

**Kentucky State Report, SEDAAG Steering Committee Meeting
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This year's Kentucky report took a lesson from last year's survey of 8 State Universities, 16 private colleges, and 14 members of the State's community and technical college system. Geography's presence at this range of institutions varies dramatically, and as a result, summarizing and comparing those myriad programs (and non programs) is not a particularly enlightening task, at least on a yearly basis. Accordingly, this year's report relies upon lessons learned, and updates from those institutions housing established geography departments or programs. There are no bona fide Geography departments among the State's private colleges. Geography courses (usually one or two a year) generally are taught under departmental auspices of some ancillary social and behavioral science, and women seem to predominate over men in student numbers, perhaps because of the role of geography in State elementary and secondary social studies certification requirements. The same pattern generally prevails within the Community College System, the notable exception being Lexington Community College (LCC). LCC boasts three full time faculty members teaching seven different geography classes. They generally fill their courses easily (class size generally is capped at 35) and, for example, this spring will offer twenty geography sections. Rebecca Glasscock at LCC notes that the development of a GIS program is in the works. The first two classes will be taught in succession in the 2001-2002 academic year.

Geography's strongest presence in Kentucky is in the State Universities. Points to note with regard to the State Universities, in summary, include:

- The Western Kentucky Department of Geography and Geology has hired four new faculty members to replace retirements. Three of those folks have GIS expertise, complementing the department's half-million dollar investment in a new GIS lab and a 12-hour GIS certificate program. Student enrollments are growing, and the vast majority of graduates (80%) are finding jobs in their chosen fields. Several students have carried on in MA and PhD programs. The department's research centers continue to employ over thirty students on grant-related projects.
- The University of Kentucky continues to build its physical geography program. Alice Turkington (PhD Queen's Belfast) joined Jonathan Phillips in the program last year. The department presently is in the search process for a third position; interviews start in January. Matthew Zook (PhD Berkeley) will join the department in 2002, as the department begins its strategy to fill lines left vacant with the departures of Adrian Smith, Francis Harvey, and John Pickles. The

graduate program continues to grow; last year's entering cohort was the largest ever and the program now has over forty MA and PhD students enrolled. Wolfgang Natter is spending the year in Germany as the Leibniz Professor of Geography at Leipzig, and Paola Bacchetta was promoted to associate professor with tenure.

- The University of Louisville's Department of Geography and Geosciences is in a search process for a medical geographer. Undergraduate enrollments are strong, especially with the re-organization of key undergraduate courses. The Center for GIS is collaborating across campus and is enjoying much success.
- Murray State has reorganized its undergraduate curriculum into Areas in Geoscience (Earth Science, Earth Science Teacher Certification, Geoarchaeology, Geographic Information Science, Geology). The undergraduate program is growing slightly, and several classrooms have been renovated, including a move to SMART board technology. The graduate program emphasizing GIS and remote sensing has a solid placement record (including the problem of losing students to the job market before finishing the degree).
- Eastern Kentucky University's Department of Geography and Planning is in a self-described development transition. Three new faculty replacements over the last two years include two GIS people and a new Chair, Bruce Davis. The department has developed a new curriculum (Global Studies, Geotechniques, Natural Resources, Community and Regional Planning) and has instituted an active outreach program, including a GIS initiative across campus and the service region. Enrollments are up, generally in the service of general education requirements and distance learning, and programmatic courses continue as before, with the department having around fifty majors.

In addition to the obligatory positive notes, several of the individual department reports commented (directly and indirectly) on the state of higher education in Kentucky more generally. Although the sitting governor has repeatedly expressed his commitment to education (in the face of budget shortfalls) there nevertheless remains a concern about not only budget cuts, but the more subtle and insidious moves to increase 'productivity.' These include the temptation to increase credit-hours-produced-per-faculty, the replacement of full time lines with part time positions and full time 'instructorships' (with higher teaching loads, at less cost-per-credit-hour and with no benefits or long-term job security), and a reticence to invest not only in infrastructural needs, but in 'human resources' through such things as salary increases and incentives to retain middle and senior range faculty in a nationally competitive job market. These are, of course, issues that resonate in higher education nationally as well as in Kentucky.