

Indiana University

Department of Geography E-Newsletter

SPRING 2021

Chair's Letter

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Chair's Letter 1

Faculty
Spotlight 2

Alumni
Spotlight 4

Graduate
Student
Spotlight 5

Undergraduate
Student
Spotlight 6

Awards
Banquet
Recipients 7

Dear all,

Once again, much has changed here at IU since our last newsletter.

After a full academic year with most courses (and all meetings and talks) online, we will be returning to in-person interaction in the Fall to the delight of students and faculty. We have learned a lot about online education over the last 15 months, and we are giving serious thought to whether some of our classes might work better in a hybrid online/in-person format moving forward. But mostly we are looking forward to the return of more normal campus life and the ability to talk with our students and each other informally, without the need for Zoom links and good WiFi.

The biggest change, however, is that our beloved graduate secretary **Susan White** is retiring on June 30 after 27 years with the department, and 39 years at IU. Susan has offered all of us – students, staff and faculty – sage advice and timely help for decades. She is both the institutional memory and the heart of the department. We will miss her very much, and wish her the best in her well-deserved retirement!

The **department's Oral History Project** is off to a great start with interviews of faculty and alumni conducted by current students. The interviews will be available online as part of IU's Bicentennial History Project, and we will also use them to write a history of the IU Geography Department. If you have any questions about the project, or would be willing to be interviewed, please get in touch with me at rlave@indiana.edu.

Lastly, alumnus **Harry Schuler** very kindly donated his IU academic regalia to the department. This saves our graduate students the considerable cost of renting graduation robes. If you received your Ph.D. from IU and purchased IU academic regalia you no longer need, please consider donating it to the department. It's a big help for our students at a moment when many of them are transitioning into new jobs, and thus money is tight.

I am pleased to report that the department is continuing to thrive despite the difficulties of the last year. I hope you and your loved ones are thriving as well!

Best wishes from Bloomington,



Rebecca Lave
Professor and Chair



Faculty Spotlight: Sally Letsinger

Dr. Sally Letsinger received her Ph.D. in Geology at IU in 2001. She brought her deep expertise in physical hydrology and GIS to the Department of Geography as an Associate Research Scientist in 2018 after working at the Indiana Geological and Water Survey for almost two decades.

Sally was attracted to the Geography Department because of faculty and students' commitment to academic inquiry and the supportive environment, noting that the diversity of scholarship fosters a rich and generous intellectual environment in which to work. Another draw was the complements between her newer areas of research and the intellectual focus of our faculty. Sally specializes in near-surface physical



processes and became interested in the spatial distribution of these processes across the landscape. As a geologist working in natural and built environments, she became intrigued by how natural and imposed heterogeneities could confound our ability to predict spatially distributed process behavior – like fluid flow – that at a fundamental level we understand. So, she decided to study near-surface process interactions in the context of the water cycle.

Sally uses a toolkit of GIS (spatial analysis) and remote sensing, and numerical and statistical modeling in her research program. Her research is entirely funded through external grants and contracts, mainly from the state of Indiana. A significant part of her research program has focused on the hydrogeology of Indiana. The state has an extensive range of water supply sources, so it is an excellent place for a hydrologist to get a crash course on everything from bedrock to sand-and-gravel aquifers or confined (deep) versus unconfined (water-table) aquifers to rivers with gravel channels versus rivers with bedrock channels, or natural lakes versus engineered reservoirs or repurposed gravel pits. We have wetlands, a shoreline on one of the Great Lakes, and we even have karst topography (sinkholes and caves) in the south-central part of the state. Indiana has both pristine and contaminated water; we have all kinds of different approaches to land and agricultural management. The changing climate is affecting Indiana, too.



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Sally Letsinger (continued)

At present, she is investigating the implications for aquifer storage of shifts in the timing of water-balance partitioning. Sally is also working on a couple of very long-term projects to improve the depiction of three-dimensional groundwater flow across the unsaturated/saturated interface (above and below the water table), incorporating a spatially accurate representation of the geologic framework of aquifers in Indiana. She collaborates with mathematicians and computer scientists on the development of a groundwater-flow model that exploits the computational power of high-performance computing resources at IU. The team is currently working to scale up a smaller prototype model to evaluate whether regional flow models are computationally feasible.

One of Sally's favorite experiences during the pandemic has been overhearing snippets of hallway conversations on an enormous array of topics as she walks by: remote-sensing spectral signatures, food sovereignty, land use in the Amazon, what to do with the leftovers from cooking class, causes and patterns of migration, and the impact of snowmelt on hydrographs. In her words, "It (Geography) is a vivacious department, a geographic menagerie!"

Alumni Spotlight: Jessica Fan



Jessica Fan liked IU Geography so much she came back for a second degree! She received her MA in 2005 under the supervision of Bill Black. After working as an urban planning consultant for several years, Jessica returned to pursue her doctoral degree with an emphasis on Children's Geography, which she completed under the supervision of Dan Knudsen in 2020.

Jessica and her husband arrived at IU Bloomington from China as international students in 2001. Upon completing her MA on urban development and transportation planning, she joined the Goodman Corporation in Houston, Texas as a Project Associate. Between 2006 and 2012, Jessica managed urban planning and consulting projects for high-profile governmental and private clients. Part of her responsibility was to apply for governmental funding on behalf of clients, and she secured \$17.2M grants in total during her time at the Goodman Corporation.

In 2014, Jessica returned to Bloomington for her doctoral degree. She researched immigrant children's everyday space (home, school, and community) and how they develop identities distinct from their parents. Jessica told us that Dr. Knudsen's strong support in academic work and life in general was crucial to her ability to finish her degree long-distance. He met with her bi-weekly virtually or by phone even when Jessica and her family had to relocate to Indonesia for two years. During that challenging period of deciding on whether to pause, quit, or entirely change the research focus, Dr. Knudsen was accommodating and allowed the flexibility that she needed. Once she was back in the US, he encouraged Jessica to attend AAG to share her research. Jessica reported that Dan's support was integral to her ability to successfully finish her doctoral degree. She also gave credit to her family members, who helped her carve out time to work on her dissertation writing.

Currently, Jessica is working as Cultural Mediation Researcher with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), where she is preparing training materials for the UNDP cultural mediation service. As a visiting scholar in the Department of Geography, Jessica is also helping with the Department's Oral History Project (part of IU's Bicentennial History Project) by recruiting potential alumni and past faculty and interviewing them.



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Graduate Student Spotlight: Drew Heiderscheidt

Drew Heiderscheidt is a second-year Master's student in the Department of Geography with a Minor in Digital Humanities. His committee members are Geography faculty members Ishan Ashutosh and Scott Robeson, and Stephanie DeBoer, faculty in the Media School with an adjunct appointment in Geography.

Before attending IU, Drew completed undergraduate degrees in history and environmental and sustainability studies and a graduate certificate in GIS at the University of Northern Colorado in Greeley, CO. As part of his undergraduate degree, Drew made an ArcGIS story map on Negro League Baseball in the

1930s and 40s. He was introduced to the discipline of Geography through his undergraduate advisers Steven Seegel, a historian of cartography, and Karen Barton, a geographer. In Colorado, Drew worked with DigitalGlobe (now part of Maxar)—a satellite imagery company in Colorado.



Drew adapted to the pandemic by shifting his thesis topic to contact tracing applications for COVID-19. His thesis looks at the historical evolution of contact tracing as a systematic disease control method. Based on archival research on public health journals, newspapers, and government documents, Drew argues that a technological and quantitative-based shift happened in the historical evolution of contact tracing approaches. Today's technocentric culture has given online contact-tracing methods more credibility.

Drew conceptualizes contact tracing apps as a body with different organs. He claims the major parts in this anatomy are GIS and spatial data, ubiquity, networked technologies (Bluetooth, etc.), and participatory sharing. Each of these components is vital for reinforcing and perpetuating state power. Drawing from Jeremy Crampton's conceptualization of geographic governance, Drew posits that these tools are used to delineate, analyze, and shape individual and groups' geographic behavior by states and corporations. This technological solutionism led to the development of imaginative geographies of GIS and created a distinction between "us" versus "them." By performing repetitively, these imaginative geographies facilitate the geographic governance of both individuals and populations. He hopes that this research can help open pathways to connecting postcolonial studies and critical GIS.

Drew has been active with the local chapter of Democratic Socialists of America (DSA). Along with fellow Geography graduate student Jen Watkins, he runs a monthly event called "Casual Conversations on Radical Ideas" to discuss topics related to capitalism and socialism in a non-academic venue. In collaboration with Dr. Ashutosh, he also organizes a reading group on Black radicalism and racial capitalism, where they discuss the works of scholars such as Cedric Robinson and Sylvia Wynter. As a member of the Geography in Practice Symposium committee, Drew invited the prominent geographer Tim Creswell from the University of Edinburgh as the speaker this semester. This summer, he will convert his thesis chapters into manuscripts and submit them to peer-reviewed journals.

Undergraduate Student Spotlight: Emily Daugherty



Emily Daugherty combines her everyday life as a food producer and small-scale farmer with her major in Geography at Indiana University Bloomington. She is the co-owner of Knightridge Farmstand, where Emily and her partner are implementing a regenerative food production system that aims to offer affordable food options to their community. This spring, they have been starting their own seeds, planting herbs and vegetables, and boiling down maple syrup in preparation for their upcoming season of selling produce at their roadside farm stand. They sell fresh eggs, raise meat birds, American Guinea hogs, and turkeys for Thanksgiving on their 9-acre farm. The farm grew enough rice for seed last season and Emily is hoping to produce enough rice for annual consumption in the coming season.

Emily transferred to IU in 2019 from Ivy Tech College and found her home in the Geography Department with support from our awesome undergraduate advisor, Rebecca Butorac. Rebecca guided her into the concentration in Food and Agriculture and courses that are relevant for Emily's interest in farming, food production systems and food justice.

Emily will be completing a senior honors thesis under the supervision of Dr. Olga Kalentzidou in the Fall of 2021 on the "Final mile" of the food bank system in Monroe County to better understand the strains of food access after it reaches the food pantry. Emily has also been inspired to continue learning about food injustice from Geography faculty members Annie Shattuck and Elizabeth Dunn, who have been encouraging role models for Emily. Last summer, Emily attended an intensive online training program with FLAS fellowship to learn Turkish. Thus, in addition to her Geography major, she will be receiving a minor in Turkish with a Language Certificate. Emily plans to travel to Turkey after she graduates in Fall 2021.

*Find your
home in
Geography*

Spring 2021 Award Winners

Paul W. and Marie K. Baumann Scholarship



Congratulations to Kylie Lewis!

Robert N. Johnson Scholarship



Congratulations to Emily Daugherty!

Spring 2020 Award Winners cont'd

William R. Black Leadership Memorial Fellowship



Congratulations to Drew Heiderscheidt!

William R. Black Leadership Memorial Scholarship



Congratulations to Allie Whitacre!



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Departmental Graduate Student Fellowships



Congratulations Seth Adelsperger and Tom Au

Alumni Associate Instructor Award

John Odland Research Fund Award



Congratulations Ben Lockwood!



Congratulations Daniel Fobi!

Other Award Recipients

Outstanding Senior Award



Congratulations Andrew Brown!

Thomas F. Barton Awards

G110 Human Geography: Nikhil Palde

G314 Urban Geography: Jenna Childress

G315 Environmental Conservation: Hannah Nelson

G417 Development Geography: Erin Hardman

Founder's Awards

G109 Weather and Climate: Josh Montpas

The Climatology Award: Josh Bregy

The Indiana Award: Ben Lockwood

Chair's Graduate Student Recognition

Seth Adelsperger

Abdul Aijaz

Tom Au

Nicole Bennett

Megan Betz

Jordan Blekking

Josh Bregy

Dunduk Dun

Daniel Fobi

Drew Heiderscheidt

Mahsa Khodae

Ben Lockwood

Unai Miguel Andres

Dan Myers

Mitchell Owens

Rubaya Pervin

Sacha Siani

Maria Steenberger

Sharif Wahab

Julie Wasserman

Jennifer Watkins

Allie Whitacre