



College of Social and  
Behavioral Sciences

# Geography and Environmental Studies Alumni Newsletter 2014-2015



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# **“ELECTRONIC” GEONOTES**

## **Geography and Environmental Studies Alumni Newsletter**



### DEPARTMENT ≧ NEWS ≦

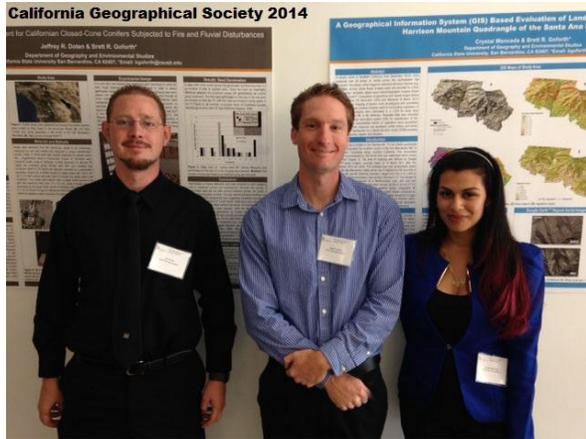
This past year was another busy one for Geography and Environmental Studies. The department went through its periodic review, which normally happens about every seven years. The process involved summarizing the department's strengths and weaknesses, followed by an evaluation by an outside visitor as an independent judge. Professor Lin Wu, chair of geography at Cal Poly Pomona, performed this task and concluded that we are doing quite well given the limited available resources and non-replacement of retiring faculty.

Both Professor Rajrani Kalra and Professor Bo Xu were granted tenure and promoted to the Associate Professor level this year. They were the only two faculty that earned such honors in the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences, which partly reflects the fact that they were the only two tenure-track faculty hired six years ago who are still here. This reflects the fact that replacing retiring tenure-track faculty in a timely manner has not been a top campus priority for many years. That may soon change because administrators recognize the damage that hiring delays can do to program continuity and morale. Whereas the department now has six tenure-track faculty and one in the process of retirement (Jeff), there is still an open line that has not been filled since Jim Mulvihill retired seven years ago. Fortunately for us, Jim has been willing to continue teaching some critical classes for us at the pay level of a first-year part-time instructor.

Both Rajrani and Bo will celebrate their promotion this year by taking sabbaticals to do research overseas. These are well-earned breaks so that they can enhance their research and also relax from the continuous strain of teaching classes.

I agreed to serve another three-year term as chair. The past three years have been a very trying time, but having worked in the system for 25 years makes the task more manageable than it might otherwise be.

Norman Meek, Chair, Department of Geography and Environmental Studies

**Brett Goforth**

L to R: Jeff Doten, Brett Goforth, and Crystal Moncada

It was a very busy founding year for the environmental geography research lab I set up. This new facility provides students with instruction on technical geographic methods applied to research on environmental change. Students utilized the lab to complete two internships, three independent study projects, activities in GEOG 370, Landscape Analysis and GEOG 304, Field Methods, a senior honors project, as well as hundreds of hours of volunteer work in collaboration with my ongoing research on topics of physical geography and biogeography in Southern California and Baja California. In April, environmental studies majors Crystal Moncada and Jeff Doten presented posters at the 68<sup>th</sup> annual conference of the California Geographical Society held in Los Angeles (based on their work in the lab). Crystal used GIS to evaluate spatial patterns of landslides mapped on the Harrison Mountain quadrangle of the Santa Ana River watershed, and Jeff conducted a lab experiment to test for viability of seed banks in local closed-cone conifers subjected to wildfire and flash-flood disturbance. Crystal's poster was judged 2<sup>nd</sup> place in the undergraduate poster competition, and she received a \$100 prize. Congratulations to Crystal and Jeff for representing our department at the conference! The lab is now equipped with three computer workstations running ArcGIS 10.1, a Meiji-Techno stereo-zoom microscope with digital video camera, and an archive of over 350 tree-ring samples collected from forests across the Southern California Floristic Region spanning from the

remote Sierra San Pedro Martir in Baja, northward to the Sierra Nevada. Although I spend most days of the week on campus working in the lab, teaching environmental studies courses and advising students, I was able to get away for a few days in February to attend the Lilly National Teaching Conference in Newport Beach, and I also co-authored a chapter in a new book titled, "Conservation Science in Mexico's Northwest: Ecosystem Status and Trends in the Gulf of California." It will be published in 2015 by the University of California Institute for United States and Mexico Studies (UCMEXUS). The chapter is a biogeographic study of chaparral vegetation "sky-islands" among Baja California's Peninsular Ranges, including 11 new detailed maps I developed using ArcGIS. I am looking forward to another busy year working with the next group of students, and have many field trips planned for my courses in the local San Bernardino Mountains.

**Kevin Grisham**

I recently completed my first year as an Assistant Professor and my fourth year overall as a faculty member in the department. This past year has been very fruitful with the Model United Nations team winning Outstanding Delegation (Palestine) and Honorable Mention (Iran) at the 2013 NMUN-Korea Conference in Seoul, South Korea. This included a visit to the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) that separates North and South Korea and cultural visits to Changdeokgung Palace and Bukchon Hanok Village. In 2014, the CSUSB MUN team won Outstanding Delegation (Lebanon) and Distinguished Delegation (Third World Network) prizes at the 2014 NMUN-New York conference. These wins mean the team has been awarded the top international prizes in 20 out of the last 22 years.

In addition, my book, *Transforming Violent Political Movements: Rebels Today, What Tomorrow?* (Routledge), came out in April, 2014, and I was honored to represent the department at the 2014 International Studies Association (ISA) Conference in Toronto, Canada. At the ISA conference, I presented research I am doing on defining sacred space, place and location and its impact on conflict management and conflict resolution. I continue to work with the National Collegiate Conference Association (NCCA) at the UN and was honored

to be selected the Vice President for the NCCA for 2014-2015. The best news of the whole year is that my wife and I will be gaining new members to our family this December. Not one, but two little ones, will be joining the family-- hopefully future geographers.

### **Jeff Hackel**

I have finished the third year of being semi-retired. I continue to advise environmental studies majors, and it is a good way to keep in touch with students since my teaching load, especially of upper division classes, is reduced. As part of the "semi-retirement," my wife and I bought a townhouse in Ventura. We still have our Crestline house, but have spent most of the summer in Ventura.

I continue to do research on population movements in southern Africa. I'm also following the Ebola outbreak in West Africa. It hasn't reached the region of my main interest, southern Africa, but it likely will. It could be devastating. The rural areas are just not equipped to handle such an epidemic.

### **Rajrani Kalra**

I am very glad to say that I have completed my sixth year at CSUSB this fall. I have also been tenured and promoted to Associate Professor. Also, I am on sabbatical for the entire academic year 2014-15.

I was awarded a scholarship for teaching and learning from the Teaching Resource Center for a project titled "A geospatial approach to understanding cities," and I received a Professors Across Borders grant to travel to India and work on my project on tourism and regional development. I will be travelling within India during December 2014 and examining the relationships between local factors in the promotion of tourist development. India is a culturally diverse nation, which adds to the promotion of regional tourism-led development. Also, this year I became the president-elect of our Gamma Lambda Chapter of Phi Beta Delta. I am very excited to be taking this new position for internationalizing our university and taking it to new heights.

In addition, this year I had two chapters accepted for publication in edited books (one by Springer and another by Concept Publishing in New Delhi) and three research papers accepted and published in the peer-reviewed journals: *Asian Profile*, *Geo Journal* and *International Research and Review Journal*.

As the SAGES faculty advisor, I am very glad to report that we have had some very active student board members and they did a great job in November 2013 for the Geography Awareness Day celebration. We invited Professor Rickie Sanders to speak. She is from Temple University, and gave a talk on "Making Invisible Cities Visible," which was well attended by faculty, students and community members.

I have several research projects in the pipeline that will keep me busy during my sabbatical. I am excited to be spending my sabbatical travelling and conducting research.

### **Michal Kohout**

One of the most rewarding activities last year was working with students in Geography 320 (Social Issues) on creating and implementing a sustainability index for various cities in the Inland Empire. The five student groups did a great job calculating various sustainability indicators, and did solid field research to find out what sustainability plans or activities were underway in their communities. We looked at four communities in the IE: Fontana, Claremont, Rancho Cucamonga and Redlands, and found that, although they have some big social and environmental problems to overcome, there is at least growing community awareness of the issues.

I attended two local conferences and presented two papers, one on the U.S.-Mexico border as a material landscape, and one on social sustainability in the Inland Empire. The second paper is now a book chapter that will be published later this year in an edited volume called: "Adventures in Sustainable Urbanism: Notes from the Field."

## **Norman Meek**

Last Spring, Joy and I hosted a party for the department at our home in Oak Hills. Pepin, our dog, is named for an early King of France (Pepin the Short), and was the hit of the party.



Honorary Geographer and party animal: "Pepin the Short."

I presented, and also published an article about the possible origins of the myth about California falling into the ocean. Originally I thought the widely known myth might have originated with the experiences of early settlers traveling 17 miles up the Victorville fan, only to find the fan had no obvious debris source. Only later did I discover that the modern myth more likely dates to some hippie groups in the 1960s, who modified some of Edgar Cayce's earlier predictions that prophesized huge natural disasters for various parts of the world, and especially California.

Among the places Joy and I visited this year were Roswell and Capitan, N.M., the homes of my alien ancestors and Smokey the Bear respectively. While in the region, I particularly enjoyed visiting Ft. Craig, a Civil War fort that is slowly decaying in the desert from natural processes. I had wanted to also visit the Valverde battlefield, but discovered access is restricted because Ted Turner owns a huge ranch that encompasses the whole battlefield and its surroundings.

## **Jim Mulvihill, Emeritus**

Jim remains on the San Bernardino City Council, which continues to face many fiscal challenges due to the city's bankruptcy. The details could

fill a book, but one of the key sources of public funds and land development was eliminated with Governor Brown's closure of all Redevelopment Agencies in California on February 1, 2012. SB's RDA annually provided about \$30 million of development funding each year when it was in operation. The influence of the public safety unions (i.e. police and fire), complicate budget balancing as their salary increases are not determined through collective bargaining, but a formula that includes the ten wealthier cities in California. Jim enjoys the challenges the city's circumstances present. He will teach two courses this academic year -- SSCI 321 in winter '15 and GEOG 415 in spring '15. Finally, daughter Carolyn gave birth to a very healthy Sara Judith on September 10th. Carolyn continues as a planner at the EPA's Division 9 HQs in San Francisco.

That's all for now ... Jim

## **Richard Rowland, Emeritus**

Dick Rowland spends much of his time investigating and processing population geographical data, especially census data, of both countries of the former Soviet Union and other countries of the world. In addition, he is also continuing to play fantasy baseball and football (and is now to be feared throughout the fantasy sports world ;-).

## **Bo Xu**

Last year was a milestone for me: In June, I got the official letter from the Provost announcing that I received tenure and was promoted to Associate Professor. Here, I would like to thank all the faculty and staff members in the department for their support and guidance. During the past year, apart from the regular teaching load of six classes with labs, I continued my research in the application of remote sensing and GIS. Specifically, I attended the AAG Annual Conference in Tampa, Fla., in April and presented my research paper, "Spatial analysis of farming viability and its contributing factors in California." I also received a Professors across Borders grant (\$2,000) from the Center for International Studies and Programs. My proposal for this grant is titled, "Dynamic monitoring of the ecological environment in the Three Gorges Dam reservoir

region based on Satellite remote sensing." This grant allows me to meet and discuss with my collaborators in Beijing and do the field work in Fuling district, Chonging, China during the summer. This research might lead to at least two co-authored research papers.

## **Jenny Zorn**

Dr. Zorn is on leave from CSUSB for the academic year while she serves as Interim Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs at Humboldt State University. She was so pleased to connect with CSUSB geography alum Dita Melcher Darrah at a CSU Reunion in Denver this fall. Dita is the owner of the David Chandler Company, which specializes in educational materials for charting the sky!

## **ALUMNI & GRADUATE NEWS**

**Jason Grossberg**, BA Anthropology 2008, GIS Certificate 2013, has been hired as the GIS Assistant for the City of Lompoc, Calif.

**Tim Moore**, BA, Environmental Studies 2010, is a Staff Hydro-geologist for the United Water Conservation District in Santa Paula, Calif., where he is able to use many of the skills acquired at CSUSB in his field of work. Tim has also visited the campus to discuss his work experiences in Dr. Meek's hydrology class for the benefit of his students.

**The following students received awards at the 2014 Awards Ceremony held this past June at the Santos Manuel Student Events Center.**

***Departmental Honors: Jeffrey R. Doten***

***Outstanding Graduating Senior in Geography: Tiffany N. Anderson***

***Outstanding Graduating Senior in Environmental Studies: Timothy M. Sterling***

***Outstanding Service to the Department: Tara L. McBride***

***K.B. Homes Scholarship: Nicolette V. Torres***

## **THINKING ABOUT GRADUATE SCHOOL?**

If you are considering going further in geography, you may need a graduate degree, either an M.A. or Ph.D. If that is the case, it's not too early to think about where you might want to go. Any of the geography faculty can give you advice and provide information on the different programs available at various universities.

## **INTERNSHIPS, JOB OPPORTUNITIES, & SUMMER FIELD SCHOOLS**

Check the bulletin board outside the Five Chair Suite, SB-327, and the SAGES website <https://sites.google.com/site/sagesclb/> for announcements concerning internships, job opportunities, and summer field schools offered through other institutions and agencies.

## **Student Association of Geography and Environmental Studies**

SAGES, the department's student club, has been gearing up recently for an exciting year of activities. Club meetings, field trips, and other events and activities will be announced in geography classes, with flyers available at club events. Matt Mancha will be heading up the club this year.

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Geography and Environmental Studies  
Alumni Newsletter

Department of Geography and  
Environmental Studies  
College of Social & Behavioral Sciences

  
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Fall 2014--Summer 2015

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**PLEASE COMPLETE AND RETURN TO:**

**≧ Alumni Response ≦**

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Current Job Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Employer: \_\_\_\_\_ Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Describe the company you work for and if your duties include geography and environmental studies: \_\_\_\_\_

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Additional comments or information for the next advising guide and newsletter (this can include job promotions, awards, projects, or activities; and personal milestones, events or travels):

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If you would like to make a gift to the Geography and Environmental Studies Department, you may make your check payable to the CSUSB Philanthropic Foundation and in the memo section write "Geography/Env. Studies Department." You may send your check to Brent Hunter, Director of Development, College of Social and Behavioral Sciences, California State University, San Bernardino, 5500 University Parkway, San Bernardino, CA 92407. For more information on how to make a gift to the department, please contact Brent Hunter at (909) 537-7363, or via e-mail at [bhunter@csusb.edu](mailto:bhunter@csusb.edu).