This fall marks the 70th year of the Department of Geography at GWU. Our department continues to thrive with over 150 majors in Geography and Environmental Studies, 25 graduate students, and the creation of a new GIS Certificate Program to begin in 2014. We just completed a major Academic Program Review that demonstrated the growth of the department and the need for new faculty lines in human, physical, and technical aspects of the discipline. Last year we taught over 2,000 students in our courses!

Geography is alive and well at GW—a point underscored by the recent senior seminar camping trip at Mason Neck, Virginia, October 11-13, 2013 where 32 geography majors and professors David Rain and Marie Price bonded in the rain, gathering data on topics ranging from invasive species, birdlife, trail access, and land use changes. We are one of the few departments at the university that has such a program, and it would not be possible without financial contributions from our alumni for which we are exceedingly grateful. In fact, many of our recent alumni participated in the senior field trip.

As the following pages attest, there is much happening as our faculty, graduate students and undergraduates are busy conducting research from Siberia to Ghana; receiving grants from the NSF and NASA; interning with organizations such as the National Geographic Society and the Environmental Protection Agency; and sharing our findings at conferences and in academic publications. This fall our chair, Elizabeth Chacko, is a visiting Fulbright Scholar at the National University of Singapore where she is teaching, conducting research and enjoying her much deserved year-long sabbatical. She will be back in July 2014. Nikolay Shiklomanov was awarded tenure this spring and promoted to Associate Professor. We also have added two new faculty members to our department; Dr. Dmitry Streletsiky, a climatologist and Arctic specialist, changed his status from Research Associate to Assistant Professor and Dr. Nuala Cowan (MA in Geography in 2004) rejoined our department as a full time faculty member and Director of the GIS Certificate Program. Dr. Qin Yu, a post-doc from the University of Virginia, is contributing to our research on environmental change in the Arctic as a Research Associate. We are now 12 fulltime faculty.

If you have not visited the department recently, there are several events detailed in the newsletter to entice you to return to Foggy Bottom this fall. On the back of this newsletter are three scheduled talks held on Friday afternoons in the department seminar room, all are welcome. We also have a book signing party on November 14th for Dr. Mona Atia’s new book, Building a House in Heaven, based on years of fieldwork in Cairo, Egypt. That same evening Professor Joe Dymond with the International Development Studies program has an event on the relevance of Open Source software to development. For more information about these events, see our webpage. Finally, our thanks to Socorro Lopez, a Geography junior, for her invaluable assistance in preparing the newsletter.

— Marie Price, Acting Chair
New Faculty: Dr. Dmitry (Dima) Streletskiy

Born in Moscow, Russia, Dr. Streletskiy completed his degrees in geography (Moscow State University, MS 2005), and climatology (University of Delaware, PhD 2010). His research is focused on understanding the diverse impacts of climate change on ecosystems, population and overall sustainability of the Arctic regions. After completing his PhD, Dr. Streletskiy worked on various NSF-founded projects and taught several courses for the GWU Department of Geography.

Dr. Streletskiy’s research combines field observations, GIS and modeling techniques to link cross-disciplinary approaches in evaluation of diverse impacts of climate change in the Arctic. Two NSF-founded projects reflect this work. One five-year project, established in collaboration with the Elliott School of International Affairs, is focused on supporting a research network on urban sustainability in Arctic Russia. The other is a three year project in collaboration with the University of New Hampshire that studies the impacts of climate change on hydrology in Northern Eurasia.

In July, Dr. Streletskiy went to Siberia where he conducted field research for the projects. He also led an International Field Class on Permafrost. The field class, co-organized with Moscow State University for the third time, brought together nine students interested in various aspects of Arctic systems ranging from climate change to human impacts. Upon returning from Siberia, he went to Alaska to join the CALM team to collect field data on the permafrost active layer. Dr. Streletskiy is excited to continue working at the Department in his new position.

New Post-Doctoral Research Assistant: Dr. Qin Yu

Dr. Qin Yu is a post-doctoral research scientist, currently working with Dr. Ryan Engstrom, Dr. Nikolay Shiklomanov and Dr. Dmitry Streletskiy on various Arctic and Africa projects at the George Washington University. Her primary research interests focus on modeling and monitoring vegetation dynamics in various regions. She expects to establish and expand her research based on her previous work in the Arctic and other vulnerable ecosystems. She hopes her research can be part of the growing Arctic research group here at the Department of Geography.

Dr. Yu received her B.S. (2001) in Earth Sciences from Zhejiang University and M.S. (2004) in Cartography and GIS from the Institute of Remote Sensing Applications, Chinese Academy of Sciences. Dr. Yu obtained her Ph.D. in Environmental Sciences from the Department of Environmental Sciences at the University of Virginia in 2012. Her dissertation research examines the individual and interaction effects of environmental controls (climate and climate change, soil, herbivore and land use change) on tundra plant communities using ecological modeling and remote sensing methods at local, regional and circumpolar scales. After graduating, she collaborated with Dr. Amato Evan as a Research Associate on Sahara dust impact on four major regions based on CMIP5 data analyses. Dr. Yu is author of several peer-reviewed and edited publications.
New Director of the GIS Certificate Program:  
Dr. Nuala Cowan

Nuala Cowan has been teaching a range of geospatial techniques courses with the Department of Geography since 2006. During this time Ms. Cowan has also conducted research for the Center for Urban & Environmental Research, the geospatial research arm of the Geography Department. Nuala recently returned to the department as the Director of the GIS Certificate Program, due to launch in Fall 2014.

Ms. Cowan completed her doctorate at the GWU Institute of Crisis Disaster & Risk Management (ICDRM) in 2013. Her thesis research focused on developing a geospatial analysis framework to reconcile humanitarian needs with resource provision, and the application of GIS to this issue. To learn more about the GIS Certificate Program, contact Dr. Cowan at nuala@gwu.edu.

The Department Welcomes Visiting Scholar:  
Dr. Pirouz Mojtahed-Zadeh from Iran

Pirouz Mojtahed-Zadeh is a well-known auk-scholar of Iran with expertise on territorial and boundary disputes, especially those in the region of the Persian Gulf. He contributed to the adjudication process of the Bahrain-Qatar disputes at the International Court of Justice (judgment delivered in March 2001).

He currently teaches geopolitics and political geography at the University of Tehran. He has been an advisor of the United Nations University (Tokyo) and has published more than 30 books, many book-chapters and a large number of research papers and encyclopedic entries in English and Persian, some of which have been translated into other languages. His latest publications in Persian include; The Philosophy of Geopolitics and Geopolitics of the Virtual Space, and his publications in English include Small Players of the Great Game and Boundary Politics and international boundaries of Iran, while Maritime Political Geography: The Persian Gulf Islands of Tunb and Abu Musa is in the process of publication in the USA.

Dr. Mojtahed-Zadeh is a member of the Academy of Persian Language and Literature and a number of academic societies. He retired from Chairmanship of the Urosevic Research Foundation of London in 2011, after reaching the age of 65.
In May 2013 the Department of Geography created the Dorn C. McGrath, Jr. Award to recognize outstanding scholarship by a graduate student in the Department of Geography. The Award is named for the former Department Chair, Dorn McGrath, who led the Department of Geography from 1996 to 2003.

Emeritus Professor McGrath taught at the university for 35 years, first in the Department of Urban and Regional Planning and later in the Department of Geography. He also founded the Center for Urban and Environmental Research (CUER), an active research center housed in the Department. Throughout his tenure at the university, he worked with area neighborhoods as well as district, state and federal governments to monitor land use changes and address planning concerns.

Dorn McGrath also worked closely with graduate students, supervising 65 Masters theses at GWU, many of them analyzing local problems and recommending plans for action. Although he retired in 2003, he is still active in local planning issues. On September 13, 2013 he was recognized for his work in Anacostia by the Smithsonian Anacostia Community Museum with the John R. Kinard Leadership in Community Service Award at a luncheon held at the National Press Club. The first McGrath Award was given last May to Jason Burgdorfer (MA 2013) who studied neighborhood effects on obesity in the District of Columbia. We were delighted to have Professor McGrath attend the award ceremony.

Recipient of the first Dorn C. McGrath, Jr. Award: Jason Burgdorfer

Jason Burgdorfer became enthralled by maps at a very young age, which established a foundation for his academic interest in geography. Jason discovered the discipline of Geography as an undergraduate student where he studied Geography and Geology at College of the Canyons and the University of California Santa Barbara where he earned his B.A. degree.

In the first year of the geography master's program at GWU, Jason served as a research assistant for Professor Ryan Engstrom. Jason used remote sensing and spatial analysis techniques to assist Professor Engstrom with his research on slum settlements in Accra, Ghana. In the second year of the program, as part of his master's thesis, Jason researched the spatial distribution of childhood obesity in the District of Columbia and its relationship to characteristics of neighborhood food and physical activity environments. In the future Jason would like to earn a doctorate degree, teach geography and geology at a community college while doing GIS work for research institutes and public agencies.
Building a House in Heaven: Pious Neoliberalism and Islamic Charity in Egypt

By Mona Atia

The Department is pleased to announce the release of Building a House in Heaven: Pious Neoliberalism and Islamic Charity in Egypt by Mona Atia. Mona Atia is an Assistant Professor of Geography and International Affairs. She teaches courses about the intersection of civil society, geopolitics and financial networks in the contemporary Middle East. She holds a PhD in Geography from the University of Washington.

Mapping the landscape of charity and development in Egypt, the book reveals the factors that changed the nature of Egyptian charitable practices—the state’s intervention in social care and religion, an Islamic revival, intensified economic pressures on the poor, and the subsequent emergence of the private sector as a critical actor in development. She shows how, when individuals from Egypt’s private sector felt it necessary to address poverty, they sought to make Islamic charities work as engines of development, a practice that changed the function of charity from distributing goods to empowering the poor.

Drawing on interviews with key players, Atia explores the geography of Islamic charities through multiple neighborhoods, ideologies, sources of funding, projects, and wide social networks. Her work shifts between absorbing ethnographic stories of specific organizations and reflections on the patterns that appear across the sector.

The Institute for Middle East Studies at GWU will host a book launch for Dr. Atia on Thursday, November 14 at 5:30 p.m., in Room 505 of the Elliott School (1957 E Street NW). Mona Atia will discuss her new book in a conversation with Diane Singerman, Associate Professor from the Department of Government, American University and Nathan Brown, Professor of Political Science and International Affairs, GWU. Books will be available for sale and all are welcome.

Geography Master’s Thesis Completed in 2012-2013


Azher Salikuddin, “Evaluating Transportation and Built Density of LEED Gold Certified Municipal Buildings,” 2013


Eric Ashcroft, “Using Remotely Sensed Data and Decision Tree Classifiers to Determine if the Changes in Accra, Ghana are Concentrated in the Most Vulnerable Areas,” 2012.


Leslie Jones, “An Examination of Coordinated Recovery Efforts for the Oswego River Area of Concern,” 2013


New Geography
Graduate Students

Lauren Cater
A Vermont native, Lauren earned her BA from American University in 2010 majoring in history and minoring in Arabic language. She spent two years studying abroad on an Erasmus Mundus graduate fellowship and received degrees in global studies and global history from the University of Leipzig and the London School of Economics and Political Science. Her academic interests lie in understanding the relationship between economic and environmental change and she hopes to pursue a career working in sustainable or international development. In her free time, Lauren enjoys traveling and exploring new places and ideas.

Emmalee Dolfi
Emmalee Dolfi graduated from Colgate University in 2013 with a double major in Geography and Mathematics. She was a member of the varsity softball team at Colgate. Her research interests lie within physical geography, specifically applied GIS, Arctic environments, and weather. She enjoys taking walks with her dog and watching movies.

Evan Watson
Evan grew up in the mountains of Northern California and completed his undergraduate degree in Environmental Studies at UC Santa Cruz. He is interested in both physical and human aspects of geography. While in DC Evan hopes to develop a skill set he takes back to California and puts to good use. He enjoys riding bikes, fly-fishing, and other shenanigans.

Avery Sandborn
Avery graduated in 2013 from the University of Maryland-College Park with a BS in Geographic Information Sciences. She has worked on various environmental research projects at NASA Goddard Space Flight Center, as well as participated in extensive archaeological research in Hawaii through an NSF funded program. Her interests within Geography and GIS include cartography, urban planning, transportation analysis, and emergency management. Avery also earned a BA in Flute Performance at Maryland where she performed with the university orchestras, chamber ensembles, and opera studio, and is looking forward to joining a local orchestra in DC.
Madeline Hale

After graduating with a BS in geography and environmental planning from Towson University, Madeline (Maddy) spent a year working as a nursing assistant at the GW hospital where she decided that geography really is her one, true love. She looks forward to returning to her interests in human-environment interactions, feminist theory, cultural geography, hydrology, and environmental hazards. When not reading or writing, she enjoys traveling, being outdoors and practicing martial arts.

Zand Bakhtiari

Zand, originally from Chesapeake, Virginia, graduated from Old Dominion University with a B.S. in Geography. Although he spent a lot of time studying GIS, he is also interested in the more social side of Geography. These interests include the Middle East, Islam, political geography, historical mapping, and the learning other languages. In his spare time, Zand likes growing fruits and vegetables and meeting new people.

Kelsey Nyland

Kelsey was born and raised to “live free or die” in New Hampshire, but she is also a Washingtonian having received her B.A. in Geography and Environmental Studies from GW this past May. Continuing her involvement in GW Arctic research, she hopes to focus on remote sensing applications, and modeling the effects of climate change in high latitude regions. Kelsey also enjoys long hikes through the tundra, swimming in the Arctic Ocean, and killing mosquitoes.

Yussef Esmail

Yussef is from Pacoima, California. He double majored in Geography and Liberal Arts at California State University, Northridge. His interests are in global political ecology, the politics of climate change, and geographies of inequality. In his spare time Yussef enjoys playing soccer, boxing and reading.
The George Washington University Department of Geography Senior Class, joined Geography Professors Joe Dymond and David Rain, and the Geography Department Chair, Elizabeth Chacko, in hosting 15 Geography Alumni for a student-made feast on Friday, November 30, 2012 in the Geography Department. The purpose of the annual event is to give graduating seniors exposure to the career paths taken by their GW geography predecessors. The Alumni group gathers prior to the meal, and each alumnus briefly speaks to the students about the various career opportunities available to geography students, and the choices each of them made from the time when they were geography seniors at GW, to their current employment positions. After each member of the alumni group speaks, then alumni, faculty, and students mingle during dinner to further explore career guidance.

Alumni attending the 2012 event represented a range of positions from those in the federal government to private industry and included organizations such as; Booz Allen Hamilton, The Department of Defense, The U.S. Department of Agriculture, The National Geographic Society, and the U.S. Census. Geography seniors prepared and contributed the various courses of the meal in exchange for the valuable advise provided to them by the alumni. Alumni participating in the Fall 2012 event included: Derek Azar, Crystal Bae, Kyle Cole, Lisa Colson, Victor Ecarna, Grace Hearty, Matthew Kamisher-Koch, Daniel Kirkwood, Sam Salkin, Charlotte Schou, Emily Sciarillo, Alex Stegmaier, Peter Tchoukaleff, and Kaitlin Yarnall. Many thanks to our alumni for offering their time, support, and advice to our graduating seniors!

Alumni Dinner with Geography Seniors, November 2012

Mason Neck Senior Field Trips, October 2012 & 2013

Located about 40 minutes south of DC, Virginia’s Mason Neck Peninsula serves as the field setting for a weekend-long research and camping trip taken each year by the GW Geography senior class. Geography seniors participate in Geography 4195W, the Geography major’s capstone course, which is also a writing-intensive course. The seniors form into research groups based on their interests, which have been as varied as measuring the growth of invasive plants, assessing the redevelopment of the former DC prison at Lorton, or preserving Bald Eagle habitat on Mason Neck.

The groups in the weeks prior formulate a research hypothesis, consult experts, and make a plan for data collection in and around the Mason Neck peninsula. They also meet in committee to plan the field trip including arranging the meals and transportation. During the weekend itself, the group arrives on Friday evening, gets a campfire going and prepares the first dinner. Saturday of the field trip is focused on the data collection, with students dropped off at various points on Mason Neck to interview park users, for instance, or assess the quality of hiking trails. On Saturday evening students sometimes hike to the bluff above Belmont Bay or play a game of capture the flag. The trip serves multiple purposes from providing valuable field experience to serving as a bonding opportunity for the seniors. Each year the students come back from the trip feeling more connected to their geography peers and confident they have created a network of colleagues and friends that will take them into the years beyond their undergraduate careers.
Juan José Valdez, a Geographer at National Geographic and Director of Editorial and Research of National Geographic Maps, was the honored guest speaker during the GW Geographic Department’s celebration of Geography Awareness Week in the fall 2012 semester. The Valdez presentation, entitled “Being a National Geographic Cartographer – or - So you take pictures for the magazine?” was delivered to a standing room only crowd of GW faculty, students, and alumni. Several of the students and alumni present at the talk interned with Valdez at National Geographic during their undergraduate and graduate careers at GW.

Mr. Valdez’s presentation is part of an ongoing relationship the GW Department of Geography has with the National Geographic Society (Nat Geo). A significant part of the GW-Nat Geo relationship is an internship program where GWU Geography and Environmental Studies students intern each semester in several departments at Nat Geo. Geography student interns participate in semester-long internship programs while earning Geography internship credits under the guidance of Geography faculty advisor, Joe Dymond. Student interns work for the National Geographic Maps Group on various map and atlas projects, the National Geographic Bee – a nationwide competition where 4th-8th grade students from thousands of schools across the United States compete in an entertaining and challenging test of geographic knowledge, National Geographic Traveler magazine, and the National Geographic Education Department, among other Nat Geo departments.

Geography Seniors, Kyle Mackie and Alex Pommer, class of 2013, both interned in the Nat Geo Maps Group under the guidance of Juan Valdez during the 2012-2013 academic year. Mackie contributed to the National Geographic Global Atlas, the forthcoming 10th Edition of the National Geographic Atlas of the World, and various destination and reference maps ranging from a Poconos destination map to an Asia-Pacific regional map commissioned by the U.S. State Department. She described her experience at Nat Geo as an “excellent, rewarding, once in a lifetime opportunity.” Mackie said that working under the guidance of Juan Valdez and his dedicated team of researchers and editors enabled her to get a behind- the-scenes look at how Nat Geo maps are made, and to experience the hard work and attention to detail that goes into each map product. Among the glowing statement Kyle provided about her experience at Nat Geo was her summation that the most rewarding part of her internship was working with the people of the Maps Group whom she described as very “welcoming and willing to teach.”

Mr. Pommer added that “National Geographic Maps takes a great deal of pride in the integrity and quality of the work they produce, which I was able to see and take part in during my internship. This experience gave me an insight into the internal operations of one of the world’s leading geographic and environmental organizations. I was able to take on a great deal of responsibility and coordinate a new and exciting Nat Geo Maps project, which allowed me to understand how a map is produced from the ground up. I don’t think I could have gained a greater geographic experience at any other organization, especially as I can now look at any National Geographic map and smile because I know the people and perseverance that goes into each and every piece of cartographic mastery. Today, as a professional geographer, I am proud to say that I was a part of our profession’s leading society.”

Juan Valdez provided the Nat Geo perspective of the internship program with the following comments: “National Geographic Maps’ internship program just celebrated its fifth anniversary. During this time, the majority of students accepted into our program have come from the Department of Geography at The George Washington University. This is no coincidence, for all have come well prepared with a sound geographic education. Our internship exposes students to real world mapmaking processes. They are well mentored in the fine art of cartographic research and editing, and by the end of their tenure I often hear these parting words: “Thank you so much for the experience. I’ll never look at a map the same way as I did before I started my internship.”

The Geography Department at GW looks forward to continuing the internship programs, and other collaborative relations, with the National Geographic Society in the coming years and is thankful for the learning opportunities and “real world” experience interning at Nat Geo provides to our majors.
**Geography & Environmental Studies Senior Awards 2013**

**Muriel H. Parry Award**

*Presented to a Geography Senior in Recognition of Scholarly Excellence*

**Jeff Kline**

Jeff Kline was born and raised in Pennsylvania, studied abroad in Berlin, Germany, and traveled to more than 14 countries during the duration of his undergraduate studies. He discovered Geography in Professor Chacko’s Geography of South Asia course, where he realized that his interest in international affairs and security could be complemented and enhanced through a spatial lens. Jeff took advantage of GW’s vast professional networks and prime location to secure three internships during his undergraduate career. The first was with The Center for a Free Cuba, analyzing and tracking Cuban espionage cases in the United States (especially within the Cuban diaspora). His second internship was with Arc Aspicio, where he researched and supported a variety of projects across the Department of Homeland Security. Additionally, Jeff applied his geographic knowledge during his time at the State Department, where he served as an intern in the European and Eurasian Affairs Bureau working on Counterterrorism and United Nations issues. Jeff asserts that his additional major in Geography was an invaluable experience. Jeff is currently working as a government consultant on homeland security and intelligence issues in the D.C. area. In the near future, he hopes to pursue graduate studies in Geography, focusing on the spatial implications of violent extremism and terrorism.

**Robert D. Campbell Prize**

*Presented to a Geography Senior for Outstanding Leadership & Scholarship*

**Kelsey Nyland**

Kelsey Nyland graduated with a double major in Geography and Environmental Studies, and minors in Biology and Geographic Information Systems. Throughout her undergraduate career, Kelsey was actively involved in Arctic research, spending her summers conducting fieldwork in Russia and Alaska. Since her freshman year, Kelsey worked with Professors Nikolay Shiklomanov and Dmitry Streletskiy in their ongoing NSF-funded permafrost monitoring research efforts. With their mentorship, she published her first peer-reviewed paper titled, “Effect of Vegetation on Soil-Surface Temperatures in Northern Alaska” in the Proceedings of the Tenth International Conference on Permafrost. Kelsey was also awarded numerous university fellowships to conduct her own independent research projects. In 2011, Kelsey received the GW Luther Rice Fellowship, which helped her to study paleo-permafrost conditions in the mid-Atlantic region using cutting edge mineralogical analysis developed in Russia. And in 2012, Kelsey was awarded the GW Undergraduate Fellowship. For this project she collaborated with the local government of Barrow, Alaska and the indigenous Inupiat people to map the village’s ice cellars (Siq-uaq), a traditional food storage practice currently endangered by the warming climate. Kelsey’s passion for Arctic environments and peoples inspired her to continue her research and education in the Department of Geography Masters Program.

**Thomas Foggin Award**

*Presented to an Environmental Studies Senior for Scholarly Excellence*

**James Hark**

Jamie has always had a strong passion for nature and the environment, and after speaking with Professor David Rain during his freshman year, he found the Environmental Studies program to be a perfect fit. After declaring his major, he went on to study Geography and GIS as well. Over the course of his undergraduate career at GWU, Jamie applied his coursework to various internships with the National Geographic Society, Casey Trees, and Senator John Kerry’s office. In the summer of 2012 Jamie studied abroad at the Center for Sustainable Development Studies in Costa Rica, where he gained hands-on exposure to ecology and sustainability in action. Post-graduation, Jamie is currently using the skills he acquired in the Environmental Studies program to pursue a career in cartography and climate change adaptation. He started a job at Appgeo, a GIS consulting company in Boston, right after graduation.
GW Undergraduate Research Award

Recipient: Geography Senior, Mitch Langley

Geography Senior Mitch Langley received a GW Undergraduate Research Award in 2013 to study limited-stop bus service provision and quality in socially vulnerable areas in Guayaquil, Ecuador; Santiago, Chile; and Lima, Peru. The comparative analysis approach Mitch is taking with his research adds significant depth to existing research on bus rapid transit systems (BRT) and other limited-stop services. Langley’s examination of Guayaquil and Lima is the first of its type for those two South American cities. Working with his Geography faculty advisor, Professor Joseph Dymond, Mitch developed a methodology which utilizes a comparison of arithmetic and principal components analyses to identify socially vulnerable urban districts within the cities under investigation. After identifying vulnerable districts, he selected limited-stop bus lines to investigate within each district from the Metrovía system in Guayaquil, Transantiago in Santiago, and the Metropolitano system in Lima. He used OpenStreetMap, a free Web-based geospatial open source database, to run spatial analysis in Quantum GIS, creating map products to back up his selections.

Three weeks of field study in August took Mitch to Ecuador, Chile, and Peru, where he spent five to six days each week riding trunk and feeder bus lines. He compared service provision (i.e. whether an area had service or not) and quality (i.e. a relative level of service) against amalgamated standards of BRT using a “yes-no,” ten-point evaluation system. While many cities display their new limited-stop bus systems as BRT, the reality is that few socially vulnerable areas are serviced by BRT systems – instead, lower quality feeder routes funnel large amounts of people from vulnerable areas into terminal stations.

Mitch is now writing a paper summarizing the results of the data he collected in South America. In the spring, he will present his research at the Student Association’s Research Day and at the Association of American Geographers’ Annual Meeting. He also intends to submit his research for publication in a refereed journal.
The Arctic field investigations continued this summer as part of the Circumpolar Active Layer Monitoring (CALM) project funded by the Arctic Observing Networks program of the NSF. The CALM project is designed to monitor the long-term response of the active layer and near-surface permafrost parameters in various climatic and edaphic conditions characteristic of the circumpolar Arctic. Geography Masters students Kristen Pyne and Kelsey Nyland, and undergraduate student Stephen Ross, traveled to the North Slope of Alaska to assist in field research and to study the Arctic climate and landscapes with professors the Geoge Washington University (Shiklomanov, Streletskiy), University of Montana (Klene) and University of Delaware (Nelson).

The students participated in the North Slope field and safety training in Fairbanks before they embarked on their journey up the Dalton Highway, one of the most isolated roads in the United States that was built to support the Alaska pipeline in the 1970s. Along the way they crossed the Arctic Circle and mighty Yukon River, and stopped at the Arctic Interagency Visitor Center in Coldfoot. The team visited both the Prudhoe Bay oil fields and Toolik Field Station, where they had a chance to communicate with and learn from Arctic scientists from very diverse disciplines and institutions. Part of the group also visited Barrow, the northernmost community in the United States. A few others got to travel to Nome on the Seward Peninsula.

The trip was a once in a lifetime experience and included helicopter rides to field sites, wildlife observation, and hiking in the Brooks Range. Aside from having fun, students participated in active research and learned advanced field techniques, instrumentation and data processing. GW Geography students who participated in Alaska field research are currently processing the data. They intend to present their research at the annual meeting of the Association of American Geographers.
Dr. Streletskiy received a three year NSF grant titled “Interactions between air temperature, permafrost and hydrology in the high latitudes of Eurasia.” In collaboration with the University of New Hampshire, this three year research project focuses on the impacts of climate change on Arctic hydrology since numerous studies indicate that the signal of climate change in Northern Eurasia has already exceeded the level of natural climate variability.

The research is aimed specifically at understanding how increases in air temperature can promote changes in magnitude and timing of river fluctuation and describes the physical processes driving these changes. The project has extensive field component in the regions of Igraka and Kolyma. Both of these areas are part of the GWU-hosted CALM network.

In these locations, data on climatic, hydrologic and permafrost characteristics is collected at a series of representative watersheds in order to assess the role of river ice formation, permafrost degradation and increasing air temperatures on river stream flow. The field data collected during this three year period will be used to feed the models scaling local observations to larger areas.

Yenisey, the largest river flowing to the Arctic Ocean, shows an increasing trend in discharge during summer periods. Increasing summer temperatures and thawing of permafrost may explain the observed trends in stream flow.

Collecting permafrost samples for isotope analyses.
Arctic Urban Sustainability Field Research and the Annual International Permafrost Field Course

This July, a diverse group of GW students traveled to the central Siberian city of Noril’sk in order to conduct field research for two new complementary research projects; a NSF-funded project called, “Building a Research Network for Promoting Arctic Urban Sustainability in Russia,” and a National Research Council of Norway-funded project called, “Arctic Urban Sustainability in Russia.” The team included GW Geography Professors Nikolay Shiklomanov and Dmitry Streletsakiy, University of Delaware Geography professor Frederick Nelson, Research Professor Marlene Laurelle from the GW Elliott School’s Institute for European, Russian and Eurasian Studies, recent GW Master’s graduates Colin Reisser and Genevieve Parente, incoming GW Master’s student Kelsey Nyland, and GW undergraduate students Trevor Ceneviva and Lauren Daupin all participated.

The group met in Krasnoyarsk where they boarded a ship and sailed north on the Yenisei River, one of the largest rivers in the world. The Yenisey slices Russia roughly in half and has a distinct longitudinal direction. Traveling from Karsnoyasrk to Dudinka, the group witnessed the bioclimatic conditions transition from the southern taiga near Krasnoyarsk to the forest-tundra in Dudinka first hand. After traveling almost 2,000 km and crossing the Arctic Circle to reach Dudinka, the group arrived in the city of Noril’sk, the largest city on permafrost and one of the largest mining industry centers in the Arctic. The following week was spent conducting interviews and investigating various aspects of current or potential sustainable aspects of the city. The group investigated a wide range of topics including migration patterns, public policies, and engineering practices.

In addition to the field work, Professor Streletsakiy, Kelsey Nyland, Trevor Ceneviva and Lauren Daupin participated in the annual International Permafrost Field Course organized jointly by the GW Geography Department and Moscow State University’s Department of Cryolithology and Glaciology. The class visited local museums and went on several excursions including attending meetings with representatives of the city’s administration and visiting mining headquarters, factories, extraction facilities, and construction companies in order to learn about the diverse effects of permafrost on urban Arctic lifestyles.
Studying the Urban Transition in Ghana

Dr. Engstrom is part of a team that was recently awarded a $1 million NASA grant to study the urban transition and its relationship to land use and land cover change in Ghana by the NASA Interdisciplinary Sciences program. This three year project focuses on mapping land cover change in the rural areas and within four major cities in southern Ghana including Accra, Kumasi, Obuasi, and Cape Coast.

This project is a follow on and expansion of the work that was previously funded by the National Institute of Health (NIH) that focused on Accra. The project is a collaboration between Geography researchers from The George Washington University, San Diego State University (SDSU) and the University of California Santa Barbara (UCSB). As part of the project Dr. Engstrom will fund one graduate assistant every year. Starting this fall, Avery Sanborn, who was recently awarded her Bachelor’s degree from the University of Maryland in Geographical Sciences, accepted the position and is now working towards her Master’s degree here in the Geography Department.

The overall goal of the project is to determine if rural to urban migration is driving changes in the built environment using a combination of high and medium resolution satellite data from 2000-2010. Additionally, the project is seeking to determine if the quality of life for urban inhabitants can be inferred from information obtained using remotely sensed data.

The role for the GW research group is to acquire and process the high resolution satellite data from NASA to provide inputs for the medium resolution land cover change mapping and to determine the amount of within city change that has occurred during the 10 year study period. To date, GW has received over 2 Terabytes of high resolution satellite data from the Quickbird, IKONOS, and Geoeye sensors that covers nearly the entire country of Ghana. Currently we are developing efficient, automated ways to process and derive information from this extremely large data set.

2013 Gamma Theta Upsilon

Congratulations to the GWU Geographers for their recent induction into Gamma Theta Upsilon (GTU), the International Geographical Honor Society. This group of exceptional GWU Geographers were inducted into GTU at the end of the Spring 2013 semester by faculty sponsor Joe Dymond, based on the number of geography credits they earned, and their overall Geography major GPAs.

The society, founded in 1928, furthers professional interest in geography, encourages geography student research, awards funds for graduate study in geography, and advances the status of the discipline for study and investigation.

We are very proud of our GTU inductees and wish them well as ambassadors for the Geography Department at GWU and for the discipline of Geography.
STUDENT CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

Undergraduate students

Lauren Benne. Urban Sustainability in Bangkok, Thailand, Undergraduate honors thesis project.

Anne Lausier. Poster presentation at the OVPR "Research Days 2013".


Kelsey Nyland. Presented a poster at the Annual Meeting of the American Geophysical Union (December 2012, San Francisco, CA).


Gloriana Sojo. Regional and Local Impacts of Infrastructure Projects in the Costa Rica – Nicaraguan Border Area presented at the PGS-MADAAG annual meeting Salisbury, MD, November 2, 2012.


Graduate students

Bartlett Bickell. “Mapping the evolution of the cultural landscape of the Great Dismal Swamp – 18th century to present”. Annual Meeting of the Association of American Geographers, April 2013, Los Angeles, California


FACULTY PUBLICATIONS

Books


Chapters in Books


Peer-Reviewed Journal Articles & Conference Proceedings


Elizabeth Chacko and Marie Price, “The Role of the Diaspora in Development: The Case of Ethiopian and Bolivian Immigrants in the USA,” Migration, 5:5-19 (Tbilisi, Georgia). 2012


Nickel, D.; Schoenfelder, W.; Medearis, D.; Dolowitz, D.; Melissa Keeley; Shuster, W., German experience in managing stormwater with green infrastructure, Journal of Environmental Planning and Management, (February 2013) Advance online publication, doi.org/10.1080/09640568.2012.748652


Michael Mann, Kaufmann RK, Bauer DM, Gopal S, Baldwin JG, Vera-Diaz MDC, Ecosystem service value and agricultural conversion in the Amazon: Implications for policy intervention, Environmental and Resource Economics.


Student and Faculty Notes

Two GW geography majors participated in the World Geography Bowl in Los Angeles, California at the Association of American Geographers Meeting in April 2013. Raynell Cooper and Chris Hart (BA 2015 expected) were on the Mid-Atlantic Division Team which was undefeated in preliminary rounds and finished second place in the finals. Congratulations Raynell and Chris!

Geography students and friends participated in the Clarendon 5K Fun Run on Sept. 28, 2013. From left to right: Ivan Cheung, Sara Wiley, Richard Hinton, Nuala Cowan and Joe Dymond.

Alumni Notes

Camille Fisher Galdes (MA 2011) accepted a position in May with the Pew Research Center in Washington DC as a Research Associate. In October 2012 she married Andrew Galdes in Boston Massachusetts. The couple now lives in Alexandria.

Adam Eckstein (BA 2009) is working as a Policy Analyst for the Manhattan Borough President’s Office writing policy reports, op-eds, and press releases. Prior to this job, he worked for the New York City research center called Center for an Urban Future.
Tim Swales (MA 2013) just landed a job working in Cupertino, CA for ProUnlimited, a company that Apple contracts with. He is a GIS Technician for Apple maps.


Cary Fukui (BA 2012) is beginning a Masters degree in Urban Planning at NYU this fall. Prior to returning to school he worked for the Department of City Planning in NYC on transportation issues.

Benjamin Nathan (BA 2012) works in Washington DC for the EPA, in the Drinking Water and Protection Division of the Office of Ground Water and Drinking Water. He writes “I work a lot with GIS and am constantly using the skills and knowledge I received from my geography studies in our monitoring and management of nationwide drinking water data.”

Jenny Brown (MA 2004) recently accepted a position as an Associate Planner for Washington County, which is just outside of Portland, Oregon. She has retired from her former job as ferry boat captain in Marion County, Oregon.

Evan Feeney (BA 2012) reports that last year he worked for the international advocacy group Avaaz as an Operations Associate. While at Avaaz he traveled to Italy to protest the murder of Syrian children at the U.N., fight for an end to global oil subsidies, reproductive rights, LGBT rights, Maui Dolphins and so much more. In April, he moved back to Washington DC as a Government Affairs Program Assistant for the Natural Resources Defense Council. There he works to defend critical environmental regulation such as the National Environmental Policy Act and advancing the President’s climate agenda. He has been putting his geographic skills to work on NRDC’s new GIS institute. And finally, he continues his political activism with the DC Divest program, a volunteer group that has been working since April to get the District Council to divest all it’s public funds from the top 200 fossil fuel companies.

Ewa Wieslaw (BA 2010) is working for the US Department of Housing and Urban Development. There she worked to defend critical environmental regulation such as the National Environmental Policy Act and advancing the President’s climate agenda. She has been putting his geographic skills to work on NRDC’s new GIS institute. And finally, he continues his political activism with the DC Divest program, a volunteer group that has been working since April to get the District Council to divest all it’s public funds from the top 200 fossil fuel companies.

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CONGRATULATIONS TO THE CLASS OF 2013!

M.A. in Geography
Jason Burgdorfer
Jessica Dell
Anna Findley
Leslie Jones

M.A. in Geography
Juliana Kuhn
Eileen Miller
Amanda Osborne
Azher Salikuddin
Kathryn Schindler
Timothy Swales
Geoffrey Swanson

B.A. in Geography
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Caitlin Boucher
Grace Campbell
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Curtis Davis
Amanda Destefano
Joseph Duffey
Kristen Dunphey
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Aaron Eubank
Justyna Felusik

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Alexander Kemp
Samuel Johnson
Jeffrey Kline
Anne Lausier
Lokyee Lui
Kyle Mackie
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Kendall Pauley
Alex Pisciarino
Alexander Pommer
Joseph Reynolds
David Smentek
Phillip Tilly
Christina Valentiner
Jerry Wauford
Gillian Weeks
Maura Welch

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Arjun Awasthi
Sarah Cahan
Grace Campbell
Samuel Catherman
Curtis Davis
Amanda Destefano
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Alyssa Edwards
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Regina Fong
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Corinne Haynes
Rosemary Holt
Jeremy Iloulian
Samuel Johnson
Alexander Kemp
Jeffrey Kline
Mitchell Langley
Anne Lausier
Hae Youn Lee
Lokyee Lori Lui
Kyle Mackie
Kelsey Nyland
Ellen Park
Kirstie Polentz
Alexander Pommer
Joseph Reynolds
Isabelle Riu
Analise Rivero
David Smentek
Christina Valentiner
Gillian Weeks
Maura Welch
Samuel Wong
If you are interested in making a gift to the Department, please visit our website (www.gwu.edu/~geog) and click on the “Support the Department” link for instructions.

Semester Events

Geography Fall 2013 Speaker Series

Friday, September 25, Pirouz Mojtahed–Zadeh, Visiting Scholar from the University of Tehran will present “Political Geography and Geopolitics: The Middle East Way.”

Friday, October 25, Roger-Mark DeSouza, Director of Population, Environmental Change and Security at the Woodrow Wilson Center will give a talk entitled "On Sustainable Development and Building Resilience."

Thursday, November 21, Qin Yu, Post-doctoral fellow in the GWU Department of Geography will give a talk entitled "Arctic Tundra Vegetation Dynamics under Changing Environmental Conditions."

Friday, December 6, Oleg A. Anisimov, Professor of Physical Geography, Hydrological Institute (Russia) will discuss the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).

All events are schedule for 4pm in the Department, Room 219 of Old Main and are followed by a reception. All are welcome.

Loyal Donors

Ms. Kirsten Anne Berg
Mr. Byron K. Callan, III
Ms. Alyssa Christelle Edwards
Mr. Aaron David Eubank
Ms. Regina Rose Fong
Ms. Sarah P. Fuller
Ms. Vera D. Harvell
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Donations received between November 2012—October 2013