DEPARTMENT HIGHLIGHTS

Deptartment size: 7 full-time faculty, 1 part-time faculty on QEP Director assignment, 3 adjunct faculty, 1 Professor Emeritus and 1 Administrative Assistant. 4 of the 8 faculty are GISP certified.

- Implemented a new major in Geographic Information Science.
- Submitted proposal to establish three topical GIS certificates, namely: Business Geographic Information Systems certificate; Environmental Geographic Information Systems certificate; and Community Development and Planning Geographic Information Systems certificate. All three were approved by ACHE on June 9, 2017 and will be offered starting Fall 2017.
- Offered three study abroad programs: Tanzania (May 2016) and Jamaica and Peru (May 2017). Two other domestic field courses were offered: U.S. Southeast and the Mountain West.
- Graduated 31 undergraduate students and 3 graduate students.
- Five out of seven fulltime faculty members published scholarly work in refereed journals. Geography faculty also made a total of 25 conference presentations and invited talks.
- Three undergraduates and three graduate students made a total of eight presentations at regional and national conferences.
- Hosted University of North Alabama Geography Alumni Association Conference in October 2016.
- Co-sponsored Master’s Clinic of the World Tang So Doo Association, held on the UNA campus in March 2017.
- Recorded 100% placement rate for Spring 2017 graduating class.
- Were contacted by 12 different companies wanting to hire from our graduating Spring 2017 class of 10 – needing to fill 15 positions.
- Recorded 100% placement for M.S. graduates - three admitted in Ph.D. programs at Michigan State University and University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee, and University of North Carolina, Greensboro, and another to University of Alabama Law School.
- Placed 2 undergraduate students in the finals of Research Day Three Minute Thesis (3MT) competition.
- Undergraduate Anh Nguyen was awarded Most Outstanding Research award in the College of Arts & Sciences.
- Undergraduate Savanna Watson received a fully-funded internship in a nationally-competitive National Science Foundation Interdisciplinary Research Experience in Hyperspectral Imaging (IDREHSI) internship program at the University of Northern Iowa.
- Undergraduate Audrieauna Beatty received a fully-funded internship in the Geographic Information Systems and Technologies (GIST) division of the Science Education internship program at Oak Ridge National Laboratories.
- Undergraduate Coty Welch received the American Association of Geographers’ Marble-Boyle Award.
- Added three new cross listed courses to the undergraduate and graduate curriculum – Biogeography, Geography of Beer, Wine, and Spirits, and Quantitative Methods in Geography.
- Moved GIS Lab from Wesleyan Room 106 to Wesleyan Room 107.
- Seven of eight Geography faculty completed Quality Matters training.
- Geography faculty member Michael Pretes was awarded 2017 Distinguished Teaching Honors by the American Association of Geographers.
Many academic advisors, faculty, staff, and students will admit that Geography is not a first major of choice for freshmen entering the University of North Alabama (UNA). I stand corrected but the average number of freshmen entering UNA each semester to major in Geography or Geographic Information Systems (GIS) is well under 3.0. The question is not why, but rather, how. If that is the case, how is geography one of the largest departments in the university by major count? Look no further: it is about who we are, what we do, and how we do it. 88 years ago when the Department of Geography was established at UNA, the mission then, is still the mission now: Inspiring curiosity and creativity, encouraging exploration and advancing geographic knowledge, and engaging the community to understand and address contemporary issues. Regardless of our various areas of interest, we corporately aspire to be a leader in applied geographic education and geospatial technologies in a global context. Our students are hard-wired to explore, discover, and learn in ways that generate an inextinguishable passion for excellence in a competitive market place. In the last 50 years, the Department has established a national reputation as a leader in applied geography exposing students to critical thinking, problem-solving and project-based learning. Because of the applied nature of the Department and our tradition of excellence, UNA Geography graduates populate many organizations and agencies in the State and region that utilize geographic knowledge and/or geographic information technologies. Most important however, and what I believe makes us unique, are the relationships we establish with our students. Hundreds of hours faculty and students spent together in the GIS Lab, study abroad, domestic field courses, conference travel, field research, Geography Club events or just tailgating home football games builds not just fond college memories but also develops life-long relationships – the elemental superglue that keeps us tight with our alumni many years after graduation.

Putting things into perspective, 2016-2017 was a great year for our Department. Our number one priority was implementation of the new GIS major. Along with that, the Alabama Commission on Higher Education (ACHE) approved our proposed topical GIS certificates. They include a Business Geographic Information Systems certificate; Environmental Geographic Information Systems certificate; and Community development and Planning Geographic Information Systems certificate. The third biggest accomplishment for the year was the transfer of the GIS Lab from Wesleyan Room 106 to Room 107. Responding to the growing numbers of the new GIS major, the Department made the decision to move the GIS Lab to a larger room, which enabled us to not only increase the machines from 25 to 40, but also experiment with the new Virtual Desktop Infrastructure (VDI) system – which runs all programs from a virtual machine at UNA’s ITS Department. Other notable accomplishments include, but are not limited to, three study abroad trips to Peru, Jamaica and Tanzania, faculty research and conference presentations, student conference travel, undergraduate and graduate student internships, two MS graduate students admitted into PhD programs, Geography faculty member Michael Pretes being awarded the 2017 Distinguished Teaching Honors by the American Association of Geographers, and Dr. Sim going on sabbatical in Dortmund, Germany. How did all this happen? Well, it is the hard work put in by a dedicated team of eight faculty, three adjunct faculty, and one staff who stay focused on providing our students with unique and rewarding experiences.

Looking into 2017-2018, the Department is focused on expanding our offerings and programs to a wide market using online platforms, changing the CIP code for the MS program to a STEM-designated CIP code, and integrating experiential learning into our undergraduate curriculum. Along with that is our ongoing deliberate efforts to enhance diversity in every facet of our operation, whether it is in recruitment of faculty, staff, and students, curriculum programming, research perspectives, international involvement and participation in on- and off-campus events. Stay connected with us for more exciting news by liking us on Facebook, following us on Twitter and Instagram, and joining our LinkedIn network.

Dr. Francis T. Koti
Professor and Chair
The Department is happy to call Dan Wanyama a part of the UNA Geography family, not only for his infectious smile and perpetual positive attitude, but also for his unflagging determination to be the best student, husband, and father one can be. Few students have attained the level of academic and personal success that Dan managed to achieve in his time at UNA, building up an impressive array of accomplishments in his two years as a Graduate Assistant. Dan expanded upon his work as a project officer in community development in his native Kenya by developing his geospatial skills with such varied courses as Modeling and Analysis in GIS, Advanced Remote Sensing, and Fundamentals of Sustainability. These experiences culminated in the completion of his thesis research, titled “A Spatial Analysis of Climate Change Effects on Maize Productivity in Kenya.” As is true to his ambitious nature, Dan presented his research at many conferences, including the 2017 Annual Meeting of the American Association of Geographers, the 2015 Annual Meeting of the Southeastern Division of the American Association of Geographers, the 28th Annual International Cartographic Conference, and the 9th Annual Kenya Scholars and Studies Association Conference. In 2016, Dan was awarded the College of Arts & Sciences Outstanding Graduate Assistant Award and a graduate research grant from the Office of Sponsored Programs. Last year, Dan married the love of his life Susan and welcomed their baby boy Radhi to their family. He is currently a Ph.D. student in geography at Michigan State University. We wish Dan and his family all the best in their future endeavors!
“Magical.” That is how Anh Nguyen describes geography, a field of study she has loved since high school. Graduating with a degree in GIS in Fall 2016, Anh took advantage of the wealth of resources afforded by the Department to enrich her college experience to the fullest. As a student, Anh worked with Dr. Sunhui Sim and Dr. Francis Koti on research projects encompassing such topics as evaluating urban features of small cities and towns in the southeastern United States to a GIS analysis of law enforcement return on investment. Anh presented her research at the 2017 Annual Meeting of the Southeastern Division of the American Association of Geographers and the 2016 University of Tennessee GeoSym. For this work, Anh was bestowed the College of Arts & Sciences’ Outstanding Undergraduate Research and Outstanding Academic Achievement awards. Anh also participated in extracurricular activities, serving as the Treasurer of the Geography Club from 2015 to 2016 and a map editor for the United States Geological Survey’s National Map Corps. Traveling and experiencing new cultures are among Anh’s favorite hobbies. Anh is currently a GIS Technician for Magnolia River, inspecting pipeline systems.

Morgan Hastings is a Spring 2017 graduate of the Department. Morgan’s interest in geography began with the Principles of Physical Geography class she took with Dr. Greg Gaston. She developed her interests in the discipline through field research in historical geography, mapping and cataloging at-risk cemeteries in Lauderdale County and her hometown of Scottsboro, Alabama with Dr. George Makowski of the History Department. As a student in the Department, Morgan served as a GIS intern with OptimalGEO in Athens, Alabama, where she was hired on as a full time Geospatial Analyst following graduation (and currently works alongside many Department alum). Skills picked up in Dr. Gaston’s Image Interpretation and Analysis course have assisted Morgan in excelling at her job with OptimalGEO. In the future, Morgan hopes to extend her experience conducting historical geography research into a position analyzing archaeological sites using remote sensing techniques.

Some people are born with an innate sense of wonder and curiosity; Coty Welch can count himself among that select group of folks. While Coty has been an avid traveler and amateur geologist throughout his life, he never quite knew how he could apply these interests in his studies. Stories told to him by friends who were members of the Department persuaded him to give geography a shot – after one class, he was convinced that this was the path in life for him. Historical Geography of the U.S. with Dr. Michael Pretes, GIS with Dr. Mario Mighty, Aerial Image Analysis with Dr. Greg Gaston, and Quantitative Methods and Applied Geospatial Analysis with Dr. Jonathan Fleming are among the classes that provided Coty with a foundation upon which he has built an impressive résumé of accomplishments. Due to his achievements in research (studying the relationship between automobile fatalities and prohibition in Alabama) and in the classroom, Coty was awarded the American Association of Geographers’ Marble-Boyle Award for Geospatial and Computer Sciences in 2017. During his last year in the Department, Coty interned with OptimalGEO in Athens, Alabama, working alongside many Department alum. Coty is currently working with ESRI in Charlotte, North Carolina as an ArcGIS Support Analyst.
Students and faculty of the Department once again explored the wonders of Peru in a Study Abroad Program this past May. The Program focused on the Andes Mountain and Peruvian Desert regions of the South American country. The natural and cultural landscapes of this geographically diverse country were examined, providing students an understanding of cultural processes and human adaptation to and modification of the landscape across the region. Students visited the storied cities of Lima, Cusco, Puno, and Arequipa, among many others. The mountain citadel Machu Picchu and brilliantly-colored Rainbow Mountain are notable destinations that amazed students on their travels.

Jamaica Study Abroad

Jamaica is a Caribbean island nation that is home to a vibrant history and rich geography. For the first time in Department history, Dr. Mario Mighty led a Study Abroad Program of eight students in May 2017 to explore topics ranging from the physical geography of the Caribbean region to human-environment interactions, particularly with regard to the economy and the environment. Memorable sites visited include the famed coffee farms in the Blue Mountains of St. Andrew and the coastal and riverine features of St. Elizabeth. Students also examined the roots and results of cultural diversity in Jamaica, investigating local and international tourist sites in Ocho Rios, St. Ann and Devon House in the capital of Kingston.
FIELD COURSES and STUDY ABROAD

Rocky Mountains Field Course

Dr. Greg Gaston and Dr. Michael Pretes took a group of #unageo students to see the majestic plains, beautiful lodgepole pines, and grand snowcapped peaks of the U.S. Rocky Mountains during the summer of 2017. Students delved into the physical and historical geography of the region, investigating the geomorphic and tectonic processes that shape the landscape. Exploring Yellowstone National Park was a highlight for students on the trip.

The Heat Is On: Geography of the Desert Southwest Coming Summer ‘18

Dr. Greg Gaston & Dr. Jonathan Fleming will set off for a Field Course Program to the Southwest U.S. in Summer 2018, introducing students to the stunning desert and canyon landscapes of the region. The states of Utah, Colorado, New Mexico, and Arizona will be visited in this Program, including visits to Mesa Verde, Arches, and Canyonlands National Parks. Contact Dr. Gaston or Dr. Fleming for more information about this once-in-a-lifetime Program.

Study Abroad Program to Tanzania Announced for May 14 - 30, 2018

Join Dr. Francis Koti from May 14-30, 2018 for a Study Abroad Program to Tanzania! Students will have the opportunity to research the Ngorongoro Crater in the Crater Highlands, learn about the historical geography of Dar es Salaam, and explore the physical geography of Zanzibar. Contact Dr. Koti at ftkoti@una.edu for more information regarding this exciting Program.
Whether it’s tailgating, playing intramural volleyball (Go Wesleyan Warriors!), or hiking out at Cane Creek, the UNA Geography Club is always seeking out a new adventure! For every home football game, the Club brings good food, good drinks, and good company to Spirit Hill to cheer our Lions on. The Club also organizes regular game nights, camping trips, and even helps fund travel to geography conferences for members.

**University & College of Arts & Sciences Awards Winners**

- Gabby D’Arcy: Outstanding Senior in Geography (University)
- Anh Nguyen: Outstanding Senior in GIS (University)
- Anh Nguyen: Outstanding Undergraduate Research (STEM) Award (COAS)

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**Dr. Francis Koti Awarded at 2017 KESSA Conference**

At the 2017 Kenya Scholars & Studies Association’s (KESSA) Conference, Dr. Francis Koti was recognized for his unwavering dedication to the organization. Dr. Koti was presented a Certificate of Recognition by the President of KESSA, Dr. Kefa Otiso, acknowledging him as a founding member, Secretary (2008-2016), and mentor to the academic community. Congratulations, Dr. Koti!
Dr. Pretes Awarded AAG's Distinguished Teaching Honors

Dr. Michael Pretes was awarded the Distinguished Teaching Honors at the American Association of Geographers' 2017 Meeting in Boston, Massachusetts. Dr. Pretes was recognized for his contributions to geographic education both within and outside the classroom. The AAG describes Dr. Pretes as “an exemplary teacher-scholar” and notes his “ability to instill a love and respect for geography in his students.” Congratulations, Dr. Pretes!

Dr. Mighty Attends 2017 GFDA in Knoxville, TN

Dr. Mario Mighty attended the Geography Faculty Development Alliance’s Early Career Workshop in Knoxville, Tennessee on the campus of the University of Tennessee from June 18-24, 2017. This GFDA workshop is for faculty who are beginning their careers in higher education and focuses on topics which are frequently the greatest sources of stress in the first years of a faculty appointment. Dr. Mighty also had the opportunity to meet the new President of the AAG, Dr. Derek Alderman. Thanks for representing us in the Department so well, Dr. Mighty!

Dr. Keys-Mathews Awarded NatGeo Grant

Dr. Lisa Keys-Mathews was recently awarded a National Geographic Society Explorer grant. Details on the grant will be available to the public in the coming months. Congratulations, Dr. Keys-Mathews! You are a great representative of #unageo!

Drone Course Coming to Department in Spring 18

Pilots, start your engines! In Spring 2018, the Department will offer a new course focusing on unmanned aerial systems (UAS) — GE 497: UAS in Geography. More commonly known as ‘drones’, UAS are an emerging technology in academia and the geospatial industry. The course will be taught by Dr. Greg Gaston and will train students on piloting UAS, capturing high spatial- and spectral-resolution imagery with state-of-the-art remote sensing equipment, and processing of data. For more information on this new course, please contact Dr. Gaston at gggaston@una.edu.

SPECIAL MENTIONS
Among the many accomplishments in Dr. Francis Koti’s career, he has always had one goal in mind: fostering growth in the Department. It appears as if Dr. Koti’s path to seeing this goal realized is becoming clearer as the years pass. As of Fall 2017, he can count three new GIS certificates among his successes. Students may now complete coursework to be awarded one of three new topical GIS certificates. In addition to the new GIS certificate options, Dr. Koti has co-authored a paper on mentoring foreign-born faculty for tenure and promotion in the Proceedings of the 2016 Kenya Scholars and Studies Association (KESSA) Conference. Dr. Koti prides himself on chairing a student-oriented Department, as is evident in the role as a mentor to Anh Nguyen and her research into return on investment on funds allocated to law enforcement in small cities in the southern United States. Dr. Koti also serves as a thesis committee member for graduate students Casey Vinson, Amanda Oakley, and Jason Blankenship. Dr. Koti is also committed to the success of UNA at large, serving on the Faculty Search Committee in the Department of Economics and Finance, working with the Accelerated Bachelors-Masters Program Working Group, and participating in UNA Strategic Doing Workshops. Dr. Koti’s engagement with other Departments at UNA include collaborating with the College of Business to design a Business GIS Certificate (which was approved by the Alabama Commission on Higher Education (ACHE) earlier this summer. Outside of UNA, Dr. Koti serves as the Director of KESSA and the Workshop leader of the AAG’s Geography Faculty Development Alliance. As a testament to his hardwork, Dr. Koti was recognized as the Co-Founder and Executive Secretary of KESSA at this year’s conference. When he finds spare time outside of his busy schedule, Dr. Koti enjoys attending his son Milton’s college soccer games, playing badminton with his daughter Arianna, watching college sports, and playing guitar.

Dr. David Brommer is a well known and widely loved member of the UNA family — the Department is fortunate to count him as one of our own. As Graduate Coordinator for the Department, outgoing Faculty Senate President, member of the Shared Governance Executive Committee, member of the University Scholarship Committee, and participant in the Emerging Leaders program, one can see that he is committed to seeing things thrive around Wesleyan Hall and UNA at large. Always on the lookout for ways to integrate the latest and greatest technology in the classroom, Dr. Brommer is currently working with Dr. Greg Gaston on developing a drone presence in our program. Dr. Brommer served as a member on graduate student Kevin Cornelius’s thesis committee, guiding Kevin toward completion of his Master’s degree in the Summer 2017 semester. As Graduate Coordinator, Dr. Brommer seeks out the best and brightest to add to the Department’s roster, fostering the development of future leaders in geography and enhancing our Master’s program. In his efforts to constantly improve the graduate program, Dr. Brommer is working hard on providing new opportunities to graduate students through online offerings and programming. Dr. Brommer further engages with graduate students through the Graduate Garden, a garden space in front of Wesleyan Hall where grads experiment with growing organic vegetables. Researching weather and climate, Dr. Brommer is currently working on a series of papers related to natural hazard perception and decision making related to severe weather. In his free time, Dr. Brommer enjoys spending time with his wife and two daughters.
Dr. Jonathan Fleming, a UNA Department of Geography alum and Assistant Professor, is one of the most dynamic faculty members of the Department, having a technical and theoretical skillset that is nonpareil among most of his contemporaries. Dr. Fleming’s passion for geography is far-reaching, whether it be publishing peer-reviewed papers, serving in academic organizations, or helping students in their day-to-day coursework. Around the Department, Dr. Fleming is currently spearheading an effort to develop and offer more online courses for our program. In the past year, Dr. Fleming has published a paper focusing on developing a GIS model of habitat suitability for *Solanum conocarpum*, a rare vascular plant species native to the U.S. Virgin Islands. Dr. Fleming is involved in professional organizations specializing in aquatic ecology as well, serving as Editor for the MidSouth Aquatic Plant Management Society and Scholarship Chairman of the Alabama Fisheries Association. Dr. Fleming is chairing four graduate students’ thesis committees — Sandor Dibble, Paul Graham, Randee Miller, and Chandler White. Along with his advisees, Dr. Fleming served as Chair and Supervisor for recent graduate Kevin Cornelius’ thesis, “Forecasting Distribution of Hydrilla Under Current and Future Climate Scenarios.” Dr. Fleming notes that geography as a discipline is changing more rapidly than any other traditional field except for computer science and technology — as a result, faculty and students have to work hard to keep up, not only knowing the past and present of geography, but also knowing how to prepare for the future. Despite the demands of the future, Dr. Fleming still values the experience of learning ‘on location’ — this dedication to instruction outside the classroom is on display in his GE 112 labs conducted in the field. In his free time, Dr. Fleming enjoys fishing, hunting, and spending time with his wife, Whitney.

Geography is a discipline that demands an attitude of inquiry, and Dr. Greg Gaston is well suited for this line of work. Over the course of Dr. G’s long, distinguished career, he has always pushed forward with new research, innovative student engagement, and a rollicking laugh that can make anyone smile. Dr. G is passionate about showing students the value of doing work in the field (as an aside, he is keen to mention that he is in fact not a geologist, although he is quite interested in geology). He also serves as Chair and Supervisor of graduate student Blake Staggs’ thesis committee, who is conducting research on the distribution of alligators in the Tennessee Valley region. Dr. G is also working with undergraduate students Isabella Wilson and Jessica Coffey on research that will be presented at the 2017 Meeting of the Southeastern Division of the American Association of Geographers. In addition, Dr. G is always seeking opportunities for professional development — he attended the ESRI User Conference in San Diego, California from July 10-14, 2017. The U.S. Rocky Mountains also came calling this past summer, as Dr. G. led a Field Course studying the geomorphology of the region. Dr. G also had the opportunity to lecture at the Universitat Politècnica de València earlier this year, further evidencing his passion for both teaching and traveling abroad. When he isn’t in the classroom or can’t be found in the field, Dr. G enjoys building and fixing things, especially tinkering with his beloved Honda motorcycle.
In the high demand world of present-day academia, teaching sometimes takes a backseat to research. In the case of Dr. Lisa Keys-Mathews, she is not willing to sacrifice honest engagement with students in the classroom, whether they happen to be first graders or college sophomores. Dr. Keys-Mathews’ many avenues for reaching out to students manifest themselves through her involvement with the Alabama Geographic Alliance. Dr. Keys-Mathews serves as Coordinator of the Alabama Geographic Alliance, organizing educational outreach programs with schools across the state. She also serves on the Editorial Board of the Journal of Geography, is a member of the Alliance Coordinator Council, and is an Explorer with the National Geographic Society. Last fall, Dr. Keys-Mathews, along with graduate and undergraduate students, participated in Geography Awareness Week events at Forest Hills Elementary School. There, they worked with first through fifth graders, using giant traveling maps of Alabama and the U.S. to stimulate interest in the discipline at an early age. The range of people she works with is not limited to primary school students, however — Dr. Keys-Mathews is also the Director of the University Quality Enhancement Plan at UNA, focusing on engaging students in undergraduate research. Dr. Keys-Mathews serves as Chair and Supervisor of graduate students Matt Taylor, Casey Vinson, Katie Kelsoe, and Christian Walker’s thesis committees. Additionally, she is a committee member for graduate students Ryan Cook and Romeo Gillyard’s thesis committees. She has also been selected by the National Geographic Society as a recipient of an Explorers Grant (congrats!). A highlight from this past year is traveling to Mindanao, Philippines to instruct teachers on how to use GIS and GPS technologies. In her free time, Dr. Keys-Mathews enjoys cycling, walking, gardening, volunteering, and decompressing.

Dr. Mario Mighty is quickly gaining a reputation as one of the most accomplished, energetic faculty members around UNA. When he isn’t instructing students in his GIS for Business and Economic Geography courses, he is conducting exciting research. Dr. Mighty’s research, titled “‘We Likkle, But We Tallawah”: Maintaining Competitive Advantage in a Crowded Specialty Coffee Market’ has led to a publication in the Journal of International Food and Agribusiness Marketing and a Study Abroad Program in Jamaica that was held for the first time this past summer. He is also working on research focusing on applications of GIS in sustainability decision making in Alabama and Jamaica. Dr. Mighty also loves his extracurriculars, leading the Wesleyan Warriors intramural volleyball team and Global Strikers intramural soccer team (who won the championship in April 2017!). Dr. Mighty is laser-focused on seeing his students succeed; his advisee Dan Wanyama defended his thesis, “A Spatial Analysis of Climate Change Effects on Maize Productivity in Kenya” in Spring 2017. Dr. Mighty also serves as Chair and Supervisor for graduate student Donald Akanga’s thesis committee. His hard work is paying off, as he has won the UNA University Research Grant, the Faculty Research and Development Grant in the past year. The secret to his success? Not skipping out on the easy opportunities to apply for funding, meet guest speakers and travel places. On a personal note, Dr. Mighty and his wife Peggy are excitedly expecting their first child this October (congrats!).

Lisa Keys-Mathews, Ph.D., GISP, B.A., 1985, University of North Alabama; M.S., 1987, University of South Carolina; Ph.D., 2007, University of Memphis

Mario Mighty, Ph.D., B.Sc., 2007, University of the West Indies (Mona); M.S., 2010, University of Florida; Ph.D., 2014, University of Florida
Dr. Michael Pretes is a consummate teacher and researcher, with his work in the classroom being nationally-recognized as among the best in the discipline. In 2017, the American Association of Geographers recognized Dr. Pretes for his accomplishments in geography instruction, bestowing upon him the Distinguished Honors in Teaching. Mentoring students is the element of academic life Dr. Pretes is most passionate about; he mentored two undergraduate students, Thad Hogan and John Crowell in their research this past year. Dr. Pretes advised Thad with work on feral swine in Alabama, which was presented at the Association of Pacific Coast Geographers Annual Meeting in Portland, Oregon in 2016. Dr. Pretes worked with John on a project focusing on the Millennial Generation and Generation Z in National Parks, conducting field research on this topic at Mount Rainier and Olympic National Parks in Washington State. Dr. Pretes also serves as Chair and Supervisor for graduate students Ryan Cook and John Murphy’s thesis committees and is a member of the thesis committees for Casey Vinson and Simon Bevis. In addition to his students at UNA, Dr. Pretes served on a Ph.D. committee as an external member at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. Research is also an integral part of his own work — Dr. Pretes is continuing his research on the role of California in the making of the National Park Service, and on the Geographer/Explorer Frederick Dellenbaugh. Currently, Dr. Pretes teaches Global Environments & Societies and Geography of Russia & Associated States. Dr. Pretes also serves as President of Phi Kappa Phi and is the advisor for Gamma Theta Upsilon. In his free time when he is not traveling, Dr. Pretes enjoys reading, gardening, and community service.

Dr. Sunhui Sim’s notable achievements continue to grow in number. Whether guiding her undergraduate and graduate advisees to completing their degrees, being awarded grants, or conducting cutting-edge research, she excels in every aspect of her career. The thing that makes Dr. Sim special, though, is that she doesn’t treat her responsibilities solely as a career — she is personally invested in seeing the Department and the people around her become as successful as she is. She cherishes the opportunity to positively impact students’ lives day in and day out: “My most memorable moments as a faculty member at UNA are when students come back to me and let me know that I had a positive influence on their development as geographers.” She saw first hand the effects teachers can have on their students, as her very first high school geography teacher inspired her to travel around the world and soak up as much knowledge as possible. She has carried this passion throughout her life, hoping to similarly impress upon her students the importance of being thoughtful members of the world community. Dr. Sim served on the thesis committee of recent graduate Kevin Cornelius and currently chairs Romeo Gillyard’s thesis committee. Notably, Dr. Sim received a research grant from the College of Arts & Sciences for her work on the livability of urban and ‘rurban’ areas. Dr. Sim is currently collaborating with former graduate students Md Abu Sayed and Jimmy Hilley in research to be published in the coming year. Dr. Sim was also elected President of the Korea-American Association for Geospatial and Environmental Sciences (KAGES) and serves as a U.S. National Committee Member of the International Cartographic Association. A personal highlight for Dr. Sim was traveling to an island around her hometown in South Korea with her two sisters and her mother in December 2016 and teaching Advanced Remote Sensing last Spring.
Congratulations, Pam!

Pam will be graduating Fall 2017 with a B.S. degree in Geography — way to go, Pam!

Thanks for everything you do for all of us here at the Department!

PROFESSOR EMERITUS
William (Bill) R. Strong, Ph.D., GISP

ADJUNCT PROFESSORS
Mr. José R. Atencio, III
Mr. Thomas Mathews
Mrs. Tama Nunnelley
UNDERGRADUATE
The Department of Geography at UNA offers two undergraduate degrees, a Bachelor of Science in Geography and a Bachelor of Science in Geographic Information Science (GIScience).

The Department also hosts three minor programs:
• General Geography
• Geographic Information Science (GIScience)
• GEOHCI/UX (Geospatial Human Computer Interaction and User Experience)

Students may also pursue one of four GIS certificates offered by the Department:
• General GIS Certificate
• Business GIS Certificate
• Community Development and Planning GIS Certificate
• Environmental GIS Certificate

GRADUATE
The Department of Geography at UNA offers a Master of Science in Geospatial Science degree. This program emphasizes applying spatial knowledge and technology to seek geospatial solutions for contemporary problems.

Fund Name | These funds support...
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Department of Geography | General fund used in the area of greatest need in the department such as – promotion of academic programs, departmental outreach, community engagement, faculty development, student events, lectureships, promotional activities
Geography Student Conference Travel Fund | Student travel to conferences, field courses, study abroad as determined by Geography faculty
Department of Geography Endowed Scholarship | One established annual competitive undergraduate scholarship
Our alumni represent the Department in places far and wide, demonstrating the skills and values that are emblematic of the education offered at UNA. Elizabeth Sutherland Ziemer is a distinguished exemplar of the Department, exhibiting the best qualities of students both old and new. As a student from 1993-1998, Elizabeth was a stand-out in both the classroom and across campus, notably serving as a member of both the Geography Club and Alpha Gamma Delta. During her time in the Department, Elizabeth forged relationships that have stood the test of time — her old GIS lab buddies, Brian Ward, Jesse Glasgow and Ethan Southern continue to be a part of her professional network, emphasizing the family atmosphere of Wesleyan Hall. The importance of building these relationships is key to success in both the academic and professional worlds; Elizabeth advises current students that “...your network starts now.” Elizabeth is currently the GIS Manager of Enbridge Energy in Edina, Minnesota, developing and supporting enterprise GIS for over 20,000 miles of North America’s pipeline infrastructure. Adding to her already-impressive list of accomplishments, Elizabeth is also serving on the Board of Directors of the Pipeline Open Data Standard (PODS) Association. The winters of the Midwest are no joke, yet Elizabeth greatly loves living in Minnesota with her husband Chris and three children, Connor, Emma, and Elise.

Jesse Glasgow knows that success can be found in a strong commitment to conceptual thinking and technical know-how. This keen awareness has led Jesse well in his life, spanning a 17-year career at Quantum Spatial and the establishment of Team Spatial, LLC, a geospatial solutions provider that he founded in 2015. Jesse’s remarkable professional achievements are rooted in his experiences in the Department, where he was an exceptional Remote Sensing, Maps & Map Interpretation, and Cartography student. While he was a student during the pen and ink days of map making, Jesse noticed that the rise of personal computers and GIS would likely pave the way for the future of the geospatial industry. With the skills he picked up in the classrooms of Wesleyan Hall, Jesse seized the opportunity of being on the forefront of the GIS revolution, starting out his career with Quantum Spatial (formerly known as Photo Science). At Quantum Spatial, Jesse and his team implemented a GIS from scratch, in the process developing business practices that received international recognition and adoption and minimizing the impact of thousands of miles of infrastructure construction on people and the environment. Capitalizing on his experiences at Quantum, Jesse decided to strike out on his own and launch Team Spatial in 2015. Team Spatial leverages location intelligence to enhance the lives of people and wildlife while preserving the natural landscape. Through in-house expertise and a network of trusted partners, Team Spatial provides full service geospatial solutions. Jesse notes that current students in the Department need to learn both the ‘how’ and ‘why’ of problems to keep up with the rapid changes in geospatial technology — changes that seem to be the only constant in the industry. Jesse also urges students to always keep in touch with the friends you make in the Department throughout the years to come. In his spare time, Jesse enjoys traveling with his beautiful wife and three children. This year has been a busy one for Jesse, including travels to Peru, Argentina, and Canada.
Audrieauna Beatty Serves as Prestigious Oak Ridge Intern

This past summer, GIS major Audrieauna Beatty was selected to intern with the Geographic Information Science and Technology (GIST) Group within the Computational Sciences and Engineering Division (CSED) at the Oak Ridge National Laboratory (ORNL) in Oak Ridge, Tennessee. In her position, Audrieauna digitized and located manufacturing sites, calculated floor area and determined the number of people in manufacturing buildings (all of which were located outside the U.S.). Audrieauna notes that she learned valuable team building skills during her time at ORNL. Congratulations to Audrieauna, and thanks for representing the Department so well!

Savannah Watson Develops Remote Sensing Skills as Intern

GIS major Savannah Watson earned a well-deserved appointment to the National Science Foundation’s (NSF) highly-competitive Research Experiences for Undergraduates/Interdisciplinary Research Experience in Hyperspectral Imaging (REU-IDREHSI) program this past summer. For her internship, Savannah traveled to Northern Iowa University to work with Dr. Alan Czarnetzki, where they researched the dispersion of ground-level ozone by wind. Savannah notes that the experience was valuable, preparing her for her next journey: graduate school! Savannah currently serves as an intern with OptimalGEO in Athens, Alabama. Way to go, Savannah!

As many of you may have noticed, Dr. Sunhui Sim is not around Wesleyan Hall this Fall — she is currently enjoying her sabbatical in Germany! Dr. Sim is working with the Geoinformation and Monitoring Team at the Research Institute for Regional and Urban Development in Dortmund, conducting exciting research in a collaborative, specialized environment. The Geoinformation and Monitoring Team is working on projects focusing on comparative urban sprawl between Germany and the U.S. and connecting the German Garden City with American New Urbanism. Dr. Sim took the opportunity to attend the SPIE-RS Remote Sensing Conference in nearby Warsaw, Poland in September 2017. Dr. Sim has also traveled to locales such as Oslo, Bergen, Aurland, and Flam in Norway, Vienna, Budapest, and Amsterdam. For the holidays, Dr. Sim plans to spend some time in northern Spain. We miss you, Dr. Sim! Thank you for being a wonderful delegate of the Department abroad!
Every year, the University of North Alabama Geography Alumni Association's (UNAGAA) Conference serves as an important link between past and current students of the Department. It is more than a collection of presentations — it provides an opportunity for individuals working in every corner of both the academic and professional geospatial spheres to network, share ideas, and experience again the bond of being in Wesleyan Hall. The 2017 UNAGAA Conference will be held October 5-6 at Wesleyan Hall on the beautiful campus of the University of North Alabama. This year, an unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) demonstration is scheduled, highlighting the emergence of this technology in our industry.

Welcome, Dr. Simon Donato!

We are excited to hear your keynote talk detailing your adventures across the globe!

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Simon Donato, Ph.D.
Ph.D. in Geology, McMaster University
GIS Lab Moves to New Location

At the beginning of the Fall 2017 semester, the doors opened on the new Freddie Wood Geographic Research Center. Moving to the former location of the Cartography Lab in Wesleyan Hall Room 107, the new GIS Lab is better equipped to meet the needs of students who wish to learn the latest skills available. Rather than traditional CPUs, machines are now run virtually through Virtual Desktop Infrastructure (VDI), easing strain on local machines. Thanks to everyone who assisted in making this move possible!

The Freddie Wood Geographic Research Center is equipped with the latest geospatial technologies, including:

- Esri ArcMap 10.5.1
- Esri ArcGIS Pro
- Esri Business Analyst 2016
- Esri CityEngine 2016
- ERDAS IMAGINE 2016
- TerrSet Geospatial Monitoring and Modeling System
- R Statistics 3.4.0
- Fragstats 4.2
- GRASS GIS 7.2.1
- QGIS 2.18

Congratulation to Peggy and Mario Mighty!

As of the publication of this year’s Newsletter, we are eagerly awaiting the arrival of the newest member of the Mighty family: a baby girl! Congratulations to Mario and Peggy — the Department wishes you all the best in your new adventure as parents!