

## UCGIS External Relations Committee Report UCGIS Annual Symposium 2016

This report covers the activities of External Relations Committee (formerly Policy & Legislation) for the period from May 2015 through May 2016 including the 2015 annual symposium in Washington, DC and leading up to the 2016 annual symposium in Scottsdale, AZ.

### Recap of Recent Committee Activities

Jeff Hamerlinck, University of Wyoming, is completing his fourth year as chair of the committee. Hamerlinck's term will end with 2016 annual symposium. A new committee chair is being recruited.

Major activities during the last 12 months included the following:

1. **2015 Symposium.** At the 2015 symposium in Washington, DC, Hamerlinck recapped ongoing committee involvement with the activities of the Coalition of Geospatial Organizations (COGO) and the GIS Certification Institute (GISCI). GISCI Executive Director Bill Hodge provided details on the (then) upcoming inaugural offering of the new *GISCI Geospatial Core Technical Knowledge Exam*®. Hamerlinck also moderated a presentation at the Library of Congress reception by Tim Petty from the Office of U.S. Senator James Risch on the '*Geospatial Data Act of 2015 and other related Congressional Activities*'. An informal External Relations Committee breakfast meeting was held on Saturday, May 30<sup>th</sup>. Attendees included Hamerlinck, Helmut Kraenzle, Tim Nyerges, Shaowen Wang, and John Wilson. The primary issue discussed was potential future advocacy roles for UCGIS within the geospatial community.
2. **Participation in COGO activities.** From July 2013 through December 2015, Hamerlinck served as the UCGIS representative on the Coalition of Geospatial Organizations (COGO). UCGIS Executive Director Diana Sinton has also represented UCGIS in these activities, which have primarily consisted of quarterly teleconferences. In December 2015, the COGO membership approved UCGIS's nomination of Harlan Onsrud, University of Maine, to serve as COGO Chair-Elect in CY2016 and COGO Chair in CY2017. In January 2016, David Tulloch, Rutgers University replaced Hamerlinck as UCGIS representative on the COGO board.

The *Report Card on the U.S. National Spatial Data Infrastructure* ([http://cogo.pro/uploads/COGO-Report\\_Card\\_on\\_NSDI.pdf](http://cogo.pro/uploads/COGO-Report_Card_on_NSDI.pdf)) remains a central COGO issue. Current discussions have revolved around the Report Card communications plan including development of a marketing brochures and short promotional videos.

COGO continues to track the status of the *Geospatial Data Act of 2015* (available at: <https://www.congress.gov/bill/114th-congress/senate-bill/740/>)

[text](#) ). Senate Bill 740 currently has nine co-sponsors across both parties and has been assigned to the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation. The National States Geographic Information Council (NSGIC), a COGO member organization, has developed an informative summary of the proposed Act and its implications: [https://www.nsgic.org/public\\_resources/Geospatial\\_Data\\_Act\\_Flyer\\_032815.pdf](https://www.nsgic.org/public_resources/Geospatial_Data_Act_Flyer_032815.pdf) .

Finally, COGO has initiated discussions with the Federal Geographic Data Committee (FGDC) to participate in the development of the new ***National Spatial Data Infrastructure (NSDI) Strategic Plan***, scheduled for release later this calendar year.

3. **GISCI Participation.** UCGIS is represented by two individuals on the GIS Certification Institute (GISCI) Board of Directors. Jeff Hamerlinck's term will end in summer 2016, while the term for Helmut Kraenzle (James Madison University) will end in summer 2017.

A major milestone for the GISCI in CY2015 was the completion and initial offering of the ***GISCI Geospatial Core Technical Knowledge Exam***® in November 2015. Plans call for the exam to be offered twice per calendar year, with the next testing window to occur in late June and early July 2016. The following link provides an informative summary of exam development process: <https://www.gisci.org/Portals/0/PDF's/GISCI%20Exam%20Process%20Somers%202-16.pdf> .

Looking forward, opportunities will exist for students graduating from higher education degree programs to initiate their *GIS Professional* (GISP) certification application process while still in school and to take the ***GISCI Geospatial Core Technical Knowledge Exam***® immediately upon graduation - if they choose to do so - in order to take advantage of their up-to-date test-taking skills in completing the exam requirement component of the GISP application.

#### 4. Other Activities.

- ***US Senate GIS Users Group:*** Conversations are ongoing with this group of geospatial practitioners on how UCGIS might best support them in their efforts. Current ideas center on the possibility of UCGIS-brokered training webinars and the Senate group's participation in the UCGIS Projects Database for internships and thesis research, once that site is fully operational.
- ***Centre for Spatial Law and Policy Opportunity:*** Beginning in fall 2015, faculty, staff and students at UCGIS member institutions may now receive discounted membership to the *Centre for Spatial Law and Policy's* weekly email updates of annotated links to important geospatial legal and policy developments from around the world. (Faculty membership = \$30/year, a 40% discount from the standard subscription; student memberships are \$15/year; prices subject to change.) If you (or

your colleagues or students) are interested in this opportunity, contact Kevin Pomfret at [kevin@spatiallaw.com](mailto:kevin@spatiallaw.com), let him know that you come from a UCGIS institution, and he will help you create an account at the Centre. It's not too late to integrate the knowledge that this opportunity represents into your curriculum today. (Special thanks to UCGIS Executive Director Diana Sinton for negotiating this opportunity.)

### **2016 Symposium Agenda Items**

Two informal External Relations Committee meetings are being planned for this year's symposium, tentatively scheduled during breakfast on Wednesday, May 25<sup>th</sup> and Thursday, May 26<sup>th</sup>, one focused on promotion of the GISP certification in higher education, and the second on future directions for the UCGIS External Relations Committee. All symposium participants are invited to attend. Details will be provided during the first General Council Meeting on Tuesday, May 24<sup>th</sup>.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeff Hamerlinck, University of Wyoming  
Chair, UCGIS Policy & Legislation Committee  
May 15, 2016