



UCGIS Value Proposition

The University Consortium for Geographic Information Science (UCGIS) is a non-profit scientific and educational organization comprised of 60+ member and affiliate institutions. It was established in 1995 to advance research in the field of Geographic Information Science, expand and strengthen multidisciplinary Geographic Information Science education, and advocate policies for the promotion of the ethical use of and access to geographic information and technologies, by building and supporting scholarly communities and networks. UCGIS is the hub for the GIS research and education community in higher education in the United States, and serves as a national and international voice to advocate for its members' interests.

In its academic leadership role, UCGIS acts a conduit and catalyst for research activities and professional development for scholars of geographic information science and systems, including a frequent focus on junior scholars and graduate students. Individuals from UCGIS member institutions have collaborated to receive funding from federal agencies such as the Department of Housing & Urban Development and the Department of Homeland Security, resulting in workshops and support of scholars to conduct exploratory research. In 2017, the National Science Foundation provided generous support for UCGIS-affiliated individuals to participate in its first Summer School, focusing this year on *Collaborative Problem Solving with CyberGIS and Geospatial Data Science*. Several additional NSF proposals are pending that will provide substantial additional opportunities for UCGIS members, and UCGIS encourages future collaborative ideas.

UCGIS has provided an organizational framework, resources, and project management for such publications as *A Research Agenda for Geographic Information Science* (CRC Press, 2005) and *Computation and Visualization for Understanding Dynamics in Geographic Domains* (CRC Press, 2008). One of the most enduring and important UCGIS projects has been stewardship of the *Geographic Information Science & Technology (GIS&T) Body of Knowledge (BoK)*. Since its original 2006 publication, the GIS&T BoK has been a priceless resource for curriculum development, accreditation documentation, and a knowledge base for a global audience. UCGIS has recently published a digital version of the GIS&T BoK (gistbok.ucgis.org), and an editorial team oversees the extensive effort to ensure this publication remains the *de facto* disciplinary reference.

At its annual Symposium, UCGIS brings together top national and international scholars to discuss the latest developments in GIScience research, education, and policy in a collegial and welcoming environment. Presentations on these topics highlight the connecting force of GIScience across multiple and diverse disciplines, and provide opportunities for students and others to compete for awards. The

Symposium provides an optimal setting for networking among GIScience researchers and practitioners, with professional experiences spanning the whole gamut from early-career to established senior scholars. Pre-Symposium workshops offer targeted and career-advancing professional development. In alternating years when the event is held in the Washington D.C. area, UCGIS emphasizes its connections with government agencies, non-profit organizations, and other associations involved with the geospatial domains. These conversations support knowledge-sharing on policies and legislation affecting geospatial topics, program changes, and funding opportunities.

UCGIS creates opportunities for the best and brightest scholars and educators to receive national and international recognition for their accomplishments, knowing that acknowledgement by one's peers is the highest form of accolade. Each year, individuals from around the world are nominated by UCGIS members to receive its Education Award, its Research Award, and its Carolyn Merry Mentoring Award. Since 2010, UCGIS has also hosted a Fellows program that celebrates the extraordinary record of achievements of individuals in a variety of spatial disciplines and communities of practice who have contributed significantly to the advancement of geographic information science education and research.

The shared governance that characterizes UCGIS presents additional opportunities for its members to engage in professional service at the national level. Its Board of Directors, Officers, and Committee members are elected or appointed positions held by individuals from our numerous member universities, and the GIS&T BoK's Editorial Team is comprised almost entirely of UCGIS-affiliated scholars. These positions represent outstanding chances to develop and display leadership skills.

UCGIS sponsors and supports online activities and resources, including a webinar series, a list-serve, job announcements and postings, the forthcoming GIS Projects Database, as well as its Community Forum and website-based blog. In each case, certain members-only benefits complement the open access that promotes its mission more widely.

UCGIS partners with national and international organizations and societies with which it holds common objectives and missions, to expand our knowledge network, keep current with diverse activities in our domain, and create opportunities for our members. We maintain formal agreements with the Association of Geographic Information Labs ([AGILE](#)), the Australasian Spatial Information Education and Research Association ([ASIERA](#)), the Global Spatial Network ([GSN](#)), the International Cartographic Association ([ICA](#)), the OpenSource Geospatial Foundation ([OSGeo](#)), and YouthMappers. We are one of the founding members of the GIS Certification Institute ([GISCI](#)) which provides credentialing to GIS professionals, as well as an active member of the Coalition of Geospatial Organizations ([COGO](#)), linking us with the top national geospatial professional societies and trade associations in the United States.

Talking points:

- UCGIS facilitates and supports scholarly communities and networks that inform cutting-edge research in geographic information science and with geospatial technologies.
- UCGIS member organizations represent dozens of universities in the United States where GIScience research and education is prominent, enabling effective and desirable cross-institutional conversations.
- UCGIS enables and greatly facilitates research collaborations among scholars at member institutions by providing grant and project management, resource dissemination, and event and activity support.
- UCGIS leads major collaborative undertakings such as the *GIS&T Body of Knowledge*, the most comprehensive GIScience knowledge reference for students, educators, professionals and regulators.
- UCGIS maintains online resources with up-to-date information regarding trends, key issues, and policies that affect geospatial research and education.
- UCGIS-sponsored workshops, projects, and initiatives ideally align with the needs and wants of its primary audience, the geospatial sector in higher education.
- The UCGIS Symposium provides a supportive and collegial environment for scholars at all levels to connect and network, explore collaborations, and exchange knowledge.
- UCGIS memberships are designed to build and cultivate connections across the many departments, centers, programs, and libraries that are involved with geospatial research, education, and activities at each of its member institutions. We support geospatial thinking and programming across a campus.
- UCGIS maintains and actively expands ties to international GIScience research and educational activities, working with national and international geospatial consortia.
- UCGIS awards merit-based travel support to graduate students from member organizations to encourage and promote participation in its Symposia.
- UCGIS affiliates are eligible for funded participation in its Summer School and related programs.
- UCGIS members are entitled to no-cost access to its webinars, workshops, and premium website content.
- UCGIS offers two types of membership:
 - *Regular*
 - Full: unlimited ("campus-wide") access to UCGIS resources for entire organization, institution, or society; two voting representatives; \$2,000/year
 - Basic: unlimited access to UCGIS resources for a single unit, school, or program; one voting representative; \$750/year
 - *Affiliate*: for government, commercial, non-profit, or other non-academic entities;

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access to UCGIS resources and fees as set by the Board of Directors; cannot hold office or vote

- There is a one-time processing fee of \$500 to join UCGIS, collected only after the application for membership is approved by the Council