Welcome to the fourth 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 remains steady, and GIScience continues to attract students from a number of disciplines across campus.

The department is continuing a rich tradition of student-centered learning with a research focus. Many of our students are involved in research activities and several have received awards. This past spring seven students (Cale Eacker, Ashley Larsen, Justice Mott, Nicole Pauley, Fletcher Sheridan, Tanner Stark, and Spencer Sydow) presented at student research day, with Fletcher receiving 3rd place for his poster titled *If You Build it Will They Come: Using a GIScience Gravity Model to Estimate Retirement Community Demand in Salt Lake City, Utah.*

Additionally, several students presented at the Great Plains-Rocky Mountain Division of the Association of American Geographers annual meeting with UNK sweeping first, second, and third places in the poster competition (1st Place - Kaitlyn Taylor, *A GIScience Approach to Analyzing Spatial Patterns of Voter Turnout in Omaha, Nebraska*; 2nd Place - Cale Eacker, *Market Area Analysis of Robinwood Retirement Community: How GIScience Integrates Marketing Geography and Spatial Analysis*; 3rd Place - Ashley Larsen, *A Buried Late Pleistocene-Spruce Forest-Wetland Environment Preserved in Platte River Alluvium, South-Central Nebraska, USA*).

The UNK Geography Department hosted the GPRM meeting which was attended by 125+ academics and professionals from eleven states. The meeting also included a tour of the Central Platte Irrigation District titled *Power, Irrigation, Recreation, and Wildlife Habitat: The Multiple Uses of Surface Water Resources in Central Nebraska.*
The conference also included two keynote addresses by prominent scholars. One by Dr. David Wishart titled *The Last Days of the Rainbelt* and the other by Dr. Glen MacDonald titled *Welcome to the 21st Century—The California Drought and Water in the West.*

Finally, it is important to highlight our recent graduates. Fujita Shumpei graduated in the summer of 2015 and Mike Schumacher graduated in the fall of 2015. Cale Eacker, Emily Kaslon, Ashley Larsen, Fletcher Sheridan, Joe Smidt, and Tanner Stark graduated in the spring of 2016—both Ashley and Tanner graduated cum laude.

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.

Jason Combs  
Professor and Chair  
combshj@unk.edu  
www.unk.edu/geography/

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


**Boken, Vijay.** (Principal), "Examining recent drought in California using microwave based soil moisture estimates," Grant, Sponsored by The Daugherty Water For Food Institute, Other, $6,528.00.

**Boken, Vijay.** (Principal), "Studying the link between the soil moisture estimates and the global warming for Nebraska using satellite data," Grant, Sponsored by The Daugherty Water For Food Institute, Other, $6,528.00.


**Dillon, Jeremy** (Co-Principal), Hanson, P. R. (Principal), Joeckel, R. M. (Co-Principal), "New Surficial Geologic Mapping in The Menominee 7.5-Minute Quadrangle, Nebraska." Sponsored by United States Geological Survey, Federal, $13,935.


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 2015, UNK hosted two scholars for GAW. Nebraska Attorney General Doug Peterson presented *Who Needs the Rule of Law?* and Dr. Brian Wardlow, Director of CALMIT, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, presented *Drought Chasing from Space: Advances in Monitoring and Early Warning.*

Recent UNK Faculty and Student Presentations at Professional Conferences


**Bauer, John.** Missouri Valley History Conference, "A Reconstruction of 1870s Population Distributions in Nebraska," University of Nebraska-Omaha, Omaha, Nebraska, 2015.

**Boken, Vijay.** International Geographical Union, "Linking global warming and the soil moisture estimates derived from microwave satellite data: a case study for Nebraska, United States," Moscow, Russia.

**Boken, Vijay.** Research Forum, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, "Studying the impact of irrigation on global warming in Nebraska," The Daugherty Water For Food Institute, Lincoln, NE.


**Larsen, Ashley, and Dillon, Jeremy.** Association of American Geographers - Great Plains / Rocky Mountain Divisions Joint Annual Meeting, "A Buried, Late-Pleistocene (~23,500 cal BP) Spruce Forest-Wetland Environment Preserved in Platte River Alluvium, South-Central Nebraska, USA." Kearney, NE.
Dillon, J. S., Hanson, P. R., Larsen, A., Bruihler, J., Howard, L. M. Association of American Geographers - Great Plains / Rocky Mountain Divisions Joint Annual Meeting, "Additional Subsurface Investigations from Platte River Terrace Alluvium in the Kearney Quadrangle, South-Central Nebraska, USA." Kearney, NE.

Dillon, J. S., Larsen, A. K., Hanson, P. R., Bruihler, J. C., Baker, R. G. Geological Society of America North-Central Section Annual Meeting, "An occurrence of Late-Pleistocene spruce macrofossils in a Platte River terrace fill, south-central Nebraska, USA," Geological Society of America, Madison, WI.


Kaitlyn Taylor
A GIScience Approach to Analyzing Spatial Patterns of Voter Turnout in Omaha, Nebraska. Great Plains-Rocky Mountain Meeting, Kearney, Nebraska, 2015.


Kaitlyn Taylor. 2015. A GIScience Approach to Analyzing Spatial Patterns of Voter Turnout in Omaha, Nebraska. Nebraska GIS/LIS Symposium. La Vista, NE.


Zach Davidson, Ashley Larsen, Dayana Rodriguez, & Nic Stoll. 2015. Delineation and Analysis of UNK Undergraduate Student Body Market Area Through GIScience. Nebraska GIS/LIS Symposium. La Vista, NE.


Fletcher Sheridan. If You Build it Will They Come: Using a GIScience Gravity Model to Estimate Retirement Community Demand in Salt Lake City, Utah. UNK Student Research Day, Spring 2016.

Alumni Updates
After spending a little more time in my contractor position, I was hired as a full-time employee in the Real Estate Department at Union Pacific. I am one of three GIS Analysts who play a support role in the department. We add and maintain information to Union Pacific’s electronic field book. Property managers use the field book to decipher where real estate agreements such as sales, leases, and utility crossings are or should be located when they do site reviews. We get the chance to view documents dating from the present to the beginning of the railroad in order to locate what real estates the railroad does or does not own. This includes the original valuation section maps that the government required UP and its predecessor railroads to keep in order to tax what land we used or took ownership of. All of this information provides new information to be learned every day, so I am easily kept busy with multiple projects either shared by my coworkers or specific to my position.

Andrew Miller
Geography and GIScience
Spring 2012

I declared Geography as my major at orientation prior to my freshman year at Kearney State College. Advisor Steele Becker, along with Stan Dart, Marvin Stone, Bob Lind, and Gordon Bennett provided inspired instruction and I graduated in 1983. They encouraged me to apply to and accept a teaching assistantship position as a master’s student at Western Illinois University. Dr. Arlin Fentem provided guidance so I could complete my thesis in population migration and receive my masters in Geography in 1987. In 2002, I completed my PhD program in Geography at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Dr. David Wishart, Dr. Robert Stoddard, and Dr. Robert Caldwell provided direction and counsel regarding my dissertation research on conservation ethics. In 1983, I started working for the Soil Conservation Service (SCS and now the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)) as a Soil Conservation Aid in Kearney and in 1987 I was given my first permanent position with SCS as a Soil Conservation Technician in Imperial, Nebraska. I held Soil Conservationist positions with SCS in Imperial, Loup City, Lincoln (Nebraska State Office) and Wahoo, Nebraska. SCS paid a portion of my PhD studies with the Advanced Study Initiative. In 2000, I moved to Nelson, Nebraska as a Resource Conservationist. All of the positions listed provided me with the opportunity to work directly with farmers and ranchers to apply conservation practices to their land. In 2004, I moved to Stockton, Kansas as the first Resource, Conservation and Development (RC&D) Coordinator for the Solomon Valley RC&D. A year later I also
took on the role as the Acting Coordinator for the Smoky Hills RC&D. As a RC&D Coordinator for a thirteen county area (and still employed by NRCS), I provided guidance to the two 501©3 businesses when working with communities and organizations. We developed projects, wrote and administered grants. The projects could be environmentally, economically or community based, such as developing a nature trail, assisting the Kansas Black Farmer’s Association when growing teff, or promoting the management of invasive weed species. As luck would have it, in 2011 NRCS ran out of funding for the RC&D federal program so I went back to the field working with farmers and ranchers in Kansas. I am currently the District Conservationist in Norton, Kansas and will retire after 30 years of work with the federal government in December 2016. Working with NRCS and the United States Department of Agriculture has afforded me many opportunities. I would not have had those opportunities had I not declared Geography as my major.

**Darla Juhl**
Geography
1983

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**Geography Emeriti Faculty and Retirement Date**
- Steele Becker  2007
- Gordon Bennett  2006
- M. Stanley Dart  2007
- Bob Lind  2003
- Marvin Stone  2000

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**Ashley Larsen with her award winning poster from the Great Plains-Rocky Mountain conference.**

**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.

Thanks to generous alumni and emeriti donations, Natasha Winfield was awarded the *Outstanding Geographer Scholarship* for the 2016-2017 academic year.