NEW UNDERGRAD SCHOLARSHIP

The UCSB Department of Geography is honored to be able to offer a new undergraduate scholarship, the Samantha C. Ying Gamma Theta Upsilon Scholarship, which will be used to support undergraduate student(s) based on the criteria of academic achievement and compelling family and personal circumstances. Highest consideration will be given to those students who are active or contributing members of the UCSB Geography Club (the Theta Nu Chapter of Gamma Theta Upsilon), and the award is available to all declared Geography majors (including freshmen) who meet the above criteria.

The Samantha Ying GTU Scholarship is made possible by Killian and Joan Ying who created the award in honor of their daughter Samantha upon the occasion of completing her PhD. Samantha had an outstanding undergraduate career at UCSB, graduating with a BS in both Microbiology and Physical Geography in 2004. She won the Robert L. Sinsheimer Award in Molecular Biology, and she received the top honors of Outstanding Achievement, Distinction in the Major, and the Chair’s Award for Excellence in Geography, as well as being awarded Geography’s Jack and Laura Dangermond Undergraduate Fellowship. “Sam,” as she is affectionately called by her parents, was accepted as a PhD candidate in Stanford’s Department of Environmental Earth System Science, and, despite having to shift her emphasis from microbiology to geochemistry and giving birth to a daughter, Samantha successfully defended her dissertation in 2011 and is now a post-doctoral scholar at Stanford’s Woods Institute for the Environment.

Killian and Joan’s scholarship fund is a touching tribute to their daughter’s academic brilliance as well as to their own admirable values. As Killian puts it, “My wife (Joan) and I came from poor families; when we arrived in California in the mid-1970’s from Hong Kong, we had a few hundred dollars and a suitcase. American higher education afforded us all the opportunities. Today, Joan and I are very fortunate to have relatively stable employment and incomes, and we would like to take this special occasion (Sam’s Ph.D. graduation) to give something back. We are not rich people; we do not believe in wealth accumulation and do not have an amount of money to create an endowed scholarship; however, we are pledging $1,000 each year as long as our incomes allow us to continue.” The UCSB Department of Geography is both honored and privileged to benefit from such dedication, generosity, and commitment to the value of education.
Although the California economy remains troubled and UC budgets do not look likely to improve in the near term, good news continues to echo down the halls of UCSB Geography. A number of faculty won prestigious awards, including Oliver Chadwick who was elected as Fellow of the American Geophysical Union, Mike Goodchild who was named a Fellow of the University Consortium of Geographical Information Science, and Catherine Gautier who was elected a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. Geography excellence continues to be recognized across the University, with Rick Church accepting an appointment as Associate Dean for the Division of Mathematical, Life and Physical Sciences. Several research projects gained national recognition, including the NSF sponsored Twin Cities Household Ecosystem Project, a project led by Joe McFadden and Jennifer King that was only one of four NSF awards selected as a finalist for a 2010 White House report on high-impact research funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. The Department also continues to evolve: we are saddened to see Martin Rau-bal depart the sunny shores of Santa Barbara for ETH Zurich, but pleased to say hello to Krzysztof Janowicz. With a formal background in Computer Science, Cognitive Science, Philosophy, Ecology, and Geography, “Jano’s” academic training and research interests exemplify the multidisciplinary nature of geography.

I am also pleased to announce continued improvements to undergraduate education in Geography, including the development of a website tailored for undergraduates (http://www.geog.ucsb.edu/ugrad/) and a new undergraduate scholarship, the Ying award, named after Samantha Ying, who graduated from UCSB in 2004 (http://www.geog.ucsb.edu/giving/opportunities/index.php#Ying). While excellence in Geography graduate education has been acknowledged by a number of prestigious awards over the past twenty years, the excellence of an undergraduate education in Geography often goes unrecognized, something the Department would like to see changed. If you have a story of how your degree has helped you in your career, we would love to hear about it.

Like 2010, which gave us the Deepwater Horizon Gulf Spill, 2011 had its own share of disasters that reminds us how deeply connected the world has become and how incredibly important Geography is. On March 11, 2011, a magnitude 9.0 earthquake struck off the coast of Japan, creating a tsunami that led to over 15,000 deaths in Japan and crippled the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear plant, leading to one of the worst nuclear disasters in history. Beyond the local impact, which remains severe, the economic impacts of this disaster were felt in virtually every country around the globe, reminding us how connected we really are. Geographers were involved at all stages of the disaster response, from assessing damage using satellite imagery to helping with relief efforts using GIS. Geography is even helping us better understand some of the least explored areas of our planet, the ocean floor, through efforts such as the Environmental Systems Research Institute’s Ocean Basemap and Google Oceans.

The generous support of alumni and friends is important to the advancement of the Department in the face of a troubled economy and shrinking state budgets. External support is critical in providing the best education and training for our students and maintaining the excellence of our world-class research. We hope you will consider a gift to support the education of our talented and deserving students in the Department. Whether you have a preferred gift fund, such as the David Simonett Memorial Fund or the newly created Samantha C. Ying Gamma Theta Upsilon Scholarship, or would prefer an unrestricted gift to the Department, all are valued highly. Our Geography faculty continue to excel in research and teaching, and our undergraduate and graduate students are extremely impressive. An education from the Department of Geography at UC Santa Barbara is a huge asset in a tight job market, and your help can make it even better.

One reason the Department of Geography at UC Santa Barbara is able to deliver on its promise to students is because of the support of alumni and friends like you, which is why I encourage you to consider making an investment in the Department. These gifts enable us to recognize our best students and support their educational and research expenses. You, as alumni and friends of the Department, have a lot to be proud of. We, in turn, are grateful for your continued involvement with our educational mission.

Sincerely,

Professor Dar Roberts
Chair, Department of Geography
Krzysztof Janowicz Joins UCSB Geography Faculty

Dr. Krzysztof Janowicz officially joined the Geography Department as an Assistant Professor of Geographic Information Science on July 1. Before joining UCSB, Krzysztof was an Assistant Professor at the GeoVISTA Center of the Department of Geography at Pennsylvania State University. Prior to moving to the U.S., he was working as postdoctoral researcher at the Institute for Geoinformatics (ifgi) at the University of Münster in Germany for the international research training group on Semantic Integration of Geospatial Information. Krzysztof did his PhD on similarity-based information retrieval for the Geospatial Semantic Web at the Münster Semantic Interoperability Lab (MUSIL). Before starting his academic career, Krzysztof was working as a software developer and Internet security consultant and was also running his own Information Technology company. To ensure that he did not have to spend his entire life in front of a computer (as he put it), Krzysztof also studied Ecology at the University of Münster, Germany. He is the community leader of the 52° North semantics community that develops free and open source software to enrich Open Geospatial Consortium Web services with a formal knowledge representation and reasoning layer, and he is one of the two Editors-in-Chief of the Semantic Web journal, the other being Pascal Hitzler from Wright State University.

Dr. Janowicz’s research interests combine several fields of Geographic Information Science and include the Geospatial Semantic Web, geo-ontologies and Linked Data, Mobile Computing, the Sensor Web, and Geographic Information Retrieval, as well as reasoning about similarity, analogy, and context. In his research, Krzysztof tries to combine different scientific domains, including Computer Science, Cognitive Science, Philosophy, Ecology, and Geography. To summarize his work in a single sentence, Krzysztof is studying the role of space and time in knowledge representation and organization. Although he focuses on Information Science, Krzysztof is quick to point out that he is interested in humans and not in machines. All of the former at UCSB Geography welcome him aboard—and we suspect that many of the latter in our Department will benefit from his expertise as well!

UCSB Geography Receives International GIS Development Award

GIS Development organized the recent Geospatial World Forum 2011, a major biannual conference and exhibition on geospatial information technology and applications. The conference, held in Hyderabad, India, January 18-21, brought together 2,200 delegates from 81 countries representing leaders, policy makers, scientists, academicians, and other stakeholders in the geospatial industry. The stated aim of the conference was to raise the awareness level regarding the increasing relevance of geospatial technology in everyday life and to make the fruits of this technology available to the common man: “Geospatial World Forum 2011 shall offer a platform for the various stakeholders of geospatial technologies from across the globe to come together to deliberate upon the ‘Dimensions and Directions of Geospatial Industry.’ The conference shall enable technologists to present a peep into what the future holds for the decision makers and users alike in terms of usage and applications of this technology.” The Geospatial World Forum 2011 singled out the exemplary contributions made by six selected organizations and professionals to the growth of geospatial technology and industry around the world, and UCSB’s Department of Geography was presented an award for its contribution to “Education/Capacity Building for Geospatial Technology.”
“How long does it take to cross the bridge from Australia to New Zealand?” “Why on earth did they build Windsor Castle on the flight path of Heathrow?” The geographical (and historical) ignorance evinced in these American tourist questions is legendary, and the National Geographic Society confirmed it in 2002 with a study showing that, among Americans aged 18 to 24, almost 30 percent could not identify the Pacific Ocean on a map. More than half could not locate India, and 85 percent could not find Iraq. The young people of America, the richest and most powerful country in the world, ranked next to last in the nine countries surveyed.

While American geographic education has improved in the last decade, most Americans still do not even have a passport. The number of Americans who have a passport, according to the most recent statistics issued by the State Department in January of 2011, is 114,464,041. Given the country’s population of 307,006,550, about 37% of the population has one, compared to Canada’s 60% and the United Kingdom’s 75%. This means that nearly 2 out of 3 Americans can’t even fly to Canada, let alone travel to anywhere else in the world (although new rules currently allow about 3.5 million Americans with ‘Passport Cards’ to travel to Canada, Mexico, and the Caribbean and Bermuda, but these cards are not allowed to be used for international air travel).

Presumably, Americans’ geographical ignorance and disinclination to travel abroad are two sides of the same coin, and several reasons for it have been put forward, including the United States’ own rich cultural and geographic diversity, an American skepticism and/or ignorance about international destinations, a work culture that prevents Americans from taking long vacations abroad, the prohibitive cost, and the logistics of going overseas. After all, America has it all: “From the mountains, to the prairies, to the oceans, white with foam,” as “God Bless America” proclaims. Beautiful beaches in Florida, crisp skiing in Colorado and the desert sun in Arizona are among thousands of domestic destinations competing to lure visitors. “In the United States, we have an enormous amount of places we can travel -- basically an entire continent,” said everything-everywhere.com author Gary Arndt, who has been traveling abroad and blogging since 2007. “You can do all kinds of things without needing a passport.”

American history and isolation is another major factor. Simon Winchester, in the 2009 edition of The Best American Travel Writing, has this to say on that subject: “No doubt Americans just don’t have the history and drive that, say, the British have for international travel. There was essentially no empire (the Philippines, Puerto Rico, and a scattering of Pacific islands excepted), and hence little by way of imperial legacy. The country is formidably isolated by thousands of miles of ocean from almost anywhere truly foreign, and getting abroad is very much more costly. Americans seldom went to seek their fortunes overseas, as British so often did . . . [and there] is little tradition of American exploration (aside from exploration-as-entertainment put on for the benefit of a number of some rather dubious but fashionable clubs and societies).” It should also be noted that only 9 percent of Americans, compared with 44 percent of Europeans, speak a foreign language. Despite all of these seeming handicaps, over 30 million Americans traveled abroad in 2010, about 10% of the American population. Not bad, especially compared to the Chinese whose 20 million passport holders are a mere 1.5% of the population.
Oliver Chadwick Elected Fellow of the AGU

Professor Oliver Chadwick was one of three UCSB professors to have been elected Fellows of the American Geophysical Union (AGU) this year. The AGU has over 60,000 members representing 148 countries and “was established in 1919 by the National Research Council and for more than 50 years operated as an unincorporated affiliate of the National Academy of Sciences...The Union is dedicated to the furtherance of the geophysical sciences through the individual efforts of its members and in cooperation with other national and international scientific organizations...To be elected a Fellow of AGU is a special tribute for those who have made exceptional scientific contributions. Nominated Fellows must have attained acknowledged eminence in the Earth and space sciences. This designation is conferred upon not more than 0.1% of all AGU members in any given year.”

Professor Chadwick is a joint professor in the Geography Department and Environmental Studies Program at UCSB, specializing in the areas of soil sciences, soil genesis and classification, advanced pedology, and soil geomorphology. Dr. Chadwick’s research interests include pedology, geomorphology, quaternary geology, soil-water-vegetation interaction and landscape relationships, and isotropic fractionations during soil evolution. According to his AGU citation, “He has clearly established himself as a leader in soil science, and is one of the world leaders in relating soils to ecology and earth system science. Professor Chadwick has become one of the core members of a small, but growing and extremely high quality group in ecosystem studies at UCSB.”

Professors McFadden and King Coauthor Major Ecosystem Study

A major study of the impact that household choices and behaviors have on urban ecosystems has been published in the April issue of the journal Ecological Applications. The project team includes Professors Joe McFadden and Jennifer King of the UCSB Department of Geography, with collaborators from the University of Minnesota.

According to the press release issued by the UCSB Office of Public Affairs, the researchers explained that the project is unique in both its scale and comprehensive approach to studying urban ecosystems. It covers the whole span of a major metropolitan region in Minneapolis-Saint Paul, Minnesota, from the city center to the exurban fringe. They compiled a highly detailed data set of 3100 individual households, based on a 23-page survey, energy utility billing records, vehicle odometer readings, on-site vegetation measurements, GIS data, and satellite imagery.

“We measured an enormous range of different activities that make up each household’s impacts on the environment,” said McFadden. “All of those measurements were made on the same set of households at the same point in time. That allows us to see the connections between different household activities and their impacts.”

The data were integrated through a Household Flux Calculator software tool, which converts the major household activities into the “common currency” of kilograms of carbon, nitrogen, and phosphorus that flow into and out of each household. The new paper details the calculations so that they can be used in other cities, and a web-based calculator has been developed for use by the public in partnership with the Science Museum of Minnesota.

The lead author of the study, Dr. Cinzia Fissore, was a post-doc with the researchers and has recently accepted a position as Assistant Professor of Environmental Science at Whittier College. McFadden said, “With the prospect of having Cinzia as a colleague in southern California, we would be excited to continue to study these questions in major urban areas on the west coast.” The study will continue through 2013 with funding of $500,000 from the National Science Foundation (PI: J. McFadden)
An April 10 article in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* titled “Inventing the Science of Geographic Information Puts a Professor on the Map” by Tushar Rae features UCSB Geography’s Mike Goodchild. It begins by stating: “To say that Michael Goodchild, a professor of geography and the first appointee to the newly created Jack and Laura Dangermond endowed chair at the University of California at Santa Barbara, is well liked by his students would be an understatement. Dar Roberts, chair of the department of geography at Santa Barbara, says student evaluations of Mr. Goodchild often contain phrases such as ‘Give this guy a raise!’ and ‘This guy rocks my socks.’ It’s a sentiment that Jack Dangermond, founder of Environmental Systems Research Institute and donor for the endowed chair in geography, can understand. He says Mr. Goodchild, whom he has known since the middle of the 1970s, ‘nurture and encourages good students, people who are passionate about the stuff—he is really good with them. But he is nobody’s fool.’”

The article goes on to describe Mike’s seminal 1992 paper that led to the creation of geographic information science, how his passion for spelunking led him from the study of Physics at the University of Cambridge in the UK to the study of Geography at McMaster University in Canada, and his eventual transition to the Department of Geography at UCSB where he is currently becoming a leader in “neogeography,” also referred to as volunteered geographic information. The Chronicle is the major news service in the U.S. academic world, and it’s appropriate, to put it mildly, that it should feature the “father of geographic information science.”

The Department of Geography is pleased to announce the appointment of Professor Peter Alagona as an Affiliated Faculty member of the Department of Geography. Professor Alagona, an Assistant Professor of History and of Environmental Studies at UCSB, received his PhD from UCLA in 2006, joined UCSB in 2008, and has become an environmental historian and historian of science with additional interests and training in ecology, geography, and science and technology studies.

Peter’s research focuses on the histories of land use, natural resource management, environmental politics, and ecological science in the North American West and beyond. He has particular interests in wildlife, endangered species, and biological diversity, and he teaches undergraduate courses cross-listed in History and Environmental Studies, as well as graduate seminars in History. His current projects include a book manuscript, under advance contract with the University of California Press, entitled *After the Grizzly: Endangered Species, Critical Habitat, and the Politics of Place in California*; developing a collaborative, interdisciplinary project that will use the UC Natural Reserve System as a case study to explore the role of biological field stations in American environmental history, from 1950 to 2010; working with Scott Cooper, from the Department of Ecology, Evolution, and Marine Biology, on a study to determine the historical distribution and abundance of steelhead, a federally listed endangered species, in the Santa Ynez River watershed; and working on a project to explore the changing relationships between the state and federal governments in American environmental history—and how previous historians have understood, or sometimes misunderstood, those relationships.

Affiliated faculty in the Department of Geography participate in instructional activities, including serving on MA and PhD committees, but they are salaried by other departments or institutions. The Department of Geography currently has 11 affiliated faculty, including this latest appointment. Welcome aboard, Prof. Alagona!
reported in a 2009 study in Population and Development. Paradoxically, the result is that areas with relatively low population densities can have much higher deforestation rates than those with higher densities. What’s needed now, Carr’s team argues, are careful, Machakos-like studies that ‘tease out the effects’ of changing demographics in remote forest frontiers. Other research has found that a farmer’s age, gender, and land tenure, for instance, can affect his or her willingness to put capital and labor into the land, with older male farmers sometimes deciding to forgo improvements. Understanding such nuances could help forge better forest-protection and land-use policies, experts say. And Carr and his colleagues predict that new studies ‘will surely test’ what they say has become a Boserupian ‘orthodoxy of population density leading to agricultural intensification.’ If so, it will open a new chapter in the long and rich debate over how population growth affects the planet, and when and where more people are a problem.”

Addenda: According to Malthusian theory, the size and growth of the population depends on the food supply and agricultural methods. In Boserup’s theory agricultural methods depend on the size of the population. In the Malthusian view, in times when food is not sufficient for everyone, the excess population will die. However, Boserup argued that in those times of pressure, people will find ways to increase the production of food by increasing workforce, machinery, fertilizers, etc. This graph shows how the rate of food supply may vary but never reaches its carrying capacity because every time it is getting near, there is an invention or development that causes the food supply to increase. Although Boserup is widely regarded as anti-Malthusian, both her insights and those of Malthus can be comfortably combined within the same general theoretical framework.
THANK YOU, DONORS!

The UCSB Department of Geography would like to thank the following people and institutions for their generous support for the period 11/01/2010 through 11/15/2011:

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“You, as alumni and friends of the Department, have a lot to be proud of. We, in turn, are grateful for your continued involvement with our educational mission.”

Dar Roberts, Chair, UCSB Department of Geography
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Thank you for your generous support!
Not since a million people died in Ethiopia and Sudan in 1984 and 1985 has the world seen such a potential for famine as it does now, with food emergencies occurring in Somalia, Ethiopia and Kenya. But although the ongoing disaster in East Africa is dire, it was not unexpected. In fact, I am part of a group of scientists that successfully forecast the droughts behind the present crisis.

I work with the Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET), which was set up by the US Agency for International Development to help policy-makers prevent such humanitarian disasters. The network identifies where food aid is needed by the most food-insecure populations of the developing world, whose livelihoods are tied to rain-fed subsistence agriculture and pastoralism.

Last summer, our group was meeting when a La Niña weather system was forecast. We knew that such an event could bring trouble, and we issued an alert that East Africa might experience severe droughts. We based this conclusion on information from three sources. First, we knew that La Niña events are commonly associated with weakened rains in the Horn of Africa from October to December. Second, from work on the ground, we knew that persistent poor rains at the end of the past decade, combined with high food prices, had weakened the population’s resilience to food emergencies. And third, research has linked warming in the Indian Ocean as a result of climate change to drying of March-to-June rains in East Africa. This warming has intensified the negative impact of La Niña events; it was the chance that both the autumn and spring rainy seasons could be affected, back to back, that really concerned us.

Sure enough, the autumn 2010 rains were poor, or failed completely. The outlook for famine or survival then rested on the spring rains. April came without rain. May came without rain. And we feared the worst. The situation on the ground quickly deteriorated. FEWS NET runs a food-price tracking system that showed that the price of maize (corn) in Kitui, Kenya, had soared by 246% in 12 months. And the value of a goat in Bardera, Somalia, usually sold to buy grain, had halved.

Satellite measurements of vegetation health tracked the emerging drought in disturbing detail. FEWS NET put out a second alert on 7 June that warned: “This is the most severe food security emergency in the world today, and the current humanitarian response is inadequate.” Two months on, the grim statistics show that the massive crisis is outstripping the international resources available to address it. Famine conditions are expected to spread farther across Somalia, and large areas of Kenya and Ethiopia could see food availability fall to crisis levels. In all, some 11.5 million people across East Africa need emergency assistance.

So what went wrong? Why weren’t the warnings — before and during the drought — enough to avert a food crisis that might turn into famine? Much of the problem is tied to political issues, especially in Somalia, but there are also strong climate and agricultural components.

The global climate models used by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change were never intended to provide rainfall trend projections for every region. These models say that East Africa will become wetter, yet observations show substantial declines in spring rainfall in recent years. Despite this, several agencies are building long-term plans on the basis of the forecast of wetter conditions. This could lead to agricultural development and expansion in areas that will become drier. More climate science based on regional observations could be helpful in addressing these challenges.

On the agricultural side, crop yields are very low, and not increasing much. The amount of farmland per person is decreasing rapidly, as population growth places more pressure on a limited landscape. Agricultural progress is not keeping pace with population growth. Declines in agricultural capacity are exacerbated by warming of the Indian Ocean, which is reducing the onshore flow of moisture during the spring rainy season, creating more frequent droughts. These trends are having an impact in southern Ethiopia, central and eastern Kenya and southern Somalia — those regions that have been hardest hit this year. Warmer and drier weather is shrinking the amount of land that is suitable for farming, leaving burgeoning food-insecure populations exposed to more frequent and severe climate shocks.

Emergencies such as the one in East Africa will become more common unless there is a focus on improving agricultural production. Ironically, the fact that crop yields are low creates a tremendous opportunity for improvement. A 50%, or even 100%, increase in yields is feasible, and would greatly improve the availability of food. Better integrated markets and increased grain and water storage can help to keep resources on hand for lean times. In the long term, a more resilient system is needed, rather than an increase in the number of emergency grain shipments. Then, when disaster strikes, surplus food can be moved around the region — from Tanzania to Somalia, say. Better regional climate-change and forecast models, combined with more effective agriculture in drought-threatened areas will not solve all problems, but they should reduce the need for emergency responses, and make such measures more effective when they are necessary.
Heather Berry Wins NSF Fellowship

First year geography graduate student Heather Nicole-Berry Frazier is one of just 2000 National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship winners this year. The purpose of the NSF Graduate Research Fellowship Program (GRFP) is to recognize and support outstanding graduate students who are pursuing research-based master’s and doctoral degrees in fields within NSF’s mission.

The GRFP provides three years of support for the graduate education of individuals who have demonstrated their potential for significant achievements in science and engineering research.

Dayna Receives Geosystems Award

Grad student Dayna Quick recently received the “Geosystems Award for Best Earth Systems Science Paper” given at the 65th Annual Conference of the California Geographical Society held this year in Bishop, Ca, April 29 - May 1. “Founded in 1946, the CGS is the oldest statewide organization dedicated to enhancing the understanding of geography as well as promoting interaction amongst academic and applied geographers, as well as members of the general public who share an interest in geography.” Dayna said that she was especially excited to present her research at the CGS annual conference this year because it was being held in Bishop, which is located in Owens Valley where she is conducting her research:

“…We currently live in a world that is impacted by global climate change, increased population, and increased water use, and, thus, an increasing likelihood of desiccated water bodies. Owens Lake playa in Owens Valley provides a somewhat unique opportunity for us to quantitatively measure the impact that a desiccated water body has on the surrounding ecosystem. This information can then be used to inform land and water-use managers and policy makers of the potential impacts of drying water bodies on the surrounding soil and ecosystems.”

Another Feather in Kate’s Cap

Geography graduate student Kate Deutsch has added the President’s Dissertation Year Fellowship to her impressive list of recent awards and accolades. According to the UCSB Graduate Division description, “The President’s Dissertation Year Fellowship provides financial resources to devote full attention to completing the dissertation in a twelve-month period. The award requires a clearly defined, vital mentor relationship between the student and his/her dissertation advisor that will encourage completion of the doctoral degree during the tenure of this fellowship. Ultimately, this program aims to improve the rate at which award recipients complete their degrees and to improve the quality of their research training and scholarly output.”

Pam Dalal Wins UCTC Grant

Grad student Pam Dalal has been awarded a major University of California Transportation Center Dissertation Grant for the Spring 2011 award cycle. The independent panel that evaluated Pam’s proposal, “Behavioral change and life course turning points in activity processes,” commented: “The student proposes a topic that involves extending travel behavior analysis to extremely long term activity patterns. Her proposal was extremely well written, and she has a well laid out plan that defined the problem of life cycle patterns, suggested a modeling framework based on characterizing habit and socialization as temporal variables that affect activity choices, and also presents a data source that can be feasibly used to estimate the variables.”
Alumna Mei-Po Kwan Receives AAG Distinguished Scholarship

AAG Scholarship Honors Awards are among the most prestigious awards in American geography and have been awarded since 1951. They are offered annually to recognize outstanding accomplishments by members in research and scholarship, teaching, education, service to the discipline, public service outside academia and for lifetime achievement. Mei-Po Kwan is the recipient of this year’s Association of American Geographers (AAG) Distinguished Scholarship Honors Award “in recognition of her pioneering scholarship in spatial behavior studies that fuse quantitative and qualitative methods from transportation geography, critical social theory, feminist geography, and geographic information science.” Mei-Po’s Honors Recipients Citation goes on to state: “The breadth and depth of her scholarship has helped to substantially transform geographic research and the reputation of our discipline, and her outstanding scholarship has exemplified the ideas of significant and distinguished scholarship in geography.”

Mei-Po received her doctorate from the UCSB Department of Geography in 1994. Reg Golledge, the Chair of her PhD committee, considered her to be one of the finest students he ever taught, and the two of them collaborated on numerous projects and articles over the years. Among her many notable achievements, Dr. Kwan is a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science; a Distinguished Professor of Social and Behavioral Sciences and Dr. Martha L. Corry Faculty Fellow, Department of Geography, The Ohio State University; the Director of the Geographical Analysis Core Initiative in Population Research (IPR), The Ohio State University; an Adjunct Professor of Epidemiology and Biostatistics, School of Medicine, Case Western Reserve University; the Editor of the Annals of the Association of American Geographers; and the Associate Editor of Geographical Analysis.

Dawn Wright Becomes Chief Scientist for ESRI

Ocean scientist, geographer, and geographic information system (GIS) author Dawn J. Wright joined the Environmental Systems Research Institute (ESRI) as its chief scientist on October 3, 2011. She will help formulate and advance the intellectual agenda for the environmental, conservation, climate, and ocean sciences aspect of ESRI’s work while also representing ESRI to the national/international scientific community. “As a scientist, Wright brings a background of rigor that will strengthen our alignment with the requirements of the scientific community,” said Jack Dangermond, ESRI president. “In her capacity as chief scientist, she will interface with government, business, industry, and the public and collaborate with them to understand and find solutions for our planet.”

A notable authority in geographic information science, Wright has for the past 16 years teamed with scientists worldwide who use GIS to map and analyze terrains, ecosystems, and habitat. She combines her expertise as a geographer and GIS user to map the seafloor; design geospatial solutions for coastal mapping and charting; and advise organizations on oceanography and fisheries, including her current service on the National Academy of Sciences Ocean Studies Board. She has worked with the GIS community to develop data models and create solutions for analyzing the ocean.

Dawn is currently professor of Geography and Oceanography at Oregon State University and will continue to be affiliated with the university. Dr. Wright received a PhD in Physical Geography and in Marine Geology from the University of California, Santa Barbara; an MS in oceanography from Texas A&M; and a BS with honors from Wheaton College in Illinois. She is also certified by the GIS Certification Institute as a GIS professional (GISP).
Jankowska Wins NSF Dissertation Research Improvement Grant

Marta Jankowska, a graduate student in our joint program with SDSU, has been notified by the National Science Foundation that she has been awarded a Dissertation Research Improvement Grant for her project “Doctoral Dissertation Research: Integrating Space and Place into Children’s Perceptions of Environmental Health Hazards.” The work is under the direction of John R. Weeks (Principal Investigator). Marta’s current research interest lies in examining interactions between environmental and public health in sub-Saharan Africa. Her approach is innovative in that it recognizes the need to ensure health through developing children’s environmental and spatial perception of health risks. Marta’s work adds and develops the literature concerning children’s health in developing countries by incorporating spatial methods and looking beyond individual risk factors into the effects of environment and neighborhoods. Her project would introduce novel ideas into the geographic, health, and environmental psychology literatures.

Dear Dr. Map: What are some of the world’s longest place names?

A: Humankind seems to have a strange penchant for giving a few places long, unmemorable and unpronounceable names. Only four places make the major leagues of toponymic cartographic monsters, a title Dr. Map reserves for one-word place names with more than 40 letters. First by a mile, with a stupendous 85 letters and full accreditation by the Guinness Book of World Records, is Taumatawhakatangihangakoauotamateaturipukakapikimaungahoronukupokaiwhenuakitanatahu. This is a Māori name for a hill on North Island, New Zealand. It translates to: “The summit where Tamatea, the man with the big knees, the climber of mountains, the land-swallower who traveled about, played his nose flute to his loved one.”

This same man with big knees may have come from Wales. Coming in second, at 58 letters, is the town in Anglesey, Wales (UK) called Llanfairpwllgwyngyllgogerychwyrndrobwlllantysiliogogogoch. This translates to “Saint Mary’s Church in a hollow of white hazel near the swirling whirlpool of the church of Saint Tysilio with a red cave.” Quite memorable and famous for its train station sign (see picture below). Given these names, there has to be at least one fish story and it comes from a lake in Massachusetts, USA. In the Nipmuc language, Chargoggagoggmanchauggagoggchaubunagungamaugg has 45 letters, and means “Fishing Place at the Boundaries -- Neutral Meeting Grounds.” And again, hunting (and exaggeration) come into play with the 44 letter Tweebuffelsmeteenskootmordoodgeskietfontein. This is from Afrikans in South Africa, and means “The spring where two buffaloes were cleanly killed with a single shot.” Suitably, there is a dispute whether the name is of a farm or a town, and whether the place itself actually exists. Compared to these, all other place names seem simple. I’ll take Nowhere, OK anyday.

On a beautiful summer’s day, two American tourists were driving through Wales. At the Welsh town of Llanfairpwllgwyngyllgogerychwyrndrobwlllantysiliogogogoch, they stopped for lunch, and one of the tourists asked the waitress, “Before we order, I wonder if you could settle an argument for us? Can you pronounce where we are, very, very, very slowly?” The girl leaned over and said, “Burrrr-Gurr-king.”