



**News Digest of the Canadian Association of Geographers  
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Compiled by Dan Smith <[cag@geog.uvic.ca](mailto:cag@geog.uvic.ca)>

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**York U's Tricia Wood argues that the biggest transit need in southern Ontario is local, not regional:** For reasons that are slightly mysterious, there is talk of big changes to transit governance in Ontario. One idea floating about is to upload all transit systems to the province because there are 11 separate transit systems in the GTHA. But one big problem with this governance talk is that regional cooperation and coordination are not the biggest transit problems in the GTHA. I'm in favour of better regional transit. Where it isn't entirely absent, what we have is, in many areas, pretty terrible, uneven, and unresponsive. I would like to see service expanded and improved. But the biggest transit problem we have in the GTHA is inadequate local transit. If we want to move more people faster and more efficiently (we do), and if we want to give people good options to get out of their cars (we do), and if a large majority of commuters work locally (they do), then what we need is better local transit. Regional transit can and should be improved, but it is not the singular priority it appears to be. Intercity transit won't meet its potential anyway if it isn't supported by strong local transit feeder service. Local transit needs more investment, inside Toronto and, most especially, outside Toronto. Most commuters in the GTHA are local, and most of them are driving because their transit options are inadequate. The province needs to focus on the nuts and bolts of evidence-based transit policy and support the capital and operating budgets of local transit. [Torontoist](#)

**U Calgary's Gwendolyn Blue engages students in the art of dialogue and deliberation:** Science in Society. Professional Communication and Interviewing. These course topics might not encourage immediate comparison, but three instructors who teach the courses in the Taylor Institute's dynamic, adaptable forum find common ground in the value and importance of dialogue. Gwendolyn Blue, associate professor in the Department of Geography, emphasizes the crucial nature of respectful and critical conversation in learning about science in society. Critical exchanges help students work through challenging concepts and contentious topics that are part of everyday public dialogues. "The course is grounded in dialogue and deliberation. We start with some ground rules, and those ground rules are that everybody speaks while appreciating that there are others in the room who may not hold similar assumptions and values," she says. "We also are very conscious of some basics from rhetoric, such as no ad hominem attacks — criticize the argument, not the person. And so we keep our focus always on the argument. We're also bound, because it's about dialogue and deliberation, to consider all views on a topic, no matter how uncomfortable they might make us." [Calgary UToday](#)

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**U Toronto's Ron Buliung helps make kids' trips to school more active and accessible with help from public funding:** Ever since he was a child and first learned how to ride a bike, it's been hard to slow down Ron Buliung. Now a professor of geography and planning at U of T Mississauga, Buliung is an avid cyclist. He is also committed to finding ways to help kids become more active. For almost a decade, with the help of public funding, Buliung has been looking at how children get to and from school. "I wanted to hear the voices of kids and help to bring their voices into the conversation about city-building in Toronto, but also across the region," he says. Backed by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research and the Heart and Stroke Foundation, Buliung and two U of T researchers from the Faculty of Kinesiology & Physical Education, Associate Professor Caroline Fusco and Professor Guy Faulkner, talked to kids and their families across the Greater Toronto Area about the social and environmental factors that affect school travel. (Faulkner is now at the University of British Columbia.). "We think about childhood as the time in your life when you learn foundational skills," says Buliung. "There's an opportunity there for children to engage with their environment in different ways and acquire the skills that allow them to incorporate, if it's physically possible, walking, cycling and other things into the set of alternatives that are available to them for moving around." His research into kids' commutes continued with funding from Metrolinx, Southern Ontario's transportation planning agency. The study showed that more than twice the number of students are now driven to and from school compared with 25 years ago. Metrolinx is aiming to get 60 per cent of kids to walk or bike to school by 2031 – a goal Buliung's research will help to achieve. "This research increased our understanding of children's mobility needs and barriers, helping Metrolinx and its partners to knowledgeably focus programs in the right areas," says Leslie Woo, chief planning officer at Metrolinx. Buliung's research also provides evidence that assists the Toronto District School Board's promotion of safe, active and sustainable school travel, says Ryan Bird, TDSB's manager of corporate and social media relations. [U of T News](#)

### **Western U's Department of Geography named Esri Canada Centre of Higher Education**

**Excellence:** The Department of Geography recently signed on to become the 11th Esri Canada Centre of Higher Education Excellence (ECCE). The ECCE program is intended to give recognition and special status to qualifying departments within post-secondary institutions in Canada that educate students in Environmental Systems Research Institute Inc (Esri) Geographic Information Systems (GIS) technology. ECCE centres have "a critical mass" of GIS expertise, said Jamie Voogt, Chair of the Department of Geography, including relevant courses, enrolments, number of graduate students and Faculty members specializing in GIS. The ArcGIS software is widely used in industry and research, and training on this software provides important hands-on experience for our students. Western has a campus-wide site licence for ArcGIS from Esri for faculty and graduate students. Undergraduate students can access a limited number of one-year Esri student licences. "Before we used ArcGIS in our courses we had a lot of student demand for it," said Voogt. Geography has been using ArcGIS within its GIS courses now for several years, and with the current development of a new teaching computer laboratory and faculty renewal in the area of Geographic Information Science beginning this year, the department felt the time was right to join the ECCE program. At Western, research and teaching on Geographic Information Science (GISci) is focused in the Department of Geography in three core areas of GISci: GIS, remote sensing and cartography. As an ECCE, the Department of Geography will be looking for up to six student associates on an annual basis to represent Western, participate in an App Challenge held by Esri and contribute regularly to a blog. These students will receive coaching and training in custom software application development on the web and on mobile computing platforms. Student associates will be entitled to receive an ArcGIS Developer Premium Subscription, free registration at local Esri Canada user conferences, have free access to Esri instructor-led training courses, and have access to Esri Canada Higher Education staff for developer/technical support. [Western SocialScience](#)

## Hot Papers by Canadian Geographers

Kristin M. Brown, Susan J. Elliott and Scott T. Leatherdale. 2017. [Researchers supporting schools to improve health: Influential factors and outcomes of knowledge brokering in the COMPASS study](#). Journal of School Health. DOI: 10.1111/josh.12578

Colin A. Chapman, Sarah Bortolamiol, Ikki Matsuda, Patrick A. Omeja, Fernanda P. Paim, Rafael Reyna-Hurtado, Raja Sengupta and Kim Valenta. 2017. [Primate population dynamics: variation in abundance over space and time](#). Biodiversity and Conservation. doi.org/10.1007/s10531-017-1489-3

Christopher S. Green, Pamela J. Robinson and Andrew A. Millward. 2018. [Canopy of advantage: Who benefits most from city trees?](#) Journal of Environmental Management 208:24–35.

Jennifer N. Hird, Evan R. DeLancey, Gregory J. McDermid and Jahan Kariyeva. 2017. [Google Earth engine, open-access satellite data, and machine learning in support of large-area probabilistic wetland mapping](#). Remote Sensing 9:1315. DOI:10.3390/rs9121315

Adam R. Martin and Marney E. Isaac. 2017. [Functional traits in agroecology: Advancing description and prediction in agroecosystems](#). Journal of Applied Ecology. DOI:10.1111/1365-2664.13039

Robert McLeman. 2017. [Thresholds in climate migration](#). Population and Environment. doi.org/10.1007/s11111-017-0290-2

Kathy J. Lewis, Cedar Welsh, Carmen M. Wong and James H. Speer. 2017. [Pathogens, invasive species, and prognosis for the future](#). In: Dendroecology. Ecological Studies (Analysis and Synthesis). Edited by: M. Amoroso, L. Daniels, P. Baker and J. Camarero. Springer, Cham. 231:257-277.

Weibo Liu, Johannes Feddema, Leiqiu Hu, Ashley Zung and Nathaniel Brunsell. 2017. [Seasonal and diurnal characteristics of land surface temperature and major explanatory factors in Harris County, Texas](#). Sustainability 9:2324. DOI:10.3390/su9122324

Xiaoxiao Liu and Stefania Bertazzon. 2017. [Exploratory temporal and spatial analysis of myocardial infarction hospitalizations in Calgary, Canada](#). International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health. DOI:10.3390/ijerph14121555

Haobo Lyu, Kaighin A. McColl, Xinlu Li, Chris Derksen, Aaron Berg, T. Andrew Black, Eugenie Euskirchen, Michael Loranty, Jouni Pulliainen, Kimmo Rautiainen, Tracy Rowlandson, Alexandre Roy, Alain Royer, Alexandre Langlois, Jilmarie Stephens, Hui Lu and Dara Entekhabi. 2018. [Validation of the SMAP freeze/thaw product using categorical triple collocation](#). Remote Sensing of Environment 205:329–337.

Valentina Radić, Brian Menounos, Joseph Shea, Noel Fitzpatrick, Mekdes A. Tessema and Stephen J. Déry. 2017. [Evaluation of different methods to model near-surface turbulent fluxes for a mountain glacier in the Cariboo Mountains, BC, Canada](#). The Cryosphere 11:2897-2918.

Dylan Simone and Alan Walks. 2017. [Immigration, race, mortgage lending, and the geography of debt in Canada's global cities](#). Geoforum. doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2017.10.006

## New in [The Canadian Geographer / Le Géographe canadien](#)



Ofer Amram, Lu Wang, Paul Sereda, Jean A. Shoveller, Rolando Barrios, Julio S.G. Montaner and Viviane D. Lima. 2017. [Assessing the relationship between physician availability and viral load suppression in British Columbia](#). The Canadian Geographer / Le Géographe canadien. DOI:10.1111/cag.124

In 2014, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS set the target of dramatically reducing the burden of HIV through expansion of access to timely HIV treatment. In order to achieve this target, it is necessary to expand access to care along the HIV cascade of care. This study examines the relationship between viral suppression and the availability of physicians providing HIV treatment in British Columbia, Canada. Data from the Drug Treatment Program of the British Columbia Centre for Excellence in HIV/AIDS was analyzed. The floating catchment method was used to assess physician availability and multivariable logistic regression was used to implement a confounder selection technique to independently assess the relationship between physician availability and viral load suppression. Individuals with more than 25 physicians within a one-hour catchment were more likely to reside in urban areas and almost twice as likely to have a suppressed viral load (adjusted odds ratio: 1.97; 95% CI 1.50 – 2.58). This study highlights the impact of physicians' availability on viral load levels. Mapping technology was used to identify the locations in which patients were most impacted by the lack of physicians.

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### Recent Theses and Dissertations

Sabrina Li. 2017. [Facilitators and barriers to safely managed water and sanitation: A spatio-temporal investigation of the association between socioeconomic factors and shigellosis incidence](#). MS in Geography. University of Waterloo, Waterloo, Ontario. Supervisor: Susan Elliott

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### Other “Geographical” News

**HMS Terror resting place given national historic site protection:** The HMS Terror is one of two ships from the Franklin expedition which became trapped in ice in the Arctic in 1845, ultimately leading to the deaths of all 129 men on board, including expedition leader Sir John Franklin. The location of the wrecked ships were one of Canada's greatest unsolved mysteries until September 2014, when the first of the two ships, the HMS Erebus was found south of King William Island. Both ships are in pristine condition despite resting beneath the sea for more than 170 years and the artifacts which remain have immense value. In October, the United Kingdom said it would transfer ownership of the ships and their contents to Canada. Earlier this month, the federal cabinet ordered the National Historic Sites of Canada be amended to add 57.8 square kilometres of seabed encompassing the HMS Terror. “An area of this size is required to prevent access and activities directed at the wreck, and to protect underwater historical resources related to the wreck,” reads the order in council. A similar order was made for the sea bed around the HMS Erebus in 2015. [Toronto Star](#)

**Humanities and social science Ph.D.s working outside academe are happier than their tenure-track peers:** With the dearth of available tenure-track faculty positions, professional organizations and others are working to change how Ph.D. programs prepare students for the careers they're likely to have outside academe. A study of some 5,000 humanities and social sciences Ph.D.s finds that those working in nonprofits are more satisfied with their jobs than are their peers in tenure-track faculty positions. That's true even for Ph.D.s who intended to work in academe but did not end up there. Some 93% of Ph.D.s in nonprofits said they were "very satisfied" or "somewhat satisfied" with their current position, compared to 88% of Ph.D.s in tenure-track or tenured jobs. Compensation seemed to play a big role, with some 80% of nonprofit workers saying they were satisfied with their remuneration, compared to 61% of their tenure-line faculty peers. Ph.D.s working in business or for-profits weren't as happy as those in nonprofits but they still reported being happier than their tenure-track peers. Those working in academe off the tenure track were the least happy overall. [Inside Higher Ed](#)

**More faculty members are using open educational resources:** More and more instructors are choosing open educational resources (OER) over traditional textbooks, a survey of more than 2,700 faculty members reveals. Awareness of OER -- openly licensed and freely accessible teaching and learning materials -- has also increased. Twenty-nine percent of faculty described themselves as "aware" or "very aware" of OER this year, up from 25 percent last year and 20 percent the year before. The proportion that reported they had never heard of OER fell from 66 percent in 2014-15 to 56 percent this year. [Inside Higher Ed](#)

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## Some Not So "Geographical" News



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