**NEW BUILDING ON THE HORIZON**

The Department has proposed the construction of a new physical facility with the hope that it will become part of the Facilities Master Plan that is soon to be developed. There are several reasons for promoting the concept of a new building. First and foremost is that we remain one of the few departments on campus where the faculty and facilities are spread across several buildings—four to be exact. This tends to stifle integration across disciplines at a time when holistic solutions to complex problems in the earth and environmental sciences requires cross/multi/interdisciplinary intervention. Secondly, we hope to promote the connection between earth sciences, environmental sciences, and the Center for Disaster Research and Education (CDRE) by providing a common physical location. We envision a building dedicated to Earth Sciences, but with ample space for environmental sciences and a bridge, both literally and programmatically, to CDRE. We believe that this combination of programs, faculty, and facilities will be unique in the State System and will serve as a magnet for recruiting top students to the undergraduate programs, as well as for the M.S. program in Integrated Earth Systems that will be developed concurrent with the new building. The facility will be designed to break down traditional barriers and to incorporate spaces that are based on overarching themes (e.g. geo-physical fluids, remote sensing, and visualization labs) rather than topics (e.g. synoptic or physical meteorology). At this time, the facility is only a concept, but we are confident that it will transform to bricks and mortar in five years. The Department has seen 100 percent growth since 2002 and the space is desperately needed.

**Happenings at DES**

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**DES Conducts Geology Search**

DES is nearing the end of the interview process for a geologist to replace Dr. R. Ramana, who will be retiring in June (see page 2 for more on Dr. Ramana). We will feature more on the outcome of this search in the fall.

**Proposed site of the new Center for Earth and Environmental Sciences located between Nichols House and Brossman Hall.**

**New Web Cam Monitors The Sky From Ganser**

If you’ve gone to the Weather Information Center “observations” Web site and clicked on “current conditions,” you may have noticed something new. Installed on top of Ganser Library is a new weather camera, which was graciously donated to the DES by WeatherBud©. The resolution is considerably better than the old camera on Caputo Hall, and the vantage point from atop Ganser allows for a full panorama of the sky condition. Moreover, the camera can be remotely rotated, zoomed, and tilted, and images captured and replayed to enhance classroom discussion. Check it out.

**Ocean Sciences Back On Full Throttle**

Starting in the fall, the Ocean Sciences and Coastal Studies (OSCS) program will be back to full complement with the hiring of Dr. Robert Vaillancourt. Dr. Vaillancourt joins DES after a decade of experience as an oceanographer at the Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory, where he specialized in marine optics. We will feature Dr. Vaillancourt in the fall newsletter.

**AMS Accolades for MU Meteorology**

The 88th Annual Meeting of the American Meteorological Society, which was held in New Orleans in Jan/Feb, was quite an event for the 30 students and faculty that attended. The MU Student Chapter was awarded the 2006-07 AMS Student Chapter of the Year. Kudos to President Matt Stepp (‘07) and the officers and members of the local chapter for their efforts (above right). The MU Chapter was recognized for its mentor program, weather outreach activities for pre-college schools, vibrant speaker series, fundraising, and social events. Topping this off, the MU Chapter poster won the blue ribbon for best chapter poster. In addition, MU students presented eight posters on their research at the annual meeting.

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Dr. Ramana Announces Retirement

Dr. Ramanantsoa Ramanantandoandro, or more affectionately Dr. Ramana, has been an associate professor of geology in the Department of Earth Sciences since joining the department in 1990. Over that period of time he has taught 11 different courses for non-science majors and geology majors, has developed the engineering emphasis in two courses, engineering geophysics, engineering geology, as well as the engineering geology option. He also applied his strong background and interest in geophysics to courses in groundwater geology, exploration geophysics, geodynamics, and others. Over these 18 years, Dr. Ramana has been involved in several professional activities. He was responsible for the acquisition and renewal of the Kingdom Suite Software Package, a gift-in-kind to the university valued at over $500,000 for use in his geophysics course. His research includes the use of seismic reflection, magnetic field, and gravity in the study of the geology of southern Lancaster County. He and his Groundwater Geology class also participated in the field component of the investigation of the groundwater resources of the Lititz area, a two-year project conducted by the Susquehanna River Basin Commission, and did some geophysical field consulting that involved students. But when reflecting on Dr. Ramana’s tenure at Millersville, it is the person, the day-to-day interactions, that leave the lasting impression on colleagues and students. We will miss his soft-spoken, unassuming, congenial mannerisms, his keen intellect, worldly perspective, and friendly demeanor. His students have benefited from his broad and deep knowledge of geology and geophysics, and his unwavering commitment to their learning and success. The department will find a new faculty member to carry on, teach the prescribed courses, advise students, and so forth, but we are not likely to find a replacement for Dr. Ramana’s unique and endearing blend of intelligence and humility. Nous lui souhaitons Bonne Santé et Bonheur.

Sarah Maxwell (meteo. ’95) of Damascus, MD is helping bring along the next generation of meteorologists. As a consultant and writer for WeatherBug®, Sarah founded the Clearspring’s (MD) Weather Club about two years ago. According to Gazette.Net, an online community newsletter, Sarah uses WeatherBug to teach the 15 club members, 5th-graders from Clearspring Elementary School in Damascus, how meteorologists predict the weather. The members have access to computers from which they can watch weather products and identify weather systems while Sarah teaches the lesson. Recently, Sarah arranged for nine members of the Russian Weather Federation to visit Clearspring. According to Principal Gayle Mollet, “the Weather Club has progressed under Maxwell’s leadership and the visit from the weather experts was important.” And this isn’t even her daytime job! Keep up the good work Sarah.

Alumni Activities

If you were at Millersville during the previous decade you directly or indirectly benefited from the leadership of the Vice-President of Information Technology, Dr. Susan Komsky. DES has a greater demand for bandwidth than any other organization on campus, and Dr. Komsky and her staff have played a key role in ensuring that the cyberinfrastructure needed for data access is robust and reliable. During her tenure, Dr. K, shown here after receiving a crystal swan from her staff during a reception in her honor, reorganized IT into an efficient service-oriented organization dedicated to providing information access.

New Digs @ Wallops for Students

The Marine Science Consortium (MSC) facility at Wallop’s Island, VA is undergoing a major overhaul, thanks to the PASSHE Board of Governors passing a $15M bond funding request for the MSC. This is a monumental step and means we are off and running on the revitalization of our MSC campus. What this means for DES’ ocean science and coastal studies program is new labs, new residence facilities, expanded curriculum, and greater access to equipment and other resources. In addition, MSC recently added the new 40’ boat pictured right for use in tidal creeks and back bay areas.