

## **GIS Advisory Committee Minutes**

*September 15, 2011*

*Room APL 204b, Antelope Valley College, Lancaster, Calif.*

Meeting called to order at 1:37pm.

Members present: Mike Pesses (Antelope Valley College), Allen Thompson (City of Lancaster), Mike Behen (City of Palmdale), Les Uhazy (Antelope Valley College).

The meeting began with Mr. Pesses outlining the Geographic Information System (GIS) courses offered Antelope Valley College (AVC) and their status. He stated that the courses still suffer from low enrollment. Geography 205, the introduction course, runs when offered because there is no prerequisite associated with it. Each class is typically comprised of half the students seriously interested in learning GIS and the other half simply taking the course because it was one of the few still open when they registered for classes. This means that not enough students pass 205 to fill the next course offered (GEOG 220, 221, etc). The district has allowed these later classes with the GEOG 205 prerequisite to run as independent study courses for the handful of students working toward the GIS certificate.

Mr. Allen Thompson said the subjects introduced in the certificate program were good, though a course in programming would be beneficial for current city employees and future graduates of the program. He also suggested that the coursework be based more on realistic, local issues. His experience in taking classes at AVC had him creating maps of volcanoes, which he doesn't have to do in his current job. Mr. Pesses responded that he is in fact introducing students to realistic scenarios using local zoning and parcel data.

Mr. Mike Behen stated that he would like to see more education of students in general about GIS and local government. This would have to take place before students enroll in a GIS class and even before they are in college, but it would introduce them to the possibilities of such a career.

Dr. Les Uhazy suggested that AVC may want to integrate the Computer Assisted Drafting (CAD) program and some new survey courses to generate more student interest. Mr. Behen stated that Palmdale has been moving toward technology integration and having students versed in using multiple technologies together would be an asset. He also added that interview skills and writing skills are needed in many of the college graduates they see.

Mr. Pesses introduced the subject of internships or other work opportunities for current GIS students. Mr. Behen stated that although the idea of free labor may sound good in a down economy, many in management do not want to spend time out of their overworked schedules to train temporary workers. He suggested that AVC talks with the mayor and city council of both

cities to try to work out an agreement for a work study program. He and Mr. Thompson both stated that there is a lot of work in city departments that AVC's GIS students could help with.

Mr. Thompson brought up a pilot program at the City of Lancaster for force developers to give GIS data to the city for their completed projects. Most developers aren't used to working with pure GIS data and therefore may need to hire GIS employees.

The meeting concluded with suggestions for more people to bring onboard the advisory committee. Mr. Behen suggested reaching out to Tim Hughes of Air Force Plant 42 and GDMS engineering.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:55pm.