

## EDUCATION PARTNERSHIP EVENT REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Attendee and Report Writer's Name:

Joseph J. Kerski - Denver  
Geographer

Location: Corpus Christi TX

Event Date(s): 7 March 2005

Purpose:

**NSF National Visiting Committee Meeting  
– GIS-TECH Project - Del Mar College**

I participated as one of the members of the National Visiting Committee as part of the NSF-funded GIS-TECH project at Del Mar Community College, Corpus Christi, Texas. The project, supported by an NSF Division of Undergraduate Education grant, seeks to build capacity and infrastructure to support GIS technician training.



*Del Mar College is a progressive community college in Corpus Christi, Texas.*

*This GIS-TECH project will provide training modules based on GIS in emergency response, database applications, and map server technologies. Its three tracks include developing these three GIS courses, building GIS awareness and training in area secondary schools, and developing new K-*

*through-16 articulation models for schools, colleges, and universities. GIS-TECH uses the CISCO network academy in its training.*

*The web site for the project is*

*<http://gistech.delmar.edu>.*

The GIS-TECH project includes 7 components: 1> Train secondary school teachers to incorporate GIS technology into their courses; 2> Provide an articulation mechanism from secondary school to community college to 4-year institutions; 3> Establish GIS certifications at the community college level; 4> Develop GIS data sets for local applications from TNRIS data; 5> Adapt GIS training modules for use by secondary school teachers, small and rural municipal employees, and the public; 6> Sponsor GIS mentors to local secondary schools to help teachers with GIS-related problems and solutions; 7> Provide necessary funding for GIS training workshops by subject matter experts to promote the use of GIS technology in rural and underserved school districts.



*Gulf Coastal Plain terrain! ... view from our meeting location at the Del Mar College Library, Corpus Christi. One of the highlights of our meeting was to hear from a former Del Mar student how the GIS program at Del Mar enabled her to realize her professional and personal goals.*

One of the strengths of this project is that the incorporation of GIS is from secondary school, through community college, through four-year universities. Another of the strengths of this project is the partners involved—from K-12 and higher education, government, and industry, all of whom have a strong commitment to spatial learning. Besides the USGS, other partners in the project are Corpus Christi Independent School District, Educational Service Center Region 2, Flour Bluff Independent School District, Texas A&M University Corpus Christi, Texas Natural Resources Information System (TNRIS), Borderlands Information Center, Texas Water Development Board, ESRI, and CISCO CLI-Virtuoso. Another strength is the emphasis on evaluation that Dr James Telese of UT Brownsville will be helping us with.



*Two of the team members for the project, Barbara DuFrain and Mike Price. Other members are Ann Johnson (ESRI University Coordinator) and Gary Jeffress (Texas A&M University).*



*I commend Dr Phil Davis, above, Principal Investigator of GIS-TECH, for the vision, experience, skills, and energy he brings to this important effort. The Co-PI's for this three-year project are Barbara DuFrain of Del Mar College and Gary Jeffress of Texas A&M University. Miguel Pavon of TNRIS, William Beston of Del Mar College, and Dr Kit Price Blount from Texas A&M University are among the other important participants in this project.*



*Participants in our meeting included many of the partners of the project from industry, government, and education. It was a pleasure to work with them. I have known many of them for years and have high respect for their work in GIS in education. In my opinion, this Del Mar grant is one valid way in which to empower students with one of the 3 "hot fields of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century" as described by the US Department of Labor—geotechnologies.*

The main purposes of the meeting were to present and understand the project goals, and for the National Visiting Committee to

provide recommendations to the principal investigators as they move forward with this project. Following our meeting, Mike Price and Miguel Pavon taught a two-day Emergency First Responders course at the college.

GIS-TECH is part of Del Mar's tech-prep program, the way to start a college technical major in high school. It is successful through program articulation, which is a planned process linking educational institutions and educational experiences to ensure that students have a smooth transition from one level of education to another. How often have we heard the sigh, "my credits did not transfer..." Articulation eliminates these types of headaches and encourages students to pursue higher education. Articulated courses contain the same course content as an equivalent college course, and for which a postsecondary institution has agreed to award college credit if the student meets requirements outlined in the articulation agreement. Tech Prep was funded by the Carl Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act in Texas in 1999.

### **Recommendations and Acknowledgements**

I believe that this project serves as an excellent model for incorporating spatial thinking across multiple levels of education. This project fits in well with goals of the Advanced Technology Education program, which emphasizes partnerships between academia and industry to promote the education of science and engineering technicians, curriculum development, career pathways, and articulation between two and four-year programs.

I believe that the USGS can make significant contributions to efforts such as

this, through our partnership input, spatial data, curriculum development, research, and training. I was honored that Dr Phil Davis asked me to be a part of the National Visiting Committee and I appreciated the assistance that he and other Del Mar staff members gave to ensure the meeting's success.

I therefore look forward to continuing to work with this project, and hope that others will consider using this as a model for their own K-12 schools, community colleges, and universities in their own regions.

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End of  
Del Mar GIS-TECH Report