

Geomatics Recruitment & Liaison Committee (GRLC)

By Nigel Day, O.L.S., O.L.I.P.

"Ask not what the AOLS can do for you! Ask what you can do to help yourselves, the public and the AOLS through the GRLC!"

We need your help to succeed! We have committed ourselves to finding a solution! We are seeking ways to develop, to train and to attract new staff members for your firms at all levels and responsibilities in Geomatics and to provide outreach and to market surveying and Geomatics to the general public.

Our Background:

The original University and Colleges Liaison Committee has been re-born under an expanded mandate. This new mandate responds to the fact that we do not have an adequate feeder group of trained or educated technicians and professionals.

What are our committed goals and objectives?

- To encourage and assist primary, secondary and post-secondary students, internationally educated persons, and those in similar professions to select the Geomatics career path and to encourage Geomatics graduates to become members of our Association.
- To promote the term "Geomatics" and all aspects of a Geomatics career to the public at large through meetings, research and outreach.
- To recruit persons for all Geomatics staff positions by liaising with high schools, colleges and universities.
- To attract internationally educated persons to the profession.
- To communicate openly with the AOLS membership and seek their support to recruit and to market.
- To proactively expand our knowledge of positive, result-based outreach initiatives that other domestic and international surveyors' associations have used successfully.

We are keeping our purpose and our solutions for the betterment of the Association foremost in our minds.

Committee Structure

The Committee draws its membership from AOLS members and staff, educators and their staff, consultants, Geomatics students, articling students and others closely tied to the Geomatics profession. We currently have 20 members who fully represent this broad base of backgrounds. We are constantly striving to discover new avenues, to review what has worked for other surveying associations and to debate new ideas. However, only those committee members who are members of our association can be tasked with active work, thus we need additional help. This is the year to work on new initiatives!

We are the group trying to initiate a resurgence of interest

in surveying and Geomatics within the public at large! We are also seeking contact with students at all school levels! We are making a concerted effort to reach the high school level in 2012!

Our meetings are vibrant and everyone is expected to contribute. Our agenda is typically filled with action items and initiative reviews and we try to invite at least one guest to each meeting with something new to share. Past invited guests have included: members of Laval University's faculty; teaching staff from UNB; Bruce Pettit (Fleming College); Robert (Bob) Fencott (Loyalist College); and Iain Greensmith of Esri Canada (who is also now a committee member).

We are also looking at other surveying associations' websites for additional information and insight including those in Alberta and Saskatchewan plus websites from the U.S., Australia and New Zealand. Help researching websites in other countries would be greatly appreciated.



Current Issues and items the GRLC is working on

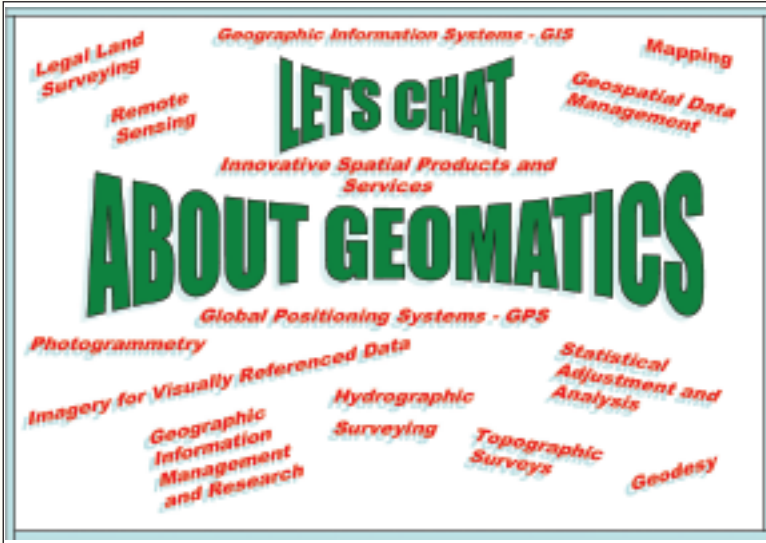
The Term 'GEOMATICS'

The question of whether or not our profession has a marketing hurdle with respect to the term 'Geomatics' is a topic which comes up often within our own Association. The public's lack of understanding of what the term 'Geomatics' means and what 'Geomatics' holds under its broad umbrella is a possible stumbling block to achieving a high degree of outreach success. Teachers and students have confirmed this problem to our committee. As a result, we are actively working to make the term part of the public's vocabulary. Until that time, we are presently reviewing whether or not to continue with the term 'Surveying' in our marketing information.

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Members Outreach 'Tool Kits'

Members of GRLC are presently creating ready to use 'TOOL KITS' for members in the hope that they will present, interact and perform outreach with students and specifically high school students. These tools will include PowerPoints with samples of photos, plan data, interesting projects or project sites that are representative of Geomatics. We will make these tools available on the Members side of the new website once fully developed.



Draft Sample Slide from a Tool Kit PowerPoint.

A member might speak about one or more of these components at an outreach session.

Marketing

We are working with the Public Awareness Committee's (PAC's) support in order to effectively market. We are working closely with them and are developing some information of our own. We are developing, 'possibly' in parallel with the *PSC Salary Study* results, a set of brochures that identify real people in real positions in real firms tied to real salary ranges. The linking of job positions to salary ranges is still being discussed but the mining industry did it with great success. We hope to have quite a number of staff representatives of most positions in surveying or Geomatics firms write brief descriptions of job requirements and why they love their job.

What is OAGEE?

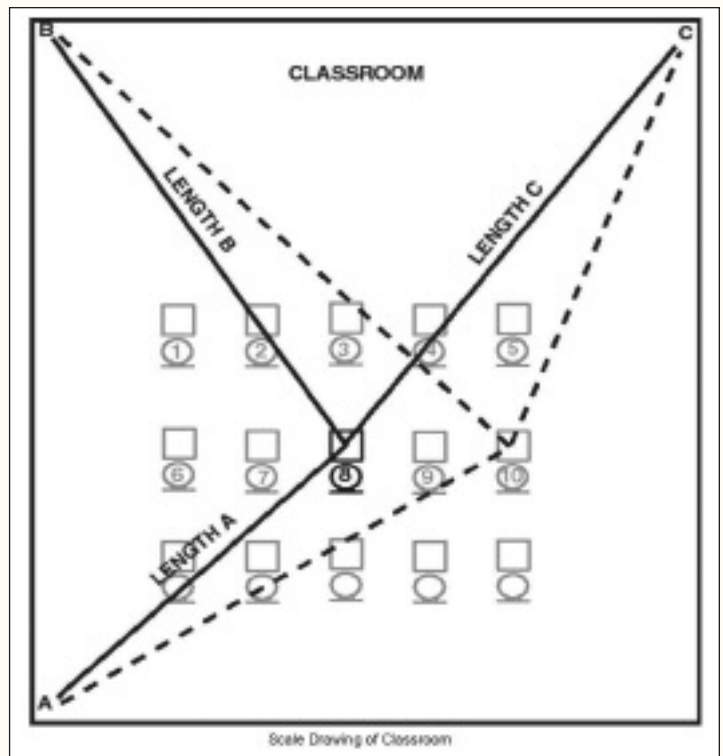
OAGEE is a teachers' group representing the Ontario Association for Geographic and Environmental Education. For the GRLC, liaison with them has proven to be invaluable and of terrific value in our efforts to spread the word about what we do and our professional home, and has the potential to give us the ear of all teachers across Ontario. Several of us, including Michael Matthews (Chair of the PAC) have attended OAGEE Teachers' events and we have published an article in their quarterly magazine which has distribution across Ontario. We hope to publish further articles related to surveying and Geomatics.

Influencing Curriculum in High Schools over the next Decade

We are presently engaged in providing input for the Ontario Geography Curriculum at the High School level for the upcoming 5 years. There has been input from some AOLS members that we also need greater contact with the science and math teachers - and I concur. We had to start somewhere and 'Geomatics' is in the geography curriculum already. Expanding into other areas could and should happen in the future.

Lesson Plans

We purchased an outreach package called 'Surveyor in a Box' from Saskatchewan to help get us started. There are some useful ideas here which we will customize but we also need to generate new hands on and 'Digital' Lesson plans for use in Ontario high schools. Our customizations will and should be based on aspects and samples of real work. If you have an interesting project and can provide notes, plans, photos or stories, please compile a package and send it to me. I suspect most firms have been involved in some interesting project that might capture the imagination of young students. Examples of lesson plans in the 'Surveyor in a Box' include Build a Railroad, CSI Surveyor, GPS Tabletop, Where Are You?, Map Your Classroom, and Lost Monument.



Map Your Classroom

The students measure the vectors and place them in a table. They are then required to scale down the measurements by a scale factor and re-create the classroom on a new page.

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Direct Outreach into Schools

We intend to compile maps, air photos, old plans and interesting items that could be shared with Geography departments, school counsellors or others. This work is just commencing. Presently, Geography is the main introductory home for Geomatics in the high schools. The challenge is that many geography teachers are intimidated by much of the new technology surrounding Geomatics (such as GIS Software, data structures and GPS data collection.)

What can the Regional Groups do to help?

We intend to engage Regional Group Chairs and members to attend events with portions of the pre-packaged 'TOOL KITS' or they may substitute information reflective of their specific company's work projects. Personal stories of surveying and Geomatics with some hands-on demonstrations of equipment appear to be very effective with high school students.

The Website

We are working to develop a section in the soon-to-be functioning, new Association website which has clear and useful marketing and recruitment information including 'Tool Kits' and 'Lesson Plans'.

Finding seed money to help develop lesson plans and resources for schools:

There are areas within government organizations where money for materials development for schools can be found. Proposals need to be developed and potential contacts explored in order to try and secure development funding.

As you can see, we are working on a number of initiatives and we need your help! Thus, I will summarize how you could help us with our needs:

1. Volunteer as a committee member or as someone who could simply help with one aspect of an initiative such as a lesson plan, Tool Kit, data mining and researching websites or other marketing creations.

2. Attend schools and community events in order to liaise, provide outreach and market to specific groups.

3. Explore the possibilities of finding dollars from government initiatives and funding to further develop both the 'Surveyor in a Box' and 'Lesson Plans' as well as other marketing promotions for students and for the public.

4. Develop information for recruitment based upon job descriptions and personal accounts with possible links to salary ranges from the study.

5. Help with developing and editing information for the new Website. 

Any time, ideas, article or lesson plan creation or review, or direct outreach efforts will be greatly appreciated! We thank you for your consideration to help us in advance!

Nigel Day is a Project Surveyor with the Ministry of Transportation in Kingston. He is presently the Chair of the Geomatics Recruitment and Liaison Committee (GRLC). This article is based on his presentation in the session "Attracting Young People to the Profession" at the AGM. Please contact him at Nigel.day@ontario.ca with ideas, suggestions or with your willingness to lend a hand or be part of the Committee.