DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY
NEWSLETTER

Spring 1995 Issue No. 1

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Introducing the Department of Geography Newsletter

This is the inaugural issue of UNI's Department of Geography Newsletter. Through this vehicle, we intend to keep in closer touch with current students and alumni. Features regarding the status of the discipline, the University, and the Department will be presented. The Newsletter will also report on the activities of the faculty as well as current and former students. If you have any comments or suggestions about the Newsletter, or wish to submit an article or information for future publication, please contact Philip W. Suckling, Head or Sandra Heller, Department Secretary at:

Department of Geography
University of Northern Iowa
Cedar Falls, IA 50614-0406
(Phone 319-273-2772)

Status of the Department

During the 1993-94 academic year, the Department underwent formal review of its programs as part of the University's routine seven-year cycle of evaluations. As part of the review process, external evaluators (Dr. Duane Nellis of Kansas State University and Dr. Charles Gritzner of South Dakota State University) visited UNI and made a report to the Dean and Provost. Positive features noted included recent enrollment growth in geography courses, increases in the number of majors and graduate students, and improved faculty morale. The reviewers' report as well as the Department's internal self-study emphasized the need for the program to retain currency in computer applications especially with respect to Geographic Information Systems (GIS). Partially in response to the review process, the Department's supplies and services budget received a substantial increase for the 1994-95 academic year and a new faculty line was assigned to Geography in order to recruit for a GIS specialist (see related story on page 4).

As of Spring 1995, there are approximately 40 geography undergraduate majors and 11 graduate students in residence. These numbers compare to only 17 majors and 2 graduate students as recently as 1990. Enrollments in geography general education courses remain strong, although the Department has reduced its participation in the University's non-western cultures program due to faculty limitations. Enrollments in "advanced" geography courses (those beyond general education) have increased from a low of 81 in the Fall of 1990 to 192 for the Fall of 1994. These are all indications of the increased health of the geography program at UNI!
Recent Activities of the Geography Faculty

The Department currently has eight full-time faculty members. Highlights of recent activities for each are as follows:

C. Murray Austin has recently published a paper, with Thomas Fogarty, titled "Changements Administratifs et Territoriaux dans la Nouvelle Europe" in the French journal Bulletin de la Societe Languedocienne de Geographie. Last summer, he attended a conference in the Czech Republic. Murray continues to teach our planning, urban and economic courses as well as a regional course on Europe. In addition to his activities with the GAI, he performs numerous service activities on campus such as Chair of the University General Education Committee.

Roy Chung has added the University's capstone course (Environment, Technology and Society) to his teaching schedule and is also currently teaching the Nature and Scope of Geography course, which is a new requirement for our graduate program. He will be presenting a paper at the March AAG meeting in Chicago titled "Space-Time Visualization of the Global Demographic Transformation".

Last spring, Robert E. Clark presented a paper on "Iowa's Landscapes of Humor" to the American Culture Association. Bob continues his teaching focus on cultural, historical and regional courses, and will be teaching the Regional Geography of Iowa course during the upcoming July summer session.

Dennis E. Dahms has recently published two articles dealing with his soils geomorphology work in the Wind River Mountains of Wyoming in the journals Quaternary Research and Quaternary International. Dennis also presented a paper at last fall's Geological Society of America annual meeting and will make a presentation at the March AAG meeting. In addition to teaching physical geography and environmental courses, Dennis is currently teaching a special section of the science capstone course that will involve a two week field trip to the Wyoming Rocky Mountains in June.

In addition to co-authoring the paper with Murray Austin noted above, Thomas Fogarty has been very busy with a USAID project jointly with UNI Political Science faculty and colleagues at the University of Iowa. The project involves economic development issues in Nigeria, with Tom journeying to Nigeria last January. On campus, Tom keeps busy with courses involving political geography, India, and the graduate program in Public Policy. Tom will participate in two panel discussions at the March AAG meeting.

James F. Fryman continues to teach the bulk of our courses in the techniques area including cartography, aerial photo interpretation, remote sensing and GIS. He is looking forward to some relief from Stephanie Weigel for the latter two subject areas! Fred continues to conduct research involving population geography and migration. He will present a paper at the March AAG meeting titled "Patterns and Changes in College Student Migration and Enrollment: 1963-1993".
David W. May retains his very active research program on rivers and floods involving his long term research sites in Nebraska as well as new work on the Cedar River basin. He presented a paper at last fall's Geological Society of America meeting and will be making a presentation titled "Timing of Paleofloods in East-central Nebraska" at the March AAG meeting. Dave added a new course titled Environmental Change to our curriculum last year (which will be offered in this June's summer session). He is teaching the Senior Seminar course for the second time this spring.

Philip W. Suckling, who joined the Department in 1991 as Professor and Head, is teaching a new course this semester on Natural Hazards and Disasters. Recent publications include "National and Regional Trends in 'Jobs in Geography': 1980-1993" in 1994 in The Professional Geographer, and "Variations in Heating and Cooling Degree Days in the South-eastern United States: 1960-1989" in 1995 in the International Journal of Climatology (co-authored with Peter Soulé of Appalachian State University). Phil will be making a presentation at the March AAG meeting titled "Spatial Coherence of Incoming Solar Radiation in the Southern Piedmont".

In recent semesters, the Department has been fortunate to have the services of four adjunct instructors to supplement our course offerings: Mary Howard for World Geography, Chris Merrett for Regional Geography: Canada, Bonnie Sines for Maps and Map Interpretation, and Kirk Stufflebeam for Physical Geography.

New GIS Faculty Member for Fall '95: Stephanie J. Weigel

The Department has recently concluded a national search for a new faculty member with specialization in Geographic Information Systems (GIS). Over 40 applications were received and the Search Committee was extremely pleased with the quality of candidates.

We are pleased to announce that Stephanie J. Weigel has accepted our offer and will join the faculty as Assistant Professor of Geography beginning Fall semester 1995. Ms Weigel is a 1979 graduate of Iowa State University with a B.S. in Bacteriology. After working with a pharmacology research team at Duke University for a few years (during which she co-authored a dozen papers), she 'discovered' geography and eventually entered the Ph.D. program at Louisiana State University in 1988. At LSU, she has held assistantships in geography and agricultural economics. For the last two years, she has been a NASA Graduate Student Fellow, working with scientists at the Marshall Space Flight Center in Huntsville, Alabama. Stephanie expects to complete her Ph.D. this summer with an emphasis on remote sensing and GIS.

Alumni Album

In future issues of the Newsletter, we will include items of interest about UNI's geography alumni. Please send your news items to the department care of Dr. Philip W. Suckling, Head or Sandra Heller, Department Secretary.
Our Current Geography Graduate Students

Two M.A. students (Rose Estes and Ezana Habte-Gabr) graduated from the new non thesis option at the December 1994 convocation. Currently, there are 12 graduate students in residence, which is substantially more than the number typical in past years. These students are:

Saed Abu-Hijleh (B.A. University of Iowa, 1991) is nearing completion of his Master’s work with an emphasis on the political geography of the new Palestinian state. Dr. Austin is his advisor.

Michael Applegarth (B.A. University of Northern Arizona, 1994) joined us last fall with interests in soils and geomorphology under the direction of Dr. Dahms. Mike is teaching our physical geography labs.


Michael Buhr (B.A. University of Northern Iowa, 1994) started in the M.A. program last fall. He has interests in human geography working under the direction of Dr. Fogarty. Mike currently holds a graduate research assistantship.

Timothy Johnson (B.A. University of Northern Iowa, 1993) joined the program last fall after completing a degree in marketing. Tim is interested in economic geography and will work under the direction of Dr. Austin.

Michael McCloud (B.A. Emporia State University, 1990) entered the program in 1992 with interests in geographic techniques and human geography. Mike’s thesis advisor is Dr. Fogarty.

Tom McLean (B.A. University of Iowa, 1990) started our M.A. program on a part time basis last fall. With a B.A. in psychology, Tom is especially interested in GIS.

Darrel Mills (B.S. Iowa State University, 1972) began our M.A. program in January 1994. With his background in forest management, Darrel is interested in planning issues. Dr. Austin is his advisor.

Frederick Payne (B.A. Grambling State University, 1994) entered our program from Louisiana last fall after completing a political science degree. Fred is working under the direction of Dr. Austin and holds a graduate research assistantship.

Jeff Rossate (B.A. University of Northern Iowa, 1994) has just started the M.A. program this semester. His main interests are in applied economic geography including location analysis.

Wayne Schoo (B.A. University of Iowa, 1989) also began his graduate studies last fall. A geography alumnus of UI, Wayne has interests that involve environmental and planning issues.

Bonnie Sines (B.A. University of Northern Iowa, 1983) has resumed her M.A. studies this semester. Bonnie’s interests are in cartography and she will work under the direction of Dr. Fryman.
What is the Geographic Alliance of Iowa?

The Geographic Alliance of Iowa (GAI), hosted in our department, was established in 1991 with the support of the National Geographic Society (NGS). The Alliance is composed of K-12 teachers, college and university professors, personnel from a variety of other endeavors, and citizens, all of whom are concerned with improving geographic instruction in Iowa. Financial support is provided by the NGS and other public and private organizations. The geographic alliance network now extends throughout all U.S. states.

Related to several national efforts, the overall goal of the GAI is to promote and enhance the understanding by Iowans of their place in an increasingly interdependent world by expanding their geographic literacy. The GAI conducts workshops and summer institutes for teachers, provides and develops teaching and curriculum materials, encourages the incorporation of geography into the school curriculum, and works with Iowa’s university teacher education programs.

Dr. C. Murray Austin of our department and Prof. James Hantula of UNI’s Department of Teaching and the Price Lab School serve as the co-coordinators of the GAI. The GAI office is located in Sabin 11, where Jane Gillen serves as secretary, and can be reached at (319) 273-5952 or 1-800-601-3899. Membership currently exceeds 1000 and is open (free) to anyone interested in promoting geographic education in Iowa.

Geography Club/ Gamma Theta Upsilon

The Geography Club is a student organization open to all undergraduate and graduate students who have an interest in geography. Operated as a branch of the club, Gamma Theta Upsilon (GTU) is an honorary society for students who have completed a minimum of 9 credit hours of geography with at least a 3.0 GPA. Students interested in joining GTU are invited to contact Dr. Dennis Dahms, GTU advisor for additional information. The organization hosts the annual spring awards banquet as well as other social and educational functions throughout the academic year.

The 1995-96 executive for the Geography Club/GTU is:

President: Greg Halverson (Sophomore)  
Vice-President: Fred Payne (Graduate)  
Secretary: Becky Reifenstahl (Senior)  
Treasurer: Jeff Rossate (Graduate)

Plans for the Spring 1995 Banquet

The Fifteenth Annual Geography Awards Banquet will be held on Friday, April 28, 1995 beginning at 6:30 p.m. in the Olde Broom Factory restaurant at 110 N. Main Street, Cedar Falls. All students, faculty, staff and alumni are strongly encouraged to attend this gala event. This year, a new award titled Outstanding Alumnus Award will be presented, in addition to the traditional student honors. For further information, please contact Sandra Heller at 319-273-2772.