

## *UGA/RLS News - Spring 2005*

Greetings from Athens. We hope this message finds all of you with a good amount of peace, happiness and leisure in your lives.

It has been some time since you have heard from us, even if you were a regular recipient of John Dattilo's "*KUDOS*". So you may or may not know that John took a department head job at Penn State University last summer and will not be returning to us. He certainly will be missed, but the remaining faculty are committed to moving the program forward in new and important ways.

Another significant event, however, is that RLS has been merged with the Department of Counseling and Human Development Services as part of a larger College of Education reorganization that eliminated the four schools in the College and reduced the number of departments - through mergers - from 19 to 9. These changes were not a reflection of a lack of productivity or other flaws of any of the original units but rather the severe budget cuts that have been imposed upon the University in the wake of 9/11 and the economic downturn. So we are now one of five programs (the others being Counseling Psychology, Community Counseling, School Counseling, and College Student Affairs Administration) in the Department of Counseling and Human Development Services. Besides the intended savings of administration costs, we feel this merger offers exciting new possibilities for broadening our particular approach to human service delivery that focuses on leisure and recreation. Our Department Head, Diane Cooper, has been diligent and effective in learning about us, managing the challenges of the new arrangement, and facilitating new relationships and new opportunities.

One consequence of this realignment is that the Recreation Resource Management emphasis area, and Mike Tarrant himself, have been moved out of the College of Education and into the Warnell School of Forest Resources. While Mike will remain an adjunct faculty member in RLS and will also continue to teach the RLST 3310 course (Outdoor Recreation), the overall character of our program will change accordingly, being more focused on human service delivery. This is not to say, however, that we are abandoning our interest in interpretation and outdoor education; in fact we expect to give these interests new and special attention as we position the program to invest more heavily in experiential (non-formal and informal) education.

At this writing we have favorable indications that we will be able to search for a new faculty member next year. Clearly, that person will have to help us rebuild after the radical changes that occurred during the past year. Our hope is to have that person on the faculty by August 2006.

Following is a bit more news about our faculty, some of the directions of our current students, both graduate and undergraduate, and a few pieces we can report about our alums. But we hope to hear back from you. When we do we will turn around and make your news and whereabouts known to other alums. In spite of our changes, we believe we can use this forum to improve communications with and among our alumni and

enhance networking as a result. Of course, we are always happy to have the help of contributions to our alumni association (through the UGA Foundation), but it is more important that we simply find out where you are and what you have been doing. Furthermore, this information will help us with the five year program review that is scheduled for this coming year. So minimally, please confirm or modify your email address that has allowed us to reach you and let us know what you are doing and whatever else you would like to share. And do let us know if we can be of any help to you professionally.

## Faculty News

**Gwynn Powell** and **Diane Samdahl** have assumed the positions of co-coordinators of RLS, with Gwynn coordinating the undergraduate program development and activities and Diane coordinating graduate program development and activities.

Gwynn has developed a new Maymester "Facilities" course for undergraduates and masters students that will involve a tour of innovative built and natural recreation facilities in Georgia. She has also developed a Study Abroad course that will be traveling to Russia for an examination of leisure resources, programs and services in that country and to establish an ongoing technical assistance partnership with summer camps there. She has also been instrumental in the last few years in establishing a partnership with Athens Clarke County Leisure Services and the ACC School System for providing innovative after-school and intercession day camp programming in conjunction with movement to a balanced calendar in several area schools. Gwynn received the SPRE Innovative teaching award and a College-wide Outstanding Teaching award. She is working to develop an integrated undergraduate core curriculum that utilizes a greater amount of field experience and service learning while treating introductory subjects in a more dynamic and integrated manner. Southern States ACA Camp Conference in Nashville, TN was an opportunity for several students and her to present their work (**Becky Smith** presented "Staff Decision Making", **John Paul McNeal** presented "Leadership Compass", **Paul Schlag** and **Dan Matthews** (MEd '00) presented "On-line Staff Training". In addition, they all were instrumental in the American Camp Association National Conference. **Meri Cambre** (MEd '04) and Gwynn published "Employee Involvement: Applications for Summer Camp" in *Camping Magazine*

Diane has been involved in revising the masters curriculum to incorporate coursework from Counseling and College Student Affairs Administration which are programs in our newly merged department, and to add a course in experiential education. She has also been working with faculty in CSAA to develop a masters emphasis in campus recreation administration. Diane received the SPRE Teaching Excellence Award in October 2004.

Diane was also a co-author of a book recently published by Wilfred Laurier Press entitled *The Diverse Worlds of Unemployed Adults: Consequences for Leisure, Lifestyle, and Health*. Diane and **Corey Johnson** (Ph.D. '03) published an article in *Schole* on the multicultural teaching modules that they developed. She and **Stephen Maynard**

presented a paper at the Leisure Research Symposium entitled “Public recreation and the Panopticon: A Foucault-based examination of power relations in public recreation.” Diane presented with Corey Johnson at the SPRE Teaching Institute on “Proactive assignments: Promoting social awareness and advocacy in leisure studies” and she gave another workshop at that conference on “*I am* poems: Using poetry as a self-reflective activity.” She and **Uttiyo Raychaudhuri** will present in May at the Canadian Congress on Leisure Research on “Leisure embodied: Examining the meaning of leisure from Greek and Vedic perspectives.”

**Katie Bemisderfer** continues to be the mainstay for the undergraduate program in facilitating professional opportunities (practica, internships and professional preparation) for undergraduates, maintaining contacts with a wide variety of professional sites such as Central State Hospital in Milledgeville, the International Horse Park in Conyers, The Atlanta Ballet, Marcus Jewish Community Center in Atlanta, HFI Events Corporation in Royston and others. She also recently attended the Georgia Regional Hospitals Activity Therapies Symposium in Rock Eagle with 15 Therapeutic Recreation students. This year she was presented an award from the Career Center at UGA for "contributing to the career development of Recreation and Leisure Studies students."

**Doug Kleiber** has served as a host during the current semester for Dr. Galit Nimrod, a Fulbright scholar from Israel. Together they were awarded a seed grant from the Gerontology Center on campus for a multi-method cross-national study, "Retirement, Activity and Well Being in Israel and the US". Doug has also served as a featured speaker and program chair for conferences in Germany, Hong Kong and Australia in the last 18 months. The counseling psychology program has also asked him to teach their required "Social Aspects of Behavior" course every other year.

### Current Students

Masters students expecting to graduate shortly include **Matt Hammons, Becky Smith, Heather Roy Robinson** and **Josh Rood**.

Doctoral student **Stephen Maynard** has accepted a tenure-track faculty position offer from UNC Greensboro.

Masters student **Matt Hammons** presented a paper entitled "Envisioning Service-Learning at UGA" at the 2005 Public Service & Outreach Conference in Athens in January. He also attended the Environmental Education Alliance Annual Conference in Helen, Georgia in March.

RLS doctoral student, **Paul Schlag**, will also be completing a masters degree in Instructional Technology.

A number of undergraduates attended the GRPA annual conference in Jekyll Island, the GRPA Outdoor Institute (hosted by **Ike English** (BS.Ed 99), and the Beyond the Basics Workshop.

Doctoral student **Sun Hwan Hwang** was elected President of the UGA Korean Student Association

**Becky Smith** and **Uttiyo Raychaudhuri** received Outstanding Teaching Assistantship awards this year

On a very sad note, an automobile accident in November claimed the life of **Jonathan Desso**, a senior in Recreation Resource Management from Watkinsville Georgia.

### Alumni

**Amanda Armington** (BS.Ed. '03) is working with the Nature Conservancy in Irvine, CA.

**Katie Armstrong** (BSEd '04, CTRS) is a TR Specialist at Emory Center for Rehabilitation Medicine in Decatur, GA

**Allan Autry** (M.Ed. '04) is now a sports coordinator with Barrow County Park and Recreation.

**Stephanie Boone** (BS Ed '03 CTRS) is a TR Specialist with "Out and About," a division of Imagine, in Boulder, CO.

**Meri Cambre** (MEd '04) is the director of Camp Ruth Lee in Baton Rouge, LA.

**Amy Cobb Williams** (BS.Ed '99) is a park ranger for the US Corps of Engineers with the Richard Russell State Park in Elberton, GA and the proud new mom of "Jacqueline Victoria CobbWilliams" (Feb 2005).

**Angela Cobbs** (M.Ed '04) is a victim advocate with the Solicitor's office in Spartanburg County, South Carolina. She works mainly with children who are victims of child sexual abuse and with other juvenile cases. She adds: "It is very interesting and quite rewarding. I do however plan to return to recreation/leisure one day.

Recent doctoral graduate, **Lynne Cory** (Ph.D, '04) has accepted a position as a post doctoral research associate at Clemson University. Besides teaching two TR courses for us during this past year she was once again instrumental in coordinating the Blaze Sport Coaching conference on campus during spring break.

**Steven Dempsey** (Ed.D. '85) was awarded UGA's prestigious Walter Hill Award for Public Service in January. Steve is a Senior Public Service Associate with the Carl Vincent Institute on campus and a former president of GRPA.

**Anthony Evans** (B.S. Ed '04) is playing professional basketball in Spain.

**David Griffin** (M.Ed. '97) recently visited campus to recruit camp staff for Camp Bob Summer In Henderson, NC where he is serving as camp director.

**Annie Hagburg** (M.Ed '04) has been hired to work with Babies Can't Wait here in Athens.

**Ryan Hines** (B.S. Ed '04) is, allegedly, "surfing the ocean blue" while being employed by Kailua Sailboards, Kailua, Hawaii.

**Kathleen Horton** (B.S.Ed '98) is the meetings manager for VNU Business Publications in Roswell, GA.

**Kelly Howington** (M.Ed '01) is director of the Cherokee Presbytery's Cherokee Retreat Center in Cartersville, GA.

**Susan Hutchinson** (Ph.D '03) has moved from Penn State University to Dalhousie University in Halifax, Nova Scotia. She presented an invited paper at the conference on "Leisure as a Counteraction for Negative Life Events" in Hong Kong last August.

**Sharon Jacobson** (Ed.D. 97) is graduating in May from Colgate Rochester Crozer Divinity School with a divinity degree, and will be ordained as an American Baptist minister in June. Sharon continues to be an adjunct faculty member with the Women's Studies Department at SUNY Brockport and serves as chaplain for The MOCHA Project, an outreach program that serves the LGBTQ communities of color and their families in Rochester, NY.

**Jessica James** (BS Ed. '04) is working as an Interpretive Ranger at Tallulah Gorge State Park.

**Justin Johnson** (BS Ed '03) is Director of Recreation with the Hilton Clearwater Beach Resort in Clearwater, FL. He plans to be married in July

**Alice Johnston** (BS.Ed '04) is now working for the Atlanta Ballet.

**Jennifer Jones** (BS Ed '03) is now the Director of Recreation for the Franklin County Recreation Commission in Franklin, GA.

**Laura Ellen McAvoy** (BS Ed '04) is currently the activity director at Arbor Terrace in Athens.

**Greg McIntyre** (BS Ed 03, Honors) is Director of Camp Henry in Asheville, NC and the proud new father of "Emma Grace"

**Chelsea Murphy** (BS Ed '04) is attending nursing school at medical College of Georgia here in Athens.

**Wes Poulos** (BS Ed '02) is a park ranger for Florida State Parks in the Jacksonville area.

**Joy Polkabra Byers** (M.Ed. '01) has recently assumed the role of Assistant Director of Programs and Special Events at Youngstown State University.

She is also expecting her first child.

**Megan Sletten Packard** (M.Ed '04) was recently married and is working with Easter Seals in Nashville.

**Kristi Townsend** (BS Ed '04) is a recreation therapist at Central State Hospital in Milledgeville, GA.

**Jeff Wreyford** (BSEd '02) is the recreation director at Perimeter Church in Atlanta, GA

### Revitalization of Alumni Advisory Council:

We are interested in revitalizing our Alumni Advisory Council. We have a limited amount of money to invite folks within driving distance to attend an initial discussion on May 23<sup>rd</sup> from 10:30-2:30. For this first meeting, we would like to invite alums to focus discussion on the undergraduate and M.Ed. degree (i.e. professional career paths as opposed to academic). The purpose of this initial group will be to provide insight into their current professional situations (i.e. stresses and challenges in their jobs, trends in their organizations, new employee challenges), yield some feedback for the program review, and provide advice about how the advisory group should function. Please contact Gwynn Powell [gpowell@uga.edu](mailto:gpowell@uga.edu) if you would be interested and able to attend the May 23<sup>rd</sup> meeting.

### Final Note

By attempting to contact those alums for whom we have emails, we will learn about the accuracy/currency of those emails, but if you get this message and have additions (new information not noted here; email addresses of others) and corrections (year graduating, updates on the information) please respond. We will then get out a revised summer newsletter in a month or two. And if you want to make contact with another alum, feel free to contact us and we'll do our best to put you in touch.

Enjoy the rest of the spring and have a great summer!