

Geo-jottings and perspectives



DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY AND REGIONAL STUDIES
UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI, CORAL GABLES, FL 33124-2221

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Student Field Research Highlights International, Miami Foci



IKONOS satellite image of downtown Miami

Over the past year a number of our Geography MA students have fanned out across the globe to investigate research topics as varied as globalization in Mumbai (Ryan McLemore, MA '07) and the biogeography of bird populations in Borneo (Ian Berdie, MA '08). At the same time, locally based problems continue to generate a range of fascinating research topics for our students, including a recent MA thesis on gentrification in Co-

conut Grove (Daniela Belloli, MA '07) and Brazilian migration to Miami (Karen Katri, MA '0X). The range and diversity of student research topics continue to expand as our faculty grows and new geographic opportunities present themselves. For instance, many of us may think of hurricanes as a major nuisance and expense, but they also afford tremendous opportunities to evaluate their impacts on human behavior, infrastructure, and the natural environment. Equally fascinating are how global issues related to climate change, sea-level rise, migration, and urbanization play out locally and in the region as a whole. I expect that many of our incoming graduate students and geography majors will continue to find ample oppor-

tunities to work with our faculty on emerging geographic problems whether local or international in scope. A sampling of current student research topics provides a glimpse of what lies ahead in the coming year:

Zoning technology in Western India (Alpen Sheth, MA '08), remote sensing of Everglades hydrology (Amy Cohen, MA '09), the geography of disadvantaged communities in Miami-Dade (Quanita Toffie, MA '09), and land use in Costa Rica (Edgar Espinoza, MA '08).

I look forward to seeing these innovative projects come to fruition and congratulate those of you who recently earned your degrees. I am truly excited to hear about your new work and future successes in the year ahead.

- D. Fuller

Dr. Tom Boswell Steps Down as Department Chair

After six years leading the Department, **Dr. Tom Boswell** has decided to return to his regular duties as Professor and undergraduate advisor. During his tenure as Chair, Dr. Boswell initiated and oversaw a range of advancements including multiple faculty recruitments, the

launch of the new MA program in Geography, and the revitalization of graduate student space in the Merrick Tower. Fortunately, we will continue to benefit from his boundless energy and good cheer as he launches several new projects and continues his research on migration

and ethnicity (see related article on the upcoming Race, Ethnicity and Place Conference to be held in Miami in 2008). Meanwhile, as of June 1, **Dr. Doug Fuller** has taken over the role of Chair while continuing his research on land cover, remote sensing and climate change.

Departmental Highlights

- HEADLINES 1
- BERDIE'S BORNEO ADVENTURE 2
- FACULTY PARTICIPATE IN ACC INITIATIVES 2
- NEW URBAN STUDIES MINOR 3
- NEW VISITING FACULTY 3
- UPDATE ON THE DEPARTMENT'S STRATEGIC PLAN 4

Also in this issue:

- FACULTY MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS 3
- NSF AWARD FOR PROFS. GRANT AND NIJMAN 4
- FACULTY PUBLICATIONS 4
- RACE, ETHNICITY, AND PLACE CONFERENCE 5
- CALENDAR OF EVENTS 5
- SUPPORT FOR GEOGRAPHY 5

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A hunter in Borneo shows Ian Berdie the finer points of his trade.

Borneo adventures from Ian Berdie...

Over eight weeks in the summer of 2007, I conducted field work in remote areas of East Kalimantan on the island of Borneo. The work involved a number of challenges, including negotiating the jagged terrain, communicating in a series of foreign languages and keeping my camera equipment dry. Under the guidance of Professors Doug Fuller and Rinku Roy Chowdhury, my research assessed the habitat needs of an endangered bird species, the

Storm's Stork. I took a series of hemispherical photographs of the forest canopy which I will combine with other remote sensing techniques to quantify forest disturbance, hopefully revealing something about the Storm's Storks' ability to utilize logged and other disturbed forests. This information will then be utilized by my partners in the field, The Nature Conservancy, as they work with local and federal administrative bodies to de-

velop a management plan for the area. I came to the University of Miami because there were opportunities to work in exciting places like Indonesia, and I had been planning this trip for months, but there were still plenty of "I can't believe I'm here right now" moments. I'm fantastically grateful for the opportunity to make a contribution to conservation and do graduate work at UM.

-Ian Berdie (MA '08)

"UM'S DECISION TO JOIN THE ACC HAS PROVEN TO BE A SOUND STRATEGIC MANEUVER—FOR ACADEMICS AS MUCH AS ATHLETICS..."

-MIAMI MAGAZINE, SPRING 2007

Professor Grant travels to Africa on ACC mission

Dr. Richard Grant participated in a three-week Atlantic Coast Conference (ACC) faculty program that examined reconstruction and reconciliation efforts in three African countries. An interdisciplinary faculty group traveled to Uganda, Rwanda and South Africa. The group was comprised of social sciences and humanities faculty, and Dr. Grant was the only geographer among the group. The core experience of the program was intensive field visits to universities and international and non-governmental organizations as well as visits to historical sites for remembering, orphanages, AIDS clinics, prisons, and urban rehabilitation projects. The ACC intensive African field experience brought together representatives from twelve universities to explore and understand the psychological, social,

economic, and institutional underpinnings of the reconciliation process that a nation must go through in the aftermath of a major internal struggle. The field visits centered on key sites in and around the vicinities of Kampala (e.g., Makerere University/Africa's second oldest university), Kigali (e.g., the genocide museum), and Cape Town (e.g., Robben Island/Nelson Mandela's prison cell). The field visits included meetings/seminars with some of the main actors involved in the peace and reconciliation process in each country. These include the government, civil society, women's groups, and youth groups as well as those who convened the various truth and reconciliation commissions. Dr. Grant is incorporating his new materials and insights into his courses this fall semester.

The ACC International Academic Collaboration

*In 2004, the presidents of the ACC agreed to provide funds to encourage collaboration among the ACC institutions in support of international programs. Over the past two summers Geography faculty members took advantage of this unique program, **Dr. Grant** (story left) and **Dr. Sen Roy**, who made field visits to Vietnam and China in 2006 to link up with local scientists on water resource issues.*



Dr. Grant (front) with local hosts during his 2007 visit to Uganda.

Faculty media highlights, 2006-2007

Dr. Ira Sheskin on Jewish Demography:

The Jerusalem Post,
December 15, 2006

Miami Herald,
May 26, 2006

The New York Times
February 2, 2007

Orlando Sentinel,
February 3, 2007

The New York Times,
June 14, 2007

Dr. Laurence Kalkstein on heat waves and health:

ABC News,
July 15, 2006

The Seattle Times,
July 12, 2007

Baltimore Sun,
September 6, 2007

Dr. Thomas Boswell on immigration:

Miami Herald,
March 22, 2006

Miami Herald,
August 2, 2006

Miami Herald,
August 21, 2006

“KALKSTEIN’S ANALYSIS PERSUADED THE WEATHER SERVICE IN SEATTLE TO ADOPT A NEW ‘HEAT/HEALTH’ WARNING SYSTEM LAST YEAR TAILORED SPECIFICALLY TO WESTERN WASHINGTON”
THE SEATTLE TIMES,
JULY 12, 2007

New Visiting Professor, Heather Bell

We are pleased to welcome **Heather Bell** to our faculty as a new Visiting Assistant Professor. Heather is a hazards geographer interested in environmental communication and perception. Her current research explores connections between flood risk, communication, risk perception and policy in the

United States. Her recent published works can be found in *International Journal of Mass Emergencies and Disasters*, *Environmental Hazards*, and *Papers of the Applied Geography Conferences*. This semester she is teaching World Regional Geography, Physical Geography, and Place, Region, and Nature.

Heather is originally from northern California and expects to complete her Ph.D. from The University of South Florida this fall. Next spring she will add Introductory GIS and a graduate course in natural hazards to her growing teaching repertoire.

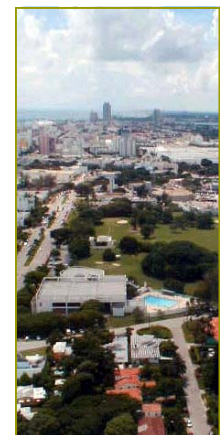
“ACCORDING TO DR. SHESKIN’S DATA, MORE THAN 87,000 AMERICAN HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS — ROUGHLY HALF THE AMERICAN TOTAL — QUALIFY AS POOR.”
NYTIMES, JUNE 14, 2007

New Urban Studies Minor

Dr. Jan Nijman is Director of a new undergraduate minor in **Urban Studies**. The new minor was approved last spring by the College of Arts and Sciences and will help link related interests of faculty and students in Arts &

Sciences and Architecture. The program includes two new courses with significant geography contents: URB 201: Metropolitan Miami and URB 301: Cities in Time and Space. The Urban Studies minor is expected

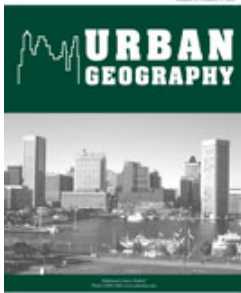
to be a useful complement to the Geography major. As an emerging global city, Miami and environs provide an excellent setting for students and faculty to address theoretical and practical aspects of urbanization.



Miami and environs: a global city.

Geo-jottings and perspectives

New and forthcoming faculty publications



Dr. Muller serves as co-editor of the leading specialty journal, *Urban Geography*.

“Slums have long been a characteristic part of the landscapes of large cities in the less-developed world, and they have proliferated in recent decades.”

-Drs. Grant and Nijman



Slum area in Vietnam along the Mekong River. Photo credit: S. P. Fuller

Dr. Doug Fuller, “A geographical sampling method for surveys of mosquito larvae in an urban area using high-resolution satellite imagery” *Journal of Vector Ecology* (in press) with A. Troyo, J.C. Beier, and O. Calderon.

Dr. Richard Grant, *Globalizing City*, Syracuse University Press (forthcoming book).

Dr. Laurence Kalkstein, “The development of analog European heat waves for U.S. cities to analyze impacts on heat-related mortality” *Bulletin of the American Meteorological Society* (in press) with J.S. Greene, D. Mills, and A. Perrin.

Dr. Peter Muller is book review editor of the *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*.

Dr. Jan Nijman is the guest editor of a special issue on “Comparative Urbanism” in the journal *Urban Geography* (March 2007).

Dr. Rinku Roy Chowdhury, “Household land management and biodiversity: Secondary succession in a forest-agriculture mosaic in southern Mexico” *Ecology and Society* (in press).

Dr. Shouraseni Sen Roy, “Impacts of the agricultural green revolution induced land use changes on air temperatures in India” *Journal of Geophysical Research—Atmospheres* (in press) with R. Mahmood, D. Niyogi, S. Foster, K.G. Hubbard, E. Douglas and R. Pielke Sr.

Dr. Ira Sheskin, “The Jews of South Florida,” article in the *Cambridge Dictionary of Jewish Religion, History, and Culture* (Judith Baskin, editor) (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press (forthcoming, 2007)).

Drs. Grant and Nijman receive major award from NSF

Drs. Grant and Nijman have received a prestigious funding award from the National Science Foundation (NSF) to continue their research on slums in global cities. About one billion people currently live in slums worldwide, and if current trends continue, that number will double by 2030. Their research will help social scientists better understand the economic logic of slums not just as “labor reser-

voirs” but also as sites or zones of specialized economic production. Without such understanding, one cannot fully understand the overall urban economy of cities such as Mumbai and Johannesburg, the two main targets of their investigations. Urban economic development strategies must take into account the economic role of slums, particularly in regard to popular efforts to stimulate local enterprise devel-

opment. Previous work by Drs. Grant and Nijman has shown that policies dealing with slums thus far have systematically ignored their economic functions, but slum eradication, rehabilitation, and relocation may have important economic consequences. The project therefore will be relevant to academic, social, and policy concerns.

Department finalizes its 2007 strategic plan

As part of our continuing dialog with UM’s administration, we completed our 2007 Strategic Plan for Geography and Regional Studies last spring. In the document, the faculty outlined their accomplishments and aspirations for the coming years, including the addition of new faculty to complement our expertise in

urban geography, environmental analysis and international development. Specifically, we highlighted the need for more faculty to teach and conduct research in urban ecology, natural hazards, and GIS. The good news is that the Provost and Dean of Arts & Sciences have already approved a new

faculty search for an urban ecologist to be recruited for next academic year. A successful search in this area will produce greater synergy and diversify our course offerings. We hope that this represents another in a series of steps toward the development of a doctoral program in Geography at UM.

Race, Ethnicity and Place Conference, Miami, 2008

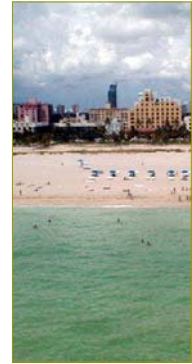
Two Departmental faculty members, **Drs. Boswell** and **Sheskin**, are playing leading roles in organizing the 2008 Race, Ethnicity and Place (REP) Conference to be hosted by the University of Miami, November 6-8, 2008. The REP Conference fosters dialog on a range of issues related to the racial and ethnic transformation of places. It encourages interdisciplinary perspectives, philosophical and methodological diversity,

and professional and student perspectives on such issues. The Conference is committed to providing high quality sessions and remaining open to broad participation by theoreticians, practitioners, and students. The Conference makes an effort to rotate among U.S. regions, incorporating a regional focus when appropriate, while maintaining national and international perspectives on race, ethnicity and place

issues. Past REP conferences have drawn thousands of participants from geography and other social science departments from around the nation and the world.

REP partner institutions include Binghamton U., Howard U., Texas State U., and the Association of American Geographers (AAG). More information can be found at:

<http://rep-conference.binghamton.edu/>



The 2008 REP conference will highlight the ethnic and cultural diversity of Miami and other regions where immigration has been important.

Calendar of Events, 2007-2008

Nov. 18-20, 2007: South-Eastern Division of the AAG Annual Meeting, Charleston, SC.

Dec. 10-14, 2007: American Geophysical Union Fall Meeting, San Francisco, CA.

Jan. 20-24, 2008: American Meteorological Society Annual Meeting, New Orleans, LA.

Jan. 25, 2008: Distinguished Geographer Lecture Series, Mei Po Kwan (Ohio State U.), UM Coral Gables campus.

Jan. 25-27, 2008: Florida Society of Geographers, Annual Meeting, Miami, FL.

Apr. 15-19, 2008: Association of American Geographers (AAG) Annual Meeting, Boston, MA.

Apr. 27-May 2, 2008, ASPRS Annual Conference, Portland, OR.

May 27-30, 2008: Joint Assembly of the American Geophysical Union, Fort Lauderdale, FL..

For more information on these and other geography events see <http://www.aag.org/Meetings/meetings.html>

"Each of us can identify some specific opportunities that we already have to build diversity while simultaneously enhancing our own work (in teaching, research, professional activities) and most profoundly our own learning."

-Victoria Lawson
AAG Past President

Help Support Geography at UM

We count on our alumni to support our academic endeavors whether it be service learning trips to developing countries or advanced use of geographic technologies such as GPS, GIS, and satellite imagery to investigate how people are changing our planet. Each year the University makes a series of special requests for donations from UM alumni. You can do your part to

help by specifying that your donation be used to support the Department's general scholarship fund, which aims to increase the amount of money available for student field research like that highlighted in this issue. For more information on how to contribute, please visit

<http://www6.miami.edu/alumni/giving/alumni.htm>

or contact our department office, (305) 284-4087. For more information on UM Geography and Regional Studies, visit our new website at <http://www.as.miami.edu/geography/>

We also would like to hear from you about noteworthy events in your life. Please write to us so we can include your news in upcoming issues of our newsletter!



Florida from Space: How will it look 100 years from now?



Geography and Regional Studies

