



Department of Geography

University of Central Arkansas



The Newsletter of the Department of Geography

Vol. 3 No. 1 February 2006

A NOTE FROM THE CHAIR.....

The Department of Geography at UCA remains vibrant and strong. We are constantly reviewing and modifying the curriculum to ensure that students receive the best geography education possible. During the 2005 calendar year, for example, we added two new courses, we made plans to add other new courses and programs, and we made some modifications in course content and requirements for geography majors and minors and GIS minors.

A new General Education elective, the Geography of World Regions, will be offered for the first time this coming fall. It has been designed to be technology intensive. We will have Smart Board technology available in Irby 311 and students will complete exercises from ARGWorld, a collection of material related to world geography. The technology associated with this new course comes from funds obtained through a Title III grant from the U.S. Department of Education and UCA.

In the spring semester of 2007, two other new courses will be taught for the first time – The Geography of Russia and Biogeography. In addition, Quantitative Methods in Geography will become a required course for majors instead of Geographic Information Techniques. We are also developing an online Principles of Geography course.

We are excited to announce that along with the existing Graduate GIS Certificate, we will begin to offer an Executive GIS Master's Degree beginning this coming fall. Many individuals are patiently waiting for this new degree.

So, as you can see, we are busy, active, and "growing" our program. (See related piece for more details.)

Dr. Brooks Green

DEPARTMENT HAPPENINGS.....

New Faculty Member Hired!

Perhaps the most important event of the year was the hiring of Dr. Brooks C. Pearson. Dr. Pearson has graduate faculty status and teaches all of the courses in the online Graduate GIS Certificate Program. He is very busy this semester as he has 18 students in the online course, Geographic Information Systems. Other than coordinating and teaching the courses in the Certificate Program, he also teaches Geographic Information Analysis, Remote Sensing, and another new course, GIS in Practice: Environmental Applications. He arrived on campus last August having just published two articles, and during the semester, he submitted a grant to fund technology training for school teachers in poor school districts in Arkansas. He and his wife, April, live in Conway and have three children, Fletcher, 2 ½ years old, and five-month old twins, Stewart and Meredith. We are glad to have Dr. Pearson in our department!

Outstanding Student for 2005-2006!

We are most pleased to announce that Rick White has been chosen by the geography faculty as this academic year's Outstanding Geography Student. Rick is from Jonesboro, Arkansas, and graduated Summa Cum Laude in December 2005. Two years ago Rick studied for a semester in Nepal and has recently been awarded a Rotary Ambassadorial Scholarship which will enable him to obtain a postgraduate diploma in Social Studies while studying at Lincoln University in Canterbury, New Zealand. Rick was in the Honors College where he wrote two honors theses, "A Pressing Need for Change," which analyzed free press issues in Nepal, and "Fresh Water: Rethinking Groundwater Policy in Eastern Arkansas." Rick has been an excellent representative of our program. We congratulate him and wish him success in his future endeavors.

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FACULTY DOINGS.....

Dr. Jeff Allender

Jeff was very busy during the year with his university duties and in those community activities in which he was involved. He developed the new General Education elective, Geography 1300, Geography of World Regions; he assisted in writing the grant proposal to fund the technology component of that new course; he submitted an article to the Arkansas Historical Quarterly for publication consideration; and he attended the SWAAG meetings in Fayetteville where he presented "Blending Rock and Brick in the Ozarks: The Mixed Masonry Buildings of Silas Owens Sr., 1938 – 1956." Jeff continues to be very active on campus, especially as he directs orientation meetings for new faculty members. Jeff finished his five-year stint on the Conway Planning Commission.

Dr. Paul Butt

Other than his normal teaching duties, Paul has devoted much of his time writing chapters of a book on the geography of food. During the fall semester, he had a one course reassignment to work on this project. Paul also attended the SWAAG meetings in Fayetteville, Arkansas, where he presented a paper, "Food-Place Associations: A Classification."

Dr. Brooks Green

Brooks took a group of teachers to the Russian Far East. They spent four weeks in Vladivostok and while there they visited the Avacha volcanic area on the Kamchatka Peninsula and the city of Khabarovsk north of Vladivostok. Brooks and part of the group spent parts of 5 days in Beijing, China, on the way home. He published a book review in the Utah Historical Quarterly and an article in Regional Geography and Geocology, a

Allender Receives Award!

Each year, the university presents three significant awards to faculty members. The awards are for teaching, scholarship, and service. Dr. Jeff Allender received the University Service Award at the annual awards ceremony in April 2005. Dr. Allender has been active in community affairs as he served on the City Planning Commission and functioned as its chair for a year. He also coordinates events on campus such as New Faculty Orientation events. We are proud of Dr. Allender's accomplishments and the important ways he represents our department.

We Have a New Student Worker!

We welcome our new student worker, Meghan Gardner. She is from Marion, Arkansas, and is a sophomore majoring in Marketing. Meghan is a member of Sigma Kappa and enjoys spending time with her family and friends, shopping, and meeting new people. Meghan replaced our former student worker of four years, Ashley McMinn. Ashley graduated in December with a BS Degree in Psychology.

Geography Faculty Members Attend Conferences

In November 2005, Drs. Allender, Butt, Green, Pearson, and Reynolds attended the meetings of the Southwest Division of the Association of American Geographers in Fayetteville, Arkansas. Ms. Mary Sue Passé-Smith attended the International ESRI Users Conference in San Diego, California, and also the Southwest Social Science Association meetings in New Orleans, Louisiana.

Student Attends ESRI Users Conference

Chris Rogers, a senior geography major, was selected to attend the International ESRI Users Conference in San Diego, California. He worked at the conference and was able to attend several sessions. Chris just recently began to work for the Arkansas Geographic Information Office in Little Rock, Arkansas.

Geography Majors Graduate

In 2005, we graduated the following students from our program: Michael Burgess, Charles Calhoun, Karla Norris, Drew Davis, Megan Harvey, Ronda James, Birane Ndiaye, Rick White, Lucindy Leland, Robbie Nix, and Chris Mueller.

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journal published by Ryazan' State Pedagogical University in Russia. He also attended the SWAAG meetings in Fayetteville and presented a paper, "The Russian Far East: Place of Plenty-People in Poverty." Brooks continues to be one of the coordinators of the Arkansas Geographic Alliance.

Ms. Mary Sue Passé-Smith

Mary Sue's teaching load has finally been reduced to three courses while she directs the Social Science Computer Lab. The lab (and Mary Sue) stays busy all day each day. We currently employ three students to work in the lab. Mary Sue attended and presented at the International ESRI User Conference in San Diego and she also attended and presented at the Southwest Social Science Association meetings. Mary Sue's teaching duties include Cartography, Introduction to GIS, and GIS in Practice: Social Science and Business Applications.

Dr. Brooks Pearson

Brooks' primary responsibility is to "grow" the Graduate GIS Certificate Program and promote the pending Executive GIS Master's Degree. Teaching courses in these programs will keep him very busy, so busy in fact, that we have the real need of additional support in our geo-technology courses. For that reason, we have requested another faculty member for the department! When Brooks arrived in August, he had just published, "Comparative Accuracy in Four Civil War Maps of the Shenandoah Valley: A GIS Analysis," in the *Professional Geographer* and "James W. Albert: Kentucky Scientist and Topographical Engineer," in the *Journal of the Kentucky Academy of Sciences*.

Part-time Faculty Members

Because of the growth of the university and the corresponding need to teach more sections of Principles of Geography, we needed to hire three part-time faculty members during the fall 2005 semester. Mr. Ian Bowles has taught for us a few years as an adjunct instructor. He teaches his course Monday nights. His fulltime job is at PAGis. Ms. Joan Shofner is teaching one section of Principles at 8:00 a.m. MWF. Joan is a former UCA geography major who received her Master's Degree at Murray State University. Joan's daytime job is at Conway Regional Medical Center where she works for the CRMC Foundation. Ms. Dora Bradley taught another night section of Principles for us on Wednesdays. Her Master's Degree came from the U. of A. in Fayetteville. Her daytime job is a 7th grade geography teacher in North Little Rock.

We anticipate that the three adjuncts will return in the fall 2006 semester and that we will add a fourth person to teach another daytime Principles section.

We greatly appreciate the work these three people are doing for us. Because of them, many more students are being exposed to geography.

Faculty Profile – Dr. Brooks Pearson

I graduated with a BS in Geosciences and English from Middle Tennessee State University in my hometown of Murfreesboro. Following a year of teaching 8th grade in Ripley, TN, I moved to Manhattan, KS, to work on a Master's Degree at Kansas State University. While working on my thesis on urban income inequality through time, I moved to Bloomington, IN, to enter the Ph. D. program in geography at Indiana University from which I graduated in December 1999. My dissertation involved estimating latent fuel ethanol production potential within the current U. S. agricultural system and how that fuel could be utilized in different engine systems.

Prior to coming to UCA, I was on the faculty of the Department of Geosciences at the State University of West Georgia where I taught courses in GIS, computer cartography, environmental science, global environmental change, and the geography of Asia. I have served several terms as Director of the Association of American Geographers' Energy and Environment Specialty Group and served as a U. S. representative to the 8th United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names.

My research interests include historical cartography, quantitative spatial analysis with GIS, and human-environment interactions. Over the past year I've published the results of a protracted study of the maps and mapmakers of the Civil War's Shenandoah Valley Campaign. Currently I'm working on a GIS analysis of the evolution of the air transportation network in the Caribbean from 1920-2000 as well as on an analysis of the railway service maps Frank H. Galbraith released in the 1890s.

My wife, April, and I thoroughly enjoy living in Conway and are enjoying the UCA community. We have three children: Fletcher (2.5 yrs old) and five month old twins, Stewart and Meredith.

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Dr. Jerry Reynolds

Jerry continues to direct our excellent internship program. This program expands each year as he adds more agencies at which students are employed as interns (see the Internship Section for details). Jerry has recently developed a new course on Biogeography and is creating an online Principles of Geography course. He attended the SWAAG meetings in Fayetteville, Arkansas, and presented "Restrictive Usage Policies on Water Supply Reservoirs and Watersheds: The Extremes of Source Water Protection in the United States." He has also submitted an article to the Southwestern Geographer – "Watershed Planning, Protection, and Assessment: Responses to the Water Quality Threat in Arkansas" – for consideration for publication.

A very active year for Geography Interns

An increasing number of students have discovered the benefits of the Geography Internship Program. Thirteen students, mostly geography majors, but a few environmental science majors, participated in the Geography Internship Program in 2005, enrolling in fifteen positions during the spring, summer, and fall. The agency list continues to expand with new additions due either to departmental contact, agency interest, or student discovery, and include Center Point Energy (the natural gas people), Audubon Arkansas, Arkansas Public Policy Panel, Crafton, Tull & Assoc. (surveying firm), Arkansas 4-H Center, all in Little Rock, and Green Bay Packaging-Arkansas Kraft Plant in Opelelo. Although the demand for GIS skills continues, the position at Audubon Arkansas was a technology specialist, the Arkansas 4-H Center required skills in environmental education; the position with the Arkansas Public Policy Panel was a legislative intern during the 2005 Arkansas Legislative Session, with considerable time involved in water issues, and the positions at Green Bay Packaging were environmental technicians responsible for monitoring both air and water discharges from the Arkansas Kraft plant.

On Sep. 20, 2005, as part of Internship Week, sponsored by UCA Career Services, several former UCA geography majors comprised an Internship/Career Opportunities panel in the UCA Student Center. Panelists included Brad Lacy, Conway Development Corp.; Robert Reed and Sharon Baker, Arkansas Highway and Transportation Dept.; Jason Donham, Faulkner Co. Emergency Management; Nate Salinas, Center Point Energy; and Brian Minyard, a planner, Little Rock Dept. of Planning and Development. The panel was very successful in the sharing of internship and career information, and creating interest in the Geography Internship Program. According to Career Services, the geography panel had the best attendance and generated the most student interest. Thanks again to the panelists. Perhaps this will become an annual event and other UCA geography alumni will be able to share internship and/or career experiences. Also, if any of you are at an agency, or know of an agency that may have a need for geography interns, please let us know. We are always in search of worthwhile geography internship positions in the central Arkansas area. – Dr. Jerry Reynolds

If you are interested in supporting the Department of Geography at UCA with a financial donation, please send it to:

Department of Geography
University of Central Arkansas
201 Donaghey Avenue
301 Irby Hall
Conway, AR 72035-5003

Any donation is greatly appreciated. The money helps support our efforts in improving the quality of our program.

The Department of Geography at UCA would like to hear from you. Please send us information about your professional and personal achievements. You may use the form below, and mail it to us, or e-mail to brooksg@uca.edu or fax to 501-450-5185.

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More News and Department Photos



The day-to-day operations of the office are handled by our very capable secretary, Ms. Suzanne Rogers, and her workstudy student, Meghan Gardner.



To the left, Dr. Butt is relaxing by the new fountain. Thompson Hall is in the background.

At right, Dr. Green is enjoying the sun near the new fountain. Irby Hall is in the background.



Curriculum Changes in the Geography Department

As the world changes and the needs of our graduates evolve, so have the core and elective courses that geography students take. Geography 2345, Geographic Information Techniques, a required course for many years, has been dropped from the program and this fall will be the last time it will be taught. Replacing it is Geography 2330, Quantitative Methods in Geography, which although listed in the catalogue for several years, it wasn't until the addition of our new faculty member, Dr. Brooks Pearson, that we've had someone who could teach it. Starting in the spring of 2007, it will be offered on a regular basis and required of all geography majors and minors as well as GIS minors. It fulfills the required statistics course that our majors would take in other departments with a course that will use examples and analysis techniques that are most applicable to the spatial aspects of our discipline.

Also, three new courses will be offered soon. A new General Education, Social Science elective, will begin in the fall of 2006. Geography 1300, Geography of World Regions, is the first new course added to the Social Science category in over 10 years and is being developed to be a very technology oriented course, utilizing GIS assignments, lots of Internet research, and digital mapping and analysis in the classroom. Dr. Jeff Allender developed this course and has been given some federal funding to develop the technology for this new course during the summer.

Two new 3000-level courses are also being developed. Biogeography will be taught by Dr. Jerry Reynolds and the Geography of Asia will be taught by Dr. Allender. Both will be offered in the spring of odd numbered years and both will be electives for Geography majors. However, the Biogeography course will also be a required core course for the Environmental Science: Planning & Administration track majors.

Dr. Jeff Allender

More Department Photos



At left is Dr. Reynolds in his ever-present bike helmet. We are always glad to see Jerry wear his helmet to protect him from the "crazies" on the streets of Conway. At right, Dr. Allender is enjoying a relaxing minute in the sun. Irby Hall is in the background.



Uh, that's Mary Sue Passé-Smith at the left. Some of our "oldest" former students will recognize her headwear. In the early 1990's, Tim Stephenson, Cathy Klein, and Kurt Kennedy created this "hat." It has been floating around the department ever since.

Dr. Brooks Pearson - at right - is always busy in his office. Yes, we are jealous about his new flatscreen monitor and his expensive printer that sits on top of his filing cabinet.