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Roane State selected as Center for Academic Excellence in Geospatial Sciences

Roane State Community College, working in partnership with Oak Ridge Associated Universities, was recently selected as a designated Center for Academic Excellence (CAE) in Geospatial Sciences.

Roane State, which offers one-year and two-year programs in Geographic Information Systems (GIS), was the only community college chosen for the program and joins 17 CAE GS academic institutions nationwide. Organized by the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency, in partnership with the U.S. Geological Survey, the CAE GIS program is a new endeavor designed to cultivate centers of academic excellence in geospatial sciences such as GIS.

“We are honored that our GIS program is recognized among several outstanding universities,” said Dr. Diane Ward, Roane State’s vice president of student learning. “The college’s selection for the program is a great example of the key role community colleges play in science, technology, engineering and math education.”

The ORAU – RSCC Geospatial Center of Academic Excellence will be a dynamic platform for GIS innovation and discovery. Operationally, the ORAU-RSCC Center of Academic Excellence will serve as the regional geospatial hub connecting and interacting with the GIS research community in Oak Ridge, the GIS academic community (including the 114 ORAU consortium members) and the ORAU HBCU/MEI Council (a 28-member consortium of minority serving institutions).

“ORAU’s Scientific Assessment and Workforce Development group views this Center as a significant resource for accelerating our mission to advance the national scientific and technical priorities by developing the next generation workforce,” explained ORAU Senior Project Manager, Desmond Stubbs. “We are pleased to partner with Roane State to build a regional engine that grows the US Geographic Information Systems technical workforce.”

In addition to Roane State, institutions selected were: Alabama A&M University, Arizona State University, Delta State University, Fayetteville State University, George Mason University, Mississippi State University, Northeastern University, The Ohio State University, Pennsylvania State University, United States Air Force Academy, United States Military Academy, University of Alabama, University of Maine, University of South Florida, University of Texas (Dallas) and the University of Utah.

“I look forward to working with the other colleges,” said Pat Wurth, director of Roane State’s GIS program. “To have an opportunity to learn from leading universities in geospatial sciences and to bring that knowledge into our classrooms is exciting for our program.”

Through the CAE Geospatial Sciences Program, the colleges will share best practices, participate in professional development activities, evaluate and update curriculum, and benefit from the expertise of the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency and the U.S. Geological Survey. Wurth

said the program will also provide opportunities for Roane State students to intern and find employment in the field of geospatial intelligence.

“The CAE Geospatial Sciences Program is a new way of cultivating relationships and partnerships across America's universities,” said Lenora Peters Gant, Ph.D., NGA senior executive for academic outreach & STEM. “This program is one of the best strategic and systemic approaches to shape the geospatial intelligence workforce of the future.”

Roane State is a two-year college providing transfer programs, career-preparation programs and continuing education. Founded in 1971, the college has campuses in Crossville, Harriman, Huntsville, Jamestown, Knoxville, LaFollette, Lenoir City, Oak Ridge and Wartburg. For more information, visit roanestate.edu or call 1-866-GO2-RSCC (1-866-462-7722).

Tennessee's Community Colleges is a system of 13 colleges offering a high-quality, affordable, convenient and personal education to prepare students to achieve their educational and career goals in two years or less. All colleges in the system offer associate degree and certificate programs, workforce development programs and transfer pathways to four-year degrees. For more information, please visit tcommunitycolleges.org.

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