

# UMD Department of Geography, Urban, Environment, and Sustainability Studies Newsletter

April 2017

## *From the Department Head*

Greetings. It has been a busy year here in the GUESS Department. We moved back into our third floor Cina offices, which are newly remodeled. The building now has air conditioning and a new office suite for GUESS faculty and staff. The office suite space replaces the old “map library”, GIS lab, and faculty offices on the south side of the building. Our former Department Head office and copying equipment room now house the Alworth Institute for International Studies. Please come visit us and check out our new space!

In other news, the department’s curriculum is changing. We are merging our four majors into one major with four tracks: GIS, Geography, Environment and Sustainability, and Urban and Regional Studies. This change is the result of the budget crisis in the College of Liberal Arts, requiring us to lose some of our “non-regular” faculty. We want your input as we finalize this new curriculum. Please respond to the survey included in this newsletter and let us know your opinions.

Despite the challenging work of curricular revision, faculty have had a productive year. Laure Charleux received tenure and promotion to Associate Professor. For the third year in a row, GUESS faculty received the College of Liberal Arts research award; this year’s winner is Adam Pine. Adam also recently published a book with Routledge Press. Mike Mageau, Randy Hanson and Ryan Bergstrom received a grant to study comparative agricultural practices at the Sustainable Agriculture Project (SAP). Please check out additional department highlights in this newsletter.

We had to say goodbye to our beloved administrative staff, Linda Klint, who got a job at the Natural Resources Research Institute (NRRI). This was a promotion and good news for Linda, but we miss her and appreciate her 13 years of work in our department. We welcome our new staff, Bridget Park, who comes to us with experience and a great attitude. Despite the large shoes that Linda left to fill, Bridget is doing a fantastic job.

We are very happy to be awarding scholarships to five of our students: Megan Schirmers, Malachy Koons, Margaret Schulstrom, Alexander Nelson, and Morgan Larson. We congratulate them and remain deeply grateful to our donors for making these important awards possible. Thank you.

Enjoy the newsletter and come visit us when you are in Duluth! We always welcome news from you and wish you the best.

Pat Farrell



Linda Klint (Left) and Bridget Park (Right)

**UMD** Department of Geography,  
Urban, Environment  
and Sustainability Studies  
UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA DULUTH  
Driven to Discover

**Special thanks to Kelyn Gress and Micaella Penning for their work on this newsletter!**

# Congratulations to our 2017 Graduates!

## Environment & Sustainability Studies

Nathaniel Atkinson, Claire Freemeier, Ahnika Hesbjerg, Jake Kollasch, Bryce Lanhart, Kaleb Larson, Brent Louis, Andre Oliver, Kyle Osterberg, Claire Middlemist, Corey Pletsch\*, Michael Sternal, Quade Wallace, Emily Weber

## Geography

Michael Nichols, Corey Pletsch\*, Jessica Wilson

## Urban & Regional Studies

Bria Raines, Zacharias Shears

## Geographic Information Sciences

Lucas Lefebvre, Maria Lindh, Samuel Lively, Leah Mohn, Keegan Rabelhofer, Eric Ronning

*\*Signifies a double GUESS major*

# 2017 Scholarship Winners

Emma Goldman Scholarship: **Megan Schirmers**

Catherine Cox Scholarship in Geography: **Megan Schirmers**

Matti Kaups Scholarship in Geography: **Megan Schirmers**

Fred and Lois Witzig Scholarship in Geography: **Corey Pletsch**

Carlson Amys Scholarship: **Jason Mozol**

Gary D. Slette Scholarship in Urban and Regional Studies: **Lexi Weihe, Alexander Nelson, Aria Kampfer, Bria Raines, and Zachary Svoboda**

Roland and Evelyn Theisen Scholarship: **Bryce Lanhart and Joshua Laumann**

## In Flight by Kevin Nelson



I guess you could say I grew up in an airplane. My dad is a pilot and the owner of a flight school, Hawk Aviation, in the small town of Rush City, MN. Whether he was teaching other students or we were going on family trips, I would try to hop in the airplane every chance I got. Being in the air became natural for me, and I knew it was something I wanted to pursue as a career.

As soon as I was old enough to get my private pilot's license (17), I continually worked toward it when I wasn't busy with school. After I got my license, I still wasn't satisfied and wanted to obtain more ratings and licenses. During my remaining time in high school and my first few years at UMD, I have gone on to get my instrument, single and multi-engine commercial license, and my flight instructor rating. As a flight instructor, I can finally share my love for aviation by teaching others to become pilots as well. There is nothing better than seeing a student I have instructed receive their pilot's license. Seeing them reach their goals makes those countless hours I put in to becoming a flight instructor all worth it.

I plan to finish my time here at UMD in the geography program, while building my flight hours and flight instruction experience. After graduation, I will go after my ultimate goal of flying for an airline.

## Morgan Larson



Morgan Larson graduated from Brainerd Senior High School in 2015. She chose UMD because of its proximity to the North Shore and the various outdoor activities that can be found within the city. Morgan will graduate with a BA in Geography and a minor in Geographic Information Systems in the spring of 2018. For a little change of scenery, Morgan plans on pursuing a master's degree in Geography with a focus in either GIS or City/Environmental Planning from the University of Montana in Missoula. Morgan is the winner of the 2017 Matti Kaups Scholarship in Geography.

## Whitewater Rafting by Brent Louis

During the course of my undergraduate studies at UMD, acquiring a BA in Environment & Sustainability and Geography minor, I spent most summers as a wilderness guide. During that time I traveled from the town of Ely to Lake Superior and roughly 50 miles north and south of the U.S./Canada border over countless lakes and portages leading canoe trips. Outdoor experience gained working at Camp Birchwood for Boys refined my navigational skills and other requirements needed to be a professional guide. Now I have the raft guide position of "Rivermaster" with Swiftwater Adventures located near Carlton, MN. A day in the life of a whitewater guide includes physical work and understanding the physics and power of moving water. On each trip we provide a 3-hour whitewater experience while educating clients on the ecosystem they are passing through on the St. Louis River. The company also offers team-building experiences that challenge participants to work together, forming positive connections that carry into their place of work. If you've never been rafting before, you should pursue the opportunity.



## **Megan Schirmers**

Megan was born and raised in Coon Rapids, Minnesota. Growing up near the banks of the Mississippi River fostered her love for the environment. She is an outdoor enthusiast, a free spirit, and is pursuing her education in Geography, Environment & Sustainability, and GIS. Megan is the winner of the 2017 Emma Goldman Scholarship.

## **Malachy Koons**

Malachy was born and raised in Viroqua, WI. His parents are Maureen O'Connor and Duane Koons. He has one older brother and two older sisters. Malachy attended Viroqua High School where he played soccer, hockey, and tennis. In middle school and high school, Geography was his favorite subject but he did not realize he could study it in college. He chose to attend UMD because of its location and wide range of outdoor activities. Initially a biology major, Malachy changed to Geography after his first semester. He is 21 years old and is currently doing a semester abroad in Worcester, England. Malachy is the winner of the 2017 Fred and Lois Witzig Scholarship in Geography.

## **Margaret Schulstrom**

Maggie is a junior hailing from near Carlton, MN, majoring in Geography at UMD. She has always been intrigued by the relationships between different studies and will happily learn about any subject. This passion for learning is mirrored by a passion for sustainable, local agriculture which is lived out in her work alongside her family on their local farm. The learning opportunities at UMD continue to encourage and complement this mindset of lifelong learning. Maggie is the winner of the 2017 Catherine Cox Scholarship in Geography.

## **Alex Nelson**

Alex is a double major in Geography and Urban & Regional Studies, and is entering his senior year. He plans to go on to graduate school to study environmental design. Alex is the winner of the 2017 Matti Kaups Scholarship in Geography.

# Faculty Spotlight: Adam Pine

Adam Pine's new book, *Confronting Hunger in the USA: Searching for Community Empowerment and Food Security in Food Access Programs*, evaluates four Duluth food delivery programs for people experiencing food insecurity and discusses access to healthy food for all citizens. He doesn't just discuss theory, Adam describes the activities in detail.

"Arriving at Ruby's Food Pantry on a freezing cold winter afternoon is like stepping out of your everyday life and into a giant performance of generosity," Adam writes. He describes a volunteer "dressed in snow pants, goggles, and an enormous winter coat" with "icicles hanging off his beard as he directs traffic in the parking lot." Adam lets the reader in on the action, "a forklift brings pallets of food from a semitrailer into a brightly lit gymnasium for distribution." He tells of "women wearing red Ruby's Pantry T-shirts [who make] sure new volunteers sign in and put on a nametag."

Adam recalls the "church leaders, boy scouts, and volunteer groups from all over Duluth ... lining the gymnasium with tables of food." At Ruby's Pantry, one of the four food programs compared in the book, people fill a laundry basket and for \$20 dollars get about \$100 worth of food.

Adam is the director of UMD's Urban and Regional Studies program. He has dedicated years to researching food security in our country and the conflicting issues of food surplus and hunger. His book compares SHARE, Ruby's Food Pantry, the CHUM Food Shelf, and Seeds of Success, all community-based food programs. "The book is about more than food security," says Adam, "it's about how to make people come together to solve problems."

While he is an advocate for the programs, he's quick to point out there are advantages and disadvantages. "Ruby's Food Pantry does wonderful things, but it can be disempowering for people to buy leftover food," Adam says. "SHARE was a buying club for people to buy discounted groceries, but it couldn't compare to the discounts of stores like Walmart." CHUM serves 6,000 people a year, but struggles to find ways to solve long-term problems. The fourth group, Seeds of Success, is a community garden that teaches people to grow their own food in a sustainable manner, but it only serves a handful of people while about 13% of the U.S. population experience food insecurity each year.



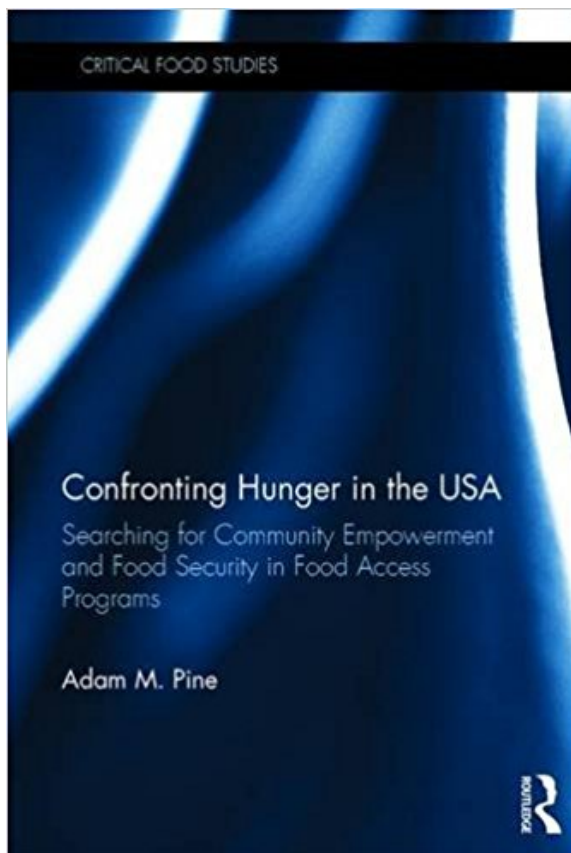
The book points out that state and federal food programs do an insufficient job of taking care of hunger, and community-based food programs go a long way to demonstrate new relationships between food and society. Adam steps back from programs and takes a critical look at how community-based food programs address the problem of food insecurity. Often the sense of belonging among the volunteers is stronger than in the program participants, and that also takes away an opportunity for community organizing.

While no Duluth program is perfect, Adam still raves about the support he sees, “Duluth is a fantastic community to live in because so many people care,” Adam says. “We have so many more food programs than I could have imagined.”

As the book came together, UMD students were given an opportunity to become involved. Adam, an associate professor in the Department of Geography, Urban, Environment & Sustainability Studies, and his wife Rebecca de Souza, an associate professor in the Department of Communication, used their students as resources for some of the research in the book.

For some students, the work turned into Undergraduate Research Opportunity Projects (UROPs). “Rebecca trained students to interview and collect data, so our students could be a part of the research,” Adam says. “Some of my students did UROPs on food security, and others entered data into our research database.”

*Confronting Hunger in the USA* offers a lot to digest and Adam insists the overarching issue is empowerment. “Whether that be money, transportation, or resources to get the things you need,” he says, “food scarcity deals with how empowered you are.”



*The book was published in January 2017 by Routledge, Milton Park, Oxfordshire, UK and New York, NY, U.S.*

Taken from the Food and Society section of UMD News

Written by Cheryl Reitan and Michelle Paquette

# Faculty Spotlight: Randy Hanson



## An Endowment, an Award, and a Certification

### *Big Strides for the Future of UMD's Farm*

Randel Hanson, director of the UMD Land Lab and Sustainable Agriculture Project (SAP) Farm, has received the Endowed Chair in Agricultural Systems position from the University of Minnesota's College of Food, Agricultural and Natural Resource Sciences.

This fellowship means Hanson is able to take a break from his teaching responsibilities over the next year and instead work with campus and community supporters to ensure the long-term development of the UMD Land Lab.

Many Duluthians know of Hanson's work to revitalize land associated with the former Northeast Agricultural Experimental Station (from 1912–1976) by creating a 10-acre organic farm (the Sustainable Agriculture Project—SAP), where UMD students learn to grow organic vegetables that are then served by UMD's Dining Services. The success of the project in turn evolved into developing a "land lab" where students and faculty could research sustainable food, water, and energy practices in collaboration with people and organizations in the western Lake Superior Region.

"This Endowed Chair position is an honor and a recognition of the importance of the UMD Land Lab for economic development, enhancing our quality of life, and strengthening the ecological stewardship of our region. I'm looking forward to reflecting the best practices of our land grant institution by helping UMD seize this opportunity in becoming a leader in sustainability as we recognize the economic, ecological and human health benefits of a more robust regional food and agriculture system."

The broad goal of the UMD Land Lab, explains Hanson, is to "leverage the considerable social, cultural and scientific resources of UMD to reclaim agriculture as a key driver of regional sustainability. We can provide new research opportunities for faculty and students and improve our region. Rebuilding regional agriculture is an opportunity multiplier, positively impacting social inclusion, employment and poverty, water issues, energy use and biodiversity."

Hanson adds that he remains deeply committed to UMD's Land Lab and appreciates the overwhelming supportive response from students and the community regarding the value it brings to campus and the region.



## *About the Fellowship*

The Endowed Chair in Agricultural Systems position is awarded by the Minnesota Institute for Sustainable Agriculture, which is a partnership between the College of Food, Agricultural and Natural Resource Sciences at the University of Minnesota and the Sustainers' Coalition, a group of non-profit community organizations.

The Chair is dedicated to stimulating discussion, new ideas, and leadership in agriculture, leading to a healthy environment, vital communities, and economic profitability in the long term.

Search committee members recognized the current impact of the UMD Land Lab, and they hope to see it continue to develop. "They believe the UMD Land Lab and SAP Farm is a model to advance sustainability practices for universities and their communities," says Hanson.

## *UMD Farm Named One of the Country's Best*

In addition to the Endowed Chair position, the UMD Land Lab and SAP Farm is celebrating being named one of the 35 best college farms in the country by College Rank, a website dedicated to evaluating and ranking college programs and experiences. Criteria include the farm's integration with sustainability and community programming.

The UMD Land Lab and SAP Farm was ranked number 19 and lauded for providing students with a "solutions-oriented approach... an organic farm with a farm-scale wind turbine, climate resilient water systems, and biodiversity enhancement."

Its relationship with UMD's Dining Services was also lauded, as 90% of the food grown on the farm is served to UMD's students, faculty, and staff. Hanson says students working on the farm value the concrete opportunity to help evolve the University's food system. "We couldn't be doing this without the visionary collaboration with our UMD Dining Services. They deserve a lot of credit for their creativity in advancing sustainability and responding to campus and community desires for healthy, local foods," noted Hanson.

"In 2016, the UMD Land Lab delivered tens of thousands of pounds of organically grown produce to Dining Services. We also hosted more than a thousand students in one form or another at the farm over the course of the year. This kind of landscape scale experiential learning, where students eat their homework, is recognized here as exemplary in the U.S. context. In this, for sure, we're a leader."

## *Certifying Organic*

After years of growing according to organic practices, in 2017 the UMD Land Lab and SAP Farm is embarking to become third-party certified as an organic operation by the Midwest Organic and Sustainable Education Service (MOSES). MOSES organizers say being certified organic enables the SAP Farm's soil performance to improve, increase yields, and increase the biodiversity of the land.

The process of becoming certified organic involves providing a detailed description of the operation and a history of the inputs, land management, and soil improvement practices applied to the farm for a minimum of three years.

## *About the UMD Land Lab*

Hanson has been focused on developing the Land Lab since 2009. Its mission is to engage teaching, research, and public engagement related to sustainable food and agricultural systems within the context of sustainable water, energy and biodiversity systems.

Its three functions are:

1. A university farm that exposes more than 1,000 students each year to an experiential education
2. A community food systems and sustainability incubator
3. A land-based research lab around sustainable food, water, energy and biodiversity systems

*Taken from the Recognition and Awards section of UMD News  
Written by Lori C. Melton*

# New Additions

## UMD Land Lab (SAP Farm) Installs Weather Station



*New Weather Station at the Land Lab - Photo by Ryan Bergstrom*

Dr. Ryan Bergstrom, with the support of Dr. Randy Hansen and the Land Lab, applied for and was awarded a CLA Technology Improvement Grant to install a weather station at the farm. The addition of a weather station at SAP will expose students to real-time and historic weather monitoring, and provide an opportunity to compare remotely-accessed data from the UMD Land Lab with data obtained from campus weather stations and through the National Weather Service. This will be particularly relevant for courses taught in the department such as Introduction to Weather and Climate, Physical Geography, Environmental Conservation, and Climate Science. In addition, students from courses such as Geography of Soils and Sustainable Food Systems will use data obtained from the weather station to monitor and track soil temperature and moisture content in real-time, greatly enhancing planting, harvesting, and irrigating proficiency at the Land Lab, while simultaneously allowing the analysis of long-term climatological trends for the site that will benefit decision making. To see the current weather conditions at the farm, visit:

[www.weatherlink.com/user/umdsap](http://www.weatherlink.com/user/umdsap).

# New Additions

## GIS 4909: Professional Preparedness

The first section of GIS 4909 Professional Preparedness was held this spring semester. This 1-credit senior level course guides students through a self-reflective process, allowing them to define and situate themselves among early career GIS professionals. Course activities include examinations modeling certification exams in the field of GIS, discussions on ethical situations regarding the work of a geospatial professional, construction of web-based portfolios to showcase their academic achievements and notable experiences, and resume preparation. The semester will end with mock interviews, a luncheon, and a group discussion aimed to assess program achievements and areas for improvement. We are grateful for the five interviewers who have volunteered their time to support the success of the program: Allen Best, Sam Giebner, Brandon Keinath, Molly Keinath, and Charlie Moore. This group of volunteers is either a past graduate of the GUESS program or has earned GIS certification here at UMD.

## Saying Goodbye

The end of the school year is upon us, and as we close the book on another semester, we also say goodbye to our graduates. This year is especially bittersweet, as we lose our work study student of four years, Kelyn Gress. Kelyn began working for GUESS and Political Science in the fall of 2013 when she came to UMD to study Communication Sciences and Disorders while minoring in Psychology. During her four years here Kelyn truly became part of the family – it will be hard to see her go! Nevertheless, she will be moving on to some new opportunities in her hometown of St. Paul – starting this fall, she will be pursuing her master’s degree in Speech Language Pathology at the University of Minnesota Twin Cities. She hopes to become a Speech Language Pathologist (speech therapist) and work with children in a school or clinic setting. Kelyn is excited to return home, but assures us she will definitely miss UMD. In her own words, “It has been a pleasure working with everyone and getting to know you all!” Congratulations Kelyn, and best wishes for a wonderful start to your graduate school experience!



# Research Opportunities

## Environment & Sustainability Student Awarded UROP to Study Park Point



Ahnika Hesbjerg, senior in Environment & Sustainability, was awarded an Undergraduate Research Opportunity (UROP) in the fall of 2016 (with Dr. Ryan Bergstrom as her advisor) to study community development and well-being on Duluth's Park Point. The Point is known as the world's longest freshwater sandbar, and while it is accessible only via the lift bridge, it is home to more than 300 residences. Since 1889, the Point has developed into a close-knit residential community that is interspersed with amenity migrants, vacation homes, and an increasing

number of tourists.

The City of Duluth has attempted to improve the quality of parks, recreational and tourist experiences, and resident well-being along the Point, however, from the community's perspective, very little has been successful. In recent years, commercial development has been an influencing force that has created concerns among, and between, residents, with particular conflicts emerging related to traffic flow, future commercial development, public access, and the overall quality of residential life. As such, the goal of this study was to determine how residents of Park Point conceptualize community development, how these conceptualizations inform the long-term sustainability of the Point, and to determine the priorities of the community moving forward.

In the spring of 2017, Ahnika conducted key informant interviews with local residents, and it is hoped that the information gathered will be a first step towards reconciliation between residents of the Point and the City of Duluth.

Dr. Bergstrom, in conjunction with additional undergraduate students, will carry Ahnika's research forward with additional key informant interviews, focus groups, and a mailed survey to local residents.

# Making a Difference

You can make a difference for current students in GUESS! Each year more and more students are pursuing educational experiences outside of the classroom by attending academic conferences. We are actively working to build our GUESS Department Fund to be able to support these valuable pursuits. Just \$250 can help cover the cost of one student to attend a conference.

**GUESS Department Support Fund (5968):** This is the general support fund for the GUESS department. Funds are used to support student initiatives and travel opportunities related to student studies in GUESS. You can also contribute to one of our scholarship funds and help lower the costs of tuition for students in GUESS.

**Emma Goldman Scholarship in Geography (1122):** This scholarship, in honor of Emma Goldman, is awarded to geography majors who demonstrated support for women, women's issues, and feminist academic and intellectual principles; and demonstrated commitment to values, ethics, politics and scholarship that match those of Emma Goldman.

**Matti E. Kaups Geography Scholarship (4652):** Awarded to Geography majors in honor of longtime professor emeritus of UMD, Matti E. Kaups.

**Catherine E. Cox Scholarship in Geography (6090):** Awarded to a Geography major, this scholarship was established by the estate of Catherine E. Cox, who was one of the first four female students in the Chemistry Department at UMD, and who went on to become a Geography professor.

**Frederick & Lois Witzig Geography Scholarship (8723):** Awarded to a Geography, Environment & Sustainability, or Urban & Regional Studies major in honor of Frederick and Lois Witzig. Frederick was a professor in the Geography Department starting in 1953, and went on to serve as Dean of the College of Liberal Arts. He retired after 37 years of service at UMD.

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