In January 2010, John Paul Jones III began his job as the dean of the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences. Jones was formerly the director of the School of Geography and Development. He succeeds Beth Mitchneck, who served as the interim dean, and Edward Donnerstein, who stepped down from the deanship in 2009 to return to the faculty. SBS Developments talks to the new dean about his background and his vision for SBS.

**You received your degrees in geography. What attracted you to that field?**

I had an epiphany one day. I had always been inclined to the social sciences, and as an undergraduate at the University of Florida I had toyed with history, anthropology and economics, and had pretty much settled into journalism by the middle of my sophomore year.

And then one day my roommate came home with a syllabus from a cultural geography class, and I was hooked. The syllabus spoke directly to me — really, it was something like a religious conversion. Here was an integrative way to understand society that looked at people’s history, culture, economy, social differences and environmental contexts together.

I also appreciated that geographers, along with other social scientists, have something to say about real world problems today. Whether its economic decline, water scarcity, climate change, or access to health care, a geographic perspective is vital.

**After you received your Ph.D. at Ohio State University in 1984, you began your career as**