Letter From the Chair: 
“The Fascinating and Relevant World of Geography”

Something everyone should know about Geography is what a fascinating and relevant academic discipline it is. But I think the average person is often unaware of this. Many people seem to labor under outdated impressions that Geography is just a descriptive discipline, that it focuses exclusively on mapping and naming earth features, or that it concerns knowledge that is unambiguous, having been solidly established long ago (hey, haven’t explorers discovered every place on Earth?). None of the statements accurately describes modern geography, of the kind we practice at UCSB and elsewhere.

Modern Geography is not only descriptive but predictive and explanatory. Yes, it involves maps (and almost any geographer does enjoy a good map), but it involves many other modes of expression and communication, including language, mathematics, physical and computational modeling, computer simulation, and then some (art and cinema!). It is fantastically multi- and interdisciplinary, integrating natural sciences, social sciences, humanities, arts, and engineering. And it involves many subtle and profound ambiguities about the world. For instance, no one knows how many lakes there are in Minnesota (or Finland, for that matter) and no one ever will. It cannot be known, because there is no principled way to determine exactly and in all cases whether some feature is a lake or not, or whether it is one lake or two. As for the idea that we know everything about every place, nothing could be less true. Places are dynamic, constantly changing. And we have yet to learn quite a bit of even relatively static knowledge about inaccessible but important places, like the world’s oceans from top to bottom.

Don’t get me wrong—I love Geographic trivia and I love maps. Did you know that there are at least four reasonable answers to the question “What is the highest point on the earth’s surface?” The summit of Mt. Everest is the furthest above sea level, the summit of Mt. Chimborazo is the furthest from the center of the earth, the summit of Mt. Denali is at the top of the tallest mountain from terrestrial base to summit, and the summit of Mauna Kea is at the top of the tallest mountain from oceanic base to summit. Did you know that Baarle-Hertog and Baarle-Nassau are contiguous municipalities of...
Belgium and the Netherlands (respectively), pieces of each of which are scattered among pieces of the other, so that the international boundary runs through cafes and private residences in the town(s)? Did you know that the name of a lake in Massachusetts is 45 letters long? Chargoggagoggmanchauggagoggchaubunagungamaugg. Did you know that Principality of Sealand was a self-declared, unrecognized country-like entity that claimed as its territory an abandoned WWII artillery platform in the North Sea about 6 miles off the east coast of England? If Sealand were accepted as a country, it would be the world’s smallest (yes, much smaller than Vatican City State) at ~.0002 miles².

There, wasn’t that fun? Knowing such entertaining “factoids” may amuse you and help you compete on Jeopardy, but they can give the general public a big misimpression of what Geography is like as an academic discipline. In my Chair’s Letter last fall, I maintained that the research we conduct in the UCSB Department of Geography is intellectually intriguing but also relevant to individuals and society at large. Let me give some examples from our department.

The Climate Hazards Group (CHG) is an organized research unit administered by the Department of Geography. Co-founded by Geography Professor Emeritus Joel Michaelsen, its current personnel include researchers Chris Funk and Greg Husak, both of whom earned doctorates from UCSB Geography, and several other UCSB post-docs and graduate students from Geography and other fields. The CHG truly expresses the breadth and interconnectedness of different aspects of Geography. At its core, the researchers and staff of the CHG monitor environmental conditions to anticipate food insecurity in developing countries, particularly in Africa. Their work produces new datasets, software tools, and analyses to inform government action and allow for timely and appropriate relief efforts in some of the most vulnerable parts of the world. In addition, the CHG actively trains representatives in-country to leverage their available resources—including their local knowledge and information—so they can better assess growing conditions and build their capacity to anticipate and respond to crises. While this is the central mission of the CHG, other byproducts of its work are the identification and analysis of climate trends, changes in land cover, the causes and effects of market activities, health outcomes of food insecurity, and a number of other topics. All of this diverse scholarship has led to a more nuanced understanding of the food system and the rippling effects of food shortages in regions at risk in the world.

Or consider another example. The Spatial Discovery Project is administered by the Center for Spatial Studies, another organized research unit housed in the Department of Geography, in collaboration with the UCSB Library. It is led by Professor Werner Kuhn of Geography (and the Center for Spatial Studies) and Denise Stephens of the UCSB Library. Other post-docs and graduate students from Geography and elsewhere participate as researchers. Funded by a private grant, the Project aims to study the challenges and strategies that libraries and researchers face in trying to discover and link spatial data via metadata on diverse platforms and in a variety of environments. In plain English, information of all kinds very often has a place component—it is located somewhere or is about some place. But given the variety of problem areas, information systems, programs, disciplines, and more that are involved in the storage and use of this information, it is a major problem to maximize how well one source of information about a place connects up with other sources of information also relevant to that place. The Project aims to (1) develop and test a technical protocol enabling researchers to easily identify spatial data located across disparate web-accessible databases, repositories, and catalogs; and (2) promote the evolution of the “spatial university” through expanding awareness and adoption of spatial data and analysis in research and teaching. In addition, the Project is connecting with the Interdisciplinary Research Collaboratory to promote increased integration of spatially-framed instructional and research activities across disciplines through targeted collaborative programming and outreach.

These are but two of several examples I could discuss that demonstrate how interesting and relevant the work of modern Geography at a place like UCSB is. As always, I know we can count on your support for these efforts, financially and otherwise. They cannot continue without it.
Keith Clarke has been selected as one of three recipients of the 2014/15 UCSB Outstanding Graduate Mentor Award. The award was initiated in 2005/06 in recognition of UCSB faculty whose mentoring is considered exemplary, and Professor Clarke is the fourth faculty member of the Department of Geography to have been given it (Reg Golledge received the award in 2005/06, Dar Roberts received it in 2007/08 and Rick Church received it in 2012/13). To quote the Academic Senate web site, “Mentoring graduate students is a vital component of our mission as a research university; it includes training graduate students for careers in research and teaching and preparing them to meet the highest professional and ethical standards as scholars and educators. The Outstanding Graduate Mentor Award recognizes the contributions of faculty whose mentoring is considered exemplary.”

Jeffrey Hoelle, Assistant Professor of Anthropology, joined UCSB Geography as an Affiliate Professor in April 2015. His research interests include human-environment interactions, space and place, conservation and development, Latin America, and cross-cultural cowboys and cattle cultures. Regarding the latter, Jeff has just had a book he wrote on the subject published: “Rainforest Cowboys: The Rise of Ranching and Cattle Culture in Western Amazonia.”

Janowicz Scores Two Grants

Associate Professor Krzysztof Janowicz ("Jano") is the Principal Investigator on two new grants. The first is a 2-year NSF collaborative proposal titled “EarthCube IA: Collaborative Proposal: Cross-Domain Observational Metadata Environmental Sensing Network (X-DOMES)” (Jano is the UCSB PI; total funding: $55,288). Jano’s second grant is for a USGS sponsored proposal on developing and deploying a scaleable Linked Data platform for the National Map (http://viewer.nationalmap.gov/viewer/). Jano is the PI on this 1-year grant titled “I/UCRC: Collaborative Research: Center for Spatiotemporal Thinking and Computing Applications”; membership funding from USGS for the collaborative research project (funded by the NSF) is $61,920.

Professor Emerita Helen Couclelis

The UCSB Department of Geography celebrated the career of Professor Helen Couclelis on June 11, 2015, in recognition of her retirement this year after 33 years as a professor in the Department. A dinner in her honor was held at Olio Pizzeria in downtown Santa Barbara (in the same building as the late, lamented Video Schmideo), and a fine time and good food (maybe the city’s best pizza) was had by all. Chair Dan Montello recognized Helen’s long career in Geography, noting especially her contributions to academic life as an intellectual and philosophical pursuit. The Department awarded Helen with a beautiful inscribed desk plaque and a gift card at her favorite bicycle shop, along with a card signed by staff and faculty.
David López-Carr is a Professor in the UCSB Department of Geography, and, until recently, the Director of the Latin American & Iberian Studies Program. After 3 years of service to the latter, he has turned over the reins to a new director:

“As I leave the Directorship of Latin American and Iberian Studies (LAIS), I am grateful for the support of staff, undergraduate majors, graduate students, and the 70 faculty affiliates across campus. Every institution experiences stresses that test its mettle. We have suffered our share of these over the past three years. Yet, with our collective resolve, we have sustained and grown the vitality of this program. Together, we accomplished much: Over two dozen co-sponsored talks and events with departments and research groups spanning Humanities, Social Sciences, and Math and Life Sciences, as well as the continuation of our annual Holiday and End of the Year Awards celebrations and of our weekly e-Noticias showcasing the richness of LAIS-related campus and community events.”

N.B.: David is pictured above with Teresa Figueroa, a Lecturer in UCSB Feminist Studies, who shared the award.

David Lopez-Carr and Fellow Researchers Receive NSF Funding to Eradicate Schistosoma Parasite

Schistosomiasis is a debilitating disease, and the result is overall poor physical health, an impaired immune system, and cognitive difficulty. “It makes you less competent at anything you do,” said David López-Carr. “It makes you less effective as a parent or in your work — and that has a huge economic impact on a society.” Medical programs to cure people of schistosomiasis, though effective, are ultimately unsustainable if the source of the parasites remains unmitigated. However, there is hope, and it might be in the form of a local river prawn (Macrobrachium vollenhovenii), currently under study by Kuris and colleagues in Senegal, that has the potential to turn the situation around. Reintroducing the crustacean into the affected areas to prey on the snails could disrupt the parasite’s life cycle and diminish, if not eliminate, the schistosome’s presence in the water.

“In the big picture, what we’d really like to do is eliminate this scourge,” said López-Carr. Depending on the efficiency and effectiveness of the method, efforts in the area to reduce the prevalence of and infections by the parasite may not only get a much-needed boost but the local economy may also profit. The prawns, which do not become infected with the flatworm larvae they eat along with the host snails, could also potentially be farmed for food and sold at market, he said. This novel way of eradicating an infectious disease like schistosomiasis has many levels and, with a highly competitive $1.5 million grant provided by the National Science Foundation, López-Carr, Kuris, and a host of researchers from various disciplines will be studying these levels by looking at, among other things, the complex interaction of human and natural forces that may alter patterns of disease transmission.
Corbin Hodges and David Lopez-Carr Receive National Geographic Grant to Investigate International Initiative to Minimize Carbon Emissions from Forest Change

UCSB Geography Professor David Lopez-Carr has been awarded $19,262.00 by the National Geographic Committee for Research and Exploration to explore the efficacy of the REDD+ program; another $17,476.00 in outside funding has also been acquired. David’s Geography graduate student Corbin Hodges (pictured) will organize and lead the survey team involved in the study, titled, “Does REDD+ increase enabling migration? Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+) and out-migration from the Maya Biosphere Reserve (MBR), Guatemala.”

REDD+ is an acronym for Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation. The astounding fact is that deforestation, at roughly 15% of global annual greenhouse gas emissions, is pumping more CO2 into our atmosphere than the entire global transportation sector. Addressing the perverse economic incentives driving deforestation is widely recognized as a critical element to advancing comprehensive climate strategies. That is why the United Nations created the REDD+ mechanism to quantify and value the carbon storage services that forests provide. By making forests more valuable standing than felled, REDD+ provides forest communities and developing countries with a NEW, sustainable, low-carbon pathway to economic growth. Source: www.coderedd.org/about-redd/

Michael Goodchild Is a UCSB Nobel Prize Laureate (of Sorts)

“As of 2014, ten Nobel laureates are associated with UCSB. UC Santa Barbara currently has six Nobel laureates on its faculty, out of the eight full-time faculty members who have won the Prize” (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Nobel_laureates_affiliated_with_the_University_of_California,_Santa_Barbara). But you could argue that Geography Professor Emeritus Michael Goodchild should be added to the list(s).

Dr. Goodchild was the recipient of the Prix Vautrin Lud, regarded by many as Geography’s equivalent of the Nobel Prize, in 2007. “The Prix International de Géographie Vautrin Lud, known in English as the Vautrin Lud Prize, is the highest award in the field of Geography. Established in 1991, the award is modeled on the Nobel Prize and is colloquially called the “Nobel Prize for Geography.” The award is named after the 16th Century French scholar Vautrin Lud who is credited with naming the New World America after Amerigo Vespucci. The award is given in the autumn of each year at the International Geography Festival in Saint-Dié-des-Vosges, France (the home town of Vautrin Lud) and decided upon by a five person international jury” (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vautrin_Lud_Prize).

“Several fields of human cultural and scientific development are not included in the Nobel Prizes because they were not part of Alfred Nobel’s will. Many unaffiliated prizes have since been referred to as “the Nobel Prize of X,” despite this being discouraged by the Nobel Foundation” (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_prizes_known_as_the_Nobel_of_a_field).
Dan Montello, the Chair of the UCSB Department of Geography, acted as emcee for our reception party and award ceremony on behalf of graduating Geography majors on June 13, and he opened the proceedings by saying, “We are honoring several specific students today for their high achievements as Geography majors, but I want to enthusiastically acknowledge and express my appreciation to all of our graduating majors today. This year’s class includes 69 students, 11 of whom earned the Bachelor of Science degree, 35 a Bachelor of Arts degree with a GIS Emphasis, and 23 the Bachelor of Arts degree. 22 of these have earned the Outstanding Achievement in the Geography Major Award, and 4 of them the Distinction in the Major Award. With that, let’s give out some awards.”:

SAMANTHA C. YING GAMMA THETA UPSILON (GTU) SCHOLARSHIP: The Samantha C. 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 Ying had an outstanding undergraduate career at UCSB, graduating with a BS in both Microbiology and Physical Geography in 2004. She received her PhD from Stanford’s Department of Environmental Earth System Science in 2011. The Samantha C. Ying GTU Scholarship is used to support undergraduate students based on the criteria of academic achievement and compelling family/personal circumstances. Highest consideration is typically given to those students who are active or contributing members of the UCSB Geography Club. This year’s $1,000 Samantha C. Ying Scholarship was awarded to Daniel Villicana.

CHAIR’S AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN GEOGRAPHY: This is awarded to the graduating senior who has majored in Geography and has attained the highest overall grade point average, namely Eric Ahlgren.

DISTINCTION IN THE MAJOR AWARD: Distinction in the Major is awarded to students who are graduating with an overall GPA of at least 3.5, with a Geography GPA of at least 3.6, and who undertaken independent study projects, research assistanceships, and/or graduate-level studies. Four students share this award: Eric Ahlgren, Warren Kunkler, Evan Thomas, and Daniel Villicana.

OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT IN GEOGRAPHY: Awarded to students graduating with a grade point average of at least 3.5 in upper-division geography classes or have otherwise been nominated by a faculty member for demonstrated academic performance. Twenty-two of this year’s 69 graduating seniors have earned this award: Eric Ahlgren, Yelizaveta Aleksyuk, Ryan Allen, Kevin Bibby, Edwin Cheung, Anna Ferguson, Timothy Jacobs, Benjamin Koff, Warren Kunkler, Ansel Lundberg, Elizabeth McBride, Trevor Merback, Alexandra Motyka, Mladen Popovic, Taylor Roberts, John Solly, Evan Thomas, Daniel Villicana, Nancy Yu, Dalin Wang, Min Zhang, and Qingyun Zhang.
A reception honoring current recipients of UCSB and extramural fellowships in Engineering; Environmental Science and Management; and Mathematical, Life, and Physical Sciences was held on October 7, and Geography was particularly well-represented. Eighteen of our graduate students were feted at the event which was held at the Loma Pelona Center, 4 to 6 pm:

**Brython Davis Graduate Fellowship: Erin Blake Wetherly**

**Eugene Cota-Robles Fellowship: Alana Ayasse**

**Graduate Division Dissertation Fellowship: Daniel Ervin, Yingjie Hu**

**NASA Fellowship: James Allen, Forest Cannon, Susan Meerdink, Andrew Thorpe**

**National Science Foundation Graduate Fellowship: Emily de Moor, Heather Frazier-Berry, Michelle Oyewole, Sarah Shivers, Katalyn Anne Voss**

**President’s Dissertation Year Fellowship: Sarah Harris**

**Regents in the Disciplines Fellowship: J Michael Johnson**

**Regents Special Pre-Doctoral Fellowship: Heather Frazier-Berry, Ying-Jung Chen, Daniel Philips**

**Special Fellowship in the STEM Disciplines: Lumari Pardo-Rodrigues**

Carol Genetti, Dean of the Graduate Division, hosted the event; Don Lubach, Associate Dean of Students, gave a presentation titled “Networking Doesn’t Have To Make You Anxious: Tips for Working the Conference Reception”; and Geography faculty members/mentors David Lopez-Carr, Leila Carvalho, and Mary Hegarty were in attendance. Geography graduate student Yingjie Hu summed it up by saying, “Geographers rock!.” Amen!

*Student Kudos continued on p. 10*
THANK YOU, DONORS!

The UCSB Department of Geography would like to thank the following people and institutions for their generous support during the past 12 months:

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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, Professor, UCSB Department of Geography
Would You Like To Donate?

Gifts of support for the Department of Geography at UCSB are deeply appreciated. All gifts, large and small, help us in our mission of teaching and research and promote the study and understanding of planet Earth and its inhabitants.

Gift Options

For the following accounts, please make checks payable to: UC Regents:

☐ Geography Department Support: Unrestricted support.

☐ Landon Romano Textbook Scholarship: Landon Romano, 1999 alumnus, established textbook fund to give back to the department that made a positive difference in his career.

For the following accounts, please make checks payable to: UCSB Foundation:

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See: http://www.geog.ucsb.edu/about/giving.php

☐ The Nicholas Bourdakis Memorial Fund: The Bourdakis Fund was established after the tragic death of Nicholas, who died in February 2001 when struck by a car in Isla Vista. He had just declared Geography his major.

☐ Jack and Laura Dangermond Fund: Jack Dangermond is the founder of ESRI (1969), a GIS and mapping software company. He is considered one of the most influential people in GIS worldwide.

☐ The Jack Estes Memorial Fund: Jack Estes was a Geography faculty member for over thirty years. He built a thriving remote sensing research unit and mentored many students.

☐ The Reginald G. Golledge Distinguished Lecture Fund: Twenty years ago, the Golledge Distinguished Lecture was instituted to bring highly respected speakers to campus to share their research.

☐ The David Simonett Memorial Fund: David Simonett was the first Chair of the Geography Department. He built what has become one of the nation's finest Geography Departments.

☐ The Leal Anne Kerry Mertes Scholarship Fund: The Scholarship will support undergraduate and graduate UCSB students who are planning or are engaged in scientific field research.

☐ The Samantha C. Ying Gamma Theta Upsilon Scholarship: Named in honor of one of our distinguished alumna, this award supports undergraduate student(s), based on the criteria of academic achievement, compelling family/personal circumstances, and membership in the UCSB Geography Club.

Descriptions of the above gift options & other gift opportunities are found at: http://www.geog.ucsb.edu/giving/

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Department of Geography
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Tammy Elwell Mentors Outstanding High School Students

Seventy-seven high school students are spending part of their summer at UCSB, participating in the highly competitive Research Mentorship Program (RMP). Top-achieving teens from across the country and around the world apply for RMP’s intensive course in graduate-level research, which puts them in labs and in the field alongside UCSB faculty, postdoctoral researchers, and advanced graduate students.

The RMP mentors may know their way around research, but for those who are moving toward potential careers as academics and professors — and most are — what they’re learning about teaching, and about themselves, in the program is invaluable. That’s according to Tammy Elwell, who is mentoring this summer for the second time.

“It’s a learning exchange where I probably learn even more as a mentor than what Justin might experience,” Elwell said. “It involves patience and kindness, learning how to communicate, learning how to listen. This has really been a reflection for me of how much mentors have helped me. I’m just speechless thinking how much people have invested in me to be where I am. Now I’m in that position of mentoring, and it feels great. I’m very grateful.”

UCSB Hosts 2015 California Forum for Diversity in Graduate Education

The 2015 California Forum for Diversity in Graduate Education was held at UC Santa Barbara on Nov. 7. The all-day event drew over 1,300 students from approximately 220 public and private universities from across the United States. The UCSB Department of Geography helped man the MLPS table, and Geography graduate student Kevin Mwenda was one of four panelists who took part in a seminal workshop titled “Life Science” that had the following description:

“Different disciplines have different norms and ways of operating. The discipline-based panels are intended to provide students with an understanding of various aspects of graduate study within a given discipline group. For each discipline group, panelists offer insights on such topics as how to prepare strategically for admission into a graduate program within the discipline groups, what graduate programs typically entail (content, workload, process, time to degree), and career options (including a snapshot of the life of a faculty member). Panelists are faculty members and graduate students, and are asked to direct their remarks toward their specific disciplines without focusing too much on their own departments.”

Walter Boggan, the Director of Admissions & Outreach for the Graduate Division, summed up the event as follows: “Thank You, Thank You, Thank You for your participation!!! We simply could not have done this without you.”

Student Kudos continued on p. 11
Lumari Pardo-Rodriguez Featured in Major Puerto Rican Newspaper

The following is an English translation of a major article in El Nuevo Dia, the most respected newspaper in Puerto Rico:

Growing up in a flood-prone area in Lajas, Puerto Rico and suffering the direct onslaught of Hurricane Georges in 1998 were circumstances that aroused Lumari Pardo-Rodríguez’s curiosity about and interest in atmospheric sciences, particularly the aspects of risk, vulnerability, and climate variability. “I had to work in some way to make sure these things do not happen,” she said, recalling that as a child and teenager she studied how hurricanes worked and followed their trajectories, since she thought the best way to help was working to improve the forecasts and atmospheric understanding of these phenomena.

In the absence of an academic specialization in atmospheric science and being uneasy about relocating to the States because she had not mastered English, Pardo-Rodríguez requested admission to the Interamerican University of Puerto Rico, where she completed a bachelor’s degree in mathematics with a minor in education. During her student years, she also had three summer internships at the National Center for Atmospheric Research (NCAR) in Boulder, Colorado.

“During my three summers in the program, I realized that although I love the atmospheric sciences, I wanted to include something more directly related to the social problems of natural disasters than just the prediction of these phenomena. This program at Colorado helped me explore and develop to the point that I went to an ‘Ivy League’ university for my masters,” she said.

Pardo-Rodríguez was admitted to Columbia University, and she received her MA in “Climate and Society” in 2009. She explained that she was in a program that teaches people how to combine methods and theories in atmospheric sciences and social sciences. “In that program, I was in contact with and working directly with people who are leaders in adaptation, vulnerability, and impacts to climate change” she said, adding that after graduating, she worked with the Urban Climate Change Research Network, which is part of the Earth Institute at Columbia University.

“This is where I decided to pursue the research topic I am currently working on. People around me commented that my interest and my thinking paired nicely with geography. Although it sounds funny, my ignorance of geography was very great. Like many people, I thought that geography was memorizing capitals and knowing where topographic data and countries are located. At first I wondered why I wanted to study geography, but then I found that geography is much more than what they teach us in school. Geography helps you know why an event happens, why it happened in a particular place, and how to take into account the different scales at which an event occurs,” said Pardo-Rodríguez, who is currently pursuing a PhD in Geography in human-environment interactions at the University of California-Santa Barbara.

Pardo-Rodríguez works for the Department of Geography at the University of California-Santa Barbara, where she teaches and does research, depending on the semester. Since autumn 2011, she has been part of the “Human-Environment Dynamics Lab,” led by Professor David López-Carr. As part of her doctoral project, Pardo-Rodríguez will travel to Peru next January, specifically to the Peruvian highlands, to collect data about building resilience to climate variability and / or climate change. This area experiences large annual variability over time, and it is approximately 4,000 meters above sea level. “During my six months in that area, I will be visiting several farming communities by interviewing focus groups in order to obtain information that can help improve the measurement of vulnerability and even help reduce the effects that natural disasters can have on those communities. Although this project is in Peru, my goal is to use the study as a scaffolding for research in other countries and, at the same time, to improve the quantitative models of vulnerability, as well as decisions about adapting to these weather events,” said Pardo-Rodríguez.

Felicitaciones to Lumari! To quote Professor David López-Carr: “Lumari’s ability to adapt to a different cultural environment defines her as a person and as a scholar and exceeds that of any student I have mentored.”
Effective the end of June 2015, Bernadette Weinberg and Beilei Zhang retired as staff members of the UCSB Department of Geography. A formal farewell for our dynamic duo was held on the first floor of Ellison Hall on the afternoon of June 3, in the form of an open house retirement celebration and a presentation of plaques and gifts. To quote some wag’s farewell note to them, “Now who is going to do all the work around here?” Bernadette (left) had 20 years of service at UCSB, during which she served as Geography’s Academic Personnel and Space Management Analyst since November 2002, and Beilei had been with the Geography Department for 25 years, acting as our Contract and Grants Manager.

Lauren Brous joined Geography staff as our new Academic Personnel and Space Management Analyst, replacing Bernadette Weinberg. Lauren is a University of Arizona alumna with a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Marketing. For the past year, she has been working in Human Resources (in various capacities, but mainly as a recruiter) at California State University, Long Beach. Before that, she also held a Human Resources position at Gillian Executive Search in Long Beach. Welcome aboard, Lauren!

A warm welcome to Alycia Lewis who is our new Contracts & Grants Manager. Alycia is a UCSB alumna who graduated in 2002 with a BS degree in Zoology. She has extensive experience in research administration and worked for the Donald Bren School of Environmental Science and Management, the Institute for Collaborative Biotechnologies, and the California NanoSystems Institute before joining the Geography department. She is also a RACC (Research Administrators Certification Council) Certified Research Administrator (one of only two on the UCSB campus).

Consuelo Rivera joined Geography staff as our new undergraduate advisor and sent the following statement: “I earned my BA in Psychology from UCLA in 2013 and my MA in Guidance and Counseling from Loyola Marymount University in 2015. I previously worked at UCLA as a student worker and as a research assistant. Subsequently, I worked as a Graduate Assistant at Loyola Marymount University and afterwards as a Career Guidance Counseling Assistant at Los Angeles City College. I’m very excited to work with the students, staff, and faculty of the Geography Department this year. Feel free to stop by my office (1831 Ellison Hall) to ask a question or just to say hello!”

Our new “techie” is Alex Feldwinn who received his Associates degree from Santa Barbara City College where he studied Multimedia with a visual emphasis. He went on to get his Bachelor’s degree from San Jose State University where he graduated magna cum laude with a major in Digital Media and a minor in Radio Television and Film. He joined the UCSB Geography IT group in June of 2015 as our new Helpdesk Manager and Windows System Administrator. Alex formerly also worked on campus in the College of Letters and Science with Letters & Science Information Technology (LSIT) where he supported numerous departments in Humanities & Fine Arts, Social Sciences, and Mathematical, Life & Physical Sciences with their computer needs and problems.
Andrew Thorpe completed his PhD in the Department of Geography at UCSB in 2015. His dissertation research focused on developing techniques for mapping and quantifying methane emissions from local sources using airborne imaging spectrometers. While in graduate school, he spent two and a half years at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory planning two AVIRIS-NG flight campaigns for methane detection and performing sensitivity analyses to determine gas detection limits of algorithms and spectrometers. During this time, he was also awarded a NASA Earth and Space Science Fellowship (NESSF). By developing methods of directly attributing emissions to individual point sources, this research aims to help constrain regional methane sources with potential implications for environmental monitoring and a better understanding of methane’s role in climate.

Edward Pultar and his brother Lorenzo have been developing software since 1995 and have built major systems for Ford Motor Company, DaimlerChrysler, R.L. Polk, ADP, IBM, Qualcomm, Movielink/Blockbuster, ESPN, and Yokohama Tire, to name a few. Valarm was born when Lorenzo woke up one morning to discover his motorcycle had been stolen by professional thieves. Originally, Valarm was conceived as an affordable and accessible theft-prevention and vehicle tracking device which Lorenzo would use himself to protect his replacement bike. Today, Valarm has evolved into a general purpose platform for asset tracking, data acquisition, and remote monitoring. See more about their innovations at http://geog.ucsb.edu/events/department-news-word/1674/alumnus-edward-pultar-plugs-the-latest-from-valarm/.

Sarah Battersby (PhD 2006) Discusses Issues and Advances in Mapmaking

I think that one of the most exciting cartographic developments in the last decade is the explosion of online mapping and tools for map design. It’s amazing to think about the huge efforts that have gone into making it easy for people to visualize their spatial data, whether as a Google Map mashup, using desktop or online GIS, with d3 or other scripting libraries, etc. The downside to all of this is that I think it is still too easy to make a bad map, and way too easy to distribute that bad map to a wide audience. My cartographic archive of what not to do just keeps growing thanks to all of the great finds on Twitter and Facebook.

On the other hand, there are a lot of people who really care about helping others work with and understand spatial data and there is some great research in cartography, GIScience, and in spatial thinking that I think will help shape the next generation of tools that we use to design maps to make them more intuitive, more beautiful, and generally more effective for understanding spatial data.

Dawn Wright Given the Bromery Award for Minorities

Our illustrious alumna Dawn Wright recently received the 2015 Geological Society of America’s Randolph W. and Cecile T. Bromery Award for Minorities which is awarded to those making “lifetime significant contributions to research in the geological sciences or to those instrumental in opening the geoscience field to other minorities.” Dawn sent the news to UCSB Geography “with thanks to UCSB for all the great training and opportunities afforded to me to make a contribution.”

Dawn received Interdisciplinary PhDs in Physical Geography AND Marine Geology at UCSB in 1994. An Oregon State University faculty member since 1995, Wright is a marine and coastal geography expert so passionate about her subject that she’s known as “Deepsea Dawn.” Wright joined Esri as its chief scientist on October 3, 2011 to 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.
Dennis Gibbs graduated with a BA degree from the UCSB Geography Department in the Spring of 1989 and was immediately hired by Santa Barbara County Flood Control District (after doing an internship) in order to assemble their first computerized rainfall database, using the spreadsheet of that era, Lotus 1-2-3. His emphasis as a Geography major was Climatology, Hydrology, and Geographic Information Systems, the latter of which was in its infancy in the late 1980’s (the Department didn’t offer a BS in 1989). Dennis studied under the tutelage of Joel Michaelsen, Jeff Dozier, Earl Hajic, Frank Davis, Laura Haston, Jack Estes, and Jeffrey Star.

Dennis went on to manage the Flood Control District’s Hydrology section and the ALERT (Automated Local Evaluation in Real Time) System, in which automated rainfall and streamflow sensors reported in “real time” via radio frequencies to Flood Control headquarters, which allowed engineers and hydrologists to evaluate runoff and flooding conditions. Dennis then became the Flood Control Hydrologist, he served as an officer for the ALERT Users Group, and he was President of the Santa Barbara–Ventura Chapter of the American Meteorological Society for several years. He also published a paper with Ed Keller after the Painted Cave Fire: “Hydrological Response of Small Watersheds following the Southern California Painted Cave Fire of June 1990.”

In 1999, Dennis had an opportunity to transfer to the Santa Barbara County Water Agency to work on Groundwater and Water Supply issues, and he once again turned to the UCSB Geography Department and came back to take classes taught by Hugo Loaiciga to “bone up” on the principles of the characteristics of Groundwater. During this time, Dennis became the Senior Hydrologist for the Santa Barbara County Water Agency, a licensed professional Hydrologist through the American Institute of Hydrology, and a licensed Weather Modification Operator through the Weather Modification Association. His duties included administration and oversight of the regional cloudseeding program to increase rainfall in the watersheds behind Lake Cachuma and Twitchell Reservoir, as well as dealing with Groundwater reports and information requests. During this tenure, he authored and coauthored several reports and publications, including “Using a Geographic Information System to Store, Retrieve and Disseminate Groundwater Data” and “Water Availability of the Cuyama Valley, California.”

When asked about his education in the UCSB Geography Department, Dennis replied: “I was very fortunate to get an excellent education under some tremendous individuals like Dr. Michaelsen, Jeff Dozier, and many, many others, many whom formed the Bren School at UCSB. It was a very diverse education that allowed me to expand in all horizons of Earth Sciences.”

After a 26 year career with the County, Dennis’s plans are to spend more time with his parents who are 82 and live in Clovis, do some traveling, and find a role in helping California agricultural interests meet their water requirements during this dry spell, particularly in light of the new regulations about water that are emerging.

Editor’s note: If you’d like to share your comments on how UCSB Geography has impacted your life and career, please contact billn@geog.ucsb.edu.
**Julie Dillemuth Publishes Her First Picture Book**

Back in November 2012, Alumna Julie Dillemuth (PhD 2008) wrote to say that she had left academia to become a full time mother and writer (see “Julie Dillemuth Finds Her Way as a Writer”). At the time, she stated: “Wouldn’t it be neat to help promote spatial thinking in kids through fun, engaging books? Not straight-up educational books, but fiction stories with spatial themes and lots of spatial language.” Fast forward 2 3/4 years: Julie recently contacted UCSB Geography to say: “Well, I’m thrilled to tell you that my first picture book is coming out next month! It’s called “Lucy in the City: A Story about Developing Spatial Thinking Skills,” and the publisher is Magination Press. Check it out at the American Psychological Association’s Magination Press site and on Amazon.

**Elisa Frank Interviewed by BBC about Coffee Crisis**

As we sip our lattes and espressos and read the daily headlines, climate change can seem like a distant threat. But travel a few thousand miles to the source of your caffeine fix, and the turbulence is all too real. Consider the coffee farmers in Chiapas, Mexico, recently interviewed by researcher Elisa Frank (MA 2009) from the University of California, Santa Barbara. Compared to the gentler showers they were used to, they are now seeing violent downpours that waterlog the plants in their care. “When we were growing up, the rains didn’t fall this much,” one interviewee told Frank. “The plants produce less. The leaves and fruit fall because of the wetness.”

These problems are by no means confined to Mexico. Farmers across South America, Asia and Africa are watching coffee plants dwindle as droughts, downpours, and plagues of pests attack their crops, as a result of global warming. The consequences of this unrest could soon work their way through the pipeline to your local coffee shop. The world currently enjoys a two-billion-cup-a-day habit. How can we ensure that the coffee still flows, when the crops are being ravaged by extreme weather? And if the farmers can’t meet that demand, will we soon reach “peak coffee”? Read more at http://geog.ucsb.edu/events/department-news-word/1703/alumnus-park-williams-discusses-california-climate-with-kqed-science-editor/.

**Grant McKenzie Wins Gates Foundation Grand Challenge Grant**

Grant McKenzie (PhD 2015) is the proud recipient of a Gates Foundation Grand Challenge grant designed to further the development of “a low cost and reliable technological solution to capture relevant data relating to the delivery and use of digital financial services in developing countries that is an order of magnitude lower cost, faster, higher quality, greater transparency/auditability, and more reliable than existing approaches which often rely on paper based surveys or in person data collection.” Grant’s winning proposal, “A Social Media Data-Driven Platform for Informed Data Collection,” was 1 of 59 winning proposals this year.
Professor Emerita Catherine Gautier is in Paris in order to attend the 2015 Paris Climate Conference (COP21), and she posted a blog on November 15 titled “Paris Attack and COP21”:

Two days after the murderous and unfathomable terrorist attacks in Paris on Friday 13 Nov, the city of light remains empty, except for those who want to show that they are alive and intend to continue living their lives as normally as possible.

Radio stations ceaselessly discuss the killings, first to recount the chronology of the events and then to try to understand the incomprehensible and share intense feelings. What is shocking is the apparent randomness of the shootings within Paris although everyone now agrees that what appears random was not. It is not only a breach of the peace as such attacks are but, more importantly, a strike against a certain life style – dining and drinking on the terrace of a cafe on a Friday night with friends, attending a soccer game with thousands of supporters -, the lifestyle of young people of different social and ethnic origins, the lifestyle of anyone who enjoys living, socializing or being entertained through sport or music. It is an attempt to separate, to create a breach between French people through their reactions to the events. A breach between those who want to respond aggressively, following the president who labels those attacks as acts of war and will be exploring energetic means of reprisals, and those who want to show that they stand together, unafraid and will continue their lives. The fear among intellectuals, politicians and many citizens is that the limitation of citizen rights from the sate of emergency and the calls for expulsion of fundamentalist imams and administrative detention of radical Islamist on french soil, as the prime minister suggested on television, will further amplify the societal division wanted by ISIS. On the other hand, there is a strong sense of needing and wanting to stand up to the attacks and maintain a spirit of solidarity built on the republican values of liberty, equality and fraternity. And fraternity was demonstrated on Friday when inhabitants of the Paris neighborhoods under attack (10th and 11th districts) opened their doors to those fleeing the carnage and those unable to go home for lack of public transportation, and when taxi drivers decided to offer free rides.

It is this fraternity and unity that will be needed from all the nations attending COP21. Will it come from the delegates representing and negotiating for their countries? Nothing is more unsure. The positioning that existed a few days ago before the shootings will remain, with countries such as the US already warning that they will not sign any legally binding agreement, and developing nations dissatisfied with the pathetic offers made for the green fund, totaling about $10B, a very small step toward the $100B needed. World unity will more likely come from all those of civil society that will be gathering around the meeting place and in Paris. How these planned demonstrations of unity will be affected by the recent events is unclear at this time.

First of all, the President of France, Francois Hollande, announced that COP21 will be maintained under major police protection. Plans that were already in place to reinstate French border controls ahead of the conference will be beefed up. How will the thousands of people converging to Paris be able to express their dissatisfaction about the negotiations, if such dissatisfaction emerges? Will the ability to demonstrate as a group and voice a strong feeling of dissatisfaction and disagreement with, in this case, the content of an agreement, be another casualty of these attacks?