We’ve Moved!

Geography Department moves from the Student Wing to Old Johnson

The Geography department has moved across campus from the Student Wing of the Lecture Hall to the recently renovated Old Johnson. The move took place during the winter break after finals had been completed. This is at least the third time the department has moved, according to Lucius Willis, a former BU graduate student who now works as a professional staff member for the department. “We moved from the Library Tower to the ground floor of the Student Wing sometime during the late 1970s,” said Willis, “and then during the 1980s we needed more space and moved to the second floor of the Student Wing. Every move has been a step up in terms of space and facilities,” he said.

Willis noted that the department now has two labs, GIS and remote sensing, and two classrooms. “This is a big plus,” he said. “We used to have to close the lab when the classroom was in use.”

The department now occupies the first and ground floors of Old Johnson and is equipped with the latest classroom technology including widescreen high-definition televisions, modern projection equipment, and blue ray and DVD players.

Geography Department Chair Norah Henry indicated that the extra space is needed now that the department has hired three new faculty members (see page 2).

Construction workers can be seen putting the finishing touches on Old Johnson - The Geography Department’s new home.

Geography graduate students Stephanie Brewer and Abraham Bothhale Motau hard at work in the new Remote Sensing/GIS Lab A in Old Johnson.

Lucius Willis tends to the more than 50-computers equipped with the ArcGIS platform in GIS Lab B.
Frazier Wins Award

Professor John Frazier received one of the most prestigious awards given by the Association of American Geographers in April during the AAG meetings in Chicago.

The Ronald Abler Service Award is given to a person for life-long achievement in serving the discipline of Geography in important ways. The award recognized John’s contributions in having an impact on two geography sub-disciplines, which is highly unusual.

He created two transformative conferences: the Applied Geography Conferences, which are in their 38th year, and the International Race, Ethnicity and Place Conferences, which began in 2002.

New Faculty to Join us in the Fall

The Binghamton University Geography Department has hired three new faculty members:

Tim Frazier, associate professor of geography, natural hazards -- floods & hurricanes

Wan Yu, assistant professor of geography, Asian migration

Qiusheng Wu, assistant professor of geography, Geotechnologies & physical geography

REP Conference Update

The International REP VII, led by Binghamton University's Geography Department and Texas Christian University, met in October 2014 in Ft. Worth, Texas. Approximately 400 attendees from a variety of disciplines and professions attended and more than 100 different institutions and agencies were represented. Attendees had the opportunity to experience the local culture and visit places such as the downtown, Fort-Worth Water Gardens, the Sixth Floor Museum, Dealey Plaza, historic African American neighborhoods and the La Gran Plaza.

This Conference began in 2002 in Binghamton and has rotated around the continental United States and Puerto Rico since. Nearly all of the Geography Department faculty attended and participated. Five of our students also attended and three, Luis Gonzales, Luis Ortiz-Sanchez and Stephanie Brewer, won prizes in the student competition for best papers.

REP VIII will be held at Kent State University in 2016, September 21-25, and again will be directed by John Frazier.
GIS Core Facility

The GIS Core Facility has been busy with several projects this past year including an update to the web-based campus map. This past academic year the facility was awarded a student-faculty Intern - recent Binghamton University Geography graduate, Denee Jenkins ('15), was assigned to work on this project.

Using ArcGIS Online, the facility developed a web mapping application that GIS Core Facility Associate Director Kevin Heard feels is superior to the current campus web map offering. “The web map has a wealth of information at your fingertips including links to department websites, on demand Google Streetview, floor plans of buildings, and a variety of clickable layers including bus stops and routes, food places, athletic locations, parking lots, and more,” he said. “The application also offers the ability to print as well as a geolocation function for smartphones. We are still working with the administration to replace the current web map with this new one.”

The following is a link to the new web-based campus map:


Gamma Theta Upsilon

The Zeta Rho Chapter of Gamma Theta Upsilon (GTU), Binghamton University's local chapter of the Geography International Honor Society, held its spring semester induction ceremony on May 7.

New inductees include:

Undergraduates:
Kimberly Albrecht
Mitchell LaRosa
Shan Lin
Amanda Rizzi
Frank Tolbert
Nicole Vogt
Sylvie Yudin

Graduate Students:
Stephanie Brewer
Johannes Buerger
Tammie Harris
Huiyu Lin
Luis Ortiz Sanchez
Norberto Quiñones

Thanks to Naomi Lazarus for her assistance with the Spring 2015 GTU Induction and Investiture.
Florence Margai - A Celebration of Life

As many of you know, we lost our friend and colleague Dr. Florence Magainda Lansana Margai, on January 8, 2015, quite unexpectedly. Binghamton University celebrated Florence's life in the Anderson Center for the Performing Arts on February 23, 2015. Family, friends, and colleagues spoke at the event, including Florence’s sisters - Alberta Momah and Martha Yilla, Harpur Dean Anne E. McCall, Geography Chair Norah Henry, Professor Eugene Tettey-Fio, and Florence’s PhD advisor at Kent State University, Milton E. Harvey. The Nuporfe African Dance Drumming Ensemble, Binghamtonics, and the Binghamton University Gospel Choir performed.

Florence was born in Freetown, Sierra Leone on November 6, 1962. After graduating from Fourah Bay College with honors, she received her Master’s of Arts and PhD from Kent State University. She went on to teach at Hunter college until 1994 when she moved to teach Geography at Binghamton University. She became a full professor here, and in 2011 became Associate Dean of the Graduate School. In 2013, Florence became the Associate Dean of Harpur College of Arts and Sciences at Binghamton University. She was also the Interim Director of the Institute of Global Cultural Studies (IGCS).

She loved and dedicated her life to her work in environmental and health disparities but even more to her family, her friends, and her colleagues. Florence passed away on January 8, 2015. She is survived by her husband, William, her daughters, Luba, and Konya, her mother, and her siblings, as well as many other family members and friends.

The Binghamton University Gospel Choir sings, "My Life, My Love, My All" in celebration of Dr. Florence Margai’s life at the Anderson Center on February 23.
Van Riper Library Reorganized

Looking for a particular book to help finish that thesis? Well, searching through Van Riper Library just became a little bit easier.

All of the books in the Van Riper collection were cataloged in an Excel file prior to the Geography Department’s move from the Student Wing to Old Johnson. They are now being classified and labeled according to the Library of Congress classification system and a computerized ‘check-out’ system will keep track of the location of every book.

The collection holds more than 3,000 books in addition to geography-related journals that date back to the early 1900s.

Graduate Intern Stories: In their own words

Cassandra Gascon

I am about to enter the final year of my master’s study where I am concentrating on urban and regional planning. I am interning this summer with the Binghamton Metropolitan Transportation Study (BMTS), the Metropolitan Planning Organization of the Binghamton urban area. At BMTS, I aid in many transportation planning activities, such as working to publish the 2015 Bicycle Plan, using ArcGIS to map pedestrian and bicyclist facilities, and performing various studies, such as auditing traffic around local elementary schools to determine the greatest need for crossing guards. I will also be participating in the agency’s Long Range Plan update, as well as assisting in the preparation for several summer bicycling clinics and events. This June will mark one year since I started interning with BMTS, and it has been an incredible learning experience. I have no doubt that interning this summer will be as equally awesome!

Tammie Harris

After finishing my first year of the master’s program in the Environmental and Resource Management track, I will be completing an internship this summer with Catskill Watershed Corporation in Margaretville, NY. CWC was created as part of the 1997 Memorandum of Agreement between New York City and the communities that provide New York City with its water supply. The goal of the MOA was to implement measures to allow NYC’s water to remain unfiltered while simultaneously helping the rural communities in the watershed sustain economically. As part of the MOA, CWC manages and provides funding for wastewater and storm water management, flood mitigation, education, and economic development in the watershed communities. As an intern with CWC, I will be working with wastewater, storm water, and flood mitigation projects. Specifically, I will meet and work with community members and leaders; review reports, plans, and other documentation for CWC’s projects; visit construction sites; and help update flood maps for the watershed communities.

I am fortunate to have an opportunity where I will gain invaluable experience while doing work that will benefit the region I call home!
Alumni Update

Merike Treier (2003)

After earning her Master’s Degree in 2003, Merike went on to work for a non-profit organization in upstate New York. She is currently the executive director of the Downtown Committee of Syracuse, Inc. She is working to improve the quality of life in Syracuse by working with tenants and property owners to make the downtown more attractive, safe and accessible for everyone.

Ramon Concepcion Torres (2008)

Ramon worked with the Juntos Center for Advancing Latino Health at the University of Kansas Medical Center and helped the Mexican Consulate in Kansas City, Missouri, coordinate their Ventanilla de Salud Program. He then joined the IRIS Educational Media behavioral research and development firm. As a Research Associate, Ramon formalizes professional, collaborative relationships with community leaders and organizations in the state of Oregon to advance company and community goals. His work supports the development of innovative behavioral research projects and interactive educational resources that inspire confidence and professional development for teachers, students, and families.

In his time off, Ramon enjoys traveling, studying regions, and connecting with communities all around the USA, Baja California, and British Columbia.

Ramon said, “The Geography Graduate Program discipline at Binghamton University provided me with the necessary academic and leadership tools in order to become a regional and a global citizen. Our professors always gave us a great opportunity to be ourselves and to thrive through hard work. The department always made you feel welcome and at home. It’s easy to miss it.”

Aaron Werner (2005)

After graduation, Aaron took a private sector job with MSA Consulting, Inc., a planning and engineering consulting firm based in the Coachella Valley area of Southern California, where he spent three years as a planner and GIS manager assisting residential and commercial developers with environmental due diligence for property transactions, environmental impact assessment, and navigating the municipal approval process for various projects. In 2008, he returned to New York and switched over to the public sector, taking a position with the environmental planning division of the NYC Department of Housing Preservation & Development (HPD), the largest municipal financier/developer of affordable housing in the nation, and the primary NYC agency charged with implementing the Mayor’s Housing Plan. He currently serves as Deputy Director of Environmental Planning with HPD, overseeing a staff of five environmental planners. The division is responsible for environmental impact assessment and compliance connected to land transactions and financing programs intended to facilitate the new construction or preservation of affordable housing on City and privately-owned property throughout the five boroughs. He is originally from the town of Liberty, New York (about 2 hours east of Binghamton on Rt. 17) and currently resides in Jackson Heights, Queens with his wife and 3-year old daughter (with a new addition expected any day now). In his spare time Aaron enjoys sports and exercise, photography, expanding his music collection, and playing with his kids.

About his time at Binghamton, Aaron said, “I spent six amazing years at Binghamton (undergrad and grad) and have fond memories of the geography department faculty and fellow graduate students. The faculty is extremely knowledgeable, experienced, and well connected in academia. The department’s incorporation of GIS into the majority of the curriculum and establishment of the GIS Core Facility provides students with the tools they need to be successful in the field.”
Graduate Awards

Artur Yakubov and Tammie Harris, Best TA co-winners

Eliot Kershner, Hsu Award, Best remote sensing paper by a graduate student

Junjie Ma, Best Overall Graduate Student

SPECIAL THANKS

Thank you to the alumni, faculty and community supporters who have contributed to the department. These donations have contributed to student life in many ways, including assisting in travel to conferences, scholarships, research expenses for honors and masters theses, graduate student recruitment, our annual speaker series, and countless other ways. The Department thanks the following for their continued contributions:

• Shin-Yi Hsu
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• Lucius Willis
• Norah Henry
• Jane Huang
• Peter Bronsky
• Kathleen McDonald Bronsky

Editor
Brendan McGovern

Reporter
Stephanie Brewer

Best TA co-winner Artur Yakubov with Graduate Director Dr. Mark Blumler at the Graduate Luncheon on May 15.

Eliot Kershner, Hsu Award recipient for best remote sensing paper by a graduate student.

News in brief

Our secretary, Maureen Truesdail (seen here with the Captain) recently returned from a vacation cruise. Welcome back, Mo. We missed you.

Middle States Conference

The Geography Department will host the annual meeting of the Middle States Division of the AAG in Binghamton in October, 2015. The Middle States Division is a regional subdivision of the Association of American Geographers representing members and geography departments in Delaware, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania and Puerto Rico.

The Future

The Department will be welcoming several new graduate students in the fall. Stay tuned for our next newsletter to find out about them and other Department events. Please, if you have any news, forward it to Brendan McGovern, bmcgove2@binghamton.edu.

If you know a Geography alum, please forward this to him/her and let us have his/her email so we do not miss him/her next time. Thanks! The Editor