Letter from the Director

These are exciting times in the School of Geography and Development. We are in a spectacular new building, with inviting spaces for teaching, discussing ideas, and making an intellectual home for a diverse range of students, faculty, and staff. We have made important changes to the BA and BS in Geography, and have enhanced the Environmental Studies and Urban and Regional Development majors. Our professional master’s degree programs in Development Practice (MDP) and Geographic Information Science and Technology (GIST) are continuing to grow and innovate in ways that prepare graduates to seize opportunities and to meet the challenges facing our changing world. New graduate students and faculty have joined colleagues in helping to sustain the intellectual climate of engagement with pressing environmental and social issues. Most importantly, our students continue to amaze and to motivate us to provide knowledge and opportunities to engage fully with the world around us.

Please read on to learn about the remarkable work done in the School. And please consider ways to help us meet the challenges and opportunities around us.

Lynn Staeheli

Come visit our new home! Over the summer of 2015 we moved out of the Harvill Building after 34 years and into the Environment and Natural Resources 2 (ENR2) building. The School of Geography occupies the southern part of the 4th and 5th floor. We share this state-of-the-art facilities with the School of Natural Resources and the Environment, the Institute of the Environment, and some divisions of the Department of Mathematics. ENR2 includes offices, classrooms, auditoriums, gathering rooms for public programs, and a rooftop community garden. The building incorporates cutting-edge technologies that exemplifies the University’s commitment to sustainability in higher education.

The University of Arizona is a research one, land-grant university. SGD is a top-ranked department covering the entire range of contemporary geography.
Letter from the Chairs of the Development Committee

Even in the best of economic times, less than half of the University’s budget is received from the state government. The impact of diminishing state support on all aspects of the University’s missions has been felt most severely at the School level. We need therefore to be engaged continuously in active fundraising. Our chief aim is to improve our current national ranking, which can only increase the value of your degree. We ask you, our distinguished alumni, to increase the value of your ‘stock’ in the School of Geography and Development by donating to one or more of our educational priorities. You may access more information on funding priorities via the School website. We have, in support of these funding priorities, identified targeted development challenges. We hope we can count on you to join your fellow alumni in helping us meet these challenges!

Cheers and thank you,
Chris Lukinbeal and Steve Yool
(co-chairs, SGD Development team)

Meet Our New Faculty

Lynn Staeheli

Is an urban, political, social, and feminist geographer who explores different manifestations of what it means to ‘belong’ to a place. Most of her work uses the paradoxical concepts of citizenship and public, terms that simultaneously signal inclusion and belonging, but also can be used to exclude people. Her work has focused on a range of topics including: community and political activism, immigration, public space, gender, ethnicity and nationalism, young people, religion, and divided cities.

Kristina Bishop

Kristina is the Interim Director of the Master’s in Development Practice Program. (MDP) An Ohio native, she received her Master’s in Geography at Ohio State University and her PhD in Geography at the University of Arizona. Her research interests are in health and international development, particularly in Southern Africa. She currently is teaching Geography of Africa, Geography of Health and the Global Economy, as well as classes in the MDP program.

Mark Kear

Mark’s work is best described as financial geography and explores the variegated landscape of post-credit-crunch experimentation in “non-prime” consumer financial markets. These markets range from financial inclusion, asset building, financial education, “fintech,” and behavioral finance, payments systems, and peer lending. Mark is currently teaching Economic Geography, Urban Growth and Development, and a capstone course called The American City.

Meet Our New Faculty

Kevin Anchukaitis

Kevin Anchukaitis is a paleoclimatologist, dendrochronologist, and earth systems geographer specializing in the reconstruction and analysis of climate variability and change over the last millennium and the interaction between past climate and human society. He received his Bachelor’s degree from Georgetown University, a Master’s from the University of Tennessee, and his Ph.D. from The University of Arizona. Before coming to SGD, Kevin was a Postdoctoral Fellow and then Assistant Research Professor at Columbia University’s Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory. From 2012 to 2015 he was an Assistant Scientist at the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution.

Kristina Bishop

Kristina is the Interim Director of the Master’s in Development Practice Program. (MDP) An Ohio native, she received her Master’s in Geography at Ohio State University and her PhD in Geography at the University of Arizona. Her research interests are in health and international development, particularly in Southern Africa. She currently is teaching Geography of Africa, Geography of Health and the Global Economy, as well as classes in the MDP program.

Mark Kear

Mark’s work is best described as financial geography and explores the variegated landscape of post-credit-crunch experimentation in “non-prime” consumer financial markets. These markets range from financial inclusion, asset building, financial education, “fintech,” and behavioral finance, payments systems, and peer lending. Mark is currently teaching Economic Geography, Urban Growth and Development, and a capstone course called The American City.

Meet Our New Faculty

Lynn Staeheli

Is an urban, political, social, and feminist geographer who explores different manifestations of what it means to ‘belong’ to a place. Most of her work uses the paradoxical concepts of citizenship and public, terms that simultaneously signal inclusion and belonging, but also can be used to exclude people. Her work has focused on a range of topics including: community and political activism, immigration, public space, gender, ethnicity and nationalism, young people, religion, and divided cities.

Kevin Anchukaitis

Kevin Anchukaitis is a paleoclimatologist, dendrochronologist, and earth systems geographer specializing in the reconstruction and analysis of climate variability and change over the last millennium and the interaction between past climate and human society. He received his Bachelor’s degree from Georgetown University, a Master’s from the University of Tennessee, and his Ph.D. from The University of Arizona. Before coming to SGD, Kevin was a Postdoctoral Fellow and then Assistant Research Professor at Columbia University’s Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory. From 2012 to 2015 he was an Assistant Scientist at the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution.

Meet Our New Faculty

Lynn Staeheli

Is an urban, political, social, and feminist geographer who explores different manifestations of what it means to ‘belong’ to a place. Most of her work uses the paradoxical concepts of citizenship and public, terms that simultaneously signal inclusion and belonging, but also can be used to exclude people. Her work has focused on a range of topics including: community and political activism, immigration, public space, gender, ethnicity and nationalism, young people, religion, and divided cities.

Kevin Anchukaitis

Kevin Anchukaitis is a paleoclimatologist, dendrochronologist, and earth systems geographer specializing in the reconstruction and analysis of climate variability and change over the last millennium and the interaction between past climate and human society. He received his Bachelor’s degree from Georgetown University, a Master’s from the University of Tennessee, and his Ph.D. from The University of Arizona. Before coming to SGD, Kevin was a Postdoctoral Fellow and then Assistant Research Professor at Columbia University’s Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory. From 2012 to 2015 he was an Assistant Scientist at the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution.
In this issue:

FRIENDS OF GEOGRAPHY NEWSLETTER

Fall 2015

Award Winning Faculty and Students

In 2015 Liz Oglesby was awarded the Association of American Geographers’ Gilbert White Public Service Honors as well as the University of Arizona’s Excellence in Upper Division Teaching.

In 2015 John Paul Jones III received the Association of American Geographers Lifetime Achievement Award. One year earlier Sallie Marston received the same award.

Diana Liverman received the Conference of Latin Americanist Geographers’ Carl O. Sauer Distinguished Scholarship Award for 2015.

SGD Ph.D. student Lily House-Peters won the 'Best Linkage Between Science and Policy" Award for her poster at the University of Arizona’s 2015 Environmental Grad Blitz.

For a full list of recent awards visit our website here.

Recent Publications By Graduate Students

Eric Magrane’s article, “Situating Geopoetics,” has been published in the new AAG journal GeoHumanities. You can read the full text online here.


Geoff Boyce has a publication in Environment and Planning D: Society and Space titled “The rugged border: Surveillance, policing, and the dynamic materiality of the US/Mexico frontier.”

SGD PhD student Jesse Minor and co-author Alexis Arizpe (SGD undergrad alumni and SNRE graduate student), have published “Trimming and Planing Rough-Cut Wood For Efficient Dendrochronological Sample Preparation and Storage" in Tree-Ring Research (2015, 71, 2:130-134).

ENR2’s First Resident

The first residents of ENR2 were a hummingbird family that became celebrities on the internet, where over 250,000 fans watched them hatch. Read and view their story here.

SGD graduate students Sonja Ziaja and Chris Fullerton recently published “Judging Science: The Rewards and Perils of Courts as Boundary Organizations” in the West-Northwest Journal of Environmental Law & Policy.
Lia Gilbert Memorial Scholarship Fund

Lia Gilbert was a member of the MDP program until her murder on November 16, 2015. Lia was passionate about social justice and served with numerous community organizations such as the Rotary Club and Angel Heart Charity. We wish to honor Lia through donations to the Lia Gilbert Memorial Scholarship Fund, which is being established in SGD. Alternatively, friends may wish to make a donation in Lia's memory to their local support services for survivors of domestic and intimate partner violence. For more information contact Kristina Bishop, Interim MDP Director.

Association of Pacific Coast Geographers and SGD

In 2014 SGD hosted the Annual APCG conference and in 2015 Chris Lukinbeal served as President of the Association, the fourth from our faculty to hold this post (David Plane 2004; Lay Gibson 1986; Dan Stanislawski 1972). At the 2015 conference SGD graduates won three awards including: Kelly-Richards for the Margaret Trussel Scholarship; Casey Lynch for the Best Ph.D. Paper President’s Award for Outstanding Paper by a Ph.D. Student; and Kate Sammler, who won the Tom McKnight and Joan Clemens Outstanding Student paper award.

Our Professional Programs
Get People Jobs

The Masters in Development Practice has placed eighty-three percent of its graduates in international development consulting, development entrepreneurship, global health, governance and social service, and environment related jobs. Forty percent of MDP alumni are working internationally. MDP Alumni (2015) Kara Luebbering is the Country Director in Nicaragua of Just Hope. There, Kara focuses on program and staff development and adopts a unique philosophy of community engagement to complete her work.

What started in 2011 as a one year in person degree program has now become three different program (MS in person and online and BS-GIST). Launch in August 2015 the BS-GIST is one of 24 new Bachelor's programs offered fully online. The BS-GIST is a cutting-edge STEM program that prepares students to enter the high-growth geospatial industry. Find out more here. The MS-GIST programs have graduated over 150 people and placed eighty-one percent of those students in jobs. The biggest employers hiring our students include ESRI, the Arizona Geological Survey, the City of Tucson, and Pima County. ESRI alone has hired 13 of our graduates. Most recently, Imtiaz Syed from the 2015 cohort, was hired by ESRI before he even graduated.

Donate to SGD Today

SGD’s diverse faculty and students excel in cutting-edge research at the intersection of physical and social sciences.