

GEOGRAPHY AND ENVIRONMENT CHAIR'S MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

September 2022



FREED – FIELD RESEARCH IN ECOLOGY AND EVOLUTION DIVERSIFIED

Aranya Iyer, M.Sc. joined forces with a Mariel Terebiznik (M.Sc. from UofT Ecology and Evolutionary Biology) to develop and co-direct a new program called FREED (Field Research in Ecology and Evolution Diversified) to provide Indigenous, Black and Racialized undergraduate students the opportunity to gain invaluable field research skills at the Algonquin Wildlife Research Station. This summer fifteen students, including four from Western, attended and had the opportunity to learn how to trap turtles and do insect surveys, participate in a wolf howl, observe the stars, and gain field skills, including camping, science communication and illustration. Thanks to fundraising by Aranya and Mariel, students had their travel and accommodations provided along with a stipend. This is a wonderful project that they will continue next year. If you are interested in learning more or supporting the program check out the web site here.

GRADUATE STUDENTS PUTTING THEIR KNOWLEDGE TO GOOD WORK

One of the things I enjoy most about being a professor is interacting with graduate students and seeing their successes. September is always an especially busy time with the arrival of new graduate students and the celebration of our students completing their degrees. This month I wanted to highlight a couple of the many contributions our students are making outside of their normal thesis research.



STUDENT HOUSING CHALLENGES

Alexander "AJ" Wray, President of the Town and Gown Association of Ontario and Ph.D. candidate in Geography and Environment, put his knowledge of urban development to good use on a study of the various policies impacting the availability (or lack) of affordable student housing in Ontario (see article in Housing Policy Debate here). The province has many university towns where rapidly rising housing prices have made finding affordable student housing challenging. AJ worked with Prof. Nick Revington at L'INRS to identify that each community has a different strategy to manage student housing – with some exclusively restricting them, while others trying to direct student housing development. Their work highlights how cities view students and potential regulatory strategies and identifies better solutions to support student housing needs. Their research was featured on the L'INRS webpage.

GRAD RETREAT – THANK YOU!

This month we also had our graduate retreat for all new incoming graduate students. It was held at Camp Stevenson. Godwin Arku with help from Jin Lee and myself, ran the event. Many thanks to Lori Johnson for help organizing the event, and to Ismahan Yusuf and John Hutchenreuther for their help instructing. Highlights were an energetic game of "Capture the Flag"!





AWARD-WINNING FACULTY

The outstanding research and contributions of several of our faculty recently have been recognized internationally.

Congratulations to Prof. Gordon McBean who was awarded The American Meteorological Society Warren Washington Research and Leadership Medal. This is presented to individuals who are recognized for the combination of highly significant research and distinguished scientific leadership in the atmospheric and related sciences.

Prof. Jamie Voogt was recognized by the International Association of Urban Climate. He was awarded the Luke Howard Award for outstanding contributions to the field of urban climatology in a combination of research, teaching, and/or service to the international community of urban climatologists (for more information see here).

Prof. Chantelle Richmond, was awarded the 2022 Fulbright Canada Research Chair in Social Sciences which will be taken up at University of Hawai'i at Mānoa from December 2022 to April 2023. Excellence in scholarship, diversity, and community service are hallmarks of the Fulbright Program. You can read more here.

Congratulations to all of you on your success and international recognition of your important contributions!

IN MEMORIAM

We were saddened to learn of the passing of one of our former faculty members and one of our staff.

Robert (Bob) McDaniel passed away in Woodstock, Ontario June 15, 2021 in his 96th year. He was a professor in Geography from 1961-1991 and then a professor emeritus. He was the creator of Geography's original web site, which he maintained until 1994. He did his PhD at Western graduating in 1954. The title of his thesis was A Military Geography of the Great Lakes Area with Emphasis on Industrial Dispersion and Defense. He published several manuscripts and books including A systems analytic approach to economic geography (1968); Sensory shift and geographic thought: A mosaic approach (1979), and The pedagogical implications of a futures program in Geography (1981). Bob was also an avid piper and a member of the militia in London Ontario. You can view his obituary here <https://www.westviewfuneralchapel.com/obituaries/robert-bob-mcdaniel/>



Cynthia (Cindy) Marie Blacklock passed away Sept. 2, 2022 in her 72nd year after a brief battle with pancreatic cancer. She was the lab technician in Prof. Roger King's lab for many years and is fondly remembered by faculty, staff and students. Many members of the department have expressed to me their happy memories of Cindy and her wonderful sense of humour. <https://mountpleasantcemeterylondon.ca/tribute/detail/s/632/Cynthia-Blacklock/obituary.html#content-start>

IMPORTANT DATES FOR SEPTEMBER AND OCTOBER

- September 25 to October 1 - UG Field Courses
- September 30 – National Day for Truth and Reconciliation
- October 10 – Thanksgiving
- October 11&12, 13&14, 20&21 – Faculty Candidate Visits
- October 19-21 – Fall Convocation



Please feel free to send me announcements and news that you wish to appear in my monthly newsletter. Thanks!