



Projections from the Chair

Dan Trudeau

A signature feature of the Geography Department is its sense of community. My colleagues and I take pride in our effort to facilitate connections among students, faculty, and staff. We know these connections matter to student motivation and learning. It is also one of the reasons why our alumni stay engaged with the department after they graduate.



A visit from Charlotte Fagan '12

We have launched several initiatives to foster and deepen the connections between alumni and current students. For instance, each issue of The Graticule now spotlights an alum. Our annual career panel highlights different pathways our alumni take and encourages conversation between students and alumni. This year, we embarked on a new approach to Lanegran Days, inviting alumni to join students, staff, and faculty in socializing over dinner following the featured speaker. We frequently invite alumni to contribute to specific classes, setting the stage for networking.

All of these touchpoints enrich the curriculum. Faculty stay informed about workplace, industry, and community practices. Being able to share what alumni do with their training in Geography helps students identify for themselves what's possible. I can't emphasize enough how much these connections matter to a "discovery discipline" like Geography where most students encounter it for the first time after they arrive at college.

To sow more seeds of connection, we're always looking to stay informed about what alumni are up to. Please take a moment to share an update with us via this [form](#).

Finally, we love it when alumni write to us or come back to visit the department. If you're ever around campus, please stop by the first floor of Carnegie!



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A Trip to the Library With Urban GIS

Freeman Boda '26

On the first of February students of Professor Laura Smith and Ashley Nepp’s Urban GIS class packed into vans and arrived at Hayden Heights Library on the East Side of St. Paul. Once there they got to observing the site as part of their participation in a community project with the library. The end goal is to help with improving the library as part of Saint Paul Public Library’s “transforming libraries” initiative.

The transforming libraries initiative frees up funds for St. Paul’s libraries to use for much needed renovations. At Hayden Heights, Urban GIS students have been gathering data from an asset-based perspective related to the Library in a bid to garner further investment from both public and private sources.

Since funding of any specific library as part of the transforming libraries initiative is not guaranteed, students are collecting and utilizing geospatial data to make the case that Hayden Heights deserves additional funding to accomplish their library improvement goals. Their final report is planned to be an interactive ArcGIS StoryMap which will be delivered to the Mayor’s Office.



A rendering of a re-imagined Hayden Heights Library



SP '24 GEOG 365 class members



Did You Know:
The Hayden Heights Public Library has the biggest collection of auto repair manuals and how-to books in Saint Paul!

A Lanegran Day Lecture to Remember

Freeman Boda '26

In his talk, “Leveraging an Education in Geography to a Career in Location Advisory, Site Selection and Negotiation”, Matt Jackson '92 discussed how he went from being a geography student at Macalester College to being the Executive Managing Director of the Jones Lang LaSalle Business Consulting Group.



He recalled how under the guidance of Professor David Lanegran, and then later through his education at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, he cultivated a passion for site selection and global location strategy work.

Discussing some of his past projects, Jackson laid out a few of the many geographical considerations that go into selecting the perfect site for a given project. From political stability to logistical concerns, a site selector must consider a wide array of geographical elements.

In a pre-lecture lunch with students, Jackson offered up some words of advice for those interested in the field of site selection: “Pick up some GIS skills, become an Excel expert, and learn how to use Tableau.” More than just the tools however, Jackson stressed the importance of learning how to write and articulate your thoughts well - something he believes gives Macalester students an edge on those coming from other (non-liberal arts) fields.

Alumni in attendance at Jackson’s David A. Lanegran lecture and dinner spanned a whopping 60 years, from 1963 - 2023. Current students, such as Oliver Matus-Bond '26 stated “I found the presentation engaging, touching upon an area of Geography that I hadn't learned about before. It's helpful to know your degree can take you various places”. Another student, Sam Anthony '26 remarked that “I thought the presentation was interesting [...], as a Mac students we hear a lot about the public sector but not as much about private sector job opportunities”.

This event was made possible by gifts from alumni, faculty, staff and friends of the department who generously donated to establish the David A. Lanegran Endowment.



Matt Jackson '92 lectures to a crowd



Left to right, Alice Gray '26, Julia Castellano '26, Mara Pirione '26, Catherine Kane '26, Tim Delventhal, and Caleb Browne '26



Matt Jackson '92 (left) with President Suzanne Rivera (center) and Professor Emeritus David Lanegran (right)

Catching up with Jake Ramthun '17

Cecelia Kaufmann '24

Geography may not be rocket science but for Jacob Ramthun '17 it was a path to employment at NASA. Since he was a child Jake was interested in all things geography, even attending the National Geographic Bee as a middle-schooler, but it was in high-school that Jake discovered Macalester College.

“David Lanegran was still teaching and a geography professor from the little college in my hometown in West Virginia who had worked with Dave before and said ‘You want to do geography? You gotta go [to Macalester]!’ So I knew early on I wanted to do Geography and it was part of my decision to go to Macalester.” Jake said.

Once at Macalester as a student, Jake declared a geography major, reflecting that “I never found a love quite like geography”. He recalled Professor Eric Carter’s *Geography of Environmental Hazards* class to be particularly influential in his thinking, eventually leading him to pursue hazards geography as a career after a master's program in the geography of hazards. Through an internship with NASA’s DEVELOP program Jake refined his GIS and remote sensing abilities, and the connections he gathered there led him to obtain the job at NASA he has now. “Macalester does have brand recognition at NASA Earth, because we've had a lot of geography alumni go through that program”, Jake says.

When asked for words of advice for current students, Jake offers something that professor Carter once told him: “geography is a great field for people who don't want to be pigeonholed into one thing. If you want to be a generalist, there are spaces out there. But, to be able to communicate what it is you do... lean into it and learn how to translate between the different fields that you want to be a part of.”



Jake Ramthun '17

Name This Ball!

Every Vote Counts

Introducing, Ball Moseley!

Freeman Boda '26

This year during the Annual Lanegran Days Department Bowling event at the Ranham Bowling Center, the departmental bowling ball was christened. Following the results of the contest in the previous issue of *The Graticule*, the departmental bowling ball is now known as Ball Moseley! Thanks to all who voted and made their voice heard.



Geography Study Away Experiences

Freeman Boda '26

Every year Macalester geography students take the plunge and make use of some of the many study away options available at Macalester. This year, students coming back from their geography-related study away experiences during the fall semester recapped their time abroad during a spring welcome back lunch hosted by the Geography Department and GTU co-presidents Corgan Archuleta '24 and Joe Harrington '24.



Joel Sadofsky '25 in the Gulf of Mexico



More Information:

See geography study away stories and other content on the official @macgeography instagram account!



Megan Twomey '25 at the Kerry Cliffs, Ireland



SP '24 Welcome Back Lunch



Aiden Reynolds '25 in Rabat, Morocco

A Trip to Thompson County Park With QRM

Freeman Boda '26

In Professor Dan Trudeau’s Qualitative Research Methods (QRM) class students are embarking on a quest with their community partner, Dakota County Parks, to plan for the addition of a “food productive landscape” in nearby Thompson County Park.

Over the past month students have visited Thompson County Park multiple times to talk with park operations coordinators and get a guided tour of the location. Their goal is to work together with their community partners and draft a questionnaire to hand out to parkgoers which will gauge interest in the addition of different food productive landscapes such as community gardens, orchards, foraging areas etc.

Through a series of “intercepts” at the park, students hope to gather enough data via their questionnaire and some interviews with parkgoers to be able to consult with Dakota County Parks as to where to best place and utilize a food productive landscape.



Students brainstorm questions on a whiteboard for the questionnaire they intend to hand out to parkgoers.

Alumni

Where in the world are you? What have you been doing since you left Macalester? Have you traveled to far off places? Written a book? Started a new business? Run a marathon? Grown your family? Share it with us! We’d love to share updates in our next Graticule issue!

[Submit an update here](#)



Students receive a guided tour of Thompson County Park and plan how to work with community partners.



Eliot Brown '06 with Ted Clement '06 at a NYC Mac Geography alumni gathering in 2012.

In Memoriam

Geography Department

A dear member of our Geography family, Theodore “Ted” Clement '06, died at home on January 5, 2024, after almost ten years fighting a rare kidney cancer, hereditary leiomyomatosis and renal cell cancer (HLRCC). Our thoughts and prayers are with his wife Diana, their children David and Alice, and his entire extended family. During his time at Macalester, Ted was an active part of the Geography family and a friend to many. We always enjoyed seeing him wear his bright orange sport coat on special occasions, a great reflection of Ted’s Macalester spirit. In more recent years, Ted served as a Macalester Trustee. You will be missed Ted, rest in peace.

Macalester
Founders Day
2005



AAG Elections

Meet Your New Vice President

Freeman Boda '26

Professor Bill Moseley was recently elected to play a leading role in the American Association of Geographers (AAG). He will serve his first year as vice president before becoming the president of the organization. With over 10,000 members, it is the largest professional association of geographers in the world. To put this triumph in perspective, this is the first time in its 120 year history that the AAG will be led by someone from a liberal arts college.

Happenings Roundup



UPCOMING EVENTS

March 21st
Career Pathways Panel

April 10
Geography Honors Day

April 23rd
Geography Spring Dinner

NEXT ISSUE

Honors Projects
Senior Spotlight
Crystal Globe Award

Aloha !

Will you be in Honolulu this April for the 2024 American Association of Geographers Annual Meeting? If so, please consider meeting up with the Mac Geography faculty and students for a cold beverage and some light food at the Waikiki Brewing Co!

The plan is to gather immediately following the AAG Presidential Plenary, Rebecca Lave - Reciprocal Scholarship, on Wednesday night.

DATE: Wednesday, April 17, 2024

TIME: 6:45 pm (Hawaii time)

LOCATION: Waikiki Brewing Company

1945 Kalakaua Avenue, Honolulu, HI 96815-1851

Questions? Contact Laura Kigin at kigin@macalester.edu

Want More?

Keep up with the wider Macalester Geography community by joining our LinkedIn Group (Macalester College Geography Network), Facebook Group (Macalester College Geographers), or follow us on Instagram (@macgeography).



THE GRATICULE

Macalester Geography Department Newsletter



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Support Geography

When giving to Macalester, consider making a gift to the Geography Department. To direct your gift to our program, please select “other” in the “designate gift to” option and write “Geography” in the comments. Your gift will support high-impact activities, including field trips and professional development opportunities for students that are a signature part of the Macalester Geography experience.

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macalester.edu/geography