

## GIS ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

**Meeting Minutes**  
November 9, 2007  
3:00 p.m. Room 407

Those in attendance:

John Helton – Program Coordinator/Professor of Computer-Aided Technology  
Doug Gregory – Professor of Computer-Aided Technology  
Vicki Gibson – Dean of Information Technology  
Gary Houlette – Professor of Physics/Geology/Engineering  
Gary Dominguez – Supervisor of Student Computer Center/Adjunct Professor of Computer-Aided Technology  
  
Shannon Calhoon – City of Oklahoma City  
Todd Fagin – Coordinate Solutions  
Annette Sharp – CenSARA (Central State Air Resource Agencies Association)  
Bob Springer – Strategic Consulting International / OSU Adjunct professor  
Robert Stokers – Topographic Mapping Co  
Stephen Vaught - City of Oklahoma City  
Mike Warner – City of Edmond

Professor Helton opened the meeting by welcoming and thanking everyone for attending. He introduced himself first, and then had everyone introduce themselves.

The packets included the meeting agenda; the list of GIS hardware/software and the curriculum form for the AAS degree were provided to everyone.

Professor Helton gave a brief history of how OCCC comes up with the idea to develop a new GIS emphasis under a Computer-Aided Technology degree program. He also told them what equipment (Software/Hardware) had been purchased with the grant. He then asked the members what GIS education/training is needed in Oklahoma City and what we perceive as the role of a community college.

Mr. Fagin brought up the point that we need to figure out who the target audience is and the potential individuals to recruit first. For example that OU is targeting its GIS program to Geography students and focus on academic theory than training.

Professor Helton told us that there is no community college level GIS program in this area, some technology centers offer GIS training classes, although those classes are not college credited and they are targeting adults.

Professor Gregory said that our target would be principally high school graduates who have probably no background at all, but are looking into this profession as a field to study. We also would have some training courses to meet other markets as a sub program.

Ms. Sharp talked about the environmental emphasis. This emphasis is used world-wide for tracking fires and homeland security, and the opportunity is tremendous. Although she understands that this field would be considered a separate track from GIS, it would be great if OCCC would offer training courses in the future. She has currently covered nine states using this program and encountered the trouble finding trainers.

Professor Houlette shared with us that there are many young college graduates who have degrees in engineering, construction science or geology that would not have enough technology skills for the workforce. It would be great if we could offer courses that would help those students as well.

Professor Helton told us that it would be a possibility to create a certificate program for environmental emphasis.

Mr. Springer asked if we are anticipating transferable degrees. Since OSU has a GIS certificate program, the transferable degree would be considered. Professor Helton agreed with it and it would be another possibility.

Mr. Fagin pointed out the problems OU has, in which their Intro to GIS class is designed for academically oriented and diversified study for a large group of people with no specific fields at all. Although he understands the concept of the Intro class, hopefully we could create a more practical oriented Intro GIS course which will teach basic components of GIS.

Mr. Fagin suggested that we should start the program under geography courses. Professor Gregory then said that there is no geography curriculum program in OCCC although there is a possibility to create one in a future.

Professor Houlette handed out the copy of the GIS degree programs at Central Piedmont community College in North Carolina and shared his experience at the ESRI Education conference in San Diego. It is very interesting that there are several certificate programs for GIS and GPS for each specific field. It is obvious that this field needs more hands-on practical training than typical degree programs. All agreed with it.

Mr. Warner believes that GIS degree will be very marketable and would offer unique opportunities for prospective students for survey, engineering and geography fields.

Professor Houlette and Mr. Fagin added that there are tremendous needs of GIS for survey and water district. The statistic came out that 70% of 2,500 licensed land surveyors in the state of Texas are 55 years old or older. And the problem is that there aren't any real survey training programs. They need GIS to create a digital format to pass on their experience and knowledge to younger generation.

Professor Helton said that some high schools have started teaching GIS in their geography program, which means we will have a market for students with some experience.

Professor Helton asked of seeing the job descriptions of a GIS Technician why a BS degree is one of the requirements and is wondering if an Associate degree would be enough to get in the market. Mr. Calhoon answered that it will be, if the associate degree is in a GIS field. And then he shared his concerns that the city of Oklahoma City encounters through the migration to GIS, which is that it is not easy to find people who both have necessary skills and college degrees. For that reason they have written new job descriptions that do not require any education background but people who are willing to learn.

Dean Gibson asked whether we need to create another physical geography course without lab. OCCC currently offers only one geography course; World Regional Geography. Mr. Fagin answered if OCCC wants the course it would have to be able to transfer to a university, then it has to have a lab.

Professor Helton asked the members how OCCC can partner with other agencies to promote GIS and who are the possible organizations. The group suggested the followings are potential partners; OKSCAUG (Oklahoma South Central Arc User Group), local USGS (U.S. Geological Survey), MAGIC (Mid America GIS Consortium) and ESRI (Environmental Systems Research Institute).

Professor Helton asked everyone to fill in the curriculum form for the AAS Degree in the packet.

Mr. Fagin suggested that the required courses would be like; Intro to GIS, Advanced GIS 1 or 2, Computer-Aided Design, GPS /Survey, Programming such as VB, C#.net, Database, Excel & Access and Web design desktop applications. Mr. Stokes agreed that managing database is important.

Professor Helton told them that we need support and feedback from people in the industry to improve our programs, then also asked the members to send job descriptions that require GIS skills, which will be a great help to develop our program.

Lastly, Professor Helton asked all members if they have any comments and concerns.

The meeting was adjourned.