

## Projections from the Chair

*Dan Trudeau, Geography Department Chair*

The department recently celebrated its 8th annual Lanegran Day and this marked the second time with a new format for the event. The event now features a presentation sandwiched between a reception and dinner, encouraging socializing. This format imparts a celebratory feel, which is aided by scheduling it on a Friday. We were delighted to host approximately 120 attendees, including a mix of current students and alumni. We concluded Lanegran Day on a Saturday afternoon at Ran-Ham Bowling, which has been a part of the Lanegran Day tradition since 2018.

Launched in 2017 following Professor David Lanegran's retirement, Lanegran Day was inspired by the University of Minnesota's "Brown Day." The inaugural Lanegran Day brought students to the St. Paul Winter Carnival to honor Dave's connection to the festival and history with the Landmark Center.

Originally, Lanegran Day featured guest speakers and occasional field trips to expand academic geography horizons, primarily for students. As we were rebuilding community following the disruptions of the COVID pandemic, we heard our students expressing interests in connecting with alumni and exploring career pathways from a geography major. Reflecting on how to address these, faculty and staff experienced an "a-ha!" moment during a department meeting in 2023 and hatched a plan to reimagine Lanegran Day as a networking event, anchored by a guest speaker, and infused with celebration. We implemented this new format in 2024 and refined it in 2025.

Lanegran Day is made possible through the generous support of many individuals who created the Lanegran Endowed Fund for the purpose of "dissolving the wall between the classroom and the broader world for geography students." On behalf of the faculty and staff, we feel that the current approach fulfills that objective and we are looking forward to the next celebration in 2026. We hope to see you there!



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# A New Face in Geography

## Introducing our new department coordinator Connie!

*Constance DeLage, Geography Department Office Coordinator*

*Interview by Sasha Joseph '25*

**S:** Just to start can you tell us a bit about yourself?

**C:** I grew up in St. Paul, specifically in the Merriam Park neighborhood. I did have a short stint on the East Coast, but for the most part St. Paul has been my home.

My professional background is in communications and event planning. Working in higher ed is a change for me, but I like applying my skills to a new industry very much.

Outside of work, I play tennis and paint watercolor. My husband Jaime works as a deputy editor at the *Pioneer Press* and we have a dog named Clementine.

**S:** And how's Mac Geography treating you so far?

**C:** Laura Kigin was incredibly helpful getting me started, and everyone has been so welcoming. I find Macalester to be a great place to work. I attended a new employee orientation where I learned only 14% of the Mac student population is from Minnesota. I love being around people who have different stories than I do.

**S:** On that subject as a life long St. Paul resident, anything to note for the 86% percent of students who aren't originally from here ?

One of my favorite places in St. Paul is the Como Lake area. I love living in a city, but I appreciate the expansive green space of Como.

**S:** Great! Last thing I wanted to ask is how can students get involved or connect with you?

**C:** I'm here every day so feel free to pop in my office or e-mail. Stop in and say hello!



## Lanegran Day: Ross Donihue

Freeman Boda '26

This year's Lanegran Day keynote was delivered by speaker Ross Donihue '11, a Macalester alum and current Lead Content Strategist on Esri's StoryMaps team. Entitled *Exploring the World through Cartography: Geographic Information in a Changing World*, the lecture focused on Donihue's journey from the Macalester GIS lab to being a National Geographic Explorer and his current job with Esri.

Donihue shared many mapmaking tips, alongside real-world examples of his expeditions. Approximately 120 students and alumni attended the talk, including some who enjoyed a departmental lunch with Donihue earlier in the day. More of Ross' work can be found at [rossdonihue.com](http://rossdonihue.com)



Speaker Ross Donihue



## Faculty Updates

Freeman Boda '26, Sasha Joseph '25

Macalester's geography faculty somehow find the time to do some incredible things when they're not spending their hours teaching classes of geography-curious students. Here are just a few of the many things that some of our Mac Geography professors have been up recently:

### Dan Trudeau

Professor Dan Trudeau has been recognized as a finalist for the Thomas Ehrlich Civically Engaged Faculty Award from Campus Compact. The award recognizes those senior faculty who practice exemplary engaged scholarship through teaching and research. Recipients are selected on the basis of their collaboration with communities, institutional impact, and high-quality academic work. You can read more about the award [here](#), and we'd like to give our congratulations to Dan!



### Xavier Haro-Carrión

Professor Xavier Caro-Harrión is back from Sabbatical!

This semester he is completing a number of ongoing projects from his time away, many of them with Macalester students past and present.

These projects include using remote sensing and satellite data to analyze tree diversity change over time in coastal Ecuador and assisting in conservation efforts and promoting alternative land uses.

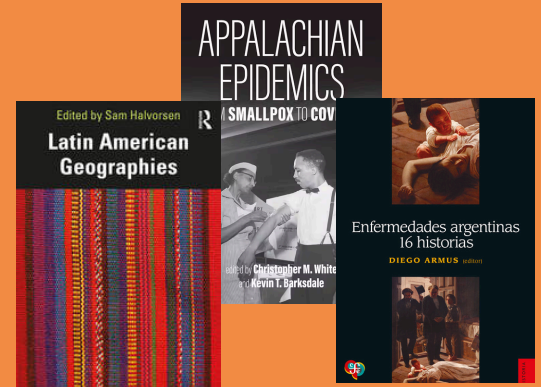
He also has a number of **summer research opportunities for students**. If you're interested in this work feel free to reach out to him!



His website further details his work. Check it out [here](#)!

### Eric Carter

This semester Professor Eric Carter has three new publications out:



With a chapter written by professor Carter in each, they delve into different issues of health in the Americas. You can find links to each book including Carter's work below:

- *Latin American Geographies*
- *Appalachian Academics: From Smallpox to COVID-19*
- *Enfermedades argentinas, 16 historias*

## Goings-On in Mac Geography

Freeman Boda '26

One of the best things about the Macalester Geography community is that there's always something going on! Be it sports, academics, or anything else, here are a few highlights from this semester so far:

### Ran-Ham Bowling

Geographers went to the annual department bowling event at Ran-ham and bowled with the departmental bowling ball, otherwise known as "Ball Moseley."



(Pictured) Holly Barcus absolutely shredding the competition

### Médecins Sans Frontières Mapathon

This semester Macalester Geography continued its longstanding tradition of hosting a mapathon where students contribute their time to helping Doctors Without Borders (MSF) map rural and under-served locations, with the aim of expanding healthcare access to those communities.



Macalester Geography students map out households in rural Afghanistan to help Médecins Sans Frontières with their lifesaving mission

### GTU Dinner



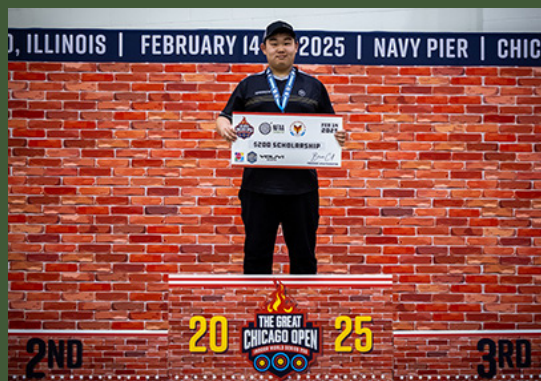
GTU co-presidents Felicia Winfrey and Aidan Reynolds having dinner with GAW contest winners

### Sports!

No, we're not talking about Professor Eric Carter's Sports Geography class, but rather aiming to highlight a few of the sports involvements that Macalester geography majors have undertaken this semester:



GTU co-president Aidan Reynolds (upper center) leads the Macalester Club Tennis Team



World archery champion & Macalester geography major Dowvince Pan '28 competes at the Indoor World Series event in Chicago

# A New Friend?

## A New Friend in the GIS Lab

*Freeman Boda '26, Sasha Joseph '25*

Mysteriously, on Lanegran Day we received a new friend in the department's GIS lab. Along with the giant highland coo came a message: "A new geography friend, a gift from some older geography friends". We thank these friends for their gift - and if you're ever around the geography department, feel free to write name ideas for the big guy on the GIS whiteboard where there is an ongoing poll!



## Geography in the Community

### Engaging with the Twin Cities

*Sasha Joseph '25*

Last semester, two Geography classes partnered with community organizations in the Twin Cities as part of the Urban GIS and Qualitative Research Methods courses.

Students in GEOG 365 "Urban GIS" spent the semester working on mapping the East Phillips neighborhood with the East Phillips Neighborhood Institute (EPNI). Their work can be seen below as well as in a zine that is being distributed throughout the community! [Check it out here!](#)

Students in GEOG 277 "Qualitative Research Methods in Human Geography" spent the semester engaging in collaborative research with East Side Freedom Library. On Tuesday, December 10, they presented findings from their project to members of the library's staff. Check out their impressive work at this link: [Payne Avenue Walking Tour - Building Tomorrow: Community Investment and Resilience Across Time.](#)



*Urban GIS Students*



*Qualitative Research Methods Students*

## Know Your Professor

Sasha Joseph '25

We asked each Geography professor this question: **What's the most breathtaking landscape you've ever seen?** Here are some of their answers!



The most breathtaking landscape I've ever seen is the island of Santorini, Greece. I was there for only a few days almost 20 years ago, with my wife -- on our honeymoon, actually. We were enchanted by the whitewashed chapels and houses that perch precariously on the cliffs above the beautiful Aegean Sea. I've always been drawn to these places built on steep topography overlooking deep harbors. - Eric



I'm going to say Glacier National Park because it is unbelievably beautiful but also because it is a recent special memory. One of my absolute favorite things is planning road trips with my boys. We went in the summer of 2022 and the landscape was just as breathtaking as described, plus the grizzly bears, fishing, and snowball fights. Ironically, Corby and I both got COVID for the first time on that trip. Just another reason it was so memorable! - Laura



"This landscape in the Mara Region of NW Tanzania may not be especially dramatic, but it gave me peace and solace while I was there for 10 days in January 2025 making connections and exploring research opportunities for our students. Every morning I would walk along this road before breakfast to take in the world around me. Along the way I would often see school children trudging up the road to school. The little girl in the distance on the left side of the road is named Aminata. I would often greet her in my broken Kiswahili and she would smile and address me as baba (or father). The street lights in the photo are solar powered and the tidy roadsides are in part due to the Tanzanian Government's banning of plastic bags a few years back (which dramatically cut down on inorganic waste). The small farms in the distance are largely managed by women who produce a rich variety of food crops such as cassava, maize, sorghum, beans and Bambara groundnuts."

- Bill

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### Pathways in Geography

3/10 @ 6:00 PM - Carnegie Room 107

### Midwest Undergraduate Geography Symposium (MUGS)

4/26 - University of Wisconsin-La Crosse

### Commencement

5/17 - Macalester LC Fieldhouse

## NEXT ISSUE

- Alumni Updates
- Capstones & Graduating Class

## Alumni, What's Up?

We've heard from several of you in response to our past calls to action and hope to include a special alumni updates section in a future edition.

If you've been out and about, tell us what you've been up to! 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?

[Submit an update here](#)

## 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

### Newsletter Contributors

Freeman Boda '26

Sasha Joseph '25

Dan Trudeau



### Departmental Support

Connie DeLage



## Support Geography!

During "Give to Macalester Days" this year, April 2-4, gifts made to the Geography Department will enhance our ability to support the high-impact learning activities that are a signature part of the Mac Geography experience, including field trips, community engagement, experiential learning activities, and professional development opportunities for students, such as presenting at a conference. Donations of any amount make a difference.

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[macalester.edu/geography](http://macalester.edu/geography)