

Employer Focus Group to discuss New Mexico Joint Doctoral Program

April 8, 2015, 8:30-9:30am

Bandelier West 122 and via GoToMeeting remote access

Host: Shirley Baros, Earth Data Analysis Center (UNM), Director

Facilitator: Maria Lane, Geography & Environmental Studies (UNM), Department Chair

Participants:

Lisa Arnold, Heritage New Mexico (UNM), GIS Analyst

Amy Ballard, Central New Mexico Community College, Applied Technologies Program Chair

Brad Brackel, Sanborn Mapping Services, Director of Strategic Accounts, Western Region

Larry Brotman, NM Taxation and Revenue Department, IT Division

Gar Clarke, State of New Mexico, Geospatial Information Officer

Daniel Estrada, NM Office of the State Engineer, GIS Division

Richard Koehler, NM Energy, Minerals & Natural Resources Dept, GIS Coordinator

Leland Pierce: NM Department of Game and Fish, Volunteer GIT Coordinator

Esther Worker, ESRI, Education Account Manager

Questions and Summaries of Response Commentary

Who needs this program?

- There are many people working in New Mexico's geospatial industry who would like PhD training
- Clearly some who would be moving straight from bachelor's program, but many others who already have Master's training, can go straight to PhD easily

Where are they?

- They are not necessarily in Albuquerque or Las Cruces
- Need to consider people throughout the state, best access is through branch campuses
- We should also seek potential students from locations in western Texas or tribal areas that extend beyond NM borders

What program structure would be most effective for potential students?

- Keep it small
- Need a valid option for students to work and complete program on a part-time basis
- Pay attention to first few cohorts (needs, characteristics) and then adapt to meet their needs
- This looks like a very marketable set of content, but might want to check with specific employers in region to verify

What do Employers Need?

- statistical training
- computing sophistication
- research design expertise
- how to set research objectives
- experience with big data approaches
- leadership skills + technical background
- PhD credential helps agencies get contracts

How can we get more info re employer needs?

- Recommendation: do our own detailed employer survey
- Current effort through NMGIC = Pathways survey to better understand relationship between academic/practical training and geospatial industry needs
- Survey still evolving; could potentially add a few questions
- Should also consider direct discussion with individual employers: especially Sandia, USGS, State of NM agencies (re total PhD employment needs)
- Contact human resources people for direct data
- USGS would be an excellent resource

What is your overall response to the draft program concept?

- Really excited about focus on professionalism
- Professional geographic practice is a key contribution
- Excitement about integrative focus
- Encouraged us to focus on paths to employment
- Take needs of part-time students seriously
- Individual organizations warrant detailed discussion