



**The Florida State University**  
Tallahassee, Florida 32306-1480

**To:** Prospective Geography Graduate Students

**From:** Xiaojun Yang, Graduate Program Director

**Date:** December 2011

**Re:** Research and Funding Opportunities at Florida State University Geography

As the time draws near for you to begin the process of applying for graduate studies in Geography, I wanted to take a moment and summarize some of the most important information regarding research and funding opportunities here in the Department of Geography at Florida State University.

Our graduate program (approximately 75 graduate students, 35 of whom are pursuing the Ph.D) is focused on training students in two general areas, broadly defined: (1) Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and Science and (2) Human-Environmental Interactions. Within these broad areas, applicants will find geography faculty and their graduate students working on topics ranging from mobility studies to sustainable food networks, from hazards and environmental risk management to the integration of GIS and remote sensing technologies for urban analysis, and from carbon emissions mitigation to cartographic visualization and modeling.

Here are several informational items to consider as you begin to assess whether FSU Geography is a potential fit given your educational goals:

1. While we typically admit the majority of new graduate students to enter our programs in the Fall semester, we do also admit some master's and doctoral students to begin programs during the Spring semester. In fact, many times we have funding opportunities available for new students who begin one of our programs in the Spring semester. See the application deadlines posted throughout our web site.
2. Funding opportunities in the form of teaching and research assistantships are available and entail a 9-month stipend of approximately \$13,000 and tuition waiver support. Funding opportunities for the summer months also tend to be available, and are in addition to the base 9-month stipend. The Department of Geography prioritizes funding for Doctoral students. However, in recent semesters we have had increased funding for Master's level students in the form of course 'mentorships,' which typically carry a smaller stipend (stipends are enrollment based) and have some tuition waiver support. Mentors assist the instructors of on-line geography courses with day-to-day maintenance and administration tasks, including helping the

course instructors grade student work. Students interested in pursuing a Master's degree in Geography at FSU are particularly encouraged to inquire about mentorship funding.

3. Academic year 2009-2010 was a very good year for our Doctoral program. Five of our Ph.D. students accepted tenure-track faculty positions at universities. Four of our current doctoral students published first-authored peer-reviewed journal articles in major disciplinary and interdisciplinary outlets. At the time of this writing, we have five Doctoral students supported by active National Science Foundation Doctoral Dissertation Research Improvement (DDRI) grants. Eight (8) new Ph.D. students entered our doctoral program in Fall 2010. These eight students have diverse academic backgrounds, though one commonality among them is that none of these students completed a prior degree (bachelor or master's) here at Florida State University.
4. The Department of Geography is situated within FSU's College of Social Science and Public Policy. This affects our graduate students in two ways. First, there are ample opportunities for our graduate students to take courses in these departments and gain additional knowledge from other disciplinary perspectives, and as a matter of practice, our students do this quite frequently. Many of our students choose to take classes in the College's other Ph.D. granting units, such as Urban and Regional Planning, Sociology, Political Science, and Public Policy. Secondly, there is a culture of interdisciplinary research collaboration within the College, as it is possible for students to get involved with funded projects and research centers whose purview span two or more College disciplines. Even beyond the College of Social Sciences, Geography Faculty and students routinely interact with people from a host of other FSU departments and units (e.g. meteorology, business, criminology, fine arts and humanities, etc.) in both research and classroom settings.

I hope you find this summary information and these selected program highlights helpful as you make decisions regarding your future geography graduate education. If I can be of any assistance with regards to further questions about our graduate programs, research foci and educational opportunities, do not hesitate to contact me ([xyang@fsu.edu](mailto:xyang@fsu.edu)).

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CC: Dr. Victor Mesev, Department Chair

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