



# Department of Geography

University of Central Arkansas



The Newsletter of the Department of Geography

Vol. 4 No. 1

March 2007

## A NOTE FROM THE CHAIR.....

Geography at UCA continues to grow and gain strength. During the year, four significant events had, or will have, a dramatic impact on the department.

First, during the summer of 2006, Irby 302 was remodeled to contain two faculty offices and a technology center. Before the fall semester began, Dr. Pearson moved into 302 C – you should see his windows – and Mary Sue moved into 301 E. The area of 302 A has become the H. L. Minton Center for Geospatial Analysis and Research, less formally called the Minton Center. The Minton Center is equipped so that students and faculty can complete research and community projects. Currently there are two students working in the Center.

Second, the Department received a Title III grant, which has enabled us to furnish Irby 311 with a sophisticated computer, display, and projection system. This technology has enhanced the instruction that takes place in 311.

Third, we are finalizing the process of searching for a seventh faculty position. We have interviewed two candidates, one of whom will be offered the position and will begin teaching in the fall. The person we hire will teach Economic and Urban Geography, Geographic Information Analysis, and online Graduate GIS Certificate courses. It has been 22 years since we added an additional person to the geography faculty.

Fourth, during the year we submitted a proposal for a Master of GIS (MGIS) Degree. The new degree has been approved by the Board of Trustees and is now under review at the state level. After an onsite visit in September, we fully expect the MGIS Degree to be operational in the spring of 2008. The MGIS Degree will consist of 30 credits, six of which will be a thesis. This new degree will be offered entirely online.

Goals for the future will broaden and further strengthen our program. Watch us grow!!

Dr. Brooks Green

## DEPARTMENT HAPPENINGS.....

### Student Lands Internship in Alaska!

Jessica Hightower, a double major in geography and environmental science, has been awarded a paid internship by the Alaska Conservation Foundation in Fairbanks, Alaska. She is a 4<sup>th</sup> year senior and a student worker in the Minton Center. Jessica's position at the Foundation will be with the Alaska Bird Observatory whose mission is to advance the appreciation, understanding, and conservation of birds and their habitats through research and education. Jessica will be a Citizen Science and Volunteer Coordinator. Her internship begins in May and ends in August 2007.



### Outstanding Student for 2006-2007!

Chris Rogers has been selected by the faculty members of the Department of Geography to be this year's Outstanding Geography Student. Chris will graduate in May with departmental honors. He has been accepted into law school at the University of Arkansas-Fayetteville. He has been a Lab Assistant for two years and will present his honors paper at the annual meeting of the Arkansas Geographical Society.



## More News

### FACULTY DOINGS.....

#### Dr. Jeff Allender

Dr. Allender continues to coordinate and plan events that orient newly hired faculty members for their job at UCA and to assist them to become familiar with Conway and the surrounding area. During the year, Dr. Allender attended workshops on Korea and Japan to bolster his expertise on the Pacific Asia region. He began teaching a new course, Geography of Pacific Asia this semester. Also, Dr. Allender became one of the coordinators of the Arkansas Geographic Alliance and will assist Dr. Green with activities related to that Alliance. The Alliance conducts workshops for school teachers (K – 12) to improve their geographic knowledge so that geography education is enhanced in schools.

#### Dr. Paul Butt

Dr. Butt is nearing the completion of his book, *Geography and Food: We are Where We Eat*. He is beginning the process of searching for possible publishers. His book should be published within the next year or two. Dr. Butt attended the meetings of the Southwest Division of the Association of American Geographers in Norman, Oklahoma, where he presented a paper that came from one of his book chapters.

#### Dr. Brooks Green

Dr. Green is now in his third year as chair of the department. He spent two weeks in Russia last May where he spent time in the State Archives in Ryazan', Russia, gathering population data for his study on the population crisis in rural Russia. Dr. Green had been one of the coordinators of the Arkansas Geographic Alliance until January 2007. He had served in support of Dr. Jerry Hanson, UALR. Dr. Hanson stepped down from that position and Dr. Green took over. Dr. Green is teaching *Geography of Russia* for the first time.

### We Have a New Student Worker!



Ms. Kendra Patterson began to work for us in January. She claims Camden, Arkansas, as her home and she is a freshman. We have begged Kendra to become a geography major, but she remains undecided. Kendra is a pleasant young lady. We are fortunate to have her in the office working for us!

### Geography Faculty Members Attend Conferences

The geography faculty members continue to remain active professionally by attending and presenting their research at a variety of conferences. These conferences include: Southwest Division of the Association of American Geographers, ESRI, Southwest Social Science, Applied Geography, and the Association of American Geographers.

### Geography Majors Graduate

The following students graduated in 2006:

Matthew D. Charton: BS in Geography and History, summa cum laude, Honors College and Department Honors

Curtis B. Hall: BS in Geography

Michael Harness: BS in Geography

Jamie Odom: BS in Geography

Desmond Heyliger IV: BS in Geography, magna cum laude, Department Honors

Cody A. Burnett: BS in Geography

Emerson Evans: BS in Geography

Lindsey Paxton: BA in Geography

Brandon Epps: BS in Geography

## More News

### Ms. Mary Sue Passé-Smith

Mary Sue continues to anchor the undergraduate geospatial technology courses in the department and manages the Social Science computer lab. She is also very active professionally by attending conferences and presenting papers. Her presentations at the ESRI Conference in San Diego have been published in electronic format. Mary Sue's research on tornadoes and related activity is cutting-edge. She will continue to be a force in that research for years to come.

### Dr. Brooks Pearson

Dr. Pearson is now completing his 2<sup>nd</sup> year at UCA. He teaches remote sensing and anchors the online, graduate level geospatial technology courses. Dr. Pearson is the Director of the H. L. Minton Center and is currently directing a project for the town of Holland, Arkansas. Last summer, Dr. Pearson conducted workshops in Harrisburg and Conway on geospatial technology as part of a \$71,000 grant he received from No Child Left Behind. He was instrumental in crafting the proposed Master of GIS Degree and will play a major role in its implementation in the spring of 2008.

### Dr. Jerry Reynolds

Dr. Reynolds has been busy directing students in the department's internship program. Students are scattered across central Arkansas and continue to gain valuable experience in positions obtained by Dr. Reynolds. Water quality and watershed management issues continue to be his research focus. He attended the meetings of the Southwest Division of Association of American Geographers in Norman, Oklahoma, where he presented a paper on watershed issues. Dr. Reynolds is teaching a new course, Biogeography, for the first time this semester.

### 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. Tim Smithey began to teach for us last semester. We will keep him busy into the future. He teaches his course Monday nights. 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 last semester, but she is not back with us this semester.

We anticipate that Tim and Joan will return in the fall 2007 semester. We greatly appreciate the work these people are doing for us. Because of them, many more students are being exposed to geography.

### UCA is 100 year old!



As you may know, UCA is now 100 years old. The university is beginning to celebrate that event with numerous activities. All colleges and departments are also beginning a major funding campaign in an effort to secure millions of dollars. As part of that campaign, the Department of Geography will be contacting former students and asking for contributions. Contributions can be designated to go to the department and to specific functions within the department. For example, funds can be designated to go toward upgrading technology, student scholarships, the Minton Center, faculty development, or an endowed professorship.

Former students will be contacted by the department as we begin this campaign. We hope that ALL of our former students will be generous in giving.



# The Department in Photos



← Mrs. Suzanne Rogers is in her 24<sup>th</sup> year as the department's Administrative Secretary. Occasionally, she throws out the "R" word – retirement, which causes all of us to cringe.



→ Dr. Green is relaxing at home with his dog, CW, and reading a good book, Questioning Geography. Dr. Green is in his 27<sup>th</sup> year at UCA.

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](mailto:brooksg@uca.edu) or fax to 501-450-5185.

Name: _____	News Items: _____
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Zip Code: _____ Phone: _____	_____
Year degree was granted: _____	_____
Business Address: _____	_____
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Title: _____	_____
E-mail Address: _____	_____

## More Department Photos



It appears as if Dr. Allender is working, but the smile on his face sends a different message! Dr. Allender is in his 17<sup>th</sup> year at UCA.



Dr. Butt smiles as he writes an "F" on this student's paper. The red pen is the clue! He is in his 27<sup>th</sup> year at UCA.



Dr. Reynolds takes the time from his heavy work load to look up for this photo. He is in his 22<sup>nd</sup> year at UCA.



## More Department Photos



Mary Sue is creating one of her GIS exercise masterpieces. She is in her 10<sup>th</sup> year at UCA



Dr. Brooks Pearson is talking to one of the numerous students enrolled in one of his online GIS courses. Note that he is working and talking on the phone at the same time. Dr. Pearson is completing his 2<sup>nd</sup> year at UCA.



This is the H. L. Minton Center for Geospatial Analysis and Research. Currently, two projects are underway in the Minton Center: 1) building a GIS for the city of Holland, Arkansas, and 2) completing some GIS work for the City of Mayflower, Arkansas. We employ two students in the Minton Center. Dr. Pearson is the director of the Center.