

Graduate Programs

Graduate students worked with the North Cascades Institute to teach Seattle kids about conservation

Partnership getting inner-city Seattleites into the wilderness wins U.S. Forest Service honors

Three graduate students, **Justin McWethy**, **David Strich** and **Teresa Mealy** won the 2011 Urban Communities Conservation Award by the U.S. Forest Service for their work with the North Cascades Institute. The award is part of the Forest Service's Wings Across the Americas program, which works to conserve birds, bats, butterflies and dragonflies. The North Cascades Institute is a private nonprofit organization that partners with Western's Huxley College of the Environment to offer a master's degree in Environmental Education. The students served a year-long residency at the North Cascades Environmental Learning Center in North Cascades National Park, working with the Seattle International District Housing Alliance to teach residents of Seattle's inner-city International District about the value and conservation of the Skagit River ecosystem.

Grant funds tuition for Rehab graduate students

Beth Boland, associate professor of Human Services and Rehabilitation, received a \$750,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Education, Rehabilitation, and Service Administration to support student tuition and stipends for graduate students in Rehabilitation Counseling. The grant will cover two years of expenses for

35 students, as well as some funds for salary, travel and supplies. Students who receive funding from the grant must work after graduation at an agency with a federal contract with the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, the Department of Services for the Blind or the Veteran's Administration. The program previously received a similar \$750,000 grant in 2008, which currently supports 37 students.

Graduate students provide free mental health counseling to community members

During winter and spring quarters, first-year students in the Mental Health Counseling and School Counseling programs provided free sessions to 48 adults and 10 children or adolescents in the Counseling Training Clinic. There are few options for free counseling in Bellingham and requests for counseling services far exceeded the number of clients the clinic was able to serve. Also, second-year students in both programs each provided a minimum of 240 direct service hours in community mental health agencies or elementary, middle, and high schools. For example, one student worked on a study of palliative care with the Critical Junctures Institute and PeaceHealth St. Joseph Medical Center.

Grad students present to geography association

Three graduate students in Geography presented papers at the annual meeting of the Association of American Geographers in April:

- **Ben Kane**, who discussed how El Niño and La Niña weather patterns affect North Cascade glacier mass.
- **Chris Robertson**, who presented "Exploiting an Underused Paleoclimate Resource: Dendroclimatology of Alaska Yellow Cedar (*Xanthocyparis nootkatensis*) Along the Mesic Cascade West Slope (WA)."
- **Jen Sears**, who presented "Identifying Areas with Dryland Farming Potential for Viticulture in the Walla Walla Valley AVA."

Communication Sciences and Disorders includes the study of autism in graduate program

In the Academic year 2010-2011, Communication Sciences and Disorders' graduate program expanded to incorporate the study of autism, a devastating disorder that affects many children and requires specialty training for practitioners. The Autism Program offers parents an 11-week evening workshop with graduate students offering help in the use of clinical strategies. Meanwhile, graduate students take an elective course in autism during the summer to learn about the theory and the practice of autism spectrum disorders.

Graduate student helps develop first-ever atlas of southern border for Border Policy Research Institute

Graduate student **Austin Rose** and Border Policy Research Institute Associate Director **David Davidson** created the first-ever comprehensive atlas of land

border ports of entry along the border between the United States and Mexico. The atlas detailed every border crossing between the two countries from the Pacific Ocean to the Gulf of Mexico, and was widely acclaimed by government leaders as a much-needed and long-overdue resource for those who study and work with cross-border trade, travel and law enforcement on the U.S. southern border. The atlas was published by the Border Research Institute as a "Border Brief" in Fall 2010, and is available on the BPRI website.

MBA student joins Canadian leadership seminar for top business students from U.S., Mexico

MBA student **Onyeka Obi** was invited to join 21 MBA students from U.S. and Mexican universities for the Canadian Leadership Orientation Program for MBA Students, hosted by the Telfer School of Management at the University of Ottawa. Participants learned about Canadian business, government and national associations with speakers including Pamela D. Wallin, Canadian senator, Jean Boivin, deputy governor of the Bank of Canada and Derek Burleton, deputy chief economist of TD Financial. The group also met with Mexican and U.S. ambassadors to Canada and other diplomatic officials.



David Strich, in the bow of the canoe, was one of three WWU graduate students honored by the U.S. Forest Service for their work with the North Cascades Institute.