Results from the 2010 National Survey of Two Year College Geospatial Programs

Synopsis—the GeoTech Center conducts an annual survey of two year college geospatial educator nationwide to assess the current state of the field and the health of the programs, as well as issues of concern to our educators. The following pages contain the results of the survey in graph format for a quick read. (2009 N=82, 2010 N=107)

Conclusion: Geospatial academic programs are healthy, with 85% of programs reporting a stable or increasing enrollment number.
Conclusion: the majority of programs range from 5-30 majors annually. A few report enrollments over 100 students.
Conclusion: programs nationwide have the most difficult time recruiting African-American students (although a large number report they do not struggle with the recruitment issue).
Conclusion: programs report continual placement of their graduates into geospatial-related fields despite the poor economy.
Conclusion: the employment opportunities are broad, with graduates being placed widely across the spectrum of industries.
Conclusion: the two largest sources of new students include workforce training and students on campus with no defined major.
Conclusion: most enrollments come from tradition academic courses, although workforce is a strong second.
Conclusion: jobs remain the number one concern of two year programs (jobs, internships, career pathways). University articulation and curriculum are major concerns.
Conclusion: articulation with universities remains a significant barrier to two year graduate career pathways.
Conclusion: most GIS courses are still treated solely as a technical credit and much more work needs to be accomplished on getting them accepted as general education credit.
Conclusion: the new GTCM is as widely recognized as the decade-old NCGIA and second only to the BoK.
Conclusion: nearly 70% of geospatial graduates reported being employed in the past 12 months despite a bad economy nationwide.
Conclusion: the Certificate is the most popular degree for two year college graduates.
Conclusion: GIS application remains the primary subject in most two year college programs.
Conclusion: lack of access to GIS software outside of campus is still the largest barrier to students. This is significant giving the rapid rise in online courses being offered. It points to a continued need for the remote desktop application solution or cloud-computing version of GIS.
Conclusion: GIS can be taught either as a stand-alone or integrated topic in most colleges.
Conclusion: vocational degree graduates and post-baccalaureate certificates remain the most popular sources of students for two year geospatial programs.
Conclusion: the primary source of GIS curriculum for two year educators is self-generated by educators. Grant-produced, or free curriculum, remains an important source for educators.
Conclusion: Geography remains the most popular discipline for GIS to be housed in, with Computer Science a distant second.
Conclusion: the post-baccalaureate working professional remains the largest source of students in two year college programs.
Conclusion: most programs are located in urban areas.
Conclusion: most educators recognize the need for national competency standards, such as the GTCM.
Conclusion: most two year educators prefer to align their curriculum with professional certification.
Conclusion: in the future, the greatest potential for growth is by integrating geospatial into other disciplines.
Conclusion: time and money remain the largest barriers to professional development for educators.
Conclusion: Esri and AAG are the two most popular conferences for two year educators.
Conclusion: while Esri and USGS remain most popular sources of information, the GeoTech Center is rapidly establishing itself as an authoritative source.
Conclusion: while nearly half responded they were aware of the new GTCM, there remains much dissemination efforts to complete.
Conclusion: far fewer educators know about the DOL SOCs than the GTCM, even though the SOCs were released (December 2009) nearly 8 months before the GTCM (July 2010).