

PANTHER GEOGRAPHY

LETTER FROM THE CHAIR



Welcome to the academic year of 2015-2016! As the UW System is enduring another round of severe budget cuts, as well as the uncertainties related to tenure and indefinite status, there has been much self-positioning and soul-searching. Although surrounded by these uncertainties, we are still optimistic about the future of our department.

The Geography Department is at a relatively stable and productive stage. We are very pleased that Dr. Alison Donnelly decided to join the department as an associate professor. An internationally-known scholar of climatology, especially phenology, she will strengthen our research fields of climatology and global change. Moreover, starting Fall 2015, assistant professor Kristin Sziarto is promoted to associate professor with tenure.

Several colleagues received prestigious university level awards. Assistant professor Anne Bonds received a 2015 Distinguished Undergraduate Teaching Award, and Distinguished Professor Mark Schwartz received the 2015 UWM Distinguished University Service Award.

Professor Mick Day announced his retirement after 38 years of outstanding services to the department. As a dedicated mentor, advisor, teacher, and administrator, he gave generously of his time in numerous critical service positions, including several terms as department chair. Professor Day is appreciated by the faculty, staff, and students.

During 2014-2015, the department graduated three doctoral students: Wei Huang, Ryan Covington, and Kathleen (Katie) Williams. Dr. Huang is currently a lecturer in our program but will start a new position in New York City in January 2016. Dr. Covington is currently a Conservation GIS Analyst at the Defenders of Wildlife, Washington DC. And, Dr. Williams is currently a post-doctoral researcher at the U.S. EPA Environmental Effects Research Laboratory, Mid-Continent Ecology Division, in Duluth, Minnesota. We welcomed three new graduate students this Fall, along with our new administrative staff, Rachel Friedl.

Finally, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the exceptional services that Mark Schwartz and Mick Day have put in over recent years. As always, your continued support and interest are greatly appreciated!

Cheers,

Changshan Wu

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College of Letters & Science

GEOGRAPHY DEPARTMENT NEWS

New Chair

Prof. Changshan Wu took office as new Chair of the Department of Geography in August 2015.



Prof. Alison Donnelly joined the department

We are delighted to welcome Alison Donnelly as our latest faculty member. Alison is an Associate Professor in physical geography and her main area of research focuses on the impact of climate change on the phenology (life-cycle events) of plants and animals. Prior to her appointment Alison was a visiting assistant professor in geography at UWM and prior to that she held the position of assistant research professor in environmental science at Trinity College Dublin, Ireland. Alison's main teaching commitments will be in courses associated with environmental geography, biogeography and climate change. We look forward to her participation as she will undoubtedly enhance and diversify both the teaching and research activity of our department.

Students at Justus Liebig University in Giessen, Germany visit UWM

On September 16, the UWM Department of Geography welcomed visitors from Justus Liebig University in Giessen, Germany. The group of undergraduate students were led



by their instructor, Timo Kleiner, a former exchange student in the department during the Fall 2013 semester. As part of their visit, the group toured the UWM campus and the department, met with Professors Woonsup Choi and Linda McCarthy, talked with Donna Genzmer of the Cartography & GIS Center, and toured the American Geographical Society Library. In the evening, graduate students and faculty convened with the group at the Hubbard Park Beer Garden to socialize. Although it was a short visit, the group enjoyed their time here and were appreciative of the hospitality extended by the department.

GEOGRAPHY DEPARTMENT NEWS (CONT.)

Launch of Teaching-Assistant Handbook and Workshops

The Geography Department kicked off the Fall semester 2015 with two very lively and interactive workshops designed to launch our new Teaching-Assistant Handbook and to build a framework by which to develop an effective discussion section. The Handbook provides information to new and experienced TAs on topics such as, roles and responsibilities of TAs, advice and tips on effective teaching, guidance on training opportunities and the pros and cons of TA evaluation.

The first workshop was attended by 12 graduate students and provided an opportunity for TAs to network and exchange experience and ideas. Together we agreed on a topic to use as a test discussion topic and from there we established a number of key messages to be conveyed, how best to convey the messages (use of images, videos, maps, etc.), how to design appropriate engaging questions to get the discussion underway and finally how to create useful exit and/or homework assignments. Some of the key points that were raised include:

- A discussion topic should be precise and focused (for example, instead of discussing climate change it might be more useful to discuss how climate warming might impact plants and animals in the wild.)
- The section should be well structured – tell the students what to expect during the class.
- Provide some background and clear definitions of the topic.
- Give the students time to understand the topic and ensure there is enough time to complete any in-class exercises.

At the second workshop, we reviewed the criteria established at the first workshop and decided that they did not need to be amended. In addition, we discussed TA evaluation and observation and agreed that it was a daunting but useful exercise. Our conclusions were that effective evaluation should (i) make life easier not harder, (ii) highlight issues and concerns and (iii) help frame focused training strategies. In addition, we felt that peer-observation would be useful, especially for inexperienced TAs to gain insight into how more experienced TAs run their class. Finally, some areas where we felt that training would be useful related to (i) focused language classes, (ii) teaching methods and styles appropriate to particular topics and (iii) how to communicate sensitive topics sensitively.



Department Picnic

On Sunday, September 20th, the UWM Department of Geography annual picnic was held at Lake Park, Picnic Site #2. Thanks to the contributions of the faculties and graduate students, we shared a lot of great foods. It was a gorgeous day for relaxing from school work and hanging out with geographers.

FACULTY NEWS



Faculty Spotlight:

Prof. Anne Bonds, Anna Mansson McGinty, Kristin Sziarto and Hyejin Yoon

Professors Anne Bonds, Anna Mansson McGinty, Kristin Sziarto, and Hyejin Yoon organized the conference, “Gendered Rights to the City: Intersections of Identity and Power” together with the International Geographic Union Commission on Gender and Geography and Geographic Perspectives on Women AAG Specialty Group last April, 2015.

The conference attracted 130 participants from 20 different countries. The conference promoted the exploration of gender, difference, and power relations in contemporary and historical urban landscapes. The papers and panel discussed the intersections of gender, identity, and power across diverse and contested spaces. The keynote panel consisted of scholars, Professor Linda Peake and Professor Shirlena Huang, and local activists from Wisconsin Chapter of 9to5 and the Milwaukee Muslim Women’s Coalition. <http://uwm.edu/igu-gender2015/>

Faculty Spotlight: Professor Rina Ghose

Dr. Rina Ghose was invited to lead mentoring sessions at the 2015 Geography Faculty Development Alliance workshop (sponsored by National Science Foundation and the Association of American Geographers) at the University of Connecticut (June 21-27). The workshop was initiated in 2002 and has been organized and led by the past president of the AAG, Professor Ken Foote (University of Connecticut), and Professor J.W. Harrington (University of Washington). The workshop aimed to foster a culture of support and success for early career faculty, and was attended by tenure track faculty members across the nation. Dr. Ghose led or co-lead sessions on (1) strategies for successful writing and publication (2) preparing for tenure and promotion (3) time management (4) teaching upper-division/graduate level courses (5) balancing personal and professional life (6) female professors in the classroom (7) Assessment and grading strategies in teaching activities.

Dr. Ghose was also invited to present a plenary talk on “Promoting Diversity and Inclusion” to departmental chairs, attending leadership development workshops, from institutes in the USA and Canada.



UWMilwaukeeGeography



<http://tinyurl.com/UWMMGeogLI>

Please join us on social media! We invite all alumni, students, faculty, staff, and friends to connect with us and use these as spaces for networking.

MICK DAY RETIREMENT LECTURE

On April 17, 2015 Dr. Mick Day held a lecture at the American Geographical Society Library on his personal and academic journey as a geographer. In Mick Day style, it was a lecture delivered with a good portion of humor. After 38 years of service, here at UWM and in the Department of Geography, Mick has certainly left a mark and we will miss him very much. Congratulations!



Congratulations – UWM Awards



The following faculty and staff have received UWM Awards, and were recognized for their work during the Annual Fall Awards Ceremony on Tuesday, October 20. From left to right:

Director of Cartography and GIS Center, chair of the GIS Council, and alumna Donna Genzmer, Academic Staff Outstanding Performance & Service Award; Professor Mark

Schwartz, Faculty Distinguished University Service Award; Dorothy Copeland, Custodian in Bolton Hall; and Professor Anne Bonds, Faculty Distinguished Undergraduate Teaching Award

46th Annual Morris Fromkin Memorial Lecture: Social Justice Activism among Muslims in Milwaukee

On October 29, 2015, Caroline Seymour-Jorn (French, Italian and Comparative Literature), Anna Mansson McGinty (Geography and Women's and Gender Studies) and Kristin Sziarto (Geography) presented the 46th Annual Morris Fromkin Memorial Lecture.

The lecture featured their research on social justice activism among Muslims in Milwaukee, which is part of the larger Muslim Milwaukee Project. The lecture elaborated on Muslims' sense of belonging, and their religious, social, and civic engagement in Milwaukee. The research, based on interviews with Muslim leaders in the community, shows how Muslims address poverty, homelessness, access to education and healthcare, and social inequalities in the city through various religious and non-religious organizations and collaborations. Many examples of justice activism and initiatives in the city highlight how religious identity and the Islamic faith frame progressive politics with a focus on social and racial justice and civil rights. Overall, Muslims' religious activism aims to improve the rights and conditions of underrepresented people in Milwaukee, as well as give a voice to a stigmatized Muslim minority.



GRAD STUDENT NEWS

Welcome our new graduate students!

Master's program: David Horvath, Robert Lackage

PhD program: Sohyung Lim

Student Spotlight: Wei Xu

Thanks to the Mary Jo Read travel award offered by our department as well as another travel award offered by the Association of American Geographers (AAG) Health and Medical Geography Special Group, I had the great opportunity to attend the 16th International Medical Geography Symposium held in Vancouver, British Columbia, this past summer. The biennial meeting has served as a great meeting point where medical and health geographers around the world discuss place-based issues related to health and healthcare. At the conference, I presented my own research titled “Mortality attributed to Alzheimer’s disease (AD) and its association with socio-contextual factors in the contiguous United States, 2000-2010.” I intend to answer questions like: What is the geography of AD mortality risk in the U.S.? How does local socioeconomic context affect the risk? Do place effects on AD mortality risk differ among sex and race cohorts and thus create health inequality? What are the implications for AD prevention and intervention?

I was very excited to share my findings and also take in peers’ perspectives. I also participated in a number of paper presentations and poster sessions on topics such as spatial epidemiology, medical tourism, and aging in place, etc. It was really nice to see what other medical and health geographers are interested in and what their research approaches are. The sessions were all full of energy, and the shared passion for public well-being was truly inspiring.

Besides the conference, the organizing committee also planned a field trip to Whistler, a resort town about 80 miles north of Vancouver. We hiked both Whistler Mountain and Blackcomb Mountain. The ride in the Peak-2-Peak gondola brought our sights to the panorama of Whistler Valley and its wonderful alpine environment. I also got to explore the city of Vancouver for a little. I went to Stanley Park and Wreck Beach, visited a friend at UBC, and tried some very good ethnic restaurants which really speak for the city’s diversity. The conference in Vancouver was a wonderful experience overall, and I very much look forward to the next gathering.





New Arrival!

We are pleased to welcome a new baby to the UWM Geography family! Quinn Teagan Viel was born to PhD student Jana Viel, and her husband Erik on Tuesday July 28th, 2015, at 10:43 am, at a healthy 6 lbs 14 oz & 19.5 inches.

ALUMNI UPDATE

Leo Zonn, PhD 1975, is now retired, after 41 years of serving as a faculty member at Arizona State University (1975-1986), East Carolina University (1986-1997), the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (1997-2004), and the University of Texas at Austin (2004-2015). Congratulations!





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