

Volume 15: Winter 2019

Inside this Issue:

Message from the Chair	1
Celebrating Alexander von Humboldt	1
Prof. Mary Perrelli	2
Dr. Camille Holmgren	2
Dr. Jason Knight	2
Dr. Stephen Vermette	3
Dr. Kelly Frothingham	3
Dr. Tao Tang	3
Prof. Veryan Vermette	4
Dr. Vida Vanchan	4
Dr. Wende Mix	4
Commencement 2019	5
Celebrating Alexander von Humboldt continued	5
Student News	5

Message from the Chair

Welcome to the Winter 2019 edition of the Geography and Planning Department newsletter. This past year has been busy and I hope you enjoy reading about what has been going on in the department.

First, we've had some big changes in department personnel. While still a valued member of our department, Dr. Kelly Frothingham has accepted a three-year position serving as Associate Dean of the School of Natural and Social Sciences. I'd like to take this opportunity to thank her for her exceptional leadership as chair and the fact that I get to take over such a strong, well-organized, and dynamic department. I know she will bring great energy and skill to her new role downstairs in

the Dean's office and be an asset to the school and campus. In addition, this summer saw the retirement of our secretary, Patty Korta. We will miss her smile and extensive expertise and we wish her all the best in her next chapter. Joining us as secretary is Lori Barry, who is quickly learning the ins and outs of the job and keeping us functioning smoothly. We would all like to extend a warm welcome to her.

Over the past year we've also launched two new programs, an Environmental Geography B.S. and a GIS Certificate. It's exciting to watch these programs take off and offer new opportunities for students.

Please keep reading to learn more about what our department has been doing!

Dr. Camille Holmgren



Students from GEG 365/565 on a trip to Seneca Bluffs Park

Celebrating Alexander von Humboldt

As a department of geography located within the city of Buffalo, we enjoy two bona fide connections to Alexander von Humboldt. As geographers, we recognize the foundational genius of Humboldt, himself a geographer, and with regard to Buffalo, we recall the centennial Humboldt celebration which took place here, in the city, 150 years ago (1869). It is by revisiting Humboldt's centennial celebration that we learn of where Buffalo's Humboldt – Humboldt Parkway and former Humboldt Park – came from.

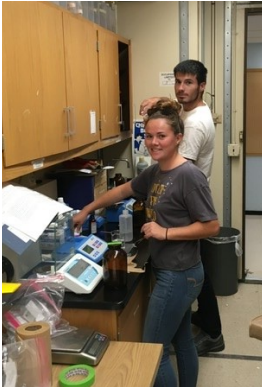
Buffalo's Humboldt sestercentennial (250th) birthday celebration included a display at German

Fest, numerous talks by Stephen Vermette (Canisius College, Aurora Historical Society, Burchfield Penney Art Center, and the local American Meteorological Society), and pathway tours linking Humboldt to exhibits within the Buffa-

lo Museum of Science (BMS) and the Aquarium of Niagara (including a birthday party put on by the aquarium's Humboldt penguins). Cont. p.5



Commemorative tree planted in the former Humboldt Park (now MLK Jr. Park). The tree is an oak, the national tree of both Germany and the United States.



Hailey Whitney and Collin Snyder processing outfall samples.

Prof. Mary Perrelli

2018-2019, included many opportunities for students to work on local storm water outfall inspection projects. Hailey Whitney and Collin Snyder spent the summer inspecting outfalls in the Town of Lancaster, and they are now working on inspections in the Town of Tonawanda. Jennifer Hanson is currently working as a GIS intern with the Erie County Department of Environment and Planning on another contract to provide in-

tern services to the County. I also continue to assist the campus with MS4 storm water requirements. We are currently updating the campus Stormwater Management Plan. In addition, I have been working with Dr. Julie Carter in the Exceptional Education Department at Buffalo State to help her pre-service teachers integrate GIS into elementary social studies lesson plans. We are working with a 4th grade

class at the Waterfront School in the City of Buffalo to implement these lesson plans. We also worked with UB on a proposal for an NSF Geotechnology Experiences for Students and Teachers (GTEST) grant to develop GIS camps to assist students and teachers with spatial thinking and how to incorporate these skills into elementary school lesson plans.



Dr. Holmgren hiking in the Ecuadorian cloud forest.

Dr. Camille Holmgren

Dr. Camille Holmgren traveled to Quito, Ecuador over the summer to present her research at the International Biogeography Society's Humboldt 250 Conference. As part of the conference, she travelled to many of the areas visited by Alexander von Humboldt that led to his insights into physical geography, including how nature varies with elevation. She spent time in the Amazon Basin observing monkeys, endangered giant otters, caiman,

countless birds, and bird-eating tarantulas; the cloud forest near Quito with toucans and over 25 species of hummingbirds, and the high Andean region with condors and snow-covered volcanoes. These explorations will provide nice examples and insights for her courses in physical geography and biogeography.

Dr. Holmgren also published three research articles in the journals *Ecology*, *Global Ecology and Biogeography*, and *Journal of Arid*

Environments, as well as continuing her research on the past vegetation at an archeological site in south-central Colorado.



Dr. Jason Knight

Dr. Jason Knight

In 2018-2019 Dr. Jason Knight continued to conduct applied research and contribute to local planning projects. His paper "Strategic Demolition for Shrinking and Shrunken Cities: A Case Study from Buffalo, NY, USA" was accepted for publication by the *Journal of Urban Regeneration and Renewal*. His work in local housing policy, specifically around vacant, abandoned, and tax delinquent properties, afforded him invites to multiple conferences. He

was invited to one local and one statewide housing conference, as well as a national experts roundtable. In October 2018, he was invited to a day-long workshop hosted by the University at Buffalo School of Architecture and Planning titled "What's Next for Buffalo-Niagara," held the day prior to the start of the Associate of Planning's annual conference, held in Buffalo. In May, he was a panelist at the "Imaging a More Livable

Niagara Falls-Exploring Solutions for the Future of the City, Niagara Falls, NY." In June, he was a panelist at the New York State Land Bank Associations annual conference, held in Buffalo. With a team of planners, he contributed to the Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing report for Erie County, the towns of Amherst, Cheektowaga, Tonawanda, and Hamburg and the City of Buffalo.

Dr. Stephen Vermette

A good part of my time over the past year was consumed organizing Buffalo's sescentennial (250th) celebration of Alexander von Humboldt – a famous geographer, explorer, and naturalist of the early 19th Century. Organizing these events provided me with the opportunity to connect in new ways with the “Buffalo” community. And I have no doubt that these connections will foster future projects.

Working with Buffalo's Federation of German American Soci-

eties provided me the opportunity to travel to Dortmund, Germany as part of the Buffalo Dortmund Sister City Delegation. The delegation celebrated the 40th Anniversary of the sister city relationship. I enjoyed German hospitality at its best. As part of that celebration, I presented a mayoral proclamation from Mayor Byron Brown to the OberBürgermeister (Ullrich Sierau) of Dortmund recognizing September 14, 2019 as Alexander von

Humboldt Day in the City of Buffalo.

The book “The Face of WNY's Weather” is completed, printed, and now available for a good read, and I continue to work – having given numerous keynote presentations – on local climate change issues.



Dr. Vermette presenting the OberBürgermeister of Dortmund, Germany, with the proclamation (left).

Dr. Kelly Frothingham

Dr. Frothingham developed a stream restoration monitoring project for Scajaquada Creek during her fall 2018 sabbatical and she is spending this fall semester implementing that project with students in her GEG 421/521 Watershed Analysis course. In fall 2016, students monitored pre-construction conditions and now, after intensive restoration activities coordinated by Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper, students are monitoring post-

construction conditions in the creek. The fall 2019 monitoring results will be added to the [story map](#) that Dr. Frothingham created to provide information to the public about the on-going restoration work in Scajaquada Creek.

In addition to continuing her stream restoration monitoring work, Dr. Frothingham is enjoying her new position as Associate Dean of the School of Natural and Social Sciences.

While she misses the daily interactions with colleagues and students in the Geography and Planning Department, serving as Associate Dean is proving to be a challenging and exciting opportunity. Dr. Frothingham started in the Dean's Office in January 2019.



Students in GEG 421/521 enjoy a beautiful fall day on a field trip to Scajaquada Creek in Forest Lawn

Dr. Tao Tang

Dr. Tang presented the recent research paper entitled “UAV based high-resolution monitoring and surveying of soil moisture status in a vineyard, Edan Valley, New York” at the 27th International Conference on Geoinformatics, Sydney, Australia, July 1 to 3 (Figure 1). The research was conducted with former graduate student Michael Radomski and two other collaborators. This paper was also presented at the New York State (NYS) GIS As-

sociation- GeoCon Conference 2019 in Syracuse, New York.

Dr. Tang continued the collaborations with Director of GIS Service Ms. Matthies-Wiza and Senior GIS Analyst Mr. Gan-gemi at the Erie County Department of Environment and Planning to offer students real-world service GIS or remote sensing projects in the GEG418-518 and GEG428-528 classes (Figure 2). Dr. Tang also serves as a member of the Profession-

al Development Committee, NYS GIS Association and the Award Committee, CP-GIS International Association.



Field visit during International Conference on Geoinformatics



Students practice drone imagery data collection on campus



Prof. Veryan Vermette
at the Hill of Crosses
in Lithuania

Prof. Veryan Vermette

My July in Poland as an English-language volunteer was greatly enriched this year by Stephen's participation. Seeing Poland through his eyes reawakened in me a delight in aspects I had become inured to. Together we experienced Krakow, Warsaw, the Tatra Mountains, the rolling plains, and met dozens of Polish language participants who came from all walks of life, including government officials, fashion moguls, an author, and an

'incognito' Poland-famous actress.

In August, my daughter and I shared a 3-week adventure through Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, and Finland. We immersed ourselves in local foods and customs, admired cultural and physical features, noted increasing Russian cultural influence as we travelled north through the Baltics, and gritted our teeth at increasing costs in

the same direction, culminating in Helsinki café ads for \$25 lattes!

From a summer of amazing experiences, a few stand out as highlights: frolicking in the Baltic Sea, encountering the unique Užupis Constitution which includes "A cat has the right not to love its owner, but must help out in time of need", and the profoundly moving Hill of Crosses in Lithuania.



Dr. Vida Vanchan

Dr. Vida Vanchan

Dr. Vanchan successfully organized the biggest Southeast Asia Week to date in March of 2019. The week featured six events including student posters display and research presentations on cultures of several Southeast Asian countries, a Buffalo Gamelan Club concert, a Gamelan music workshop, a puppet theater workshop and a panel discussion on democracy and the state of politics around the world.

She served as reviewer for a book on economic geography

and one of the interviewers for the NYS Master Teacher Program finalists that are part of the 2019 cohort of STEM Master Teachers. She also co-organized and chaired a session titled 'Towards Responsible Business? Innovations and Transformations in the Geographies of Production and Work' at the 2019 Annual Meeting of Association of American Geographers in Washington, DC.

Dr. Vanchan is currently a faculty associate for the Southeast Asia

Program Faculty Associates in Research (FAR) at Cornell University. She is also an affiliated faculty for the public Administration and Nonprofit Management Division of the Political Science Department at Buffalo State.



Dr. Wendé Mix

Dr. Wendé Mix

The Interdisciplinary Unit in Data Science & Analytics has been approved by SUNY. Dr. Mix is the Associate Chair/Coordinator for IUDSA & Data Science and Analytics M.S.. Additionally, SUNY has approved a Data Science and Analytics Certificate. Dr. Mix assists with recruiting, curriculum development, marketing, and teaching.

Most recently, Dr. Mix developed a story map and a web mapping application on the "Social Determinants of Health" in collaboration with advisory board member Kimberly Herrington, who is the Business Intelligence Project Coordinator at Horizon Health Services. Dr. Mix is

looking forward to completion of the renovation of her lake house (many years in the making) and a trip to Sapporo, Japan this December to ski at the mountain venues of the 1972 Olympics!

Commencement 2019

The photo on the right shows many, but not all, of the graduates who walked in the May 2019 commencement ceremony. 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 3, 2019 deadline. Your fellow students, plus department faculty and staff, look forward to celebrating your graduation at commencement!



Cont. Celebrating Alexander von Humboldt

There was SciNight (a night of discovery at the BMS) and presentations/activities for Buffalo State's Master Teacher Program. The month-long celebration ended with a commemorative tree planting in MLK Jr. Park (former Humboldt Park), a rededication of the 'Humboldt Room' at the BMS, and a presentation by Andrea Wulf (author of "Invention of Nature") at the BMS.

While there are many to thank, I wish to acknowledge the outsized support provided by our Geography & Planning Department, the Buffalo Museum of Science, and the local Federation of German American Societies.



Dr. Vermette revealing himself as a Humboldt groupie.

Student News

Student award winners from May 2019:

Chair's Discretionary Award: *Gregory Bream*

David Bullough Memorial Award for Academic Excellence: *Lucas Colon*

National Council for Geographic Education—outstanding student in geography: *Dominic Gentile*

Katheryne Whittemore Award for Outstanding Geography & Planning major: *Austin Smith*

National Council for Geographic Education—outstanding student in planning: *Rachel Sokoloff*

WNY American Planning Association: *Nicholas Quilty-Koval*

Congratulations to our award winners!



2019 Student 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.

SUNY Buffalo State
Geography & Planning Department
1300 Elmwood Avenue
Buffalo, NY 14223

Phone: 716-878-6216

Fax: 716-878-4009

E-mail: barryla@buffalostate.edu

We're on the web!
geography.buffalostate.edu



BUFFALO STATE
The State University of New York