department of
GEOGRAPHY
COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS & SCIENCES
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN
WINTER 2011

RIBOT LEADS MAJOR STUDY OF DEMOCRACY IN FORESTRY DECISION MAKING

Associate professor Jesse Ribot is co-leading a major study funded by a grant from the Swedish International Development Agency that is delving into the representation of rural populations within forestry decision making. About $1 million of the grant monies is going to the Social Dimensions of Environmental Policy Initiative, directed by Ribot. The grant will fund the creation of the Responsive Forest Governance Initiative (RFGI), a three-year Africa-wide comparative environmental-governance research and training program to enable representative, responsive, and accountable local decision making in forestry.

These woodcutters of Eastern Senegal have no voice in the forestry policies and projects that affect them.

Wood cut for charcoal production in Eastern Senegal.

The objective of the research is to strengthen representation of forest-based, rural populations within forestry decision making through local government. RFGI will help institutionalize responsive and accountable local governance processes that reduce vulnerability, enhance local well-being, and improve forest management, which will all involve strengthening local rights and representation.

Researchers will examine how international and national institutions (government agencies and non-governmental bodies) integrate representation into their policy, project planning, and implementation processes in forestry. By understanding the choices made by these higher-scale institutions, it is possible to understand why and how representation has had such a poor track record in forestry to date.

The four core countries to be studied are Burkina Faso, Ghana, Senegal, and Uganda, with additional case studies from Africa, Asia, and Latin America to be integrated into the program as opportunities arise. The researchers will closely collaborate with leading entities like the African Union and the UN Economic Commission for Africa, with the eventual aim of increasing the awareness and understanding of local representation in forestry decision making.

Message From the Head

One of the constant challenges we face in the Department of Geography when trying to recruit new majors is the question: "What am I going to do with a degree in geography?" Perhaps all of us who pursued a degree in geography have been haunted by this question at one time or another. The popular image of geography as trivia, an image reinforced by the popularity of certain parlor games and by surveys of geographical knowledge reported in various media, has led many students and their parents to view the answer to this question negatively. Such a view also reflects the lack of exposure many in our society have to the content of modern geography given its near absence in the high-school curriculum. A final stumbling block is the scarcity of job advertisements with the lead: Geographer Wanted. Geography is a diverse field—a characteristic that many of us see as a strength that initially attracted us to the discipline. This diversity, however, also means that career opportunities for geographers are broad—so broad that the market for potential careers is difficult to define. When someone pursues a degree in architecture, civil engineering, accounting, or psychology, it is rather easy to identify the types of career opportunities associated with these degrees. The case is not so simple for geography. We can point potential majors to various career information resources on geography, many of which are Web-based, but lists of careers ranging from real estate appraiser to environmental scientist may only confirm to some that geography has no well-defined job market and that finding a professional position after graduation will be difficult.

A more personalized approach to answering the question is to point out to interested students where graduates from our program are now employed and how they are using the skills they acquired while pursuing their degrees. This approach brings home the message that students graduating from our program are indeed employable and that career opportunities exist for those who major in geography at the University of Illinois. For this information, we must to turn to you, our alumni. Over the years, our department has not done a good job of keeping track of the careers that you, our graduates, are pursuing and how geography has played a role in your careers. To help us connect with you and to have you help us, we would love to hear from you about what you are doing and how you are using your training in geography. Please take a moment to send me an email (brhoads@illinois.edu), fill out the alumni information form at http://go.illinois.edu/geographyalumni, or send a letter by mail to update us on your career. Also, if any of you would like to visit the department to talk to undergraduates about how your degree in geography has benefitted you, please let us know. We look forward to hearing from you!

Bruce Rhoads
Head

Winter 2011
Department of Geography
School of Earth, Society and Environment
College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

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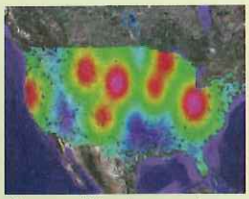
College of Liberal Arts & Sciences AT ILLINOIS

Department Renews Emphasis on Geographic Information Science

The Department of Geography is moving towards an increased emphasis on Geographic Information Science in both its research and teaching endeavors. This change is meant to reflect the increased centrality of geographic information systems (GIS) techniques within the discipline to study the environmental, physical, and social phenomena with which geographers have traditionally been concerned.

The department envisions contributing more broadly to the development of knowledge and technologies within GIScience, a field that undergirds the workings of GIS. And, as both private and public industries have signaled a strong demand for professionals with expertise in geospatial techniques, the department will undertake a renewed emphasis to attract and train undergraduate students in these techniques.

Several initiatives reflect the effort to accomplish these goals. Newly tenured associate professor Shaowen Wang leads the GIS Group's development of cyberinfrastructure GIS, tasked with networking powerful computers in various locales to solve complicated problems with massive data sets.



Shaowen Wang's research taps into the power of supercomputers to rethink maps and spaces.

The National Science Foundation has funded this initiative through a $4.4 million grant, with the University of Illinois as the lead institution among a consortium that includes ESRI, the U.S. Geological Survey, and research institutes at Arizona State, Georgia Tech, the University of Washington, and the University of California at Santa Barbara. The aim is to create Cyber GIS, a software framework for spatial analysis and modeling that leverages the power of supercomputers linked by a cyberinfrastructure. Such a system will overcome computational limitations of previous GIS software and technologies.

The department has also hired an assistant professor, **Dr. Jonathan Greenberg**, who will be a key member of the GIScience undergraduate and graduate programs. Arriving at the University of Illinois in January 2012, Jonathan is currently an assistant project scientist at the Center for Spatial Technologies and Remote Sensing at the University of California at Davis, where he is working with advanced remote sensing and GIS techniques to map environmental change.

A couple of his projects involve creating highly accurate, high-resolution maps of the Lake Tahoe Basin and Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta to help identify potential environmental problems. At the University of Illinois, Jonathan will not only contribute to research in GIScience but also teach undergraduate and graduate courses in GIS and remote sensing.

Finally, the department received authorization to search for a full-time instructor in GIS at the PhD level. The hiring of an instructor will allow the department to offer several new or seldom taught advanced GIS courses on a regular basis. The instructor will also be tasked with helping to develop an online undergraduate GIS certificate program in geography.

Professors Study the Effects of Mississippi River Flooding

This past year the Mississippi River experienced record flooding during the spring and early summer. This exceptional event necessitated releases of water from the flooding river into emergency spillways on the floodplain.

As part of this effort, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers used explosives to breach protective levees along the river to save the town of Cairo, Ill., and divert rising water into the Birds Point-New Madrid floodway, inundating 130,000 acres of farmland. After the levees were breached, the flow of water into this floodway was unregulated. Farther downstream, controlled releases of floodwaters from the swollen river occurred at the Morganza spillway in northern Louisiana and the Bonnet Carre spillway near New Orleans. The flow of water into these two spillways is regulated by mechanically controlled gates.

Birds Point-New Madrid Floodway (left) after levee breach (May 3, 2011) and (right) after Floodwaters receded (June 4, 2011). Images From NASA Earth Observatory.


Breached levee at the upstream end of the Birds Point-New Madrid floodway.

During the flood, a team of scientists at the University of Illinois, including Professors James Best and Bruce Rhoads in the Department of Geography, approached the National Science Foundation about documenting the effects of the flooding on the physical environment. The magnitude of this event provides a rare opportunity to study how large floods influence the landscape surrounding the river. Moreover, the release of floodwaters through the spillways serves as a large field-scale experiment in which to examine flood impacts under regulated and unregulated conditions. In June 2011, the team received a grant for Rapid Response Research from NSF to explore the influence of the floodwaters moving through the spillways on patterns of erosion and deposition and on chemical properties of inundated soils.

The project is being conducted in collaboration with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the U.S. Geological Survey, the National Aeronautical and Space Administration (NASA), and Southern Illinois University. The goal is to rapidly collect critical data during the flood and immediately after waters recede from the spillways. In the Birds Point-New Madrid floodway, airborne LIDAR (Light Detection and Ranging) and hyperspectral imagery from NASA's

Erosion of gullies in the Birds Point-New Madrid Floodway by floodwaters.

Airborne Visible/Infrared Imaging Spectrometer (AVIRIS) are being used to map patterns of erosion and deposition caused by the flood and to detect the chemical effects of flooding on soil properties. Dr. Jonathan Greenberg, now at the University of California at Davis and who has accepted a position as an assistant professor in the Department of Geography starting in January 2012, has helped organize the collection of these remote-sensing data. The LIDAR/AVIRIS mapping is complemented by LIDAR data collected before the flood by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, by measurements of flow conditions during the flood by the U.S. Geological Survey, and by ground-based sampling and testing of soils by scientists at Southern Illinois University. A field visit to the floodway in June 2011 was conducted to examine the breached levees and erosion by floodwaters. The U of I team has also collected field data on characteristics of sediment erosion and deposition in the Morganza and Bonnet Carre floodways using a new boat outfitted with state-of-the-art equipment for large river research.

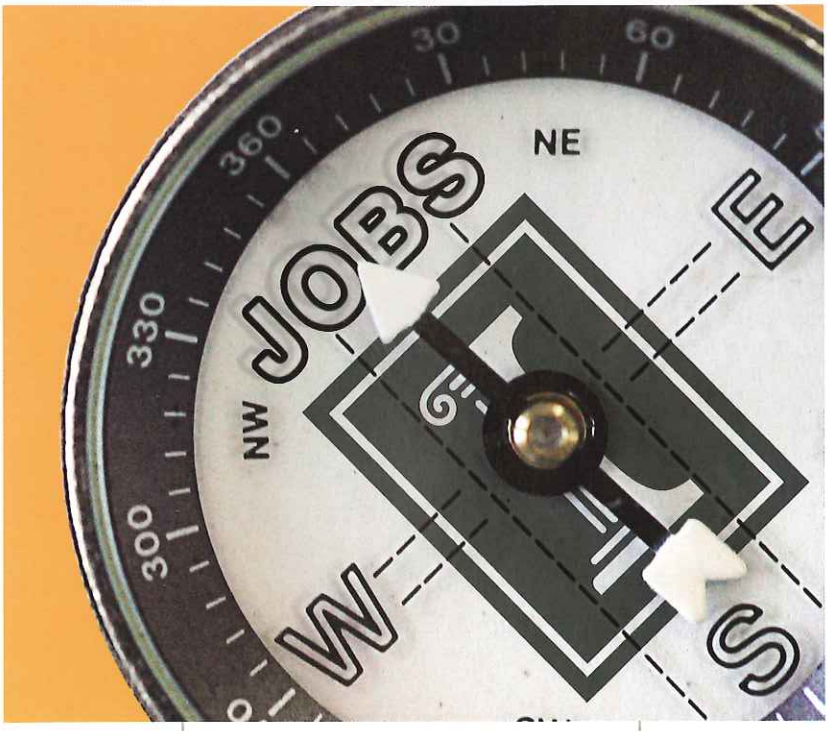
Information generated from the project will contribute to our understanding of how specific flood-management strategies affect floodplain landscapes and will also provide insight into the basic processes by which floods modify these landscapes.

Department Faculty Promoted

Colin Flint was recently promoted to full professor in recognition of his accomplishments in furthering our understandings of the geographies of geopolitics and conflict. He has published a primer, Introduction to Geopolitics, that introduces a framework for understanding contemporary geopolitical conflict and has co-authored articles exploring how social network analysis and spatial analysis can be used to elucidate local and interstate conflicts. Between 2008 and 2011, Colin served as the director of the Program for Arms Control, Disarmament, and International Security (ACDIS), which is housed at the University of Illinois and strives to support research on policymaking in international security. In 2011, Colin became the department's director of graduate studies. Colin's promotion was acknowledged as one of three deserving of special recognition by the Office of the Provost among all promotions at the associate and full professor levels across the entire campus.

Shaowen Wang achieved the rank of associate professor. His cutting-edge research involves creating cyber-infrastructure that will essentially lay the foundation for next-generation Geographic Information Systems by linking computers over distributed networks to perform large-scale calculations. He is the founder and director of the CyberInfrastructure and Geospatial Information Laboratory and, in 2009, was a recipient of the National Science Foundation's prestigious CAREER award for promising junior faculty. Since arriving at the University of Illinois in 2007, he has widely published on issues related to GIScience, especially on the emergence of cyberinfrastructure. Shaowen has also demonstrated a commitment to teaching, evidenced by his recognition in 2009 and 2010 as a Teacher Rated as Excellent by his students. He also received a prestigious Petit Scholarship from the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. These scholarships recognize those with the best promotion packages within the college.

PhD Program Rated as 'Excellent' and Places Graduates in Academic and Non-Academic Jobs



The Department of Geography's PhD program was rated as excellent by a recent University-wide assessment of doctoral programs. Only nine of the 98 programs evaluated achieved this rating.

The assessment rated the program's effectiveness as excellent, citing that eight out of 10 graduates between 2005 and 2009 were placed within academia, with four graduates working at Research I universities.

The program was praised for the financial support that students receive, having an ideal student-to-faculty ratio of 3 to 1. Students reported high levels of satisfaction with the mentoring received from their advisors. The assessment did cite the need for improvement in the program's student diversity (just 11 percent are minorities and 35 percent are women), as well as in training students to design and teach a course in their field. The department is developing a plan to address these issues.

The department's success in placing graduate students in academia is reflected in several recent PhD graduates finding employment as tenure-track faculty beginning in the fall of 2011.

Steve Radil will specialize in political geography and GIS at Ball State University's Department of Geography, where he will teach both undergraduate-level GIS courses, as well as urban and political geography courses. Steve will also participate in service projects in which undergraduates will perform mapping and analysis for local nonprofit groups. He will also use Web 2.0 technologies to engage in community-based projects.

Trevor Fuller will begin work at SUNY-Oneonta's Department of Geography, and continue his research combining GIS, human-environment interactions, and environmental justice issues. This fall, Trevor will teach undergraduate introductory courses in GIS and geography; in the future, he will teach courses that explore sustainability, as the Department of Geography at SUNY-Oneonta recently took responsibility for teaching environmental studies courses at the university.

Betsy Beymer-Farris begins her job in the Earth and Environmental Sciences Department at Furman University, a liberal arts college located in Greenville, S.C. Her first-year duties include teaching courses in sustainability sciences and social systems, two areas that reflect her research interests in political ecology. She also is helping to establish the department's new sustainability science major.

A few of the department's recent graduates found employment in fields outside of academia.

Recent PhD graduate Lan Luo works as a senior research analyst at the Institute for Health and Business Insight (IHBI), a nonprofit consulting group affiliated with Central Michigan University. At IHBI, she applies a range of techniques from statistical analysis, spatial analysis, and GIS applications to assist business and health organizations make data-driven decisions that keep them financially competitive.

Greg Burton began working in the summer of 2011 as a software engineer at Orbitz, the Chicago-based travel website. He develops and maintains software that measures the return on investment that Orbitz receives from paying search engines like Google. Greg reports that his background in geography distinguished him from other interviewees for the position because he had technical computer-based skills along with a holistic perspective on geographic problems of interest to Orbitz.

Ewan Robinson now works as the communication officer for the Institute in Development Studies in Brighton, England. Ewan is tasked with transmitting and translating development-related research for the media, development organizations, and policymakers in the United Kingdom through policy briefs and reports. This position has shown Ewan how critical research on development impacts audiences outside of academia.

FULBRIGHT GRANTS AWARDED TO GRADUATE STUDENTS FOR OVERSEAS RESEARCH

Two department PhD students were awarded prestigious Fulbright grants to conduct field research overseas related to their doctoral dissertations.

Hal Fischer is traveling to India to explore democratic decentralization and water management interventions related to the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, which promises rural adults 100 days of work on government-funded development projects.

Hal is interested in how existing village power structures influence the outcomes of such development projects, with an emphasis on democratic accountability and the decision-making process a village undergoes in choosing particular projects. His actual fieldwork will involve assembling and coordinating a team of research assistants in conducting local surveys across a wide range of villages.

Richelle Bernazzoli will travel to Zagreb, the capital of Croatia, to examine the Euro-Atlantic integration process in this country. As a new member of NATO, Croatia is an ideal study site for Richelle because it is undergoing a process of democratization and identity formation. In questioning the traditional assumption that states and institutions act as a singular, coherent entity, Richelle is interested in applying the concept of "security governance," a framework that questions the illusion of a unified state by studying the interactions among government and civil society actors. Her field research is a multi-site ethnography of institutional actors representing "government bureaucracy" and "civil society." Her project will provide insight into how national identities are contested and shaped.

New Staff Member Joins Geography

I joined the Department of Geography staff on August 30, 2011. I have a bachelor's degree from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in French and math education. After teaching for three years, I decided to make a career change to typesetting. After 20 years of typesetting, I was employed by the University of Illinois Board of Examiners from August 1997 to June 2009, evaluating college transcripts to determine CPA exam eligibility. I worked a brief time for the Carle Hospital Sleep Lab. In my spare time, I enjoy reading, tutoring, and taking care of my 13 cats.

—Connie Harrison

FACULTY PROFILE

BASSETT'S 'ATLAS' MAPS CAUSES OF HUNGER ACROSS GLOBE

Professor Tom Bassett's *Atlas of World Hunger* recently won the James M. Blaut Award given by the Cultural and Political Ecology Group of the Association of American Geographers. Written in collaboration with agricultural economist Alex Winter-Nelson, the *Atlas* maps out and explores the causes of hunger across global and national scales, an issue that has been a prevailing focus of Tom's career.

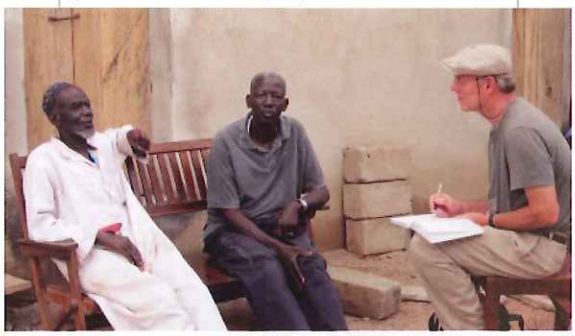
He has been a member of the geography faculty for over 25 years, having taught courses on geography of the developing world and political ecology, as well as conducting research on farming systems and land rights issues in sub-Saharan Africa.

The *Atlas* grew out of an undergraduate course on development geography taught by Tom in 2003. In the course, students were assigned a class project in which they had to map where hunger exists and explain the causes of the spatial patterns. The subsequent collaboration with Winter-Nelson took place over five years and involved collecting a host of statistical data and critiquing existing hunger indicators.

"It was exciting that we were doing something original," Tom remembers. The two eventually developed the Hunger Vulnerability Index (HVI), which measures hunger based on food availability, access to food, and nutritional outcomes. Unlike some hunger indicators, the HVI takes into account the distribution of food by using the $2 a day indicator. It is an improvement over studying just food availability, where food balance sheets say little about actual food consumption at the household and individual levels.

> "IT WAS EXCITING THAT WE WERE DOING SOMETHING ORIGINAL."

For more than 20 years now, Tom has annually visited Cote d'Ivoire to conduct research on the livelihood of the rural population, part of the larger theme in his research revolving around the struggles of the rural peasants making a living from the land. Tom has consulted with leading international organizations like Oxfam that are also concerned with poverty and social justice in the developing world. His research has, for example, focused on the negative effects cotton subsidies in the global north (especially those in the United States) have had on cotton growers in sub-Saharan Africa and issues regarding conflict over land between cattle herders and farmers in Cote d'Ivoire. Tom typically approaches these problems from a political ecology perspective that emphasizes the political dimensions of conflicts revolving around environmental, economic, and social issues.



Tom Bassett interviews the earthpriest of Katiali, Katienen'golo Silué (left) with the help of longtime research assistant, Adama Koné (center), about land tenure issues in the region.

More recently, Tom has gravitated towards the emergence of "new political spaces" in the Cote d'Ivoire, with particular emphasis on the recent electoral crises in the country. In an article co-authored with Scott Strauss in the widely read journal *Foreign Affairs*, Tom argued that the international media largely overlooked the role played by two regional organizations in Africa—the African Union (AU) and the Economic Community of West African States—in opposing Laurent Gbagbo's usurpation of the presidency of Cote d'Ivoire from Alassane Ouattara, widely regarded as the legitimate winner of the run-off elections. The Eurocentric focus of the international media obscured "an emergent, pro-democracy policy in which African heads of state are taking on significant roles in conflict resolution." His piece in *Foreign Affairs* is a cogent example of how Tom's research has staked out a position of explaining economic and social issues from an empathetic perspective for those living the developing world, a remedy for centuries of European-American dominance in the global south.

Tom grew up in Lowell, Mass., a city of about 100,000 people that is less than an hour from Boston and was the birthplace of the Industrial Revolution in the United States. He studied at Tufts University near Boston as an undergraduate, where he majored in English. After graduation, he undertook graduate studies in geography at the University of California at Berkeley. He describes his rationale for switching disciplines from English to geography as being motivated by a desire to be a university professor (given the poor job market for English PhD graduates at the time) and his burgeoning interests in human-environment problems related to the nascent environment movement of the 1970s and 1980s.

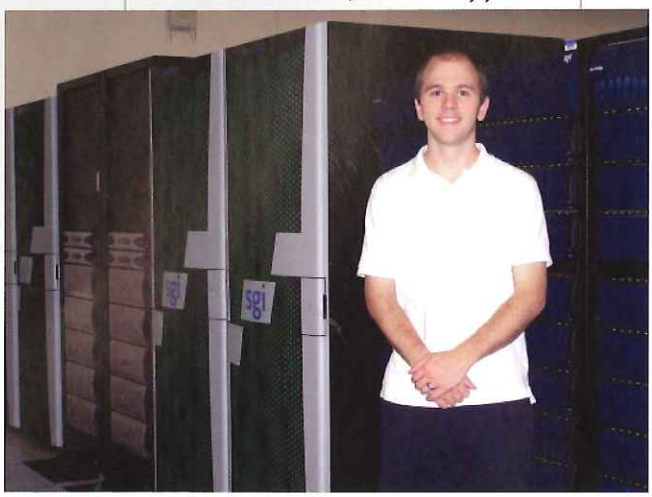
Outside of work, in what he calls his real life, Tom enjoys surfing, a skill he learned as a teenager growing up in New England, and playing banjo in a local Champaign-Urbana band, The Young and the Fretless.

GRADUATE STUDENT PROFILE

SHOOK LEVERAGES COMPUTER POWER TO ANALYZE SPATIO-TEMPORAL PROBLEMS

Like many students entering geography, Eric Shook's path was a circuitous one. Eric majored in computer science at the University of Northern Iowa and was working as an analyst at the University of Iowa's Grid Research and education group @ IoWa (GROW), developing code for GISolve, a Web-based and cyberinfrastructure-enhanced environment that enabled large-scale analysis and modeling.

When Shaowen Wang, then a research scientist at the University of Iowa, received a tenure-track offer from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Eric was faced with two choices: remain at Iowa as a full-time staff member or move to Illinois with Dr. Wang as a PhD student in geography. Given two days to make a decision, Eric concluded that his interests lie in the application end of computer science, and that geography was an "interesting domain to study." He moved to Illinois and hasn't looked back since. His thoughts on the move: "I didn't know much about geography before, but it's turned out good so far."



Eric Shook also advises undergraduates in the GIS group.

Today, Eric works at the cutting edge CyberInfrastructure and Geospatial Information (CIGI) Laboratory developing parallel programs intended to facilitate the linking together of thousands of computers to simulate and analyze complex spatio-temporal problems. Eric describes CyberGIS as the formation of "virtual organizations" composed of various universities and industries not bound by immediate proximity, but that instead have a shared focus on a single topic or problem. CyberGIS allows these "virtual organizations" to leverage the computational power of computers across the world to execute more complex codes and process huge data sets.

For example, a single code in CyberGIS can generate 2 terabytes of data and require the use of supercomputers with 4,000 cores. (By comparison, a typical personal computer these days uses between 2 to 4 cores.) "You can't do that in ArcGIS, so that's why you use CyberGIS," Eric says. Funded by a $4.4 million grant from the National Science Foundation, CIGI has a goal of creating a CyberGIS Web portal through which these organizations can input data and codes on the Web, facilitating large-scale analysis that was previously not possible.

Eric is also involved as the graduate advisor for the GIS Group, an undergraduate organization of about 12 members. Their main project is IMap, which, like Google Maps, is meant to provide directions from one place to another. But whereas Google Maps is limited to street directions that tend to benefit drivers, IMap is intended to provide more pedestrian-friendly directions that include not just streets, but also sidewalks, walkways, and door entrances on the University of Illinois campus. The idea is for users to be able to find the quickest way from one building to another on campus, which oftentimes involves shortcuts that take advantage of paths not adjacent to streets.

Eric led a group of undergraduates who tediously mapped the exact locations of walkways and door entrances using GPS devices. Members of the GIS Group then took turns inputting their data into IMap using HTML, Google Maps API, and JavaScript. Next, they implemented Dijkstra's algorithm to calculate the best path between various points on campus, attempting to determine the shortest distances while considering requirements, such as accessible doorway entrances.

The GIS Group has received recognition by winning an award at the School of Earth, Society, and Environment's research review and by receiving funding from the campus's 1867 Society ($1,100). The group is currently working on expanding IMap's capabilities for students with visual impairments, as well as collecting points-of-interest (coffee shops, for example) that pertain to students and faculty.

When not involved in these two endeavors, Eric enjoys spending time with his wife and two children and taking walks around Crystal Lake Park in Urbana. The experience of being a graduate student has been a whirlwind for Eric, in that he was the first in his family to get a college degree. He came from the small town of Dunkerton, Iowa (population 700), a place Eric remembers as a nice community with "two farmer co-ops, one school, and no stoplights." Like Champaign-Urbana, Dunkerton is surrounded by cornfields.

GEOGRAPHY STUDENT COMPETES IN BOSTON MARATHON

At first glance, running and geography do not appear to have much in common. However, according to Charles Fogelman, a PhD student in the Department of Geography, they are similar. "Both take a lot of patience and perseverance, and you have to have the same self-motivated mindset to accomplish your goals in both research and running." If anyone should know that, it is Charles, who recently completed the 26.2 miles of the Boston Marathon in less than three hours—two hours, 56 minutes, and 29 seconds to be exact.

Charles began running about eight years ago while he was in the Peace Corps in Africa. "We had some free time, and I was bored and figured, okay, I'll just start running." Since that day, running has become one of Charles's favorite hobbies. But running did not come easily, and, just like his research, he says, "It's actually really hard work, even though it doesn't always feel like work. You constantly have to motivate yourself to set higher goals and do whatever it takes to achieve that goal."

In 2006, Charles reached a new level of interest in the sport while he was studying in New York City. "I was walking around Central Park and started casually running up Fifth Avenue. I did not know it was the day of the New York Marathon, nor did I know that this was right around the 23rd mile of the marathon. Suddenly this rush of runners came through. It was the most awesome and exciting experience, watching both the runners and all the people cheering them on." Charles then made it his ambition to begin marathon training himself. "Each day I set a goal to run just a few seconds faster, and, when I accomplished that goal, I established a new goal."

Just over a year later, in November of 2007, Charles realized his desire and ran in his first marathon, the Philadelphia Marathon. He has since participated in several other marathons, such as the ING New York City Marathon, the Bank of America Chicago Marathon, and, of course, the famous Boston Marathon. He has also participated in several other races, including one ending on Lambeau Field in Green Bay, Wisc., and the ING Hartford Marathon in Hartford, Conn., where he finished 43rd—a personal best. But his objective is not to win these races. "As long as I hit my own personal goal, I really don't care where I end up," says Charles.

PhD student Charles Fogelman says geography research and running both require a self-motivated mindset.

The people with whom he races have become part of the drive to sustain his hobby. "Even though running is a competition, there is also a great deal of camaraderie involved too. I've seen people that race hard against each other all day, and then they hang out together afterward. I've even seen people racing head to head for the win and then handing their water bottle to the person they are trying to beat." Charles says that running has taught him about people working together—a lesson that has and will continue to help him in his research and teaching.

"As any geographer knows, you cannot do research on your own. You have to learn how to work next to the people who could very well be your competition. Knowing how to balance the two and work towards a common goal is pertinent to personal success in the research world. Running has taught me how having that balance can work for the good of everyone."

Charles's recent inspiration comes from the participation of many University of Illinois athletes, graduates, and coaches in the 2011 International Paralympic Committee Athletics World Championships. Charles says that seeing fellow Illini men and women reach such extraordinary goals motivates him to continue working toward and continually resetting his own goals.

Although Charles plans to participate in many future Boston Marathons, for now much of his time is spent in pursuit of his research on interconnections among AIDS, food security, and development agencies. His career goals include working to improve the development process, with particular interests in Africa. His hope is to obtain his PhD in three years. Given that the average time to PhD now exceeds four years, this goal would be unrealistic for many. However, if Charles approaches his dissertation research with the same motivation, self-discipline, and ambition to excel that he has for running, he no doubt will meet his goal.

A complete listing of Charles's race history can be found at www.athlinks.com/myresults/29326603/Charles-Fogelman.aspx.

New Graduate Students Tackle Everything from Environmental Policy to Hydrology to Urban Sprawl

Carol Burga earned her BA in geography and environment from Pontificia Universidad Catolica del Peru in 2005. She has worked in the North Peruvian Amazon conducting participatory mapping projects of indigenous lands for grassroots organizations. Her work experience includes professional consulting and teaching at the university level. The MA program's focus on politics of environment matches her research interests on environmental policy, land tenure, natural resources governance, and democratic representation.

Varun Goel, born and raised in India, is interested in how people with different cultures and lifestyles interact in continuously changing environments. Although he came to U of I as an undergraduate in computer engineering, a visit to a GIS firm coupled with his fascination for geography, convinced him to choose a career in GIS and related fields. By pursuing a master's degree in the GIScience program, he will focus on the application of GIS technology to healthcare and emergency management.

Shikha Lakhanpal has an undergraduate degree in psychology and sociology. A master's in social work introduced her to the field of environment and development. She pursued it further through her Mphil thesis on "Socio-Economic Vulnerability and Climate Change in an Eastern Coastal District of India." She plans to study the issues of space, place, and society in her doctoral work. Geography was a natural choice for her as it allows for eclectic interdisciplinary work and provides a core theoretical anchor within which she would like to place her future research.

Quinn Lewis graduated from the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse with a BS in geography and a minor in history. His specific interests are in fluvial systems, hydrology, and the dynamic interactions between humans and the natural landscape. He plans on working with Dr. Rhoads and exploring the numerous opportunities for research at Illinois. He has always been interested in the physical landscape and exploring nature. He decided on geography as a major when he realized he could make a career out of exploring the natural landscape.

Joe Simanis is a first-year master's student with interests in urban geography, such as transportation and urban sprawl, statistical geography, and GIS. An Illinois native, he received his bachelor's degree in geography from Illinois State University in December 2010.

Muhammad Umar is a citizen of Pakistan, an agrarian country where water scarcity is becoming an alarming issue. He was naturally inclined towards the field where he could tackle this issue and thus pursued fluvial geomorphology. He had the opportunity to visit the Department of Geography as a short-term visiting scholar and found the research environment and skills taught phenomenal.

Kevin Berg is a master's student who received his BS in geography in the GIScience track from the University of Iowa in 2009. His research interests combine elements of human geography and GIS, with a focus on urban geography. Specifically, he is interested in how social inequalities are reflected in the built environment and in using different research methods to expose and address this reality. His current work deals with the role of social vulnerability in the exposure to evacuation risk in U.S. Gulf Coast cities.

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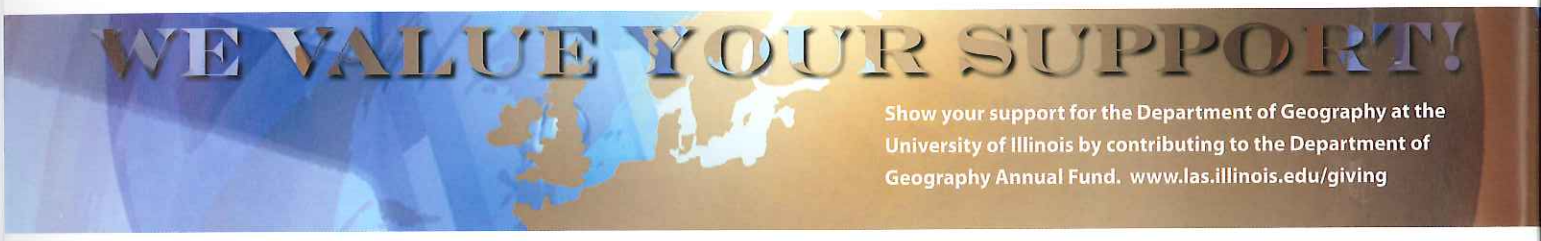

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