

Volume 13: Winter 2017

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Message from the Chair

Greetings from the Geography and Planning Department! I hope you enjoy this latest volume of our newsletter.

There are some features in this newsletter volume dedicated to celebrating success—the success and recognition of our departmental faculty and staff, as well as celebrating the success and accomplishments of our students and alumni. The newsletter also highlights what faculty have been doing for the past year. You will see that they have been travelling, working on research projects, and presenting their research results far and wide. Faculty have also been developing innovative, high-impact teaching methods.

In other news, I was thrilled that the fall equinox pumpkin drop returned this year! Scheduling difficulties last year made celebrating the equinox impossible, but popular demand

brought this tradition back to Buffalo State. Also, as this newsletter goes to press, the department hosted a very successful GIS Day event. We co-sponsored GIS Day 2017 with the UB Geography Department and the WNY GIS Users Group. Mary Perrelli was instrumental in coordinating the day's activities, which featured four speakers covering topics ranging from drones to climate change maps and data to the latest developments from ESRI. More than 60 people from Buffalo State, UB, and the local GIS community enjoyed the presentations and the networking social hour that followed.

Again, I hope you enjoy reading about the Geography and Planning Department activities!

Dr. Kelly Frothingham

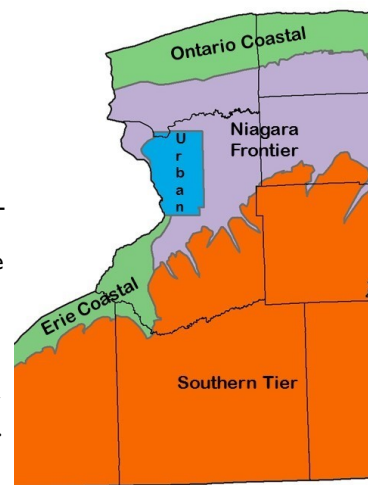


The fall equinox pumpkin drop returned this year! That is Dr. Vermette on the Classroom Building roof with students dropping the first of two pumpkins.

Weathering Change in WNY

Given the premise that regions will not respond to global warming equally or with similar intensity, the research project 'Weathering Change in WNY' examined, through a trend analysis (1965 to 2016), regional responses to global climate change – a climatic response chiefly seen as a rise in temperature. Working with '[Designing to Live Sustainably](#)' Dr. Vermette, with assistance provided by Zachary Neudeck (Geography Major) and Mary Perrelli (GIS Lab Supervisor), defined and described five climate zones for WNY (see map). A GIS course education

[module](#) describes this effort (working with Mary Perrelli and Wende Mix). The 'zone' classification will be used to further localize the climatic impacts. While the first priority is to mitigate global warming, identifying and understanding regional responses and nonresponses are critical when considering local adaptation and resiliency strategies, and to take advantage of potential opportunities for the region. Funding was provided by the SUNY Research Foundation. This project is in its early phase.



Learn more about this project in the [Buffalo News](#), on [WIVB-TV](#), at [Buffalo-Niagara Gardening.com](#), and through [Buffalo State](#).

Celebrating Faculty and Staff Successes!

Faculty and staff in the Geography and Planning Department work hard year after year and some members of the department have recently received recognition for that hard work.

Ms. Mary Perrelli, GIS Lab Supervisor, received an award from the New York State GIS Association. She was awarded the 2017 Individual Contributions to the Profession award, which provides recognition for

outstanding contributions to the GIS profession.

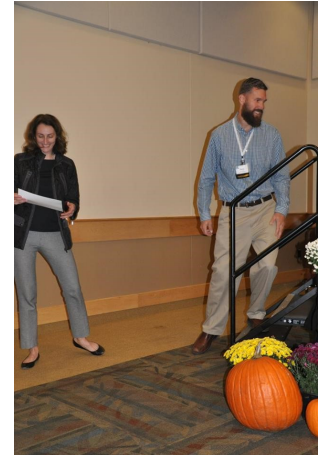
Dr. Jason Knight and his team of collaborators received two American Planning Association (APA) awards for the City of Tonawanda Local Waterfront Revitalization Program. They received public outreach awards from both the WNY APA and the Upstate APA.

Dr. Stephen Vermette was appointed as an External Affiliate of the Research and Education

in Energy, Environment, and Water (RENEW) Institute at UB.

The [RENEW Institute](#) is a university-wide, interdisciplinary research institute that focuses on complex environmental issues, as well as the social and economic issues with which they are connected.

Congratulations to all the hard-working members of our Department!



Mary Perrelli receiving her award.
Photo credit: [NYS GIS Association](#)



Dr. Camille Holmgren

Dr. Camille Holmgren

Dr. Camille Holmgren completed her work on a multi-year project developing a classroom module for introductory science courses. The module, *The Changing Biosphere*, explores macroevolution and extinction using an earth systems approach in which students evaluate recent human influences on the biosphere in the context of the geologic record. The module is part of InTeGrate, an NSF STEM program that involves faculty, educational specialists, and evaluation experts at multiple institu-

tions working collaboratively to create a series of modules aimed at addressing societal issues and developing earth literacy. The module was recently published [online](#) following final scientific and pedagogical peer review.

Dr. Holmgren also gave a presentation entitled "From Mass Extinctions to Modern Extinctions: Teaching with InTeGrate's Online Changing Biosphere Module" at the Geological Society of America's annual meeting in Seattle, Washington in October.

Dr. Holmgren is also busy teaching GEG 101: World Natural Environments as a course in the newly established Dean's Honors Program. She continues her research using packrat middens to explore late glacial vegetation and climates of arid environments.



Dr. Jason Knight

Dr. Jason Knight

Dr. Knight is currently working with various stakeholders and professionals to develop strategies and policies to address vacant, abandoned, and distressed properties in the City of Tonawanda under a grant from the NYS Attorney General's Office. Planning students in Spring 2016 worked on the zombie project, as well as other planning efforts in Tonawanda, for Planning 431 – Planning Practicum. As Chairperson of the steering commit-

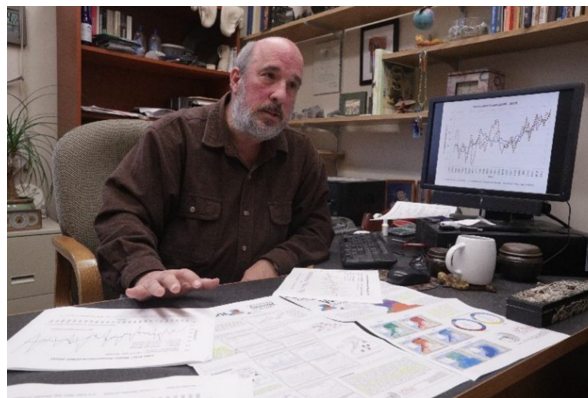
tee for the Tonawanda Main Street Program, Dr. Knight was involved in reorganizing as the Tonawanda Local Development Corporation, for which he was voted to a four-year term as President of the Board. The mission of TLDC, a non-profit, is to revitalize the City of Tonawanda's Main Street following historic preservation, economic development, and community engagement principles. He organized a session at the 2017 American Association of

Geographers Annual Meeting in Boston, MA and presented a paper titled "Legacy Cities, Legacy Suburbs: Actually Existing Shrinkage and Decline in the Suburbs of the Rust Belt." He remains active in planning and community development efforts, including as a member of the Site Selection Committee for Habitat for Humanity Buffalo.

Dr. Stephen Vermette

It's been a mixed bag! Traveled to South Korea and Vietnam in January. Last spring, with Karen Wehn from ECC, I offered the 'Bahamas Field Experience' course. Taught a mini-course on Arctic Geography for the College's NYS Master Teacher Program, and provided lectures on China and South Korea for the National Consortium for Teaching about Asia seminar series hosted by Nazareth College (Rochester, NY) and the UB Confucius Institute (Buffalo, NY). Over the summer I began a study of WNY's climate –

titled 'Weathering Change in WNY'. The 'Weather Event' exhibition, a meteorologist's interpretation of Charles Burchfield's watercolors, is on the road again at the Montclair Art Museum in Montclair, NJ, where I also contributed to a panel discussion providing insights on the exhibition. Work with the New York Geographic Alliance continued, presenting watershed/water quality workshops for teachers in the Southern Tier.



Dr. Vermette going over 'Weathering Change in WNY' results with a reporter from the Buffalo News.

Dr. Kelly Frothingham

Dr. Frothingham continued working on monitoring riparian restoration sites with Dr. Dan Potts (Biology) and a team of student research fellows. The sites are all located in the Niagara River Greenway and they are designed and built by Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper. The designs follow living shorelines principles, so they use plants and a limited amount of rock to provide streambank or shoreline protection and maintain valuable habitat. Monitoring

stream restoration is so important, but it is rarely done, in large part because of time and money constraints, so being able to work on this project is very rewarding. It is even more rewarding because a few student research fellows are hired each season and trained in innovative stream restoration monitoring methods. To date, Drs. Frothingham and Potts have worked with nine research fellows at four different restoration sites.



Graduate students Madeson Goodman (Biology) and Alyssa Hessler (GLES) surveying a transect at Sandy Beach Park Club.

Dr. Tao Tang

1). Dr. Tang delivered a keynote speech: "Collecting and Sharing Large Quantity of Digital Locational Information - Google Maps, Google Earth, and Drone Flying" at the Computer Science for All in Western New York Conference, organized by Computer Information Systems Department for in-service teachers.

2). Dr. Tang served as an instrumental person for establishing two international agreements for recruiting both undergraduate

and graduate students to the college from China.

3). Dr. Tang presented the paper: "Capturing and Analyzing Geographic Information of High Spatial and Temporal Resolutions to Solve the On-going Problems" at the New York State GIS Conference; and he accomplished the two-year service as one of the Board of Directors of New York State GIS Association.



Air-photograph of participants at the Computer Science for All in WNY conference.

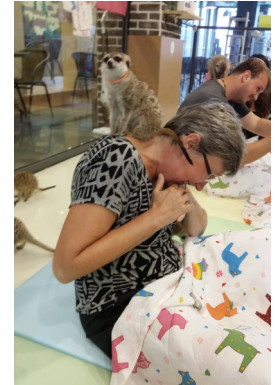


Prof. Veryan Vermette

Prof. Veryan Vermette

In July, I passed two hot and wet monsoon weeks in South Korea. We travelled the southern coast, visiting World Heritage Sites of natural significance (eg: wetlands, bamboo forests, tidal mud flats, lotus gardens) and cultural importance (a Confucian Learning Center and fortresses aged >1000 years, stayed in a fortress folk village where people live much as they did hundreds of years ago). Perhaps the most memorable was monsoon

weather delivering temperatures and humidity > 100°F/%, and 11" of rain in 12 hours! "Been there, done that, do NOT need to do monsoon again!!" Or was it the memory of having meerkats excitedly clamber over me in a café...? Or eating 'poo' (-shaped) bread? Or...



Dr. Vida Vanchan

Dr. Vida Vanchan

Dr. Vanchan served as chair, co-organizer and discussant for two sessions on 'Interdependent Challenges and Urban Living: Managing Complex Cities' at the 2017 Annual Meeting of Association of American Geographers in Boston, Massachusetts. As a result of these sessions, she authored and contributed a short piece on 'Urban Livability and Integrated Challenges,' which was published by the University Birmingham (Blogs), UK.

In continuing collaboration with various departments on Campus, Dr. Vanchan gave a talk and successfully organized the Sixth Annual Southeast Asia Week in March of 2017 featuring lecture series and discussion on conflicts and resolutions within local and global communities as well as oral and poster presentations related to this theme by students in her Geography of Asia class.

Dr. Vanchan was accepted and successfully completed the

Emerging College Leaders Program at Buffalo State in May of 2017. This program is a six-day leadership development opportunity for faculty and professional staff members who are interested in becoming more effective leaders.



Dr. Wendé Mix

Dr. Wendé Mix

The highlights of 2017 for Dr. Mix were a ski trip to Whistler (think glacier) in Vancouver BC and a 15-day self-guided bicycle tour of Scotland. The UK has an excellent set of (hardcopy) Ordnance Survey maps which (her computer programmer son was amazed to discover) are much more valuable than Google or Bing maps for navigating the backroads and national bike system, especially when your phone has no service or a dead battery. Seeing and experiencing a country by bike was a wonderful educa-

tional experience. Dr. Mix hopes to take many more self-guided bicycle trips in the years to come. On the academic front, Dr. Mix continues to promote a return to a programming based approach in GIS education which provides students a better understanding of manipulating and analyzing geospatial data. Her presentation entitled "Geospatial Programming for GIS Education" was well received at NY Geo Con in Lake Placid this fall. She has continued to develop [Python](#) and [web mapping](#) coding

examples for students and has successfully lobbied the department to replace GEG 429 Advanced Topics in GIS with GEG 485 Interactive and Web-based mapping as a required course in the GIS minor. Dr. Mix continues to collaborate with the Interdisciplinary Data Analytics faculty and is teaching a new course this fall for graduate students in the Public Administration Master's program; GEG/PAD 587 Open, Big Data for Public Administration and Nonprofit Management.

Commencement: Celebrating Graduation!

Beginning in May 2017, Buffalo State started celebrating commencement with school-specific ceremonies. This means that all the School of Natural and Social Sciences graduates attend the same ceremony, so all of our Geography B.A. and Urban and Regional Planning B.S. majors can celebrate their graduation together at the same commencement ceremony. Our majors study and work hard together for years as they progress through their programs of study and now they can share in the joy of graduation together.

The photo on the right shows many, but not all, of the May 2017 graduates with Dr. Frothingham. This photo was taken on the Ice Arena floor just before graduates marched into the Sports Arena to receive their hard earned diplomas.

If you are graduating this May, be sure to [apply](#) by the February 2, 2018 deadline. Your fellow students, plus department faculty and staff, look forward to celebrating your graduation at commencement!



Student and Alumni News

Student award winners from May 2017:

National Council for Geographic Education—
outstanding student in geography:

Stephen Hawco

National Council for Geographic Education—
outstanding student in planning:

Natasha Davrados

WNY American Planning Association:

Andrea Folgerhait

Katheryne Whittemore Award for Outstanding
Geography & Planning major: *Molly Taylor*

David Bullough Memorial Award for Academic
Excellence: *Timothy German*

Chair's Discretionary Award: *David Aldridge*

Congratulations to all our award winners!

Alumni—we want to hear from you! Where are you? What are you doing? Please contact a department faculty member so you can be featured in our next newsletter.



2017 Student Award Winners

Alumni news:

Dr. Lindsey Higgins, a 2010 graduate of our Geography B.A. (with a Meteorology & Climatology minor), has successfully completed her Ph.D. program at Stockholm University in Sweden. After graduating summa cum laude from Buffalo State, Lindsey received her M.A. in Geography (climatic studies focus) from The Ohio State University. Her doctoral thesis is titled "Linking lake variability, climate, and human activity in Basotu, Tanzania."

Ms. Julie Berlinski, a 2014 Geography B.A. and 2017 Great Lakes Ecosystem Science M.S. graduate, has been working for the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets and just recently accepted a new position with that agency. Julie will be re-locating to Albany where she will be a Senior Environmental Analyst in the Division of Land and Water Resources.

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