UMass Global launches geospatial education institute to upskill professionals

The University of Massachusetts (UMass) Global has established the Institute for Geospatial Education to help organizations adapt to the emerging post-pandemic world. In partnership with international entities, the institute offers online training and education for analysing and communicating mission-critical geospatial data. By upskilling with the institute's innovative courses, professionals can stay competitive in the evolving business landscape.

"Our rapidly changing world demands that organizations respond in kind. Failure to do so can have detrimental consequences," said UMass Global Chancellor David Andrews. "Geospatial technology can accelerate problem-solving, enabling those who use it to rise more quickly to address the challenges of the day, regardless of if these challenges surface from circumstances internal or external to the organization. By harnessing the university's extensive online capacity, the Institute for Geospatial Education can work across international borders to help partner organizations develop 'employees of the future' among their ranks."

Building on Esri's GIS and data analysis tools

The Institute for Geospatial Education will partner with others to provide customizable online geospatial education teaching on how to apply geospatial spatial technology. It will equip managers and other personnel with the foundational skills for geospatial analysis, including geospatial storytelling and data-driven decision-making. The institute's formation builds on the university's long-standing collaboration with Esri, the global leader in geographic information systems (GIS) and data analysis platforms.

"UMass Global's Institute for Geospatial Education is exciting for many reasons," said Clint Brown, director of product engineering at Esri and a member of the institute's advisory board. "GIS and location services enable people everywhere to track progress throughout communities and geographies worldwide. As such, the institute's partners will rapidly become part of an ever-expanding group of problem-solvers capable of addressing the big challenges that face our planet."

Worldwide demand for geospatial skills is increasing. The total volume of business activity within the field is expected to increase from some US$681 billion in 2025 to US$1.4 trillion in 2030, according to projections by international consultancy Geospatial World.

Harnessing the power of people, place and geospatial technology

Dr Sheila Lakshmi Steinberg will serve as the institute's inaugural director. Steinberg is currently faculty assembly president at UMass Global, president of the Urban and Regional Information Systems Association (URISA) and a well-known expert in the field, having co-edited 'Resilient Communities Across Geographies' (Esri Press, 2021) and co-authored 'GIS Research Methods: Incorporating Spatial Perspectives' (Esri Press, 2015) and 'GIS for the Social Sciences'(Sage Publications 2006).

"I am excited to lead the new institute because we harness the power of people, place and geospatial technology to improve society," Steinberg said. "We are creative, we cross global boundaries and we respect the cultures of different countries as we seek to empower using geospatial tools."

The institute's advisory board and affiliates around the world comprise leading experts in the application of geospatial knowledge and related industries such as aerial imagery, remote sensing, sustainability and data-driven decision-making. These known individuals and affiliates will bring cultural competencies and capacity to the new Institute for Geospatial Education, enabling the institute to execute services and valuable international partnerships upon launch.

"I foresee possibilities for new international collaborations, partnerships and knowledge sharing across countries," Steinberg said. "We are convening international geospatial and education experts to deliver hands-on educational opportunities to all."

Learn more about the Geospatial Institute for Education.