Dear all,

Greetings from Bloomington!

Fall Semester is nearly wrapped up and students, staff and faculty are all looking forward to winter break after an eventful year. Although almost all classes and some meetings and events have been in person this semester, the pandemic has continued to affect all of us in many different ways. It is clear that students, in particular, are struggling with the toll of almost two years of reduced in-person interaction. Indiana University is putting a lot of thought and effort into addressing these stresses, as are we in the department, and I am hopeful things will be easier for everyone in the Spring.

We are very pleased to welcome two new colleagues to the department: Patricia Basile and Shalom Drummond. Patricia joined the department this August as an Assistant Professor, strengthening our topical focus in Cities, Development and Justice, and our regional focus in Latin America. And Shalom has been doing an excellent job as Susan White’s successor (we’ll tell you more about Shalom in the Spring Newsletter).

If you have not been interviewed for the department’s Oral History Project, please get in touch! We would love to include you. The interviews will be available online as part of IU’s Bicentennial History Project, and we will also use them to write a history of the IU Geography Department.

I hope the new year brings you and your loved ones peace and joy.

Best wishes from Bloomington,

Rebeca Lave
Professor and Chair
New Faculty Spotlight: Patricia Basile

Meet Patricia Basille, the newest assistant professor in the Geography Department!

Patricia received her Bachelor’s degree in Architecture and Urban planning and her Master’s in Building and Urban Sustainability from Mackenzie Presbyterian University in São Paulo, Brazil, where she was born. In 2014, Patricia enrolled in the PhD program in the Constructed Environment program at the University of Virginia, where she focused on urban grassroots organization and development in favela neighborhoods in São Paulo.

Before coming to IU, Patricia was at Arizona State University, where she taught Urban Planning and International Development to undergraduate and graduate students from 2018-2019. She then worked remotely at Arizona State University from 2019-2021, where she was an award-winning instructor.

In discussions with Patricia, she reported that her doctoral degree was incredibly eye-opening and led her to decide to pursue teaching, for which she has a natural passion. She also noted that in her PhD program, the “connections between different disciplines [...] created richer discussions about how the built environment is produced.” Her commitment to teaching and to interdisciplinary research make her a great fit with the culture of our department, and her work in critical approaches to urban geography is a great addition to our concentration in Cities, Development and Justice.

In her first year in the department, Patricia is teaching our existing courses in World Regional Geography and Qualitative Methods and has developed a new course: Solidarity Economies in Latin America. The latter has created a wonderful opportunity for IU students to work collaboratively with students at the University of Virginia and the Federal University of Paraná in Brazil. Students from all three classes will present their findings at the upcoming World Social Forum, a meeting for civil society organizations dedicated to collaborating, sharing and campaigning for globally pressing issues. The collaboration between the schools will enhance class discussions, helping students broaden their understanding of class topics, and create connections with students across different schools as part of Global IU initiatives.

We are excited to have Patricia as a colleague and collaborator!
Alumni Spotlight: Dr. Bradley Lane

Meet Dr Bradley Lane, the Geography department’s alumni spotlight!

An associate professor in the School of Public Affairs and Administration at the University of Kansas, Bradley works predominantly within the Urban Planning program and has served as Chair of the Transport Geography Specialty Group of the American Association of Geographers. His research focuses on issues relating to behavior, policy and planning issues within urban transportation.

In 2003, Bradley received his undergraduate degree from Rice University, where he studied political science and policy. He received his M.A. and his Ph.D. degrees from our department under the supervision of the late William R. Black. Bradley noted that a great deal of his continuing interest in pursuing sustainability stemmed from the work he did with Dr. Black, who had a deep and lasting impact, mentoring his research and inspiring his personal and academic growth.

After graduating from IU, Bradley moved back to Texas and taught as an assistant professor in the Masters of Public Administration program in the College of Liberal Arts at the University of Texas at El Paso, where he was able to supervise graduate research and teach policy analysis, research methods, and urban and regional planning. His current research at University of Kansas is focused on what he describes as the “three revolutions of transportations”: the “electrification of the vehicle fleet, autonomous vehicle technology, and shared mobility”. He is analyzing the adoption of these methods of transportation by individuals and companies, the spatial variants of transportation, the influence of the method adopted and, consequently, the wider impact of chosen transportation environmentally and socially.
In addition to his research, a great deal of his work at the University of Kansas focuses on teaching and helping his students develop their own work. He advises a number of graduate students, helping them to develop their skills in areas such as quantitative research methods and GIScience and spatial analysis. He reports that the care he takes with his own students mirrors the positive role mentors, particularly Dr. Black, played in his development at Indiana University.

Bradley looks forward to furthering his professional contributions through teaching and publications, including two upcoming books. The first explores electric mobility and the problems it solves and creates within the context of urban transportation. The second book will likely focus on one of two topics: the geography of the “three revolutions” or the geography of changing technologies in transit.

Bradley has very fond memories of his time at Indiana University. He expressed how the safe learning environment, his peers and his professors helped him progress and flourish into the person he is today. On reflection, his advice to students and recent graduates is “not to be afraid to communicate - just communicate [...] because you never know, someone may just remember you from having introduced yourself at a conference or read some of your work down the line.”
Undergraduate Student Spotlight: Erin Hardman

Erin Hardman is a Junior pursuing a degree in Geography with a minor in Math and Spanish. This academic year, Erin is living in Madrid as part of an IU study-abroad program, which she is loving!

Erin’s first taste of what the Department of Geography had to offer was during Fall semester her freshman year. After taking her first Geography class and seeing the myriad other courses offered that spring, she “got excited about the descriptions and what [she] could do.” She vividly remembers the day that she decided to switch her major. “I was sitting in the Chipotle with my sister one Sunday before the start of the Spring semester of freshman year. I went to Safari and was typing something in and the first suggestion was ‘IU Geography requirements.’” She remembers thinking “this is a sign!”

Since then, Erin has explored many different areas of Geography. Because of her involvement with the Center for Women in Technology, she got the opportunity to work as a research assistant for Dr. Dana Habeeb at IU’s Healthy Cities Lab. Erin was able to present the research she did with Dr. Habeeb at the 2020 International Association for Society and Natural Resources Conference. This summer, she presented on a different research project, “Urban Forest Equity: An Analysis of the Distribution of Tree Benefits,” at IU’s Undergraduate Research Poster Symposium.

Given the breadth of classes the Geography Department offers and Erin’s versatility as a student, she found it hard to narrow down and decide her concentration. As she put it, “everything is geography [...] and geography is everything!” However, during her time in Spain she has realized she would like to use the knowledge and skills gained from her Geography coursework to analyze topics from her Spanish minor, perhaps using Doreen Massey’s theory of place as a framework to analyze Catalonia’s desire to secede from Spain. We are looking forward to reading her senior thesis, whatever topic she chooses.
Graduate Student Spotlight: Megan Betz

Meet IU Geography’s most recent Ph.D., Megan Betz!

Megan successfully defended her PhD, “Analyzing the “Community” of Community Orchards,” on November 9th. In addition to coursework and research, Megan served as an Associate Instructor for our department for several years, during which time she developed and lead a course we still teach every year: Urban Alternative Agriculture. While completing her dissertation, she had a full-time position as the community engagement coordinator in the Service-Learning Program at IUB’s Center for Innovative Teaching and Learning, where her primary goal was to ensure Indiana University was engaging constructively in service-learning and civic projects with its surrounding community.

Megan’s journey as a scholar started when she attended Ball State University in 2006 and received her undergraduate degree in Journalism and French. It wasn’t until 2011 when she started her M.P.A at IU studying Sustainable Development that she became interested in community-based agriculture and local food systems. Her decision to pursue political ecology as her primary field within Geography grew from her observations of how “food builds [a] community.”

Megan has been deeply involved in food-related issues in Bloomington, serving as a food critic for Bloom Magazine and a contributor to the “Earth Eats” show at WFHB, and volunteering with Community Kitchen of Monroe County, the Bloomington Community Orchard, and the People’s Market. These were eye-opening experiences that enabled her to explore career options and think deeply about the intersection of food security and justice in Bloomington.

Her years of hard work and previous work experience paid off this month, as she began a new job as the CEO of nationally-visible Bloomington non-profit Mother Hubbard’s Cupboard, a job she “[has] dreamed of having”. In this position, she intends to strengthen “community-based advocacy” and “fight for a food system [we] want”: one that is sustainable, equitable, and just.
Oral History Project: Update

Indiana University has a more than decade-old oral history project to collect and preserve faculty, staff, and alumni experiences in honor of Indiana University’s bicentennial, celebrated in 2020. The oral history website (https://200.iu.edu/signature-projects/oral-history/index.html) has thousands of transcripts and recordings accessible to the public. There are some great stories featured on the website, and we encourage you to take a look!

In 2019, we began inviting members of the Department of Geography - past and present - to participate in oral history interviews that will be included on the IU website, and will also help us write a history of the department. Dr. Jessica Fan (a recent IU graduate) and current Ph.D. student Sharif Wahab worked with current department chair Rebecca Lave to develop and revise the interview questions, and have conducted all the interviews to date. Interviewees so far have ranged from emeritus professors to newly graduated students. It’s been fascinating to hear how much the department has changed over time!

If you haven’t signed up for an interview already, please send Rebecca a note (rlave@indiana.edu). We’d love to hear from you!