



University at Buffalo *The State University of New York*

Department of Geography

THE COMPASS

2016



Photo Source: Geography Awareness Week Photo Contest, Winner- Physical Geography category submitted by

PhD student Youngseob Eum

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

It is with great pleasure to share with you the Department of Geography Fall 2016 Newsletter.

This past year, we have had some “comings and goings” of significance. On behalf of the department, I should like to thank Professor Sharmistha Bagchi-Sen for her tireless efforts serving as Chair these past six years. Professor Monica Stephens and Simon Chabel also welcomed their son, Felix Stephens Chabel, born on May 14, 2016. Finally, we are saying goodbye to two longstanding members of our department. Mrs. Betsy Crooks and Mr. Joseph Murray have retired from UB after more than two decades of service. We thank them most sincerely for their enormous contributions to the department and we wish them well in their new careers.

We look forward with much excitement to the coming year, and we invite you to share your news and information with us and to participate in scheduled events here at UB and at the AAG meeting in Boston.

With best wishes,



Sean J. Bennett





Pictures from the retirement party held on September 16, 2016, for Betsy Crooks, shown (L) with her husband Glenn and Joe Murray (R) with his husband Tim Conroy.



Incoming Fall 2016 graduate students at the reception held on August 26, 2016.

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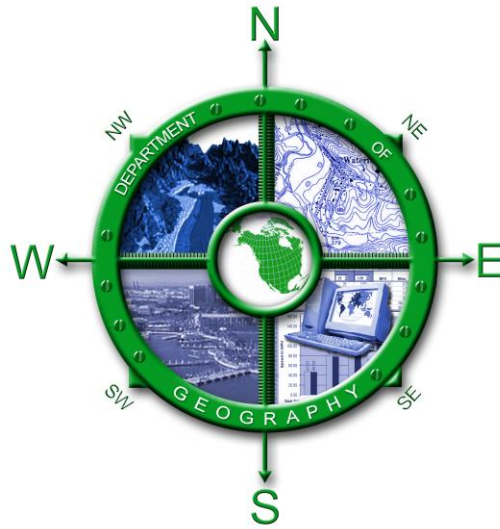
🌐 Student News & Awards

🌐 Faculty News

🌐 Alumni News

🌐 Miscellaneous Activities –

- Geography Awareness Week Photo Contest
- Football Pool
- Holiday Party
- AAG
- Graduation Reception



Student News & Awards

Aldrich Undergraduate Research Award



Mario Ayoub was awarded the Aldrich Undergraduate Research Award for 2015. The award enabled him to continue working with Dr. Trina Hamilton on her research project on the evolution of the ethical diamond market. While Canada quickly cornered the so-called “ethical” diamond market over the past decade, trading on Canada’s reputation as an environmental and human rights leader and images of pristine arctic landscapes, Canada’s ethical monopoly appears to be waning.

Indeed, the goal of this project is to develop a better understanding of how alternative products and production sites, from lab-created to Australian and Russian diamonds, have come to gain market share and ethical credentials.

Working alongside Dr. Hamilton and Seth Cavello, a PhD student and graduate research assistant for the project, Mario helped create a database of key players in the industry, including 187 ethical diamond retailers, dozens of mining, cutting and polishing, and consulting firms, as well as NGOs and government agencies involved in creating and critiquing the ethical diamond market. He also learned to use qualitative analysis software (NVivo) to code retailers’ websites by key themes related to types of products offered, ethical narratives and discourses used, target markets, etc. Finally, he helped track changes in retailers’ product offerings and messaging using the The Wayback Machine, the public portal for The Internet Archive, a non-profit internet library.

Mario graduated from UB with a BA in Political Science and International Trade in 2016, and he is now pursuing a JD (law) degree at University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill AND a Master’s of Public Planning at Duke University's Sanford School.

Chunyuan Diao – has received two awards recently. One is the “Student of the Year Award” from the Central New York Region of the American Society for Photogrammetry and Remote

Sensing (ASPRS). The award is given to highly qualified students with a strong interest in photogrammetry, remote sensing, and geospatial information system. Her other award is “The DigitalGlobe Foundation Award for the Application of High-Resolution Satellite Imagery” from the American Society for Photogrammetry and Remote Sensing (ASPRS). This award includes a grant of high resolution satellite imagery data to support the development of remote sensing and applied research by graduate students.

Jonathan Pleban, PhD

student, has been collaborating with Buffalo Public School #31, Harriet Tubman Elementary as part of UB's NSF ISEP (Interdisciplinary Science and Engineering Partnership) program. A school/community garden had its grand opening recently. The garden will serve as a research location for teachers during summer and a teaching tool for students during the Fall and Spring.



Dr. D. Scott Mackay and Jonathan hosted UB REU student, Aileen Zebrowski, from

the University of Minnesota during the summer of 2016. The team developed a hydroponics system at UB’s Dosheimer's Greenhouse to test for unique photosynthetic behavior in *Brassica rapa* genotypes dependent on nutrient fertilization. The work is part of ongoing collaboration between Dr. Mackay and the University of Wyoming Botany Department in modeling *B. rapa* genotypes. It is anticipated that Aileen will present the results at a scientific conference this semester.

Dameng Yin, PhD student, volunteered for the Rio 2016 Olympics in Brazil. She was very excited to visit South America for the first time. Dameng said it was a wonderful experience and plans to volunteer again for the next Olympics. She is pictured on the right in both photos- accepting her certificate for being a Volunteer and watching the diving finals with friends.



Kuo Siong Gordon Tan, PhD student, is currently in Beijing after being awarded a Confucius Institute Fellowship to do his dissertation research while attached to Beijing Normal University.



A Geography Wedding !



You hear about people meeting their spouse at college, but occasionally they are members of the same department and it happened for our own Geography PhD students. **Torsten Schunder** and **Yue Luo** met as they started their Graduate studies in the US in 2013. Following a wedding ceremony in Buffalo in 2015, they had wedding ceremonies in the summer of 2016 in both China and Germany. The picture was taken outside the St. Urbani church in Imsen, Germany. The Geography Department will be always a special place for them.

Faculty News



We welcomed new faculty member **Adam Wilson** to the department as an assistant professor in August 2015. He came to Buffalo after completing a Climate & Energy Postdoctoral Fellowship in the Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology at Yale University and a Ph.D. in Ecology (2012) at the University of Connecticut. Prior to working on his Ph.D., he spent two years in a small Berber village in Morocco doing environmental education for the U.S. Peace Corps. His current

research program is centered on understanding and predicting the ecological implications of global change. He has published over 30 peer-reviewed articles in journals including the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, *PLOS Biology*, *Methods in Ecology and Evolution*, *Remote Sensing of Environment*, *The International Journal of Climatology*, the *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society* and his research has been featured by *The New York Times*, *Washington Post*, the *BBC*, *Gizmodo*, *Wired*, and others. His nature photography portfolio, which has won awards from both the Ecological Society of America and the North American Nature Photographer's Association, includes an ethno-botanical guide to the Moroccan Argan Biosphere Reserve, two books on the bryophyte diversity of Patagonia, and images featured in *The New York Times* and the *BBC*. In his spare time, he enjoys playing in the dirt with his kids and making strange sounds with his didgeridoo.

Sharmistha Bagchi-Sen and alums Jason Knight, Amy Frazier and Russell Weaver are co-authors of a new book on shrinking cities. Sharmistha is pictured here with Jason.



In this book, researchers turn to data to answer tricky questions tied to population loss in cities and suburbs across America. Among the questions addressed: Which areas of America are declining in population today? Is population loss stabilizing in these regions? And how does shrinkage influence the quality of life for the residents who remain?

The book, published in August by Routledge, is titled, “[Shrinking Cities: Understanding urban decline in the United States](#).” Bagchi-Sen co-authored it with three former doctoral students at UB: Russell Weaver, PhD, an assistant professor of geography at Texas State University; Jason Knight, PhD, an assistant professor of geography and planning at SUNY Buffalo State; and Amy E. Frazier, PhD, an assistant professor of geography at Oklahoma State University. You can read the full article in the UB News Center at <http://www.buffalo.edu/news/releases/2016/09/017.html>

Ling Bian reports that she and Enki Yoo received a \$2.7M NIH grant. The project mines mobile phone data, combined with census data, to build a computer model that simulates people’s movements and interactions within the area. The simulation then will “infect” one or more residents with the flu and track how the disease spreads based on the person-to-person interactions captured by the model. Epidemiological models that simulate the spread of diseases are a key component of emergency preparedness. By identifying which segments of society are vulnerable to infection, such models can help officials make decisions about when and where to

issue travel bans, how to administer limited supplies of drugs and vaccines, and where to focus public health campaigns such efforts to promote handwashing.

Ling also states that in recent years, a number of Geography MS students have been recruited by high-tech giants, such as Google and Apple. These include former MS students Renjie Liu, Lizabeth Liu, and Zhuo Chen. These students have solid knowledge in geo-spatial reasoning and are skilled in GIS, information, and computing technologies.

In addition to courses, the department regularly offers short-term workshops to bring students up to speed on the most current GIS and IT development to make them competitive on the job market.



We extend special congratulations to **Dr. David Mark** as he was recently recognized by Simon Fraser University as one of their 2015 Outstanding Alumni. The Award was presented on March 3, 2016.

“Dr. David Mark, BA '71, PhD '77 (Geography)- A pioneer of the field of Geographic Information Science (GISci), Mark developed new methods to represent topography on digital computers, and worked on the principles of vehicle navigation systems and way-finding long before GPS or Google Maps existed. Consistently named as one of the most productive, creative and integrative academics in Geography, Mark’s more than 225 publications have been cited over 10,000 times and his research has provided sustained and far-reaching contributions to advancements in the field. In 2004, Mark was named Researcher of the Year by the University Consortium for Geographic Information Science (UCGIS), and was later recognized as Educator of the Year in 2009. In 2013 he received a Distinguished Career Award from the Association of American Geographers. He was also promoted to the rank of a Distinguished Professor at State University of New York.”



Professor Geoff Jacquez presented an invited keynote “Genetic GIScience: Towards a place-based synthesis of the genome, exposome and behavome” at the Conference on Geospatial Approaches in Cancer Control and Surveillance, Sept. 2016, Natcher Conference Center, NIH campus, Bethesda, MD.

We are sad to report that retired faculty member **Richard A. Mitchell** passed away on March 16, 2016. Dick Mitchell was one of the original professors in our department, having been appointed in 1966, just two years after the founding of the Department of Geography. Dick came to us from the University of Iowa and taught at UB until 1997.

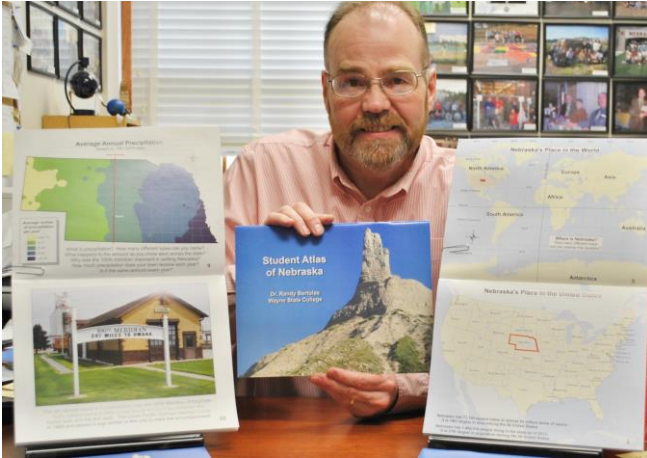
Dick taught perhaps the first statistics courses for the department: Geographical Statistics. In those days, much of the statistical work was done by hand or with adding machines. This was how students did factor analysis and multiple regression in the "good old days."

Over the last half of his career, Dick taught a course every year on the Historical Geography of Buffalo. This was his favorite course and he always had appreciative students. He collected books, postcards, photos, and other memorabilia as a hobby, and these materials enriched the course.

In addition to his wife, Betty, Dick is survived by his children Lisa, Sandy, and Brian and several grandchildren.

Alumni News

John Baker, MS 2012, is now the Data Manager for a nonprofit in NYC called the Center for NYC Neighborhoods. This non-profit focuses on middle class and low income homeowners in New York City and New York State. He is also managing their data programs and conducting research on homeownership issues



Randy Bertolas, PhD 1995, is starting his 22nd year as Professor of Geography (and 9th year as chair of the Department of History, Politics, and Geography) at Wayne State College in the rolling hills of northeast Nebraska. Recent travels to the BRIC countries have left him more convinced than ever that he made the correct decision in choosing to become a geographer. Randy's recent publication of

his "Student Atlas of Nebraska" (intended for use in the 4th grade Nebraska Studies curriculum) has been selected by the Nebraska Sesquicentennial Commission as an official 2017 initiative of the Nebraska 150 Celebration. Randy has been a member of the Geography Football Pool for over 20 years. Good luck this year Randy!

David Cacner, BA 1986, works at National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency, Director, Enterprise Innovation Office. In April 2016, the President conferred him with the 2015 Presidential Rank Award of Distinguished Defense Intelligence Senior Professional "for sustained extraordinary accomplishment in the administration of programs of the United States Government and for exemplifying the highest standards of service to the public, reflecting credit on the federal civilian service." This is quite an accomplishment! Congratulations David.

Ming Jiang, MS 2014, has accepted a GIS developer position at Wendel.



Jin-Kyu Jung, PhD 2007, was promoted to Associate Professor at the University of Washington-Bothell. He is pictured here at Cotopaxi mountain (which he climbed) in Ecuador where he was for a summer research trip.

Morgan Kissel, BA 2015, accepted an administrative position at New Era Cap.

Aaron Lee, MS 2015, moved to Brooklyn after accepting a position at JLL (Jones Lang Lasalle), which is a large business services firm supporting commercial real estate management.



Deborah Naybor, PhD 2013, is currently an Assistant Professor of Environmental Studies at Paul Smith's College in the Adirondack Mountains of NY. Deb said that she found it difficult to leave Buffalo and its memories behind, but she is excited to return to the school where she completed her undergraduate degree in Forestry a long time ago. Her new position teaching human geography in relationship to the world's environment and the college's focus on hands on learning means she gets to go out in the forest for class time.



Paul Marko, BA 2000, was selected for promotion to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel in the Marine Corps and will take command of his reserve squadron in May 2017. Congratulations Paul!



Bridget Paul, BA/MA 2012, was visiting Singapore Bridget and was asked by Geography Department PhD student Wei Yin to give a talk to her GEO425 students in the UB-SIM program. The talk, entitled “The Relocation Industry - An Inside Perspective,” introduced students to the world of mobility services and Bridget's position as a language network specialist with a major relocation management company. Bridget is pictured in the front row on the far right.



Christine Purpura, MS 2015, presented her research at the 2016 AAG Annual Meeting in San Francisco. Since leaving UB, Christine relocated to San Diego and has enjoyed surfing, hiking in the desert, and exploring the mountainous regions. In spring of 2016, she accepted a position as an Assistant Forest Ranger in the Adirondack

Park in New York State where she partakes in wilderness actions including wildfire suppression, search and rescue, and forest protection.

Danny Sheehan, MA 2008, has spent the last 6.5 years at Columbia University as a GIS analyst for the Department of Epidemiology. He also completed a Certificate of Professional Achievement in Data Science. Recently he started working at Carto (CartoDB) at the US headquarters in Brooklyn, NY.



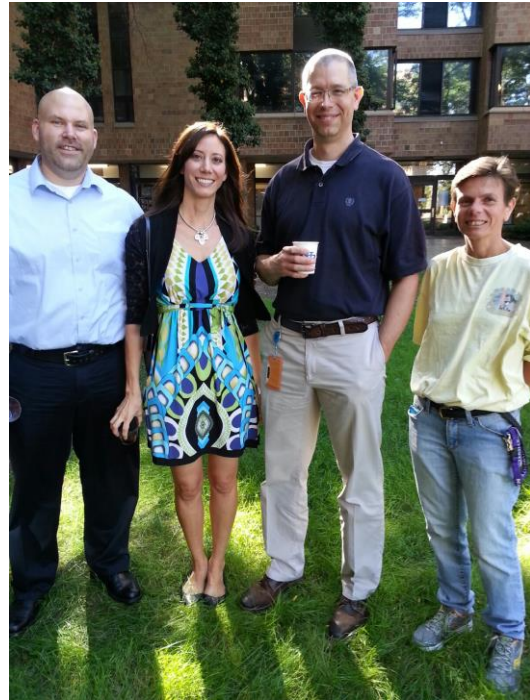
Karen Tareen, BA 1998, is CEO of Geocove, Inc., a

leading provider of GIS-based technology and services. She said the company recently graduated from the University of Central Florida (UCF) Business Incubation Program and is now a part of START-UP NY a new initiative by the State of New York to provide tax incentives to businesses expanding to New York. Geocove opened a new office at the University of Buffalo's Technology Incubator located in Amherst, New York in June, 2015. Karen has used our students for Internships and also hired a department alumni on a full-time basis.

State of the Department 2016



Chatting before the lecture, Yue Luo (PhD student), Dawn Becker, and Professors David Mark and Sean Bennett



Alumni Brian Barnes, MA 1999, his wife Cathy, Jeff West, BA 1997, MA 2002, and Sue Roussie, MA 2006 and PhD 2012



Sean Bennett's band provided the entertainment

2015 Geography Awareness Week

A few GAW photos from the 2014 & 2015 contests. All entries can be seen in the Facebook album at <https://www.facebook.com/geography.ub>





Geography Football Pool



The Geography Football pool has been maintained for over two decades with players scattered around the country and sometimes even in Europe and Asia. It is a great way to maintain contact with friends from Geography. Each week participants try and pick the winners in the NFL games. The “traveling trophy” is sent from winner to winner each year. The trophy was hand-crafted in 2002 by Alum **Jeff Brunskill**, PhD 2005. The donuts represent an old tradition of having the winner bring donuts into the office each week. Look for the email each August inviting you to join the pool.

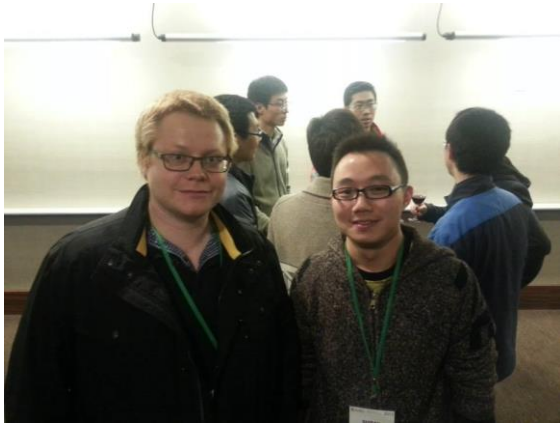
The trophy is currently with alum Ben Huang. Ben is the 2015/16 1st Place Winner and most Geographers will be able to tell what city Ben is in.



The Department Holiday Party

The annual department holiday party is held each year in December. It was a chance to celebrate age-old and not-so-old traditions. The event features the traditional visit from Santa Claus.





For more AAG photos please visit our Facebook Albums <https://www.facebook.com/geography.ub>

2015 & 2016 Graduation Receptions



Dann Karlson, BA 1997 – Graduation Guest Speaker, 2015

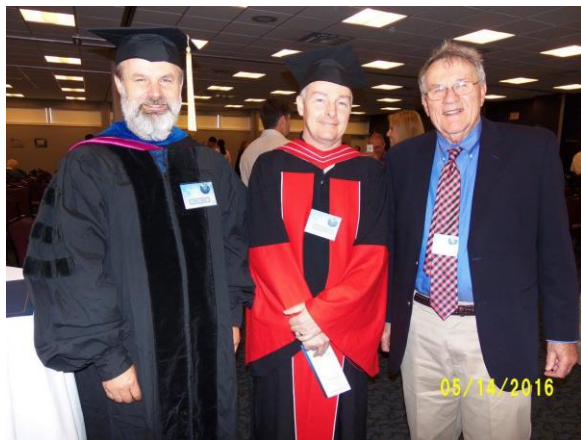




Dan Visone was our 2016 Alumni Guest speaker and is pictured here with Professor David Mark.

All graduation photo albums can be viewed on Facebook at:

<https://www.facebook.com/geography.ub>



Special Thanks.....

We wish to express genuine thanks to everyone who has donated to the Geography Department. You have made a difference!

If you are interested in making a contribution, please visit our secure support pages:

[Geography Department Resource Fund](#)

[Hugh W. Calkins, Ph.D. Prof. of Geography Applied GIS Award](#)

[Abrahams-Woldenberg Field Scholarship](#)

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Special thanks to Betsy Crooks for making this newsletter possible!

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Note -Some entries have been modified due to privacy regulations.

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