

**UCGIS Education Committee Report  
2014 Symposium  
Diana S. Sinton, Chair, Education Committee**

Report Topics

1. Survey from 2013 Symposium
2. Membership
3. 2014 Education Award
4. Products and Activities Being Considered
5. Next Steps

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**1. Survey from 2013 Symposium**

During the 2013 Symposium, the Education Committee administered a survey to all Council members and Symposium participants. The vast majority of respondents felt that the BoK ought to be a high priority project for UCGIS, and felt its platform ought to be digital, interactive, and open to many. Collecting and distributing educational materials via the UCGIS website was ranked as a high priority. Future partnerships with AGILE and GISCI were considered more desirable than with USGIF and community colleges, though making connections with them was also supported to a lesser degree. Co-sponsoring GIS-related educational conferences was regarded positively. For more specifics, you can find the [published results here](#).

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**2. Membership and Meetings**

The Education Committee began its current year with particularly low membership, comprised only of Diana Sinton (Chair) and Amy Lobben (Vice Chair). After a call-for-participation was issued in February 2014, we successfully recruited individuals from 7 other member institutions (Sarah Battersby, Univ South Carolina; David DiBiase, Esri; Doug Flewelling, Univ. of Redlands; Sven Fuhrmann, Texas State Univ; Xingong Li, Univ of Kansas; Steve Moore, University of Redlands; Jennifer Swift, Univ Southern California; and Laura Tateosian, North Carolina State University).

The group has held one virtual meeting using the Go-To-Webinar platform, on March 20, 2014.

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**3. 2013 UCGIS Education Award**

Calls for nominations for the 2014 Education Award were distributed in mid-November 2013, but only two nominations were received. Following discussion with the Executive Committee, it was decided not to issue an award this year. Both of the 2014 nominations will remain “active” for next year, and solicitation of nominees will be broadcast more widely. The Committee was unaware that there had also been two nominations that had been left active after the 2013 year. Previous-Chair Brandon Plewe has been asked to provide information on these to be able to reconsider them during 2015 as well.

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**4. Products and Activities under Discussion and Development**

The Education Committee is interested in pursuing activities that fill the expressed interest in online educational resources. During our March meeting, we discussed the possibilities of making connections with two existing online collective resources, that from <http://teachgis.org> and Esri's [SpatialLABS](#). These two are relevant for UCGIS because Diana Sinton is involved with them both (as owner of TeachGIS.org and as Series Editor of SpatialLABS) and is aware of opportunities for leveraging these for UCGIS's benefit, but specific strategies, mechanisms, and outcomes are still uncertain for the UCGIS involvement.

Some of the main issues discussed included identifying specific ways that UCGIS members would gain benefits from these resources; what would be involved in a UCGIS “branding” of them; and how long term maintenance and curating would be accomplished.

One important idea that was discussed was how the revised BoK2 could be linked to these resources. For example, it would be a significant benefit to a member to be able to identify resources (labs, curricular materials, exemplars, images, figures, etc.) that were associated with or relevant to specific *learning pathways* through the BoK. Developing learning pathways themselves is an activity that the Committee would like to see UCGIS pursue.

Another idea is to have a UCGIS-sponsored or branded set of SpatiaLABS, focusing on GIScience topics. For example, the topics of uncertainty, modeling, and spatial statistics are currently not well represented, and we could identify UCGIS expertise in these areas. What remains to be seen is how these currently “open” resources can be used in ways that bring specific UCGIS membership value. What would reside on the UCGIS website is still uncertain.

Lastly, the Committee is also drafting specifications for the development of a GIS Project Database. This would serve as a repository of “projects” available to be completed by students at UCGIS member institutions. “Clients” would be able to post details about available projects, including information about the types of questions being asked, data available, timeline, expected outcomes and deliverables, etc. Faculty and graduate students from UCGIS institutions would be able to login to the website and search through the database, and then contact the client directly themselves. UCGIS would serve only as a facilitator to the match-making; we would not get involved in aspects of project management, etc. *Action items:* 1) determine what kind of simple database options are possibly implemented via Drupal, 2) solicit projects and perform basic vetting of submissions, and 3) test the system with faculty and students in fall 2014.

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## 5. What’s Next for the UCGIS Education Committee?

This Committee has members who are ready for tasks and productive conversations. As Diana Sinton resigns as Chair, we hope that the next round of leadership can continue to identify opportunities that will serve the needs of current and future members. We are particularly interested in activities that bring clear value to members and satisfy documented needs.

Respectfully submitted,

Diana Sinton  
Chair, UCGIS Education Committee  
May 15, 2014