

DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY CHAIR UPDATE

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Brooker Creek Preserve is an 8500 acre wilderness in the middle of an urban environment.



DEPARTMENT RETREAT.

The Department will have its annual retreat on Friday, February 10th from 9-4:30 at the Brooker Creek Preserve. I will send directions separately before the event. We have identified some key areas for discussion:

1. What is our research focus? How can we communicate our strengths to the our various communities? Do we want to develop research groups?

2. Review of our two-year plans. How does our two-year plan look? Does it reflect comprehensive coverage of our key areas? Do we need to make any changes to the content?

3. Overall quality assessment of our program. How can we assess the quality of our program? Our students? How can we benchmark our Department at the national level?

4. ESP. Now that



we have voted to accept ESP within the Department as a program, what will the Department be like in the future? How can we best manage this change?

We will have an

introduction to Brooker Creek Preserve by the Director of the Preserve in the morning. We will also have time to walk through a portion of the preserve. I will arrange for sandwiches, salads, and chips to be brought in from Publix. I will also make sure we have plenty of water or soda.

If you haven't been to Brooker Creek Preserve, you are in for a treat. It is the largest undeveloped track of land in Pinellas County. The managers of the park hope our visit will open up possibilities for research collaboration and student training.

CHAIR'S UPDATE

1. Fenda Akiwumi has accepted our verbal offer to join our faculty as an Assistant Professor in the Fall of 2006. I will keep you posted as we move through the process.
2. The search for the new

Assistant Professor line in Remote Sensing has moved into the final selection stage for interviewing candidates. Interviews should start in the next week or two.

3. The search for the GIS

Instructor has moved into initial screening.

4. I have not heard yet on summer school allocations. There is a chairs' meeting coming up on Feb. 3rd and I hope to know more then.

AFD/FAR AND THE ANNUAL EVALUATION PROCESS-UPDATE

There are a couple of updates on the evaluation process and the AFD/FAR Process.

1. Many of you have not finished your Fall updates or signed your spring assignments. Please finish these updates as soon as possible.

2. **The due date for the annual evaluation packet has been extended.** To date, the teaching evaluation results have not been returned to the Department or put online. Thus, I am extending the deadline for at least one week until February 3rd. I will send out an email if we need to extend the deadline.

3. Thanks to Jay

Chakraborty for developing the evaluation template. Nice work Jay!!! Jay sent out a framework for reporting research, service, and teaching that should suit us nicely until we move fully into the online system.

ALUMNI NEWS

John Abresch, who completed his masters with Kevin Archer in the late 1990's, recently was hired by the USF library as the area representative for the Social Sciences. I am sure that we will be seeing a great deal more from John in the future. Congratulations!

Sandra Dunlap who completed her masters with us in the early 1990's is now working as a 5th and 6th grade teacher in Honduras. Some of you might remember Sandy working on some early GIS research on karst and wetlands. She and daughter Erin are doing well.

Chris Emerich, a former MA student who completed his thesis with Dr. Tobin on hazards in Hillsborough County, recently earned his Doctorate from the University of South Carolina. Congratulations Chris!!!

"Americans are the only people in the world known to me whose status anxiety prompts them to advertise their college and university affiliations in the rear window of their automobiles."

Paul Fussell



FACULTY ANNOUNCEMENTS:

1. Jay Chakraborty recently received a grant from the Florida Department of Transportation for research on the development of SLD applications. Congratulations Jay!
2. There was a flurry of activity as grant deadlines approached in

January and I signed off on several grants including ones by Archer, Bosman, and Tobin. Phil van Beynen, Phil Reader, and Bob Brinkmann submitted a proposal to NSF on the development of a karst disturbance index. We partnered on the proposal with the Univer-

sity of Western Kentucky and the University of Wisconsin at Milwaukee. Good luck everyone!

KARST INFORMATION PORTAL-UPDATE

USF, along with the University of New Mexico and the National Cave and Karst Research Institute (NCKRI) hosted an international meeting of karst scientists, policy makers, and information specialists to talk about the development of a karst information portal. USF is the lead institution on the effort. Attending from USF



were: Len Vacher (Geology), Lee Florea (PhD student Geology), Bogdan Onac (Geology), Robert

Brinkmann (Geography), Spencer Fleury (Ph.D. student Geography), and Todd Chavez (USF Library).

The meeting was big news in Carlsbad, New Mexico and you can read about the meeting online at this site: <http://www.currentargus.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20060121/NEWS01/601210301/1001>

ESP UPDATE

I am certain that many of you are curious where we stand with ESP moving as a program into the Department.

I heard from the Dean and he gave approval for our vote. However, he was concerned that there was too much administrative weight. He suggested that instead of having a Director of ESP and an Associate Chair of Geography under a Chair of Geography, that we have a Director of each program under the Chair of Geography.

I need to clarify with the Dean what exactly this means. I think he was confused why ESP would have a

Director and why Geography



would have an Associate Chair.

I also think we may wish to fold in the graduate director's responsibilities within the "Director" responsi-

bilities or some other shared responsibility to eliminate the Dean's concern about a top-heavy department.

We will spend some time talking about this issue at the retreat. In the short term, I am not making any administrative changes or staff assignment changes until we have a chance to discuss the Director/Associate Chair issue at the retreat.

However, I wanted to let you know that the Dean gave us the green light to move ahead.

"Chicago is a city of contradictions, of private visions haphazardly overlaid and linked together."

Pat Colander

ESRI CLASSES

Paul has scheduled a number of ESRI classes for this spring:

1. Introduction to ArcGIS.
2. Introduction to ArcGIS II.
3. Advanced Analysis with ArcGIS.
4. Introduction to Geospatial Scripts.

As usual, Paul has one seat in each class available free for USF faculty. I have taken the seat in the first class. However, please contact Paul if you wish to have a seat in one of the other classes.



POSSIBLE AAG FIELDTRIP (CONT'D PAGE 4)

I come from the center of a vast continent.

Growing up in the Midwest, I often dreamed of seeing the ocean or of traveling to exotic lands like Georgia or Wyoming. Not too far from our family hobby farm/hunting grounds is a roadside 'Geographical Marker' that informs interested travelers that the spot is exactly half way between the Equator and the North Pole.

How exotic that location now seems from my present home in Tampa, Florida. Here, I am much closer to the Equator and much further from the North Pole, and certainly more on the edge of a vast continent.

Things are different on the edge. I don't feel the endlessness of the landscape or the sense of diversity of space that centrality provides.

Yet, what is this central place like?

Much of Wisconsin is a glaciated karst landscape. The continental craton crops out in the northernmost part of the state to create a spectacular fall line where some of the largest rapids east of the Mississippi are located. There are also vast areas of Pleistocene refugia in areas

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POSSIBLE AAG FIELDTRIP (CONT'D)

that were not glaciated in the most recent ice advance.

The region is agricultural, yet has many manufacturing centers. Milwaukee is an important for light and heavy manufacturing. Perhaps its most famous company is Harley Davidson, although it is also home to Miller Brewing and Master Lock.

The state is important because it is on the Mississippi transportation route and the St. Lawrence Seaway that interconnects the Great Lakes. Wisconsin leads the nation in the production of

snap beans, cranberries, canning beans, milk, corn for silage, and ginseng.

If there is any interest, I am thinking about leading a group from USF up to Wisconsin either before or after the AAG meeting.

There are a number of options for field trips.

- 1) A day trip to visit Milwaukee.
- 2) A day trip to visit the glaciated terrain known as the 'kettle moraine'.
- 3) An overnight trip to see Milwaukee and the kettle moraine area.
- 4) An overnight trip

to see the kettle moraine and either the Mississippi valley area or the continental craton of the Wisconsin/Upper Peninsula border.

Let me know if there is any interest in a field trip to Wisconsin.

Right now, I am thinking that the March 11th or 12th will work well.

Milwaukee is only about an hour and a half or so from downtown Chicago (think Tampa and Orlando), so a day trip is pretty easy.

CHICAGO!

This year, the AAG Annual Meeting will be in Chicago. For those of you who have never been to Chicago, you are in for a fun time.

A great way to get oriented in the city is to go to the top of the Sears Tower. This tower, now the largest in the United States, provides a panoramic view of the region.

You can see the smokestacks of Gary, Indiana and the downtown of Milwaukee, Wisconsin in the distance. In addition, the vast suburbs leading to the farmland beyond demonstrate the vast size of the city.

I am currently reading a book about the Columbian Exhibition that took place

in Chicago in the late 1800's called Devil in the White City. I recommend it as a nice introduction to the grittiness and boosterism that created Chicago out of the prairie.

Failed Wisconsin Motto:

"Come to Wisconsin and Smell Our Dairy Air"

Actual Wisconsin Motto:

"Forward"

UPCOMING DATES

February 3rd: New deadline for annual evaluation materials.

February 10th: Department retreat, Brooker Creek Preserve, 9-4:30.

February 17-19th: Florida Society of Geographers

March 3rd: Department Meeting, Conference Room, 9-11.

March 7th-11th: AAG Annual Meeting

March 13-18th: Spring Break!

April 21st: Department Meeting, Conference Room, 9-11.

April 28th: Last day of the Spring Semester!!!

