

September 2011

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The University of Iowa

# GEOGRAPHY @ IOWA

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## Geography News

**Greetings from the Heartland!**  
This is our first newsletter in quite a few years, and we would like to reinstate this tradition in order to keep in touch with alumni and friends of the department. This will not only enable us to inform you about what is taking place in the Department of Geography at Iowa, but also to hear back from you about what is going on in your part of the world.

We have seen significant change in the department during the past year. First and foremost, we suddenly and unexpectedly lost a longtime member of the Department faculty, Rex Honey. Rex joined the department in 1974, spent over 36 years here. We have established an annual speaker series in Rex's honor as part of our weekly Kohn Colloquium to allow us to bring in distinguished speakers to continue discussions on topics that were important to Rex, our faculty, and students.

Other change has been necessary as we face the challenges presented by the current budget climate in post-secondary education. We are indeed quite fortunate because we have been able to hire three new faculty members (described in greater detail below) who started their academic careers at Iowa in

August. Maggie Carrel has just completed her PhD at the University of North Carolina, Heather Sander (PhD, Minnesota) is joining our faculty from a post-doctoral position with the EPA in Cincinnati, and Eric Tate has also just completed his PhD at the University of South Carolina. We are very excited to have them join us.

We are also fortunate because Geography faculty members continue to be involved as key players in highly competitive NSF programs. Most notably, the IGERT (Interdisciplinary Graduate Education and Training) program at NSF has funded our proposal (submitted together with faculty in Statistics and Actuarial Science, Computer Science, Civil and Environmental Engineering and Mechanical

Engineering) and we have admitted our first class of IGERT trainees this fall. This grant is quite a feather in our cap since it is the first-ever IGERT grant made to The University of Iowa.

Our students continue to fare very well. As you can see elsewhere in this newsletter, one of our students has earned a nationally-competitive Truman Scholar award. This is a notable distinc-



*Geography Department DEO*

tion. But what is even more impressive, is that the Department has had three students receive a Truman award in the past three years. This outstanding achievement points not only to the excellence of the students we are educating, but also to the mentorship they are receiving as they progress towards the completion of their degree requirements. I am very proud of this and, as a friend of the Department, this certainly reflects on the contributions and support from all of you as well.

Best wishes,

**Marc P. Armstrong, Chair,  
Professor and CLAS  
Collegiate Fellow**



“...Geography faculty members continue to be involved as key players in highly competitive NSF programs.”



## *NSF IGERT Awarded to UI*

Faculty members in The Department of Geography at The University of Iowa (UI) are among the leaders of an interdisciplinary team awarded a \$2.6 million National Science Foundation: Integrative Graduate Education and Research Training (IGERT) grant entitled “Geoinformatics for Environmental and Energy Modeling and Prediction (GEEMaP).” Geography professors Kathleen Stewart and David Bennett are co-PIs on the project, and geography professors Marc Armstrong, Marc Linderman, George Malanson, and Gerry Rushton are senior personnel. The project PI is Dr. Kate Cowles from the Department of Statistics. Other participating departments include Computer Science, Civil and Environ-

mental Engineering, Industrial Engineering, Biostatistics, Mathematics, and Political Science.

This is an interdisciplinary program for Ph.D. students supported by the National Science Foundation to provide students with a research experience in geographic information science and applied areas of environmental science and energy production (e.g., wind energy; hydroelectric energy; watershed management; contamination of air, soil, and water; flood prevention and control). The first cohort of IGERT students are starting their studies this fall.

## *Cross-Cultural Educational Experiences Conference*

India recently held their Cross-Cultural Educational Experiences Conference, a student-moderated conference where graduates of the [India Winterim Program](#) come together to share their stories and experiences.

UI India Winterim is made possible by:

### **Joan Lara Student Scholarships**

The Joan Lara Student Scholarship Fund at the University of Iowa was established by family and friends in memory of Joan. Its purpose is to support outstanding and promising students as they travel to present their research, conducting research, or participate in courses at regional, national, or international venues.

### **Chad E. Smith Scholarship Fund**

The fund was established by Seneca Environmental Services, Inc. and Chad Smith’s family and friends in memory of Chad E. Smith. Chad E. Smith received his B.A. degree in Political science and Sociology in 1992 and a B.S. degree in Geography in 1993. He was killed in a car accident in August 1994. He had been employed by Seneca Environmental Services, Inc. in Des Moines.

### **Comments from past recipients:**

“My experience in India was nothing short of amazing. I felt like I packed more living into those three weeks than I have in entire seasons. I’ve gotten to do a fair share of traveling in my life, but no country I’ve been to can compare to the vibrancy of India.

Visually, India is amazing. There are so many colors, so many people, that it can be overwhelming. I’ve been to Beijing before, but even that mega-city does not compare to the mass of humanity that can be found in Delhi.”

~Noah Haas, 2010-2011

### **Joan Lara international Travel Award Recipient**

“As we experienced life in the villages and on the campus in Chitrakoot, we experienced unmatched hospitality and came to understand a new sense of humanity, one that is founded on caring for the collective community before oneself. This is sustainable, and sustainability is ultimately the mission of the DRI’s Self-Reliance Campaign: “We do not stand for ourselves but for our kith and our kin; our kith and kin are those who are oppressed and neglected.” Captivated by this place, enthralled in this movement, I return to Iowa emboldened, refreshed, and grateful for my time in India. Although the comforts of a familiar home are justly enticing at winter break, I already feel nostalgia for India, a new kind of home, where I hope to be the same time next year.”

~Chelsea Krist, 2010-2011 **Chad E. Smith international Travel Award Recipient**



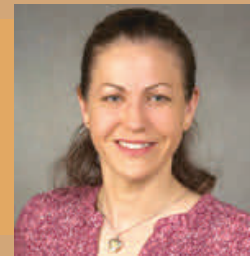
## Faculty News

During the past year the Geography department conducted searches for open tenure-track faculty positions. We welcome aboard Maggie Carrel, Heather Sander and Eric Tate.



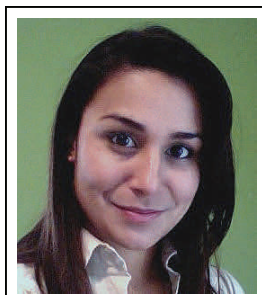
**Maggie Carrel** received her PhD from University of North Carolina Chapel Hill and is particularly interested in infectious diseases in Asia, and how environmental alteration and population migration act as drivers of disease ecologies. Her MA research considered the impact of flood protection on cholera incidence in Matlab, Bangladesh. She has published in PLoS One, Environmental Health, Health & Place, and the Bulletin of the World Health Organization.

**Heather Sander** is an EPA Postdoctoral Fellow in the National Exposure Research Laboratory, Ecological Exposure Research Division. She received her PhD from the University of Minnesota. Professor Sander is interested in developing sophisticated quantitative analytical approaches to answer fundamental questions about relationships between society and the environment, with particular reference to global change broadly alongside sustainable land and ecosystem management in urban and suburban ecosystems at local and regional scales.



**Eric Tate** is a geospatial modeler who is interested in the intersection of natural hazards and society. He received his PhD from The University of South Carolina. In previous work as an environmental engineer, he served on the development team for the HAZUS Flood Model, which simulates flooding processes and estimates impacts on the built environment. His work involves the development of geospatial decision support tools to aid researchers, practitioners, and policymakers in addressing natural hazards mitigation.

## Student Spotlight



*Veena Patel*

**Veena Patel has been named a 2011 Truman Scholar.** Patel is a 2011 UI graduate, majoring in Geography and pursuing a certificate in Sustainability Studies. The policy proposal by Patel for the Truman competition featured her interest in urban food that is local and healthy. Qualifying work by Patel included her practical ecoimagination in creating icEcoCabs and in helping generate an undergraduate organization for Geography majors. Patel's award marks the third straight year that a student from the Uni-

versity of Iowa has won a Truman Scholarship. For 2011, there are sixty Truman Scholars for the country as a whole. In 2009, the Truman Foundation named the University of Iowa one of its two Honor Institutions for excellence in preparing students for careers in public service.

**Christopher Page 2010 Truman Scholar:** Mr. Page, a 2011 graduate, double majored in geography and political science, with a minor in Chinese. In addition to studying abroad in China and interning with a Minnesota state legislator, Page was a student government senator.

**Rachel Nathanson 2009 Truman Scholar:** Ms. Nathanson, a 2010 graduate, majored in economics and geography in the College of Business and the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, respectively, and hopes to specialize in environmental law and policy in her future career.

**Shane Hubbard, Ph.D.** candidate in the Department of Geography, received a Governor's Volunteer Award from Governor Chester G. Culver during a special recognition ceremony held July 2010 in Cedar Rapids. Shane was honored with an Individual Volunteer Award by Johnson County, Iowa for continued support to the Johnson County Emergency Management Agency. During the June 2008 floods in Iowa City Shane provided invaluable GIS support to county emergency managers.



*Shane Hubbard receiving award from former Governor Chester G. Culver*

# The Annual Rex Honey Speaker Series



*Professor Rex Honey*

The Geography department is mourning the loss of Professor Rex Honey who passed away in October 2010. Rex Honey was a professor of geography at the University of Iowa (1974-2010) who was infused with a passion for international research and teaching. Rex was nationally and internationally known for his contributions to political geography and the geography of human rights. He was particularly interested in jurisdictional organization and cultural struggles over human rights, which he helped to advance in Nigeria, Jordan, New Zealand, India, and the United States. Rex was a co-founder of the UI Center for Human Rights and helped to launch its new certificate program; he served as the Center's associate director from 1999 to 2006. He also served as director of the UI's Crossing Borders Graduate Training Program (2006-10), the African Studies Program, and the Global Studies Program.

Dr. Joel Barkan, Senior Associate of the Africa Program, at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, Washington, DC, gave a talk on March 31, 2011 which was the first in the new Annual Rex Honey Speaker Series planned by the Department of Geography in Professor Honey's memory.



**At The University of Iowa, we conduct research and teach students about social and biophysical systems, GIScience, and the events that shape the world in which we live. You can help our efforts, by contributing today at <http://www.givetoioowa.org/geography>.**

**To support the Rex Honey Speaker Series, please contact Professor Gerard Rushton via e-mail [gerard-rushton@uiowa.edu](mailto:gerard-rushton@uiowa.edu) or by phone (319) 335-0162.**

## Meet An Alum

*Charles K. Huyck, Executive Vice President, ImageCat, Inc.  
Geography, 1993*



Mr. Huyck is a geographer specializing in the integration of advanced geospatial technologies and emergency management. As Executive Vice President of [ImageCat, Inc.](http://www.imagecat.com), he oversees a team of engineers, scientists, and programmers developing software tools and data processing algorithms for loss estimation and risk reduction. At The University of Iowa, Mr. Huyck studied GIS with Professor Marc Armstrong and Environmental Management with Professor Rebecca Roberts, earning a Bachelor of Science degree in 1993. He has over 15 years of experience in GIS analysis and application development. He introduced GIS and Remote Sensing to EQE International, where he served as GIS Programmer Analyst on several loss estimation and research projects. At the California Governor's Office of Emergency services, he was responsible for geospatial analysis, database development, and mapping disaster information for the Northridge Earthquake, California winter Storms, and California fire storms. Mr. Huyck has contributed to the development of several online and desktop programs, for example: the HAZUS flood module, EPEDAT, USQuake, GeoVideo, and Better DEMS. He has authored over 50 papers, many pertaining to damage detection and inventory development with remotely sensed data.

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Visit the Geography department when you're in Iowa City!

