

The TIMSGeoTech Goes to High School

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The Tiered Internship Model for Students in Geospatial Technology (TIMSGeoTech) seeks to address the growing need for skilled technicians in geospatial technology in Colorado and is funded by the National Science Foundation NSF DUE/ATE #0902511. The project, administered by Pikes Peak Community College (PPCC) in Colorado Springs, CO, aims to create a tiered internship program with industry that will start with the two-year college and high school partners.

To meet the goal of recruiting new students for the Geographic Information Systems (GIS) program, a series of presentations were made at local high schools. At these outreach events, high school students are introduced to information about the PPCC GIS programs, view a GIS video, participate in an interactive mapping demonstration, and take part in a geocaching exercise. From the spring of 2010 to the spring of 2011, the TIMSGeoTech participated in ten career fairs which lasted three to four hours on average and spoke to approximately 350 students. Moreover, GIS Ambassadors visited various classrooms and talked about GIS and student life to roughly 250 middle and high school students. The team also organized four workshops to introduce high school students to the technology.

Upon questioning, it is routinely discovered that high school students know nothing of the GIS field, and have not been informed of the concurrent enrollment program that enables high school students to gain college credit while still in high school. It is clear that recruitment efforts must be increased at the secondary level and in the community at large among potential pools of students.

The student ambassador facet of the program was devised as a method for meeting and interacting with young people at the secondary education level, in other college classrooms, at youth group meetings, and in outreach efforts to under-represented demographics. Six outstanding GIS students were chosen for this work and are paid a stipend for their service. These ambassadors speak on behalf of the program and GIS careers, and describe projects they have worked on. The GIS student ambassadors program was developed based on the SC ATE model "Student Ambassadors in Engineering Technology" residing in the Florence-Darlington College, SC.

The TIMSGeoTech outreach has received very favorable response from teachers and students and is continuing its work in Colorado Springs and surrounding areas. See attached pictures.

For Information on how to enroll into the PPCC GIS program contact the GIS Chair, Ms. Donna Arkowski at donna.arkowski@ppcc.edu.



High Schools Students from William J. Palmer High School in Colorado Springs, Colorado



High school students learning to use GPS units.



Field experiences for High School students.