

TENNESSEE STATE REPORT TO Southeastern Division of the Association of American Geographers (SEDAAG), November, 2004

Prepared by Lydia M. Pulsipher, Dept. of Geography, University of Tennessee

Methodology: Surveys were sent to the Geography programs listed on the table below. All data in **dark blue** is current for 2004. The 2003 report can be consulted for information from schools that did not report in this round. Data that is in **brown** is not updated from 2003.

Summary of findings: Judging from the submitted data, most programs appear to have shrunk a bit in enrollment when compared to the data submitted last year (or in previous years, in cases where no 2002 survey was returned). This is, in part explained by the financial difficulties the state of Tennessee has undergone, and in some cases by overt efforts on the part of school administrations to limit enrollments and upgrade the overall quality of students admitted. However, I note that in the case of my own department, the numbers are also down, and yet I know that we actually have more and better majors and more and better graduate students than in the past. To some extent, the discrepancies are due to miss-reporting in the past. As last year, the mood of some Tennessee geographers appears to be a bit grim, with several noting tight finances and the fact that their departments have been merged with other disciplines, hence they feel a loss of status and identity and also feel overworked. On the point of being stretched too thin, the terse report from Professor Ridenour at Austin Peay State U. in 2003 and the lack of a report this year (see below) perhaps sums up the present mood among Tennessee Geographers.

Institution	Department name	Faculty		Majors			Enrollment in Courses		Courses (c) or Sections (s) Taught	
		Full - time	Part - time	UG	G	Cert.	UG	G	UG	G
Austin Peay State										
East TN State +	Technology & Geomatics	2	6	40	New MS in Tech. in 2003		1221 (2003)		50 s	New in 2003
Middle TN State +	Dept of Geo-Sciences	4	1	30	0	9	380	20	40	13
Tenn. State	dpadgett@Tnstate.edu									
Tenn. Tech	Earth Sciences	2	1	0	0	0	400		12c	
Univ. of Memphis +	Earth Sciences-Geography	6		~39	~15MS ~4PhD		~600	~50	~10c	~5c
UT + Chattanooga	Sociol/Anthro/Geography	2	1	0	0	0	820	0	27s 18c	0
UT + Knoxville	Department of Geography	12	1	70 official, plus many undeclared	36 MS 20 Ph.D.	0	~1050	44	29c	30c
UT Martin +	Geology, Geography & Physics	3	0	11 in Geography 4 in Travel/Tourism	0		579	3	17c 27s	2c 2s

Roane State +	Soc. & Behavioral Sciences. & Business Tech.	2 GIS 1 Geo	1 GIS 1 GEO	30 in GIS	0	GIS AAS degree	152 (Geog) 132 (GIS)		3 geog c 6s 7 GISc 9 s	0
Volunteer State+	Social Science & Education	1	0	4	0	AS w Geography Emphasis	321	0	12s	0

Department narratives:

Austin Peay State University: Gregory S. Ridenour reported. The other tenure/tenure-track geographer and I have conferred about the survey. In light of our change from Geography to Geosciences, and the fact that we are critically understaffed (only 1.75 tenure lines devoted to teaching geography), we have decided to refrain from filling out the survey. ridenourg@apsu.edu

***East Tennessee State University. Charles Gunter reported.** Recent changes that affect our department: We were formerly in the College of Applied Science and Technology and as of July 1, 2003, we became a part of the College of Business and Technology. We were a separate department (Geography, Geology and Geomatics) and now geography and surveying are in the Department of Technology and Geomatics. Geology is now a part of the Department of Astronomy and Physics in the College of Arts and Sciences.

Geography at **East Tennessee State** was one of several majors (UG and G) up for review for 2004-5. The Board of Regents chose to use 'Academic Audit' for our self-studies. All of the Board of Regents institutions (2-yr. and 4-yr universities) are involved except for Austin Peay. The same disciplines are not affected at every institution, and only our program was up for review. I'm optimistic with the fact that having participated in this program suggests that the university is 'not giving up on geography'. We lost one faculty member (Instructor) at the beginning of Fall semester for medical reasons. Dr. Robert Peplies, who is finishing his retirement phase this semester, is going to continue to teach both lower and upper divisions courses for us as a part-time instructor. It is my understanding that we will be able to hire a new faculty member in a tenure-track position for Fall, 2005. We continue to have large enrollments in our Earth Science courses (a choice in the general education core) and in cultural geography (also a choice in our core). We still have students choosing to major and to minor in geography; and to graduate with a major in geography. My telephone number is (423) 439-4162 should you need to telephone me. Chig Gunter <GUNTER@mail.etsu.edu>

Middle TN State: Doug Heffington reported. Four fulltime faculty active in research and service. H. Garbharran studies squatter settlements in South Africa with an USAID joint grant with SIU and U. of Durban-Westville (S. Af). D. Heffington directs Global Studies Program and teaches summer field courses in Costa Rica. J. Henry is co-regional coordinator of the Tennessee Geographic Alliance. P. O'Farrell has developed field courses in Ireland. Heffington expresses alarm at the merging of Tennessee geography programs with geo-sciences and other entities and laments that this is damaging geography's image. He says, only UT remains with a strong identity. jheffing@mtsu.edu
The Tennessee Geographic Alliance, the Department of Geosciences at Middle Tennessee State University, and the University of Tennessee at Knoxville teamed up to send 15 Tennessee teachers to Mexico City for a summer workshop on *Mexico City: A Window into the Culture and Population of Mexico*.

Tennessee State : No report received after two reminders

***Tennessee Technological University: Larry W. Knox, Head,** reported. Our faculty now consists of Evan Hart, Peter Li and Jason Duke. We will not be hiring any new faculty this year.

Hart and Li, along with Hugh Mills in Geology, received a grant from the Tennessee Dept. of Environmental Conservation to study water quality in a karst watershed in Cookeville, TN. Our interest in geography is twofold: 1) to offer courses at the introductory level and to majors in education seeking certification in geography. 2) We offer a concentration in GIS. We are in the initial phase of this offering but it is attracting quite a few majors.

A recent change in the Tennessee Board of Regents now means that students only need 120 credits for graduation. Due to this change several departments have changed their major requirements and in some cases this has affected geography course enrollments since our courses are required in those majors. For example, our Physical Geography course is no longer an option for education majors, nor is it a general education option at the university level. The number of students in Physical Geography course has decreased by about one-third due mainly to this change. Our Human Geography course is still required for many majors and at the university level and enjoys strong enrollments. Our GIS courses face increasing demand, so much so that an additional faculty position would be desirable, but not likely at this time. The university also recently decided to stop offering minors, so we no longer have a geography minor available. lknox@tntech.edu

***University of Memphis: Hisang-te Kung reported:** The head of the department is Dr. Jerry Batholomew. The faculty consists of: Drs. Ted Mealar, Hisang-te Kung, Thad Wasklewicz, Esra Ozdenrol, Arlene Hill, and Jung-Yol Sohn (new). The geography division of the Department of Earth Sciences has undergone changes including a merge with the geology and geophysics programs which brought a new PhD program. Three new geographers were hired in 2002. The faculty is active in publishing with each turning out a refereed article most every year and several have received research grants. Our graduates get jobs with FedEx, the local planning offices, EnSafe Consulting Co., USGS Water Resources. More interaction with other departments across the state in an effort to enhance the standing of Geography would be welcome.

University of Tennessee, Chattanooga: Craig Laing reported. As in years past, our full-time and part-time faculty continue to teach heavy loads. We could sure use an additional full-time, tenure-track faculty member, especially with an emphasis on physical geography, but, due to financial constraints, we are unable to hire such a person. While we do not have a geography major at UTC, our number of geography minors continues to grow each year. Craig-Laing@utc.edu

University of Tennessee, Knoxville: Bruce Ralston reported. Our Ph.D. students all go to academic jobs in the Middle West, Northeast, Mid-Atlantic, South and Southwest. Our M.S. students go into environmental consulting, GIS, Cartography, and planning jobs or into the private sector. Our BA students go into planning, environmental management, logistics, law, business, medicine, education, GIS, cartography, and remote sensing, or other careers for which a strong liberal arts education is important. Every year several go on to graduate programs across the country. bralston@utk.edu

Over the 2003-2004 academic year our department has had many successes which may be viewed at <http://web.utk.edu/~utkgeog> What follows is a short list of some of the accomplishments.

Dr. Tom Bell and Dr. Peggy Gripshover together were awarded a grant from the State Historical Society of Iowa on the rise and fall of agricultural specialization in eastern Iowa. have published three book chapters, one for a volume on the fate of small town America (Ben Ofari-Amoah, ed., *Beyond the Metropolis*, 2005 forthcoming); one for a volume on the teaching of popular culture in geography (Ray Browne, ed., *Popular Culture Studies Across the Curriculum*, 2004); and one for teachers preparing their students for the AP exam in human geography (Robert Bednarz, ed., *A Teacher's Guide to Advanced Placement Human Geography*, 2004).

Dr. Carol Harden received a Fulbright Fellowship that allowed her to spend three months in Ecuador in 2004 doing research with a colleague at the University of Cuenca

Dr. Horn: was elected a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

Drs. Orvis, Grissino-Mayer, and Horn: National Science Foundation Grant.

Dr. Henry Grissino-Mayer regularly publishes in the public press on topics related to his tree-ring research. Most recently on March 8, 2005 in the Christian Science Monitor. In 2004 he was awarded the Junior Research/Creative Achievement Award by the College of Arts and Sciences, UT.

Dr. Pulsipher received a grant from UT Office of Technology for assistance in developing all aspects of a version of World Regional Geography for very large classes and she published the 3rd edition of *World Regional Geography: Global Pattern, Local Lives*, WH Freeman, 2005.

Dr. Rehder's book *Appalachian Folk Culture*, Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins Press, 2004 has won the "Fred Kniffen Book Award" from the Pioneer America Society for the best single authored book in 2004.

Dr. Shaw was a Visiting Scholar at the Chinese Academy of Sciences during the fall 04 semester. published *Geographic Information Systems for Transportation*.

Dr. Ralston published *Developing GIS Solutions with MapObjects and Visual Basic*

Dr. Charles Aiken and Kurt Butefish, Coordinator of the Tennessee Geographic Alliance hosted a four-week institute on the *Cultural Diversity of the American South*, June-July, 2004 for 25 teachers competitively selected from across the U.S. The institute was funded by a \$168,808 grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Ms. Jessica Tharpe won the Outstanding Master's Thesis in Transportation Award from the Association of American Geographers. **Mr. Hongbo Yu**, a doctoral student, won the Outstanding Student Paper Award in Geographic Information Science and Cartography from the University Consortium for Geographic Information Science. **Mr. Evan Larson** won the award for Outstanding Master's Proposal in Biogeography from the Association of American Geographers.

The Tennessee Geographic Alliance [late 2004] was awarded a \$113,000 Grosvenor Grant from the National Geographic Society Education Foundation to host statewide workshops on *Teaching and Learning Geography* during the summer of 2005. The goal of the program is to prepare 150 Tennessee teachers to become "highly qualified" to teach geography.

***University of Tennessee, Martin: Jefferson Rogers reported.** My statement of last year still holds: "Over the recent years, about 50 percent of our graduates go on to graduate school at other universities (we don't offer Masters degrees at UT Martin). Since the mid 1990s, all of the students with Geoscience-Geography or Geoscience-Travel/Tourism who have applied to graduate school have been accepted and have subsequently graduated with Masters degrees. Of those, they have either gone on to PHD programs or found jobs within their respective fields. About 35 percent have gone into such areas as K-12 Social Science education, social services positions with the State of Tennessee, the US Navy, hotel management, cruise line or corporate tour operations, and other areas. The remaining 15 percent of our graduates have not kept in contact with us since graduation."

Our faculty consists of: Drs. Jefferson S. Rogers, Associate Prof., Robert Mark Simpson, Assistant Prof. and Mr. Helmut C. Wenz, Professor of Geography.

Regarding the State of Geography: Maybe our story is familiar to others, maybe not:

Geography seems to remain an enigma for incoming college students because they have had little to no exposure to subject in the public schools of West Tennessee. The exposure they do get tends to be from coaches of athletic teams who have only a marginal interest in the subject. Our attempts to improve the situation are stymied, however. It is difficult to encourage Secondary Education majors to earn certification in Geography because the faculty in UT Martin's Education program tell their students to not do it. Why? Because there is no viable job market for Secondary-Ed Geography teachers in the state, especially in rural West Tennessee --unless they are willing and able to spend most of their time coaching football, baseball, and/or basketball teams. They are steered to teach American History where there's strong demand. And so goes the cycle.

Because most freshmen don't know what Geography involves and are conservative in their course selections, they take what they have *already* had in high school ... namely, American History. When or if they do take Geography, it's when they are juniors. Those who then discover it's a great subject and realize it would be a good major degree program for them don't change majors or declare double majors because they realize that it would make them stay in college for at least an extra year. Consequently, many decide to stick with the program into which they've already invested much of their time.

Since we don't get the big numbers in declared majors, we can live off of service. But, now even that is at risk due to the drop in required credit hours for a BS or BA degree.

Trends in SCH production, indeed, remains a persistent issue for us, as noted in last year's survey mainly because curriculum changes have been only begrudgingly proposed and approved by faculty. UT Martin will become one of the last of the state universities to drop their degree programs down to 120 credit hours. As the various departments and colleges on campus cut electives and protect credit hours ... and because the process of cutting is not complete ... programs which rely on non-majors for much of its SCH production are still unsure how big of a drop, if any, they will experience. So, for example, we ask: Will fewer students opt to take our intro Geography sequences because the Social Science sequence for the BS degree might be reduced? If so, how many?

In an effort to boost SCH production in Geoscience (Geology, Geography, Travel-Tourism) courses and improve our curriculum, we are creating several Geography courses that will be cross-listed with Geology; they will also be team-taught with Geology faculty to further enhance the interdisciplinary nature of these courses. They include a sophomore-level methods course for our Geoscience majors, a junior-level course on the Geography and Geology of Tennessee, and a senior-level Geohydrology course. And, of course, we continue our efforts to offer courses that are well-conceived, distinctive, relevant, and appealing. We hope that a solid reputation will help keep enough new students coming in the door.. jrogers@utm.edu

Roane State Community College: Russ Schubert (Business and Technology) reported. Geography is viable at Roane State only because of the requirement for elementary education majors to take a human geography course. We have a few students other than education majors that choose geography to meet a social science requirement. I would like to provide more emphasis in geography and plan to work with other faculty in broadening our offerings as well as increasing internal marketing. The GIS program is small, but viable. It is a non-transfer program that attracts a wide range of students ranging from PhD.s wanting to pick up a tool to use in their field to people with no previous

college experience. Even though this is an AAS program, we have an articulation agreement with East Tennessee State University. Schubert_R@roanestate.edu

Volunteer State College: Keith M. Bell reported. Most of our students go on to four year institutions. Our one faculty member received tenure in 2003. The Tennessee Geographic Alliance has greatly helped our department and has increased the geographic literacy of the public. For example Dallas Simons, a student at MLK Magnet won 2nd place in the NGS GeoBee. Simons was also a member of the national team, which won the international competition. Keith.Bell@volstate.edu