Unk-Geography Newsletter  
Fall 2015

Welcome to the third annual fall newsletter from the Geography Department at the University of Nebraska-Kearney. We are pleased to share department highlights and updates with alumni, emeriti faculty, and friends of the program.

The department currently has five full-time tenure track faculty and two adjunct instructors. The number of majors and minors has remained steady for the past few years. In addition to majoring in geography, GIScience continues to be an area that attracts students from across campus.

The department is continuing a rich tradition of student-centered learning with a research focus. Our students presented nine different research posters at UNK’s student research day with Tayler McPeak placing second in the Behavioral and Social Science division with his poster titled: *Assessing the Impact of Irrigation on Global Warming*. Five students—Michael Daake, Emily Kaslon, Ashley Larsen, Summer Liu, and Fletcher Sheridan—along with four faculty attended the GPRM-SWAAG meeting in Albuquerque, New Mexico in Fall 2014. Additionally, four students—Ashley Larsen, Fletcher Sheridan, Tanner Stark, and Kaitlyn Taylor—gave oral and poster presentations at the Spring 2015 Nebraska GIS Symposium in LaVista, Nebraska. Finally, three of our seniors graduated with honors in Spring 2014—Xiaojun (Summer) Liu, Tayler McPeak, and Kaitlyn Taylor.

In Spring 2015 the department hosted Dr. Adam Houston a professor from UNL in Earth and Atmospheric Sciences. The event was associated with Dr. Dillon’s Dynamic Planet course and included the movie “Twister” along with a Q&A session.

The department is set to host the Great Plains-Rocky Mountain Division of the Association of American Geographer’s meeting this fall. Information about the conference can be found at gprmconference.com.

If anyone has news or updates for a future newsletter or is interested in the program, do not hesitate to contact the department at (308) 865-8355.

H. Jason Combs  
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Geography Faculty

John Bauer
Associate Professor
Ph.D. 2006 University of Kansas

Vijay Boken
Professor
Ph.D. 1999 University of Manitoba

Paul Burger
Professor
Ed.D. 1997 Oklahoma State University

Jason Combs
Professor and Chair
Ph.D. 2000 University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Jeremy Dillon
Professor
Ph.D. 2001 University of Kansas

Nate Eidem
Adjunct Lecturer
Ph.D. 2011 Oregon State University

Matt Engel
Adjunct Lecturer
Ph.D. 2007 University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Recent Peer-Reviewed Publications and Other Scholarly Works by Geography Faculty

- Hanson, P.R., Dillon, J.S., Bruihler, J., and Howard, L.M., 2014, Surficial Geology of the Kearney 7.5 Minute Quadrangle, Nebraska: 1:24,000 scale Geologic Map published by the University of Nebraska-Lincoln in cooperation with the United States Geological Survey.

Geography students Emily Kaslon, Ashley Larsen, Fletcher Sheridan, Summer Liu, and Michael Daake at Capulin Volcano National Monument in New Mexico.
Alumni Highlights
A short conversation with the department chair was all it took for Nic Stoll of Marysville, Kansas, to decide a geography major. “I was unsure of my plans and mentioned to my honors adviser that I liked maps. I was sent over to talk with Dr. Combs who sold me on GIS.” Confident with his geography and geographical information science major and economics minor, Stoll graduated in 2013. “My GIS skills were pretty sharp coming out of college. My internship with CropMetrics provided me with a job, and I now manage all customer accounts, give tech support to dealers, conduct data analysis and provide precision ag data services to growers in Nebraska and Kansas.”
Nic Stoll
Geography & GIScience 2013

Mike Murphy grew up in Columbus, Nebraska and transferred to the University of Nebraska-Kearney in 1997 majoring in Geography with a minor in History. During my last year at UNK, I completed an internship with Tri-Basin Natural Resources District created with help from Geography Professor Steele Becker and Tri-Basin’s Manager John Thorburn. During his internship, Mike learned about the NRD system and its role in conserving Natural Resources. Some of his duties included performing tree planting, water sampling, spraying noxious weeds, ultrasonic flowmeters with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and other activities. For my senior seminar I did a project showing the growth of 2nd Avenue due to development of the Interstate and changes over time. Mike earned the respect of the Geography Department faculty and was an honors graduate in December 1999 with a 3.70 GPA. Mike has been employed with Aerial Services, Siouxland Interstate Metropolitan Planning Council (SIMPCO), Nebraska Title Company, and is now a GIS Specialist at the Lower Elkhorn Natural Resources District (LENRD) in Norfolk, Nebraska. Experience at the LENRD includes fieldwork and creating maps pertaining to water sampling, water levels, construction of new monitoring wells, addition of new irrigated acres, and assisting other government agencies. Mike’s current project is certifying irrigated acres in the district with help from three other NRD staff.
Mike Murphy
Geography December 1999

Geography students Ashley Larsen and Nathan Moore with the Doppler truck at the Twister movie special at the World Theater in downtown Kearney.
Geography Awareness Week
National Geography Awareness week was created in 1987 to highlight geographic awareness and literacy among students and the general public. As part of its observance, UNK Geography hosts a scholar or practitioner to highlight the application of geography or geographic information.

In Fall 2014, Dr. Christina Dando from the University of Nebraska-Omaha presented *Ways of Knowing: Exploring the History of Geography Outside of Academia.*

Dr. Brian Wardlow, Director, Center for Advanced Land Management Information Technologies, from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln will be the keynote speaker for UNK’s Geography Awareness Week activities this November. Dr. Wardlow is an expert in drought mitigation and will discuss drought and land management practices in the Great Plains.

Recent UNK Faculty & Student Presentations at Professional Conferences


**John T. Bauer.** “Mapping the 1870s Nebraska Frontier” Paper presented at the 2014 Missouri Valley History Conference, Omaha, Nebraska, March 2014.

**Boken, V.** Applications of the soil moisture estimates derived from the microwave satellite sensors, an example of Nebraska, United States. Presented at the Department of Geography, Delhi School of Economics, Delhi University, May 19, 2014.

**Combs, H. Jason.** Pioneer Life on Glass: The Balcom-Green Collection GPRM-SWAAG Regional Meeting Albuquerque, New Mexico.

**Combs, H. Jason.** Micropolitan County Voting in the 2012 Presidential Election GPRM-SWAAG Regional Meeting Albuquerque, New Mexico.


Hanson, P.R., and **Dillon, J.S.,** 2014, OSL dating indicates wind erosion in loess landscapes of northeastern Nebraska occurred during the Late Pleistocene: Geological Society of America (GSA) North-Central Section meeting, Lincoln, NE., April 24-25.

**Eacker, Cale, Larsen, Ashley, McPeak, Tayler, Sheridan, Fletcher, Smidt, Joe, Stark, Tanner, and Taylor, Kaitlyn.** Market Area Analysis of Robinwood Retirement Community: How GIScience Integrates Marketing Geography and Spatial Analysis. Advisor: Dr. Paul Burger. 2014 UNK Student Research Day. *This project was also presented at the Nebraska GIS Symposium.*
**Kaslon, Emily.** Electric Avenues Throughout the United States. Advisor: Dr. Jason Combs. 2014 UNK Student Research Day.

**Larsen, Ashley.** A Spatial Examination of Geographic Factors that Influence Voter Turnout in Nebraska. Advisor: Dr. Paul Burger. 2014 UNK Student Research Day. *Ashley also presented the same research poster at the Nebraska GIS Symposium.

**Larsen, Ashley, Stoll, Nic, Davidson, Zach, and Rodriquez, Dayana.** Delineation and Analysis of UNK Undergraduate Student Body Market Area Through GIScience. Advisor: Dr. Paul Burger. 2014 UNK Student Research Day. *This project was also presented at the Nebraska GIS Symposium.


**McPeak, Tayler.** Assessing the Impact of Irrigation on Global Warming. Advisor: Dr. Vijay Boken. 2014 UNK Student Research Day. *Tayler also presented the same research poster in Vancouver, British Columbia at the Seventh International Conference on Climate.

**Taylor, Kaitlyn.** Generational Political Patterns: The Case Study of Presidential Election Results in Kearney, Nebraska. 2014 UNK Student Research Day.

**Taylor, Kaitlyn.** The Role of Geography Education in K-12 Curricula. Advisor: Dr. Jason Combs. UNK Student Research Day.

**Tanner Stark, Kaitlyn Tayler, Ashley Larsen, and Fletcher Sheridan at the Nebraska GIS Symposium.**

**Geography Emeriti Faculty and Retirement Date**
- Steele Becker 2007
- Gordon Bennett 2006
- M. Stanley Dart 2007
- Bob Lind 2003
- Marvin Stone 2000
Geography Student Fund
The department has an endowed scholarship fund to support students majoring in geography. If interested in contributing to the scholarship fund please contact Anne McConkey, Director of Development, at 308 698-5282 or amcconkey@nufoundation.org or Val Vierk, Department Support Staff, at 308 865-8355 or vierkv@unk.edu.

Geography majors Emily Kaslon and Ashley Larsen with Dr. Jeremy Dillon at the GPRM-SWAAG Meeting in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Mark your calendars now . . . UNK’s Geography Department is set to host the Great Plains-Rocky Mountain regional meeting of the Association of American Geographers on October 2-3, 2015!