (B.S., 2013) has been on a roll in Georgia. First, she was admitted to the Graduate Program at Georgia State University in Atlanta, GA, and awarded a nationally competitive travel grant of $500 from the AAG International Geographic Information Fund (IGIF) to use to support her travel and presentation on community geography at this year’s AAG meeting in Tampa.

Then, Amber was selected to participate in the National Geographic Geography Intern Program during the summer of 2014. This is a highly competitive internship program. The National Geographic Education Program she will be working in is the Fieldscope Program. She will assist with conducting outreach and education initiatives in the Chesapeake Bay area. Her specific duties will include improving outreach and education materials, website management, and writing. GIS skills will be used for working with the developer on improving and expanding FieldScope as well as assisting in conducting workshops (in-person and web-based) on how to use the web-based GIS tool.

To top it all off, Amber received a Graduate Research Fellowship from the National Science Foundation. The stipend for 2014-15 is $32,000 per twelve-month Fellowship Year and the GRFP Fellowship period is for 5 years, with support provided for a maximum of three years. Way to make us look good!
Geography Faculty Profiles

Dr. Christopher Atkinson continues to be heavily involved with online teaching. His courses generally include regional geography, physical geography, and GIS. In addition, he is excited about the opportunity to continue as a McNair Scholar mentor, closely working with staff in that office. Currently, Ms. Manna Khan is Dr. Atkinson’s mentee in the McNair program. During Summer 2014, she started her research into some of the environmental concerns related to her native Bangladesh. Dr. Atkinson also continues as faculty advisor for the UND Geography/ GTU Club. The annual picnic enjoyed delightful weather this year. On a personal note, the Atkinson family welcomed Oliver John in early November, 2013.

Dr. Devon Hansen continues her work with neighborhood revitalization in the Grand Forks community. Since Fall 2012, Dr. Hansen, Dr. Munski, and graduate student Mikel Smith have been attending the monthly neighborhood meetings in the Near South Neighborhood (NSN), as part of the Mayor’s Urban Neighborhood Initiative. Mikel’s thesis research included a survey to understand how the residents perceive their neighborhood. They are working on a manuscript based upon this research. Graduate student Derrick LaPoint is connecting with the NSN regarding ways to implement a neighbors helping neighbors program. In April, Dr. Hansen presented research at the 2014 AAG Annual Meeting in Tampa. She participated in the 7th Annual Community Connect Forum in Emerado, North Dakota on April 26, 2014. In Fall 2013, GEOG 576: Field Methods and Analysis in Geography provided an opportunity to link with Heidi Hughes from the local Audubon Society and Agassiz Valley Project near Warren, Minnesota for a service-learning component. Dr. Hansen assisted graduate students in developing a questionnaire to determine perceptions of area residents and visitors regarding the Audubon Agassiz Preserve. Her students were pleasantly surprised when a pilot study using their questionnaire was conducted and they were able to analyze those results. Lastly, this summer Dr. Hansen has enjoyed visits from several family members.

Dr. Michael Niedzielski continued to enjoy combining teaching, research, and service at UND. During Fall 2013, students in his service-learning version of GEOG 471/L: Cartography & Visualization created maps to meet needs identified by community members of the Near Southside Neighborhood of Grand Forks. After improvements during Spring 2014, these maps were distributed to the community and can be viewed at http://arts-sciences.und.edu/geography/maps4community/index.cfm. In addition to previously taught courses such as GEOG 151, GEOG 457, GEOG 471/L, and GEOG 474/L, he offered a new course during Spring 2014, GEOG 476: Python Programming and Spatial Database Development. He was invited on a panel to discuss best strategies for effective community-based learning at a roundtable in October, 2013. Michael directed the first year master’s work of his first graduate student, David Wiosna. Michael directed undergraduate Austin Braget in the creation of a map of the St. Stanislaus Catholic Church cemetery in Warsaw, ND and directed undergraduate Megan Quinlan in the creation of a spatial database for Fort Berthold Community College. He designed maps for the High Plains Housing Center and for the centennial celebration of Parshall, ND. He presented his research at two international conferences: at the peer-reviewed Transportation Research Board in Washington, DC in January 2014 and at the
Dr. Brad Rundquist’s term as departmental chairperson ends on Dec. 31, 2014, when Dr. Gregory Vandeberg takes the reins. While he mostly enjoyed serving as chair for 6 1/2 years, he’s also ready to be relieved of requisite administrative tasks. This summer, his service on the Council of the Association of American Geographers and on the Board of Directors of the Heartland Region of the American Society for Photogrammetry and Remote Sensing ends. He is on the planning committee for the 2015 North Dakota GIS Conference, which will be in Fargo. Conference travel this year took Dr. Rundquist to Annapolis, MD, Washington, DC, Tampa, FL, and Omaha, NE. Upcoming personal travel plans include the Black Hills and Medora, to the homeland (Lincoln, NE), and to Ely, MN, as well as regular trips “to the lake” in Bemidji. Dr. Rundquist’s son Kendall (22) successfully completed his junior year at Baylor University majoring in Business Information Systems. Son Riley (19) completed his freshman year and was accepted into the Hilton College of Hotel and Restaurant Management at the University of Houston. Ella (12) finished her first year of middle school and continues to be ALL IN when it comes to dance (four competitions and numerous other performances last year). Autumn (6) enjoys Girl Scouts, swimming, and gymnastics. She will be a first-grader in the fall.

Dr. Paul Todhunter and his wife, Debbie, continue to enjoy their lives as empty nesters. Oldest son Nathan has a sound editing internship with City on a Hill Productions in Louisville, KY. He and Paul saw a Red Sox baseball game together in Cincinnati while Paul was grading AP exams. Oldest daughter Emily is working as a registered dietician at a hospital in Ocala, FL. A family “vacation” in Orlando, FL in May allowed for a mini-reunion. Youngest son Ryan completed his first year of marriage (to former UND Accounting grad Lexi Mattson) and is starting his second year of medical school at UMN. Youngest daughter Rachel begins her third year as a psychology major at that school down south whose name cannot be uttered. Paul and Debbie celebrated their 30th anniversary with a road trip in June to Kansas City, MO and Omaha, NE. He presented a paper on Devil’s Lake flooding at the AAG Annual Meeting in Tampa, FL. A manuscript on the topic is in press in Climate Research (with former grad student Emily Knish). He is working on another Devils Lake flood paper with former student Rhonda Fitzek-Devries. Melissa Wygant defended her thesis this summer on a place flood vulnerability study of Grand Forks that she and Drs. Todhunter/Niedzielski hope to write up this year.

Gregory Vandeberg had another busy year at UND. He is currently preparing for a second research trip to Continental Glacier in the Wind River Range of Wyoming, with Dr. VanLooy of Earth System Science and Policy. The trip is being funded by a faculty research seed grant that Dr. Vandeberg received in March, and includes three student assistants. He had one graduate student, Rick Thalacker, finish his M.S. in May, and is currently working with Dasuni Ranapathi Arachchige from Sri Lanka on predicting flash flood locations using a GIS. Her research is being funded by a fellowship from the North Dakota Water Resources Research Institute and the North Dakota State Water Commission. Dr. Vandeberg presented research at the North Dakota State GIS Conference, the Association of American Geographers Conference in Tampa, FL, and the ND EPSCoR Conference. He is also a co-author on a paper with Dr. VanLooy that was recently published in the Journal of Glaciology. Finally, he has been approved for a one semester developmental leave for Fall semester 2014, and will be working on manuscripts from his research as well as traveling to the University of Regina.

The Vandeberg-Dando family continues to be busy and active. They had a great family trip in July to the northeast coast of Florida, and collected lots of shells and other fine memories. Lara Dando, Greg’s wife, is currently working for the Grand Forks School District, daughter Anna will be a junior in high school, and son John will be in fourth grade this fall.

Dr. Enru Wang had his first developmental/sabbatical leave! He made two trips to China. He visited Beijing Normal University and Beijing Union University, giving lectures to students and faculty (on oil boom in North Dakota and government structure and urban planning in the United States) and discussing research with his collaborators. His family joined him during the second trip. In addition to spending some time in Beijing, they traveled to Shandong and Guizou where they spent Chinese New Year with other family members and relatives (first time in 17 years!). They also traveled to Chengdu, the capital city of Sicuan Province in southwestern China, where Aurora and Austin especially enjoyed the visit to Chengdu Panda Base.

Dr. Wang continued his research on urban sprawl and urban commuting in Chinese cities. He was invited to write a paper on Development and Planning of Shopping Centers in the Twin Cities for a special issue in a leading Chinese planning journal Urban Planning International. In April 2014, he attended the annual AAG meeting in Tampa, FL and presented a paper on Measuring Urban Sprawl in China. He is looking forward to coming back to resume his teaching activities.
Alumni Contributions Total $9,415 in 2013-14!

2013-2014 Donors (some multiple times)

Ms. Barbara Serr
Mr. Michael Phillip
Mr. John Rutten
Mr. Mark Kuhn
Ms. Antoinette Peck
Ms. Stephen Sexton
Ms. Paula Lee
Mr. Jason Danielson/Ms. Lindsay Morgan
Mr. Kenneth Jensen
Mr. Donn Baker
Mr. Gerald Rott
Mr. Steve Walker
Mr. Lee Okeson / Mrs. Marlene Okeson

Mr. Josh Jorde
Ms. Lara Dando
Drs. Douglas/Laura Munski
Dr. Tom Mote
Mr. Mark Kuhn
Dr. Roger Sandness

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.

< Key Numbers >

September 2013:
- 31 Undergraduate geography majors
- 9 Undergraduate minors
- 13 Graduate students
- 31 GISc Certificate students
- 4 Graduate minors