Chair’s message - Another year has passed, and we’d like to welcome you back to the Department of Geography Alumni Newsletter – an evolving format that we hope you will enjoy. 2016-17 has been a busy year for the Department. Befitting SFU, faculty have actively engaged community, giving media interviews, invited lectures and talks, organizing conferences, leading conference sessions and symposia, publishing new books, book chapters, and journal articles, taking on journal editorships and executive roles with national and international organizations, and acting as experts in local to international dialogue. All this work has contributed to maintaining our high QS World University ranking: 2nd amongst Canadian comprehensive universities and 7th of all Geography departments in Canada. Two of our faculty have retired this year: Roger Hayter (after 40 years!) and Janet Sturgeon. Though we miss them both, they are having much fun in retirement as you will see later in this newsletter. Two new faculty members have joined the Department, Jason Leach and Andrew Perkins, adding some welcome depth and breadth. And our long-serving staff member, B-Jae Kelly, received a much-deserved staff achievement award for work performance. We invite you to check out the details of this year’s news, kudos and events on our website and follow us on facebook.

We are also proud of our new graduands: ~100 majors/honours, 42 certificate and 12 graduate students in 2016-17. We congratulate you all on your achievements and wish you the very best for your future successes. We hope that you stay connected with us by sending us your stories or joining us at alumni events. Several alumni attended our Annual Distinguished Speaker’s lecture in early March. It was wonderful to see, and catch up with, you all. To those of you who we haven’t seen in a while, we invite you to (re)connect with SFU Geography through this newsletter.

Tracy Brennand, Chair
Hello and welcome back to the Department of Geography. The 2016-17 academic year has been a busy one, and throughout the year we have held a number of activities that have involved our included alumni members. For example, several alumni attended our Annual Distinguished Lecture. This year's lecture was given by Dr. Jamie Pearce from the University of Edinburgh, who is a highly regarded health geographer. It was held in early March.

I am delighted to announce that we have recently launched an alumni video series. Our first six videos feature short discussions from departmental alumni about how the skills they acquired in their geography degrees have helped them in their careers. View them at www.sfu.ca/geography/people/alumni.html If you are interested in participating in this video project please get in touch with me (crooks@sfu.ca) so that we can make arrangements.

I hope this newsletter gives you an opportunity to re-connect with the Department. There are so many ongoing initiatives that can and do involve alumni that it's impossible to begin to summarize them here. That's why I encourage you to follow the Department on Facebook. We are still in the early days of growing our social media presence and would appreciate having you in the audience!

Finally, throughout this edition of the alumni newsletter you will see fieldwork photos submitted by several current graduate students. I have taken the liberty of including one of my own on this page. It was taken at the Painted Rocks ancient petroglyphs site in southern Arizona. I was there recently conducting focus groups about health care for Canadian 'snowbirds' who winter in that state.
The undergraduate program, with over 450 majors and minors, is in a period of profound change. We are transforming it to best suit the needs of our current students, to encourage new students to become geographers, and to address shifting capacities among our faculty. At the core of this renovation is an ongoing review of all our programs, involving the creation of program-level Educational Goals for each of our majors, a program mapping to fit courses to the Goals, and a subsequent reorganization of each program.

At the ‘chalk face’, our rethinking is most obvious to students in Geography 100 (Our World: Introducing Human Geography), where Drs. Nick Blomley and Geoff Mann have joined Dr. Ivor Winton and some excellent sessional instructors in teaching versions of the course. The revised course has been successful and we are confident it will attract more students to Geography.

The department’s longstanding suite of degree programs (BA Geography; BA Environmental Specialty; BSc Geographic Information Science; and BSc Physical Geography) has now been joined by a new program: our Bachelor of Environment (BEnv) in Global Environmental Systems (GES). Students who become GES majors develop expertise in social and biophysical systems at the global scale. They study the consequences of these systems and how their negative effects might be mitigated. In doing so, students participate in advanced biophysical, socioeconomic data analysis and modeling courses. These five programs provide a valuable geographic education to a wide range of students, with each one calibrated to provide a specific blend of social science, science, and analytical knowledge.
I'm not sure if I always wanted to be a hydrologist, but growing up in northeastern Ontario I was constantly surrounded by water; however, it was mostly in frozen form and when it did finally melt, the water usually sat around in swamps providing ideal mosquito habitat. Perhaps because of these early associations with water, I first attempted a career in birding, but my red-green colour blindness proved too much an obstacle to overcome. So I turned to a career in water - the most colourless thing I could think of.

My first job was as a hydrometric field assistant in the prairies and although I enjoyed my time there, the fast paced hydrologic action of mountain streams beckoned and I started graduate studies at UBC. After completing my PhD, I headed off to northern Sweden for a postdoc position. It was a return of sorts to my boreal forest roots, as northern Sweden reminded me of my northern Ontario childhood (complete with mosquitoes) - just with adorable red houses sprinkled everywhere.

After a year and half of a daily intake of meatballs and cardamom buns, it was back to the west coast of Canada to take up my current position at SFU. At SFU I'll be primarily teaching the introductory and advanced hydrology courses. I'm excited to incorporate my own hydrology experiences into the classroom, as well as bringing in colleagues who work in industry and government positions around Vancouver to share their perspectives on current hydrologic issues. I'm also busy initiating a research program looking at how climatic and land use changes, such as forestry and urbanization, impact watershed hydrology and water quality. I'll be working closely with groundwater, aquatic ecology, and river science specialists to get a full picture on the health of our streams. I'll be spending my time in the field mostly in BC's southern coast mountain catchments, where there's nary a mosquito around.
A couple of years ago while on a Geography 497 field trip to England an old friend of mine opined that neither of us had a ‘proper job’. Whatever he meant, after 43 years of teaching and research – 40 years at SFU - I am now looking forward to a ‘proper’ retirement! Shielded, if not immune, from the dictats of bosses and business cycles (is this what my friend implied?).

I thoroughly enjoyed my career, as a privileged part of a wonderful Department and University. This is not to say my job lacked stress. I still remember my very first teaching semester at Memorial University of Newfoundland in 1973. With no prior teaching experience, no mentoring, no preparation time, responsible for three courses, and corrections to my PhD thesis to complete, I had run out of material for my first year economic geography class with two weeks still to go! However that course ended (as the guilty party ‘I don’t recall’ but the students were clearly forgiving) it was an interesting introduction to on-the-job training (and proper planning). In practice, along with accumulating experience, OJT never stopped, and I enjoyed the tinkering, experimental side of teaching and the challenge of being contemporary. I always felt field trips were special. Admittedly, on a GEOG 497 field trip, one student suffered a broken leg in an end-of-day frisby game outside of our residence, a converted 19th century mansion, in Sheffield, England. He had inadvertently jumped into a bush that was part of a Ha Ha (look it up, it’s a real name). But field trips, especially residential field trips, were typically wonderful experiences of great value to all participants.

For me of course, retirement means no more class-based field trips, which is too bad, but no more committee meetings, which is very good. I have also discarded my alarm clock. I am still involved in research, and some teaching, while happily engaging more in hiking, reading, music lessons and looking after grandchildren – now there’s a proper job, even if unpaid it is exhausting. I wish you all the very best, and would encourage you, if you have the pre-retirement time, to let the Department know about what you are doing - you can email any Department member you know, including me – and we won’t ask for a donation!

What do I miss about Canada? I miss loonies and toonies; I miss CBC radio 2, especially Tom Allen and Rich Terfry; and I miss #3 maple syrup. But most of all I miss the students, faculty and staff in the geography department at SFU. I think of you frequently. I enjoyed all the courses I taught, but I have a special affection for my senior seminar on China, and for Geog 605 with human geography Masters students. I wish I had a picture of every class of students who took China's Society and Environment, and every set of Geog 605 students. Current faculty, take heed! These are precious moments, even though they seem to happen year after year. I’m in touch with my own fantastic former graduate students, including Sai Latt, who is back in Burma continuing his work on the peace process.

I now live in southern California in the foothills of the San Gabriel Mountains, in what my friends call my wilderness lodge. Mountains have been the fundament of my connection with the natural world, whether the Colorado Rockies where I was born, the Sierra Nevada in California, the Himalaya when I lived in Nepal, the ridge top where for 20 years I did research in China, the tremendous mountains that I viewed from my SFU office, or the majestic San Gabriels that I see every morning. Now that I have retired I plan to learn Spanish and to enjoy the cultural richness of the greater Los Angeles area. I have sunshine almost every day, which is what I wanted, but I will surely come back to visit SFU to see the people who were my community over many wonderful years.
Ranked amongst the top 10 among universities in Canada, our stellar Department of Geography is a continuing source of pride for the Faculty of Environment.

In many ways, the Department reflects the structure of the Faculty itself, bridging disciplines from the natural through the social sciences. Given those overlapping interests, readers may be interested in joining us at some of the upcoming events at the Faculty of Environment.

In celebration of the 150th anniversary of Confederation, the Faculty of Environment launched the Dean’s Lecture series this spring with “A City for the Birds” presented by renowned ornithologist, Dr. Rob Butler. Dr. Butler set a challenge to spot 150 species within the city limits by Canada Day. Not only did participants spot some of Vancouver’s birds in the presentation but there were some geographers spotted in the audience as well. Keep your eyes posted on our website for more Dean’s Lecture talks in the fall.

Another lecture series is titled "The Octopus's Garden? - Planning for Sea Level Rise." We feature experts from a variety of backgrounds to consider how to build resilience in the face of climate change. This series launches on June 8th, covering issues from sea level rise to population displacement at home and abroad.

Finally, our renowned Pacific Water Research Centre continues to host our Water Solutions series, with a Sept 14th talk exploring waste water challenges in BC. And if you are thinking about something a little more formal, we offer a variety of workshops, certificates, and Professional Programs that explore sustainability, community economic development and more. We invite you to engage with us, both at the Department of Geography as well as at events hosted by the Faculty of Environment. For more, please visit www.sfu.ca/fenv.html.

Ingrid Leman Stefanovic, Dean
Thanks to funding from SFU’s Library, and the initial efforts of Professor Valorie Crooks the SFU Library now hosts two publicly accessible Department of Geography digital collections that can be found at summit.sfu.ca (search 'geography' to find these collections in the Summit repository). These collections house all graduate theses written in the Department (MA, MSc and Ph.D.) as well as the Department’s Discussion Paper series. Previously, many of these important resources were available only in hard copy, and were sometimes hard to find. Professor Nick Blomley is now starting to oversee the digitization of Geography undergraduate Honours Theses. These will also be made available in the Summit collection.

Stephan Nieweler explains that in the context of competing local and external interests and conflicting community planning and economic visions, his graduate research has been focused on the effects of boom, bust and stagnation on the downtowns of the three major resource towns in northwest BC - Prince Rupert (pictured here), Terrace and Kitimat. The recent speculation and uncertainty regarding major resource export projects (particularly LNG) has brought this issue to light, as the communities seek to implement long term economic development strategies that will renew aging infrastructure and strengthen existing community and commercial assets located in the civic heart of downtown.

Kimberley Geeves (MSc. Geography student) and supervisor Lance Lesack taking sediment cores from lakes in the Mackenzie Delta located in the Western Canadian Arctic.
Over the past year, the Geography Graduate Association (GGA) has been busy, organizing events for our members and working to increase our presence in the department. The photos on this page were taken at events we have held over the past academic year.

In September the GGA organized its annual graduate retreat in Whistler for the incoming cohort. We went into town and explored local stores and cafes, before returning to the hostel for dinner and icebreaker games. On the drive back to Vancouver we stopped at Alice Lake to spend some time on the beach. The trip is a hit every year, and provides a great opportunity for graduate students to get to know each other before starting the Fall term. Throughout the rest of the year we organized a number of events. In the winter we went curling, and for many participants it was their first time trying out the sport. We also went to pub trivia, organized an East Vancouver brewery crawl, went hiking, and sang karaoke (there are several multi talented students in our department!). One of our primary goals this year was to improve social relationships and connections within the department, and we hope we have managed to do so.

Members have also presented at a number of conferences this year, with support from the GGA and the department. The conferences took place throughout the world, including cities like Seattle, Montreal, Boston, Rotterdam, and Toronto.

Currently we are developing a mentorship and TA/TM training initiative to offer Geography graduate students department specific training. We are looking forward to welcoming the new cohort of students come September!

_Samantha Thompson,_  
_Geography Graduate Association Representative_
Kurt Frei completed his graduate fieldwork deep in a burned landscape of central interior British Columbia last summer. His research centers around the implications of wildfires and bark beetle outbreaks on wood recruitment in the small streams of this region.

Jeff Morgan sits on the East Coast of Barbados on Bathsheba Beach. In 2016, Jeff spent three months in the Caribbean studying offshore medical schools and the international mobility of medical education.

Scattered amongst Cozumel, Mexico’s tourist landscape sit myriad pharmacies offering visitors the chance to purchase medications while on vacation. They are the focus of Leon Hoffman’s doctoral research.