



Fall 2017

STUDENT NUMBERS

100 Undergraduate majors

18 Graduate Students

19 Freshmen

12 Passed 2017 Field Camp

17 Earned B.S. in May 2017

17 Earned M.S. in May 2017



Ashley Dinkel earned her B.S. in May

FROM THE CHAIR

It has been at least five years since the last newsletter from our department. As most of you know, I joined FHSU in fall 2014 after Dr. John Heinrichs passed away earlier that year. I came to Hays from Starkville, Mississippi where I had spent nine years at Mississippi State University. My expertise is in meteorology and climatology, but I have a long history of working alongside geologists, geographers, and several other disciplines. My family and I love living in Hays, and I am excited to share the successes of our department with you here.



COLLEGE OF STM

In 2015, the Department of Geosciences became an inaugural member of the new College of Science, Technology and Mathematics. After many years in the College of Arts & Sciences, it is an exciting opportunity to be in a smaller (7 departments), more focused college. This does not change much about the day-to-day operations for us, but it does make our causes more visible so that we can argue more effectively for our students, especially when it comes to the demands of lab expenses, field courses, and science, in general.

WELCOME TO DR SUMRALL AND DR SUMRALL

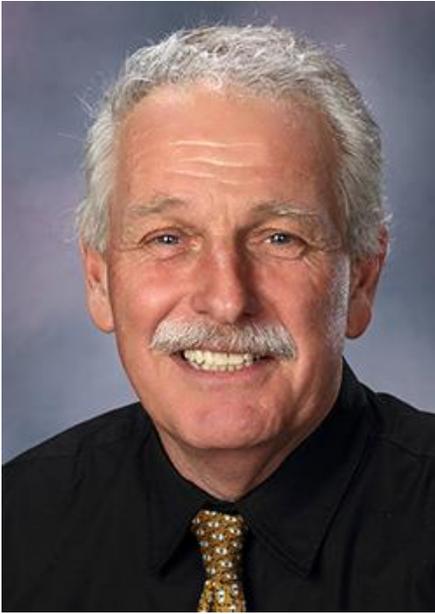


We have added two faculty to the Department this fall. **Dr. Jonathan Sumrall** is a karst geologist who studies carbonate features around the world. He will teach Mineralogy, Petrology, Field Methods, Field Camp, and other courses in his areas of expertise. He is originally from Biloxi, Mississippi, but he most recently spent four years at Sam Houston State University.

Dr. Jeanne Sumrall is a geologist and geographer with expertise in geoscience education. She will be an instructor for Geosciences and KAMS (Kansas Academy of Math and Science), which is located on the FHSU campus. She will teach a variety of courses for our department, including Introduction to Geology, Environmental Geology, and World Geography.



A NEW SCHOLARSHIP IN HONOR OF KEN NEUHAUSER AS HE RETIRES



Dr. Kenneth Neuhauser joined the FHSU faculty in the summer of 1980, and he has been one of the most recognizable and respected faculty members on campus ever since. In July 2018, Ken will conclude a 39-year career in the Department of Geosciences. We will never be able to replace Ken, but we will do our best to honor him and his passion for field geology by creating the **Dr. Ken Neuhauser Geology Field Camp Scholarship**. Our goal is to raise enough money for this scholarship to be endowed and to significantly offset the costs of geology field camp for our students. While field camp is a crucial and memorable part of the geology curriculum, the cost can be enough to prohibit some students from ever choosing geology as a major. Ken always worked hard each year to find money to help those students, and we think this will be a great legacy.

To give to this fund, please visit: <http://foundation.fhsu.edu/donate/> and enter “Ken Neuhauser Geology Field Camp Scholarship” as the Designation.

If you donate during the *I Fed the Tiger* campaign, 23–25 October, the first \$100 of your gift will be doubled. <http://foundation.fhsu.edu/ifedthetiger/>

ARE YOU INTERESTED IN JOINING OUR ADVISORY COMMITTEE?

Alumni and friends play an important role in the success of an academic department. You are the ones who offer financial support, valuable internships for students, and word-of-mouth publicity about our programs. We are also interested in your input regarding the perception and direction of the Department of Geosciences. Our goal is to have this group organized with 4–6 members that represent multiple groups (e.g., geology, geography, alumni, donors, etc.), and we hope to have our first meeting in fall 2018. The committee will decide how often they meet as well as their goals and strategies.

If you are interested, please contact Grady Dixon via email (pgdixon@fhsu.edu).

IN THE FIELD

Field experiences have always been an important part of geosciences education, and our department continues this tradition. In addition to our annual Geology Field Camp, we are now running annual field courses focused on study abroad and on storm chasing, and Dr. Jon Sumrall has plans to start taking students to his research field sites on Caribbean Islands. Of course, we continue to help students attend professional meetings where they can meet peers, network with future employers, and learn how other scientists are applying what they have learned.



CURRICULUM UPDATES

In the last few years, we have made two noteworthy updates to our curriculum. The first occurred in 2015 when we combined our geology and geography degrees into a single B.S. in Geosciences. This was to minimize vulnerability to either program as the Kansas Board of Regents and the previous FHSU administration began to prioritize academic programs based on their numbers of majors, credit hours, etc. By combining programs “on paper,” both became stronger in the eyes of those in Topeka and in Sheridan Hall. This is a common trend around the country as financial pressures force programs to merge into multi-discipline departments. However, it is the coursework that makes the degree, and all of our programs continue virtually unchanged in the courses that they require. For example, petroleum geology majors will still take courses specifically in petroleum geology and they will be called “petroleum geologists” when they graduate. We also still keep track of geology and geography majors using slightly different degree codes (505-2015P vs 505-2015L).

The other change is that it is now possible for our students to complete their geography degree entirely online. This process began at least four years ago as Drs. Tom Schafer and Rich Lisichenko pushed the idea, but the program was completed within the last year.

You can read more about our curriculum on our website:

<http://www.fhsu.edu/geo/Undergraduate-Programs-in-Geosciences/>



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VIRTUAL COLLEGE

FACULTY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

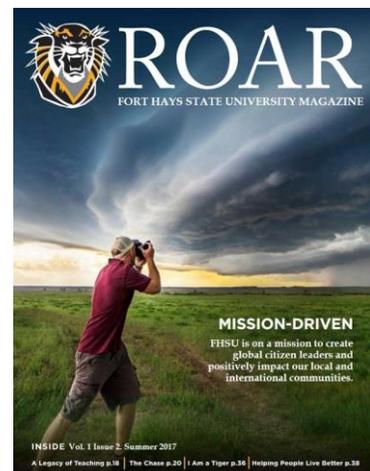
Our faculty continue to do great things, and there is not enough room to detail everything in this newsletter. But here are a few highlights from recent months:

- Dr. Laura Wilson earned three grants, from the National Science Foundation and the Dane G. Hansen Foundation, totalling nearly \$500,000, and she was recently featured on *Science Friday*, a weekly, call-in, radio talk show that is broadcast internationally.
<https://www.sciencefriday.com/segments/finding-fossils-under-the-sea-of-kansas/>
- Dr. Grady Dixon earned a grant from the National Science Foundation for \$400,000.
- Dr. Ken Neuhauser earned a grant from the Kansas Department of Transportation for \$100,000.
- Dr. Hendratta Ali was recognized as the FHSU Outstanding Undergraduate Research Mentor, the Inspirational Geoscience Educator from the American Association of Petroleum Geologists, and a “Rising Star” by her alma mater, Oklahoma State University.
- Dr. Keith Bremer was recognized as the College of STM Faculty Advisor of the Year.
- Dr. Laura Wilson was recognized as the College of STM Outstanding Teacher for Spring 2017.
- Dr. Rich Zakrzewski, Professor Emeritus, was awarded the title of “Honorary Member” by the Society of Vertebrate Paleontology.
- The first two issues of ROAR Magazine featured Geosciences faculty.

GUEST SPEAKERS

Visiting lecturers and colloquium speakers are a valuable part of our students’ education. It is helpful when external people reinforce the messages coming from the faculty, and these events often provide networking opportunities as well. We have been fortunate to host the following people recently, and we look forward to bringing in more.

- Dr. Deanell Tacha, Dean of the Law School, Pepperdine University
- John Francis, Francis Financial Services, Inc.
- Mark Allen, President and Co-founder, Enertech
- Travis Rozean, Owner and Manager, Business Decisions, LLC
- Matt and Mindi Parsell, GIS Analysts for the City of Tulsa





*Tomanek Hall on the campus of FHSU
(photo by Grady Dixon)*

YOUR TURN

We want to hear from you. We welcome alumni and friends who return to campus for a visit. Are you interested in organizing a reunion? Are you willing to come talk to our students? Do you have news to share about your accomplishments? Do you have questions about what is happening at FHSU? Please reach out to us. We try to stay active on Facebook and Twitter, and we are easy to reach via email and phone.

Contact Us

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*Robbins Center, FHSU Foundation and Alumni Association
(photo by Grady Dixon)*

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