

## Across the Division

### **Brandon University**

During fall 2017, Brandon University Department of Geography welcomed Dr. Alex Koiter to its ranks. Alex completed his PhD at the University of Northern British Columbia and brings with him teaching and research expertise in geomorphology and watershed management. The fall also marked the first offering of a new unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) certification course in compliance with Transport Canada. The course is one of the first of its kind in Canada and offers students instruction on everything from pilot navigation to map interpretation, to Canadian aviation regulations. More recently, Drs. Chris Malcolm and Doug Ramsey completed a report for the provincial government on the role of community museums in southwestern Manitoba. Their report outlines the importance of community museums in rural tourism and highlights the fact that they often suffer from a lack of funding and are dependent on an aging set of volunteers to run them. The department congratulates Dr. Rachel Herron on her appointment by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research as Canada Research Chair in Rural and Remote Mental Health. Further, Dr. Peter Whittington and colleagues from University of Alberta, University of Waterloo, and University of Laval were awarded an NSERC – Collaborative Research and Development (CRD) grant to investigate management and ecological restoration of peatlands to support a sustainable Canadian horticultural peat industry. Not least, the department extends big congratulations to Brandice Hollier (MSc candidate with Drs. Whittington and Malcolm) who was awarded a Manitoba Graduate Scholarship. Finally, the department has joined twitter. Please follow us @BU\_Geog for the latest news and updates.

### **Lakehead University**

Lakehead University's Department of Geography and the Environment embarked this year on a process of remodelling and updating its programs. At the graduate level, the Master of Environmental Studies in Northern Environments and Cultures program is being expanded to include a wider range of faculty and has been renamed to simply Master of Environmental Studies. At the undergraduate level, work is being done to define concentrations of study for particular student interests such as geoscience and climate change, and to add a co-operative education option. The department went through a cyclical undergraduate review in 2018, which reinforced the need for this remodelling in the context of challenges such as reduced enrollment and faculty. No staffing changes have taken place since Dr. Todd Randall was appointed Dean of Science and Environmental Studies in 2017. In September 2017, the department hosted an interdisciplinary Forum on Climate Change, but is hoping for no conflicts with the PCAG conference in Hecla this fall.

### **University of Manitoba**

The reporting year in the Department of Environment and Geography has been busy with curriculum development, discussions of program restructuring and the successful applications for high-level research chair positions. Both the BA and BSc in Geography have moved to reinvigorate their undergraduate curriculums with streams and new course development, while the Environmental Studies and Sciences programs have begun discussions for strategic renewal of their programming. Dr. Mark Hanson has led these changes in his position as Acting Chair of the department. The department has also seen the recruitment of several chairs: A Canada 150 Chair and a Canada Excellence Research Chair, both of which come with additional chair positions granted at the university level.

The department is able to report a range of exciting research brought to completion or underway. Dr. Bruce Erickson was awarded a SSHRC grant to study polar bear tourism and neoliberal landscapes in Churchill. Dr. Jonathan Peyton published *Unbuilt Environments* (UBC Press 2017), a monograph that has won multiple awards. Jonathan also received the U of M/UMFA Merit Award for Excellence in Scholarly Research. Dr. Stephane McLachlan continued as the Chair of Wa Ni Ska Tan: Manitoba Hydro Alliance, a \$2.5 million SSHRC grant. Dr. Feiyue Wang was awarded a Tier I Canada Research Chair in Arctic Environmental Chemistry. Dr. C.J. Mundy continued as Graduate Chair and received several major grants, as did Dr. Jens Ehn, relating to ongoing research on

Arctic oceanography. Dr. Tim Papakyriakou stepped down from his position as the Director of the Centre for Earth Observation Science to focus more directly on research. He was replaced in that position by Dr. John Iacozza, who also led a series of changes to the physical geography curriculum. Dr. Ronald Stewart and John Hanesiak continue to develop the undergraduate atmospheric science specialization. Lisa Ford (with Dr. Alan F. Arbogast, Michigan State University and Dr. Daryl Dagesse, Brock University) published *Discovering Physical Geography* (Wiley 2017). Dr. Janna Wilson continued her undergraduate teaching excellence, while Dr. Bonnie Hallman and Dr. Mary Benbow dedicated most their 2017 academic year to administrative positions at the faculty level.

Several other exciting research initiatives were delayed by extenuating circumstances: construction at the Churchill Marine Station was delayed by the conditions of the rail track to Churchill, while the summer research season on the Arctic Research Vessel HMSS Amundsen was interrupted by weather and the distress calls of other sailors.

### University of North Dakota

During the reporting period, the Geography and GISc Department experienced both triumphs and tragedies. The department hosted the 2017 PCAG meeting in Morris, Manitoba in late September with the support of the Virginia George Inheritance Fund, the Dakota Science Center, the Association of North Dakota Geographers, as well as contributions of sweat equity from many colleagues across the division when the Trump Travel Ban prevented the program being held in conjunction with the AAG GP-RM regional meeting in Grand Forks during mid-October. Long-time departmental secretary, Cindy Purpur, retired. The department recognizes her strong efforts through the years to assist in the success of many undergraduates, graduate students, and faculty. Fortunately in the budget cuts at UND the department was able to have her position retained and filled by Valerie Bensley. Unfortunately, Dr. Michael Niedzielski elected not to return from his developmental leave and signed resignation papers effective 2019–2020. He will be teaching only online from Poland during 2018–2019 before ending his appointment at UND. Dr. Christopher Atkinson, a stalwart supporter of PCAG, has moved from Grand Forks to Melrose, Minnesota in order to be with his wife and children. Lisa Atkinson was selected to be the community development planner for this part of the North Star State, so Chris will be teaching online for UND in 2018–2019. Meanwhile, the department's graduate program has seen Brandon University alumnus Peter Brandt successfully defend his thesis in May of 2018. The department's graduate teaching assistantship roster was slashed by a third in the 2017–2018 'budgetary bloodletting,' the consequence of certain administrators thinking that the Bakken Boom would be lasting forever in the Williston Basin oilfields. However, there is optimism that there will be a rebound in the state's economy but it is guarded optimism tinged with pessimism in light of current global geopolitics. The decision to appoint Dr. Bradley Rundquist, a former chairperson of the department, to be Interim Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences for 2018–2019 is duly noted. Finally, there will be a delegation of folks from the Grand Forks campus and the Dakota Science Center coming to the 2018 PCAG meeting at Hecla Island which looks to be a bright spot on the horizon for the department's faculty, graduate students, and undergraduates.

### University of Regina

The department celebrated the convocation of 19 undergraduates in our Environmental Studies, Geography and Geographic Information Science Major and Minor programs this past year. Two faculty members are on sabbatical this year: Dr. Randy Widdis and Dr. Julia Siemer. The department underwent its first Academic Unit Review since 2002, and we are excitedly working to apply the recommendations that will carry us into the future. We were also delighted to offer a summer field course exploring the history and geography of Berlin, Germany.

### University of Saskatchewan

Last year the department welcomed Dr. Krystopher Chutko whose research focuses on isotope hydrology, lacustrine processes, and paleoenvironmental reconstruction. This year the department welcomed three new members. Dr. Corinne Schuster-Wallace combines research interests in water, health, and wellbeing. Corinne joins us from the Institute for Water, Environment and Health, part of the United Nations University at Hamilton, Ontario. Dr. Ehab Diab brings expertise in urban transportation and network planning. Ehab is a former NSERC post-doc scholar from the University of Toronto's Transportation Research Institute. The University has recruited NASA Jet Propulsion Laboratory senior water scientist Dr. Jay Famiglietti as Canada 150 Research Chair in Hydrology and Remote Sensing. Jay will hold a joint faculty appointment in the Department of Geography and Planning. After 10 years as Department Head, Dr. Dirk de Boer has stepped down to take on the role of acting Vice Dean Indigenous in the College of Arts and Science. Dr. Alec Aitken has replaced him as Department Head with Dr. Bram Noble serving as Acting Head in 2018–2019. This year has seen many personal accomplishments and honours. Dr. Chutko was honoured by University of Saskatchewan Students Union at the Experience in Excellence Awards Gala for his excellence in teaching, student involvement, leadership, and bettering the student experience. Dr. Bram Noble was awarded a SSHRC Insight Grant of \$91,800 for researching Knowledge-based Impact Assessment for Renewable Energy Transition. Leigh Thomas, a third-year Regional and Urban Planning student, received the Academic Excellence Award dur-

ing Indigenous Achievement Week. Thomas who is from the Cree First Nation community of Chitek Lake is particularly interested in Indigenous planning in the 21st century through community-led initiatives, traditional Indigenous governance systems and integrating Indigenous ways of knowing into planning practices. Last but not least, Dr. John Pomeroy was awarded the prestigious J. Tuzo Wilson Medal for outstanding contributions in the field of geophysical sciences at a ceremony in Vancouver during the annual meeting of the Canadian Geophysical Union.

### **University of Winnipeg**

One highlight of this exciting academic year was the joint effort of the Departments of Geography and Environmental Studies and Sciences to successfully propose a new graduate program to the University with the next step being provincial approval. A range of research projects are ongoing in the department. Dr. Ed Cloutis continues to work with the NASA Mars Rover 2020 teams, including the ExoMars Trace Gas Orbiter NOMAD instrument science team preparing for analysis when the spacecraft settles into its final data acquisition orbit. Dr. Patricia Fitzpatrick is the Co-Principal Investigator of a High North Programme (Norway) funded collaboration between the University of Winnipeg and NTNU Gjøvik. The Department of Geography along with broader support from the University hosted its first cohort of Norwegian exchange students in September 2017. The students spent the week learning about sustainability initiatives and energy research at UW and elsewhere in the province. Dr. Danny Blair and Dr. Ian Mauro are the co-directors of the Prairie Climate Centre that in 2017 received a \$1M grant from Environment and Climate Change Canada to complete the online and bilingual Climate Atlas of Canada. Dr. Nora Casson was awarded the 2018 UW Chancellor's Research Chair to investigate relationships between water, landscape, and environmental stressors such as climate change. On sabbatical in Australia, Dr. Joni Storie collaborated with Dr. Neil Sims of Land and Water, Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization (Melbourne), to examine the ability to extract forest biomass measures from synthetic aperture radar and optical remotely sensed datasets for areas in Queensland and Tasmania. The department is also appreciative for the commitment of Dr. Marc Vachon as the Department Head for six years, with Dr. Chris Storie now accepting a three-year term in the role. In addition, the department welcomes back Dr. Blair after his tenure as Associate Dean of Science and more recently the Acting Dean of Science. We are also pleased to report that 20 undergraduate Geography students were awarded UW scholarships totalling \$15,000 during this academic year. Finally, the department will be hosting the Canadian Association of Geographers meeting in May of 2019 with Dr. Matt Dyce as the Conference Chair. We are looking forward to seeing many of you in Winnipeg.