

GEOMATICS ADVISORY BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
APRIL 22, 2005

Location: UAA Library Building, Room # 302A

Time: 0800 – 1000

Report By: Tom Knox, P.L.S., SR/WA

Proceedings:

The meeting was brought to order by Chairman Paul Brooks shortly after 0800. A quorum was present.

Paul handed out a new e-mail contact list and Jim Sharp had a correction to his address. The previous meeting minutes were introduced for approval and comments or corrections were entertained. Hearing nothing substantial to change, a motion for approval was offered and the minutes were approved.

Item No. 2 – ANSEP Presentation

Herb Schroeder and Hal Spachman (School of Engineering) made a presentation on the hugely successful mentorship based program aimed at encouraging Alaska Natives to enroll in and graduate from the Engineering program. The ANSEP concept provides native peer support to help incoming students from Alaskan Villages to successfully complete an engineering degree. The Program began in 1995 with two students and has expanded to the states of Washington and Hawaii with over 700 students. Mr. Schroeder's time is spent mainly on raising money from corporate sponsors to fund the various activities and resources for the program as well as developing eight week summer internships for the students with these sponsors. Herb said his goal is to expand the program to non-native students as well and permanently shift the education paradigm for all students. There was discussion by the Advisory Board about the possibility of being able to interest ANSEP students in pursuing a degree in Geomatics. Mr. Schroeder welcomed the idea and was willing to lend assistance to our program in reaching prospective students in the various villages that he visits promoting ANSEP. No concrete commitments were made and more discussion will follow on integrating Geomatics into the ANSEP program. Herb's fund raising has resulted in funding the construction of the ANSEP Hall on campus.

Item No. 7 – Committee Reports

John Oswald gave a report on recent fund raising activities. He met with Rob Lang and Sue Marchant, U.A.A.'s Major Grants Administrator to discuss ideas concerning fund raising for the Geomatics program. Sue recommended focusing on what are the needs for more funding for the Department and communicate

that to prospective donors. Donations to date are approaching \$1,000,000 in hardware, equipment and software from the mapping and measurement industry vendors. John and Orson Smith both stated that there are potential program benefactors who are willing to give cash contributions, but they want to know how and for what the money will be used. They aren't interested in sending a check to the University and not having it benefit the Geomatics program. The faculty is currently working with BLM to renew the BLM Assistance Agreement (John Sroufe indicated that new money is pending from BLM to fund the Assistance Agreement). Tony Follett suggested finding a person with grant writing experience to assist the fund raising effort. It was also suggested that the professional societies should be approached to provide funding to establish an endowment for a visiting Geomatics Chair. Orson suggested that our funding strategy should match the program's needs with those donors who are willing to contribute. He offered the idea of having a course in ocean research with a survey emphasis might generate a larger donor base. Orson noted that the UAF ship is currently idle and the crew has been laid off because there is little interest in coastal work at this time. Fund raising is a significant effort and potential donor targets were identified, such as Alumni, Private Industry and Government Agencies.

Discussion turned to the problem of a lack of qualified faculty to teach the courses and of the University's reluctance to hire more staff. There is a concern in the community that the current faculty is stretched beyond reasonable limits and wants the University to hire more qualified instructors, but questioned whether additional hires should be supported by the private sector rather than as a normal University function. Rob Lang said that student fees were increasing and that that may add some budget relief. Bob Kean suggested that the program might draw additional instructors from vendors supplying new software, especially in the AutoCad area. Steve Buchanan proposed that the program should contribute to ANSEP and designate the contributions to benefit Geomatics. Rob closed the discussion by stating that he was in favor of having the Geomatics program link up with the ANSEP program.

Item No. 4 – Geomatics Positions

Rob Lang reported that the GIS position has been posted for hire. Don Davis believes the position will not be filled in time for fall classes. The better strategy is to keep the advertisement open until December and interview respondents in spring to hire for teaching the fall 2006 semester. There is another position awaiting final approval. Don Davis stated that a position was promised by the Administration several years ago, but has never been fulfilled because position funding was stripped from the program in 1998. Rob will work on the Administration to convince them to return the funding for the additional position. Eighty percent of the Adjunct Professors have committed to teach for another year. Rob said he is going to supply a full time administrative position to the Geomatics program starting this fall.

Item No. 3 – School Of Engineering Activities

There was an announcement about the reception for the creation of a new engineering curriculum this afternoon in the U.A.A. Commons Building as well as a general School of Engineering celebration! All were invited to attend. The Geomatics program and its sponsors are being recognized for the development of the Trimble Geomatics Lab thanks to Trimble and Accupoint and the Aeromap U.S. & DAT/EM Systems International Photogrammetry Lab.

Item no. 9 – BLM Assistance Agreement Status

John Sroufe described the Federal program's origin as coming out of Washington D.C.. The program has been in existence for two years and provides \$25,000 to various universities around the country with courses benefiting surveying and mapping. Its important to note that the funding for this program comes from Alaska's BLM budget. John felt U.A.A. should be a recipient of that funding since it was being paid by the Alaska budget. The money has restrictions. It can not fund scholarships, but is earmarked for program administrative operations. There is \$50,000 available to U.A.A. this year. John cautioned that the money isn't guaranteed each year, but is subject to BLM's budget approval by congress.

A BIG THANKS TO JOHN, He's our \$50,000 GEOMATICS MAN !

Item No. 6 - Curriculum

Jim Sharp mentioned that surveyors are interested in continuing education in the evenings to fulfill continuing education requirements that may be a possibility for Alaskan surveyors in the future as a condition for licensing. Steve Buchanan is receptive to the idea and needs to know what courses would be of interest to potential students. Rob Lang suggested developing special courses to meet specific needs of the surveying community.

For The Good Of The Order

Tony Follet mentioned that he had seen several news articles lately from several different sources on Geomatics and School Of Engineering programs. The word is getting out that we exist and that we do good for the community.

Meeting Adjourned