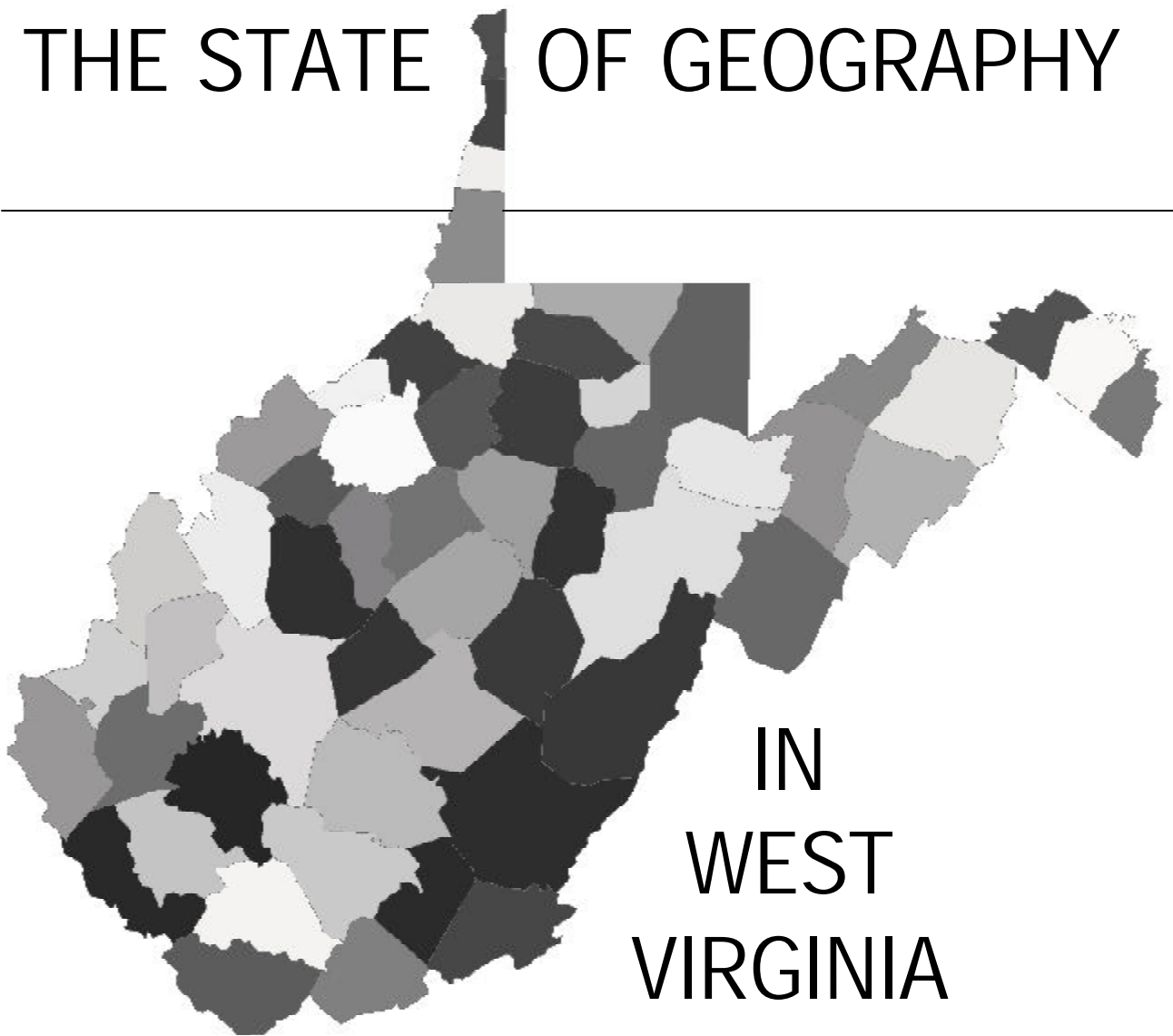


# THE STATE OF GEOGRAPHY

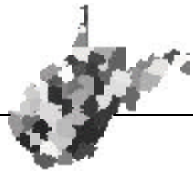
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IN  
WEST  
VIRGINIA

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sedaag annual meeting 2004  
compiled/ edited by  
**brent mccusker**  
WVU



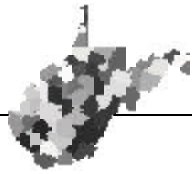
## overview of geography in west virginia

Geography in West Virginia continues to grow, especially with recent hires at Marshall University, West Virginia University and an expected hire at West Liberty State College. In departments across the state, there are robust curricula and vibrant research projects. The number of students enrolling in geography courses and becoming majors is healthy and growing slightly. Geographers continue to meet informally at state conferences such as the yearly FACDIS (Faculty and Course Development in International Studies Program) conference and at the Appalachian Studies Association conference.

Geography courses are taught at Shepherd University, Fairmont State University, and West Liberty State University as part of broader social science programs. Marshall University, Concord University, and West Virginia University all have departments in which geography is housed.

The state of geography in West Virginia is inexorably linked to the crisis in higher education that affects us all. Funding is a major issue across the board. WVU has taken a pro-active approach to these challenges and has begun re-organizing major university procedures for overhead and has begun to implement a workload equity model for all departments. We all recognize the challenge of these times and that universities in West Virginia have responded to serious financial challenges with remarkable creativity and insight.

*\* Concord University, Fairmont State University, and Shepherd University faculty were unavailable for this report.*



Geography at WVU is thriving. We have consolidated our gains in faculty in the past few years and are now at a major turning point toward the construction of our new building. We grow more excited about our new home everyday as we see the plans for this remarkable facility with its remarkable faculty coming to fruition. The state funding bond was passed and we now begin the hard work of developing the architectural plans.

Our new faculty continue the tradition of scholarship and productivity of our program. Drs Hessl and McCusker have received grants, Dr. Miller has received national recognition for her dissertation and publication in PERS, and Drs. Hanson and McCusker are working on developing official university linkages with national universities in Ghana, Malawi, and South Africa. This summer, Dr. Ge Lin visited NASA Johnson Space Center at Houston as a faculty fellow..

Our “AARP” crowd, led by Drs. Martis and Weiner, continue their long-standing scholarship \*. Dr. Martis has reached a life-long dream of compiling and publishing an Atlas of Presidential Elections. He promises us, however, that he will not map South Florida (for the 2000 elections) nor use data from Diebold equipment (2004 elections) as that might get us into significant trouble with the current regime. Drs. Weiner and Elmes have in

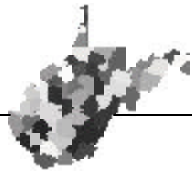


*Student's in Dr. Warner's class at Cooper's Rock Park in Morgantown*

embarked on a major project detailing GIS and Society Perspectives on the Digital Earth. Dr. Elmes was elected chair of the International Geographical Union's Commission on Geographic Information Science. Dr. Oberhauser is a national councilor and serves as the head of the AAG's publication committee.

Dr. Harris has very exciting news recently that he has received a clean bill of health after a very trying year. We are all relieved that he is well again. Also on the good news front from Dr. Harris is the award of a major national research center for GIS and natural resources (called the National Geospatial Development Center) from the National Resources Conservation Service. And an impressive center it is!

*\*A term of endearment in our program as one always overhears them either looking forward to retirement in the case of Martis or how the “young faculty” are doing in the case of Weiner.*



We continue to graduate high quality Master's and PhD students. Francis Koti (2004) was hired at the University of Northern Alabama. Dr Hanham is pleased to report that doctoral students Eric Spears and Scott Spiker both graduated this summer. Dr. Oberhauser is especially pleased to have Seela Aladuwaka graduate with a PhD in Geography and return to her home university in Sri Lanka. Dr. Warner reports that Abdullah Almutairi graduated with a PhD in August of 2004. His dissertation is potentially a major contribution to the field of change detection in remote sensing, because he provides the first comprehensive analysis of how the accuracy of the different change detection methods varies as a function of image properties.

*All text authored by Dr. Brent McCusker*

### Facts and Figures

Geography degrees awarded include BA, MA, and PhD (the only PhD in Geography in the state).

Number of geography courses/sections offered in academic year:  
undergraduate = 94; graduate = 22.

Number of students enrolled in all geography courses:  
undergrad = 2700; grad = 45.

Number of geography majors:  
undergrad = 180; grad = 30.



*Environmental biogeography research under Dr. Hessl*



*Dr. McCusker in collaborative research at Hammanskraal Meteor Crater, ZA*



The academic year of 2003-2004 has been exciting and eventful for the geography department. We were joined by two young but extremely capable professors: Dr. Josh Hagen and Dr. Anita Walz. Dr. Hagen is a cultural geographer and specializes in Europe. Dr. Walz is our resident physical geographer. Both had incredibly productive and smooth first years at Marshall. The department received date projectors for all of our classrooms and this equipment should help students to realize the great spatial experience that the study of geography is.

For the first time in at least 10 years or more, the department had three graduate students successfully complete and defend theses. As chair, I am proud of our faculty for encouraging and working with our students so they could reach this academic benchmark. This is another indication that the geography program at Marshall is solidifying our place as a strong asset with in the COLA community.

Another indication of the department's quest to be the best, is our students that graduate continue to get exciting and well paying positions in the workplace. Some of our students have found excellent positions locally and out of state. We also have two students who will be enrolled in Ph.D. programs starting Fall 2004. Remember, geography is a spatial experience and we encourage students to stop by our offices and check out the possibilities of pursuing a major in this most exciting discipline.

*Marshall geography's  
map library*



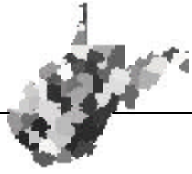
*New Faculty*

Joshua Hagen, Ph.D.

Since graduating from the University of Wisconsin and joining the Geography Department last fall, I have had an incredibly busy and rewarding year. In addition to teaching sections of Cultural Geography during my first year, I have also taught courses focusing on Medical Geography and Political Geography. I was also pleased to offer two courses dealing with my specialty: Europe. One was an introductory on the Geography of Europe, while the other was more advanced and focused on European urban planning and history. I am looking forward to improving these courses during the next year, as well as more fully utilizing the newly-installed computer projection systems.

Anita Walz, Ph.D.

Anita Walz joined the Department in August 2003 as the new physical geographer. She teaches GEO101 (Physical Geography) each semester and is also responsible for GEO 430/530 (Intermediate GIS: Raster Analysis), GEO 425/525 (Climatology), GEO 320 (Environmental Geography). Dr. Walz has an extensive background in GIS and remote sensing, and research interest in environmental geography and landscape ecology.



*Cirriculum Update*

The Geography Department is working toward a great expansion in the number and quality of GIS courses available. Beginning in Fall of 2004, the following courses will be available and offered on a regular basis: GEO110 Basic GIS, GEO201 Introduction to GPS, GEO301 Cartographic Principles of GIS, GEO429/529 Fundamentals of GIS—Vector Analysis, and GEO430/530 Intermediate GIS—Raster Analysis. In addition, the following courses are offered on a semi-regular basis, because we do not have the full-time faculty available and must rely on adjuncts with expertise in their fields: Special Topics—Digital Imagery Analysis, and Special Topics—Customizing Arc GIS using Visual Basic, Special Topics—Transportation GIS.



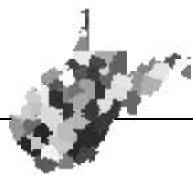
*Dr. Jarrett in class*

*Travel: Students, Faculty Travel to Charlotte, NC, Philadelphia, PA, Wyoming County, WV*

The annual Southeastern Division of the Association of American Geographers conference was held November 23-25, 2003 in Charlotte, NC. The conference was attended by Larry Jarrett and Jamie Leonard, but no students this year. Dr. Leonard presented a paper entitled: The Geography of Frequent Church Attendance: A West Virginia County Case Study. Students received grants from Leonard Deutsch (Graduate Dean) and Sarah Denman (Provost) again this year, but were unable to attend.. Josh Hagen and Larry Jarrett also attended the Association of American Geographers annual meeting in Philadelphia, PA in March 2003, where they met with former colleagues, including MU's own Ray Rappold.

Dr. Brinegar's capstone course students (GEO 420/520 Geographic Field Research) travelled to Wyoming County this spring to gather research data. Accommodations were obtained at Twin Falls State Park where the class stayed in comfortable cabins for the three-day trip to southern West Virginia. Students prepared meals during the stay and Michael F. and Aaron P. won the "Best Field Cook" competition with tasty omelets and cinnamon rolls for breakfast.

*All text authored by Larry Jarrett, Chair.*



Geography degrees awarded (check all those that apply):

No geography degree                      Undergraduate degree   X  

Masters degree                      Doctoral degree

Other (please specify)

**Geography Courses/Students**

Number of geography courses/sections offered in academic year:

undergraduate   7/15                        graduate

Number of students enrolled in all geography courses:

undergraduate   480                        graduate

Number of geography majors:

undergraduate   3      Masters                      Ph.D.

Name of Chair/Department Head:      Dr Richard Lizza (not a geographer)  

Number of geography faculty:              Full time   2      Part time

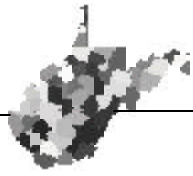
Please list the names of the persons teaching geography courses in your department.

Dr. David C Brooks

Dr. Brian L Crawford

Please list the new geography faculty joining your department and indicate if you will be hiring new faculty in the upcoming academic year.

We hope to hire a replacement for Dr. Brooks, who is retiring.



At West Liberty, students can earn either a B.A. or B.S. in Social Sciences with a concentration in Geography. We have had few geography majors since becoming part of the Department of Social and Behavioral Sciences, however because we are not a separate department, and support the general studies program of the college as well as a very successful Social Studies Education program, we are able to survive. Our graduates are finding success in graduate schools and in the workplace. Our biggest challenge at the moment is the retirement of Dr. Brooks and the problem of convincing the administration that he must be replaced.

*All text authored by Dr. Brian Crawford*