SLUGAC 9: Charting Path Forward (September 25-27, 2015)

Please mark your calendars! The theme of the conference highlights one of the original goals of SLUGAC, which was to provide students with an alumni perspective of the world that awaits them after SLU.

The 1st circular with more information will be sent out in January!
Greetings from the New Chair,

It is a pleasure to write to you with greetings about the Department of Geology. I took over as chair for Jeff Chiarenzelli, who selflessly served for the past four years. I’d like to take this opportunity to thank him for numerous contributions he made to the vitality of our program. It will not be an easy task to maintain the momentum Jeff so diligently kept.

St. Lawrence is a very dynamic place and our department is no exception. Over the past few years, the department has grown significantly, and currently we have 45 majors and 3 minors. Why do they choose geology? As we get to know them, we find that many believe geology is an exciting career pathway that will allow them to make a difference in society by their work, and to spend at least some of their time outdoors. Many also state that their interest in geology comes from the reputation of the department as being one of the best on campus, welcoming, and providing students with numerous opportunities. We still believe in getting students ‘out in the field’, and most of our courses have a significant field component. Last year trips were offered to Jamaica (carbonate sedimentology), Alaska (glacial geology), and Colorado (petrology, mineralogy). In the past, destinations have included the Bahamas, Costa Rica, Dutch Antilles, United Kingdom, Yellowstone and Grand Teton parks, Acadia National Park, North Dakota and Mt. Kilimanjaro. All expenses, aside from the airfare, are paid for by the department.

In addition to field studies, our students have recently participated in faculty-lead research in varied geological settings, ranging from Canadian Rockies to the Andes and the Dinaric Alps. Students have also participated in a wide range of analytical studies at world-class facilities including the Arizona Laserchron Center in Tucson, the Isotope Geochemistry and Geochemistry Research Center at Carleton University in Ottawa, the Sensitive High-Resolution Ion Microprobe Laboratory at Curtin University in Perth, Australia, among others. During the last summer the department was also able to support 4 summer research fellows through competition for University funds, the J. Mark Erickson and the Linus R. Gilbert funds. Student research is vibrant and varied, and we had four of them presenting at the GSA Annual Convention in Vancouver. The James S. Street Fund has proven particularly valuable in supporting student research efforts above and beyond what we can afford through external grants, University and our department budget. The Street Fund also provides the portion of travel and registration expenses, not covered by the Dean’s Office, for students who attend professional conferences. In addition to the Geology club, our students have two local chapters, AAPG and Sigma Gamma Epsilon of the Geology Honorary Society. The department has a long history of producing a large proportion of graduates who go on to graduate school and eventually obtain Masters or Doctoral degrees. Last year our students have been accepted at Colorado School of Mines, Idaho, Missouri, Washington, and Temple University. Currently we have 5 faculty, whose research interests include aqueous geochemistry, dendrochronology, isotope geology, Devonian paleontology, military geology, and carbonate sedimentology among others. Faculty published more than 3 dozen papers in the last few years, many in top-notch journals, including Geology, GSA Bulletin, Precambrian Research, AAPG Bulletin, and Sedimentology.

Every good house is built on solid foundations! And our foundations are the preceding faculty, Bob Bloomer, Bill Elberty, and most recently Mark Erickson. Mark’s life and career has been and still is dedicated to the department and especially to our students and alumni. We will try to follow his footsteps and build and nurture strong connections with our alumni. Along these lines we continue to regularly host our triennial SLUGAC meetings, where our students are introduced to a wide range of career options that you have pursued and thus benefit from your experience and wise counsel. An integral part of each SLUGAC meeting has been the Bloomer Lecture with banquet. Unfortunately, the Bloomer Lecture Fund has been depleted and we are looking into ways to reinstitute it. Anyways, I am happy to invite you to participate at SLUGAC 9, which will be held September 25-27 on campus – please mark your calendars!

What lies ahead of us? The Brown Hall hasn’t changed much for decades. However, thanks to a generous donation by one of you, and a matching funding by the University, a new modern classroom is currently being built in Brown, and should hopefully be finished by SLUGAC. A tripled number of majors with unchanged geology budget is putting a lot pressure on faculty and our equipment, too. Our two old field vehicles are at the end of their life time, and need to be replaced and extended to four vehicles, hopefully through an endowment fund. Our major equipment would also benefit from such a fund.

This program is strong thanks to the commitment and generosity of our alumni, students, faculty, and friends. You can read about their accomplishments in the following pages. We hope to do a facelift of our newsletter starting with the next issue, and hope that you will like it better.

Please send us notes and pictures! Have a Merry Christmas and Happy and Prosperous New Year!

Sincerely,

Antun Husinec
Jennifer Gifford
we will also manage some mineral collection since Bancroft has some fantastic sites!

Dr. Alexander K. Stewart
I was further delighted that my paper “Precambrian crustal evolution in the Great Falls tectonic zone: insights from Xenoliths from the Montana alkali province” was finally published in the Journal of Geology, volume 122, number 5. I am enjoying the opportunity to do research with my students. Currently we are analyzing Nd and Sr isotopes from Neoproterozoic dikes in the Adirondack region at Carleton University in Ottawa. In early January two students will accompany me to the Arizona Laserchron Center to work on a variety of projects that require geochronological investigation.

Dr. Trent Hubbard '94
Hello Everyone,
This past Fall semester was a great experience while teaching Structural Geology with labs and Environmental Geology. We enjoyed all of the lovely fall weather going out in the field for almost every lab section until it was too cold to continue. The students were given the opportunity to create a geologic map of a peninsula on the Oswegatchie River by Governeur and then write up a geologic history of the area.

Catherine Heinrich '15
This summer I worked with Catherine Heinrich ’15 and Dr. Trent Hubbard ’94 using tree rings to reveal mass-wasting events in permafrost terrain along the Alaskan-Canadian Highway (near Northway Jct.). Based on our analyses, mass wasting began in the late 1980s and has recently increased significantly in the past decade (in association with a general warming trend). Catherine presented her work at GSA in Vancouver and was even able to speak with the geologist who invented the processes we used (Dr. Jack Shroder)! Catherine is working on her senior thesis doing some final analyses and writing; expecting to graduate this May. In addition, I am currently working with Hannah Drummond ’15, who collected tree-core samples from north-central Maine. Like I told her before she left for the summer, “We’ll have to see where the data take us.” Well, turns out that is always the case—we have recognized multiple Spruce Budworm, Choristoneura fumiferana (Clemens) outbreaks and an overall climate (and solar) signal. Most importantly, however, is the masking of the climate signal during the Spruce Budworm outbreaks. Hannah will be presenting her work at the NEGSA meeting this March. This time of the year is also time to begin grooming students for next-semester’s work. As of now, Melanie Swick ’16 and Eleanor Jones ’16 are beginning their work toward SLU Fellowship submissions in mid February. Melanie, an anthropology-geology major (heading to NZ for the semester), is planning on working on dendroarchaeology by generating a “floating” barn-beam chronology for the region (and hopefully connecting with a living, fixed chronology). Ellie is planning on working with dendrohydrology by determining the feasibility of using trees in this region as proxies for pre-instrumental streamflow.

Catherine Heinrich '15
Personally, I have been preparing for my pre-tenure sabbatical by submitting grants for travel and research support. My focus this spring will be three-fold: finalize some inactive scorpion research from my time in Iraq and Afghanistan, working on the feasibility of streamflow reconstructions in this region and, finally, likely travel to Tajikistan and Uzbekistan for water-resource management/transboundary works with Dr. Jack Shroder (UNO) and his team.

Jeff Chiarenzelli
This past summer and fall were quite productive working with students and preparing for my pre-tenure sabbatical. I worked with Catherine Heinrich ’15 and Dr. Trent Hubbard ’94 using tree rings to reveal mass-wasting events in permafrost terrain along the Alaskan-Canadian Highway (near Northway Jct.). Based on our analyses, mass wasting began in the late 1980s and has recently increased significantly in the past decade (in association with a general warming trend). Catherine presented her work at GSA in Vancouver and was even able to speak with the geologist who invented the processes we used (Dr. Jack Shroder)! Catherine is working on her senior thesis doing some final analyses and writing; expecting to graduate this May. In addition, I am currently working with Hannah Drummond ’15, who collected tree-core samples from north-central Maine. Like I told her before she left for the summer, “We’ll have to see where the data take us.” Well, turns out that is always the case—we have recognized multiple Spruce Budworm, Choristoneura fumiferana (Clemens) outbreaks and an overall climate (and solar) signal. Most importantly, however, is the masking of the climate signal during the Spruce Budworm outbreaks. Hannah will be presenting her work at the NEGSA meeting this March. This time of the year is also time to begin grooming students for next-semester’s work. As of now, Melanie Swick ’16 and Eleanor Jones ’16 are beginning their work toward SLU Fellowship submissions in mid February. Melanie, an anthropology-geology major (heading to NZ for the semester), is planning on working on dendroarchaeology by generating a “floating” barn-beam chronology for the region (and hopefully connecting with a living, fixed chronology). Ellie is planning on working with dendrohydrology by determining the feasibility of using trees in this region as proxies for pre-instrumental streamflow.

Melanie Swick '16
This spring I will teach a course on New Developments in Alternative Energy and for the lab portion of the class the students and I will build a rocket stove mass heater! This should be exciting as well as a great hands-on learning opportunity. I will take two students to the Canadian Arctic this summer to work on a project with Mike Williams and Sean Regan (’10) of UMass Amherst related to their NSF-funded study of the Snowbird Tectonic Zone. After that I will be on a year-long sabbatical trying to write up what we will learn in the next few months.

Hannah Drummond '15
I am enjoying the opportunity to do research with my students. Currently we are analyzing Nd and Sr isotopes from Neoproterozoic dikes in the Adirondack region at Carleton University in Ottawa. In early January two students will accompany me to the Arizona Laserchron Center to work on a variety of projects that require geochronological investigation.

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Salutations Geo-Folk,

Hope this finds you all well and ready for the holiday season. All is well here in good ole Brown Hall with students and faculty busy with this last week of class and preparing for exams week after this weekend. My how the semesters fly by!

All is well at the little farm Shirley and I call home as well. The horses are good sporting nice thick winter coats and big round grass belly’s from their light schedules and dining on good winters hay. No cows this winter but, I hope to begin my own beef herd come spring rather than having to find and purchase weanlings each year to raise for my family and to sell to those few friends who enjoy the home grown, grass fed beef we raise. The boys (Reno the 3 year old golden and Milo the 2 year old yellow lab) continue to enjoy life on the farm and let their presence known whenever deer, turkey or geese decide to dine in the meadow or pasture. They do seem enjoy making the geese fly off in a loud burst of energy! The season has been a mix of winter like weather and mild fall days as we approach the first day of winter. The big lake effect storm that Buffalo received just before Thanksgiving was not as bad at our place, in the end we only received around 38” of snow in 3 days vs Buffalo’s 8 feet or so of snow in the same time frame. After the storm ended it warmed into the 40’s and we lost most of that snow as quickly as we received it. Crazy weather... As I type out a holiday hello to you folks this morning the radio continues to warn us of the Nor’ easter that is beginning to visit the east coast and threatens to reach northern New York state. Gotta love winter!

I hope you all have a wonderful holiday season filled with hope, love, friendship, and joy. Merry Christmas!

Matt VanBrocklin

Ben Rendall ’11

I have been spending quite a bit of time in the Middle East with my Exxon-Mobil Carbonate Stratigraphy Group. I have made 2 additional trips to Qatar to look at North Field cores and one trip to UAE to work on a microporosity project for the supergiant Upper Zakum oil field. I also had a great trip with Jim Markello to Turks and Caicos to look at some modern sedimentss. In October, Estella and I went to Chicago where I ran the Chicago Marathon (4 hr 21 min)! I’ll be back in both Qatar and Abu Dhabi during January and February of next year. Currently I am describing my way through a mountain of thin sections and well logs. I hope the semester is going well!

John Murphy ’11

I accepted a job offer with Schlumberger, and currently work as a borehole geologist for their PetroTechnical team in Bakersfield, California. My thesis manuscript was recently accepted for publication by Sedimentary Geology.

Guten Tag.

The second half of the year 2014 has been one of planning and preparation. Apart from teaching and the finishing touches on the Paleolab, I have been working with several students to set up projects for their senior year. Rudy Bentalge’16 and Hannah Drummond ’15 will be processing data they collect over the winter in Vienna. They will be looking for evidence of anthropogenic disturbance of the mollusk benthos due to heavy oil drilling in the Arabian Gulf. Jaleigh Pier’16 will be working on the effect of climate change on Eocene predator-prey interaction using samples from Seymour Island, Antarctica, and Gullen LaPointe ’16 will be collecting mollusks in my old hunting grounds, the Devonian of Central NY, and will be studying morphologies of pteriid bivalves. The preparations have been promising and I will have a great group of motivated students working with me next year.

I started collaboration with a colleague at Clarkson University, Dr. Ioannis Mastorakos, to explore the possibilities of Finite Element analysis in Invertebrate Paleontology. This type of analysis, a method mainly used in material sciences, uses 3-d surface data and models the effect of stress and strain on the objects, in our case the shells of clams and snails.

Other than that things have been comparative quiet and this gave me the chance to further organize our Paleontology collection and update exhibits throughout the department. I have been purchasing equipment, e.g. a 3-D scanner and a slow cutting saw, from my start-up funds and I am happy to announce that the Paleolab is now set up and is actively used by students!

For the first time this year I had the opportunity to be part of the activities for the annual visit of Canton Middle School students. It was a great experience to engage with these children and encourage their curiosity for science. I also visited the classrooms of my own children at the Potsdam Elementary school to talk about Paleontology in particular of course about Dinosaurs. The kids get to touch real dinosaur stomach stones and bone and by the end they all know how to walk like a T-rex; it is a lot of fun!

I have also been working closely with the University as the liaison for the department to help with the renovation of the new classroom for our department. This has been an exciting chance for me to get to understand the workings of the University better and be a part of an exciting project that will majorly improve the learning environment for our students. I personally want to take this opportunity to thank the Alumni that are supporting us in this endeavor.

All the best for the New Year,

Judith Nagel-Myers
Greetings Friends,

It is getting pretty quiet around here as I write this because this is Friday afternoon and Thanksgiving Break has begun! Of course for me it is just any other day! Sherrie has reminded us that she would like the Newsletter copy by Monday however! I will send just a few notes this time to let you know that I am still functioning.

I did not get any serious fishing done this summer – that’s the biggest news. Much was intended but little materialized. In the thick of summer John Hoganson decided it was time to transfer my library and collections to the ND Heritage Center where I am donating them to the Johnsrud Paleontology Laboratory of the NDGS. We loaded a 14-foot U-Haul truck with most of my journals, books and fossils and made the 3-day drive to Bismarck in mid July. The NDGS paid for travel expenses for which I was very grateful. I stayed to work with John on the shark paper and another paper that has been pending a while. We finished the shorter paper and made progress on the shark paper. The figures are done and John has since completed the first draft of the taxonomic descriptions.

Progress has been made!

Prior to that trip I had a visit from Lance and Emily. After the trip I visited with my brothers. Glenn and his wife, Jane, have moved to Progress has been made!

The 10 yards of topsoil that Ray and I distributed over the vegetable garden did great things for the yield this year so we have lots of organic beans, carrots, squash, beets and Brussels sprouts to help us through the winter. In the fall we put 4 yds. on the flower garden and replanted that as a butterfly garden. I imagine the deer won’t recognize it that way but......

I have completed a couple of manuscripts and am in the rewriting stage on some others. I interrupted the writing to teach a SOAR course for retirees this September—“Tales Fossils Tell Me” subtitled “Life in the Cincinnatian” was the topic and I had a full class of 16 who stayed with me the whole time! They say they had fun. October took me to GSA in Vancouver where I roomed with Chris Stevens and really enjoyed the meeting. The St Lawrence alumni event was hosted by Antun Husinec at a local pub and it was well attended. I was especially happy to see some west coast alumni that I seldom see including Michelle Judson, now retired from BP, and Andy Nevin of Nevin Engineering in Vancouver. Had a good visit with Dan Peppe from Baylor as well. What a great group of people we had there. SLU faculty and students presented and 30 or so alumni papers were included in the meeting.

Since then, I have been putting the garden to bed, doing a little writing and running the stewardship program at church. As Thanksgiving approaches, I am beginning to look toward Christmas plans. I imagine most of you are thinking of the holidays as well, so I will wish you all the best for Christmas and the New Year. 2015 will be an important year for the Geology Department and no doubt for the globe as well! I’m sure Antun will tell you what’s up for the year ahead in his note.

Warmest regards,
Dr. E.

*Amelia Oates ’12*

I very much like the University of Washington Applied MESSAGe Program! It feels so great to be back into academia and studying geoscience alongside some brilliant scientists. I am taking more engineering based classes now and I find myself referring to my notes from SLU almost daily. I’m currently in Hillslope Geomorphology with Alison Duvall, whom I just learned knows Fred Read! Such a small world, we chatted about my thesis project and how wonderful it was to work with Antun & Fred in Croatia. It’s such a great reminder of how small this Geology community truly is!

*Tyler Harris ’13*

In October I started working as a mud logger/sample catcher. I am working in the Swanson River Oilfield on the Kenai Peninsula, Alaska. There is a lot of interesting stuff going on and I am starting to learn some of the programs and work. Hopefully my work from sedimentology will come in handy once we start looking at the samples! I work the night shift from 6pm to 6am. It was a tough transition to make, but I think as of today I have the sleep pattern figured out. I’m looking forward to doing some exploring of the area once I have some time off. Hopefully I can go hiking in the mountains near Anchorage before I fly home.

*Chris Mudge ’13*

I have accepted a RA position at Idaho State University. Looks like I will be following Ben’s path out west.

*Thomas Lockwood ’14*

Things are going very well at the Colorado School of Mines a full ride and a monthly RA stipend! I am on track to earn a Master’s in Geology (focus in Petroleum) in 2 to 2.5 years. I will be taking Carbonate Sedimentology and Petrology (a 600 level), Advanced Petroleum Geology (600 level) and Integrated Exploration and Development (500 Level) - the latter two being taught by my advisor Dr. Sonnenberg. I’ve had interviews for next summer internships with Marathon Oil and Noble Energy, and have upcoming interviews with SM Energy, Hess, Oasis, and Statoil.

*I attended GSA this fall in Vancouver. My work with SRK has been going well. The days are starting to get shorter in Alaska. I hope all is well.*

*Christopher Stevens ’04*

*Cameroon Mitiguy ’14*

Officially got the job today (12/11/14) after two weeks of training in Tulsa Oklahoma. I will be moving down to West Texas Sunday as a mud logger in the Permian Basin for Horizon Well Logging. All those carb sed stratigraphy labs and classes paid off!

Happy Holidays,
The Geology Club at St. Lawrence provides opportunities for students to order field equipment, create fun SLU GEO apparel, and visit natural history museums in northern New York. This semester, the Geology club set goals to create SLU GEO apparel and order field equipment. We also embroidered apparel with the SLU GEO logo and purchased rock hammers for students. For the spring 2015 semester, the club will order mugs with the SLU GEO logo. The final orders for these neat mugs will be placed early next semester, which will be available to current and past Geology students. Early next semester, we are also planning on visiting the Ottawa Natural History Museum. Lastly, the Geology Club is open to possible volunteer opportunities at St. Lawrence in the spring.

The St. Lawrence chapter of AAPG got off to a great start this fall semester as three new officials were elected. Daniel Milavec '15 is the new acting President, John Miller '16 will serve as VP and Nora Kinslow '15 will act as Treasurer. After the election, the documentary Switch was screened. This movie provides several views on global energy and further helped to educate our club members on current issues surrounding global energy issues, fossil fuels, and alternative forms of energy production. With our funds, the club plans to provide more educational opportunities focusing on petroleum geology and possible career opportunities.

The geology department hosted around 100 fifth graders from the Canton Central School. Students enjoyed presentations on careers in geology, and enjoyed hands-on experience in dendrochronology, paleontology, structural geology, and sedimentology. We received many ‘Thank You’ notes and beautiful hand drawn cards from students and their teachers, who also appreciated munchkins and apple cider. As always, the most exciting part of the trip was a demonstration of a volcano eruption. This year it was pretty spectacular, with several students getting wet!

St. Lawrence Sigma Gamma Epsilon Chapter: New Inductees and the 100th Year Anniversary (Spring 2015)

Sigma Gamma Epsilon (S.G.E.), the national honorary society for the Earth Sciences, acknowledges exceptional students in the Geosciences. S.G.E. students are required to have at least a 3.0 Geology GPA and take a substantial number of classes before induction. We were proud to receive five new members for the honorary society this semester, including: Kelan Koncewicz, Austin Hart, William Moynihan, John Miller, and Kathleen Sears. Congratulations to the new inductees! Finally, SGE will be sending two representatives from our SLU chapter to the 100th SGE Anniversary at the University of Kansas on March 25th to 27th next year.

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2014 Senior Theses

- Michele E. Goldberg - Modern Mixed Carbonate-Siliciclastic Depositional Environment of the Salem Bay, Jamaica. Advisor: Dr. Husinec
- Bryn W. Keenhold - Post-Glacial Signature of Fox Fen, Northwestern Adirondacks: Correlation to Brandreth Bog and Ballston Lake, Adirondacks. Advisor: Dr. Stecart
- Roselyne C. Laboso - Weekly Monitoring of River Chemistry in St. Lawrence County, New York. Advisor: Dr. Chiarenzelli
- Thomas D. Lockwood - Facies Change Along the Margin of a Deep-Marine Terminal Splay, Neoproterozoic Windermere Supergroup, British Columbia, Canada. Advisor: Dr. Husinec
- Saddie R. Serviss - Chronology Development and Climate Response of Pinus strobus L., Crooked Lake, Adirondacks, New York: April Showers Bring Narrow Rings? Advisor: Dr. Stewart