

CAS TFI supports upgrades to SIUE Geospatial Technology Lab

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EDWARDSVILLE - With a \$20,934 grant from the College of Arts and Sciences' (CAS) Target Funding Initiative (TFI) program, Southern Illinois University Edwardsville's Department of Geography is getting much-needed technological upgrades in its geospatial technology laboratory.

The department teaches 15 distinct geospatial technology courses in the lab to nearly 280 students annually. It will combine its \$6,000 equipment budget with the TFI grant to purchase 25 new Dell computer towers.

"Our ability to keep up with cutting-edge geospatial technology is crucial for the future success of our undergraduate and graduate programs," said Susan Hume, PhD, department chair. "Increased computing power will offer opportunities to add new software and propose new geospatial techniques courses. For example, new course offerings in 2018-19 include GIS for medical geography and a business geography course that will teach students how to use geospatial techniques for retail location analysis and road network flow analysis."

The enhancements will assist the department in providing students with industry-standard knowledge needed to advance in the rapidly evolving field of geospatial technology.

Each tower will feature a four-core, 3.1 gigahertz Xeon processor, 8 gigabytes of memory, and a 1-gigabyte NVIDIA graphics adapter. According to Hume, the new systems will be a massive upgrade from the laboratory's existing computer towers, which were replaced six years ago.

The new computer systems will allow the department to continue to teach its existing geographic information systems (GIS) courses, support students' senior assignment projects, master's theses, and non-thesis research projects, continue to support and grow the department's minor in GIS, and further prepare its students for internships and careers with private companies and government agencies.

"Modern geography research uses a wealth of technology, including infrared or visible spectrum satellite imagery, to view our planet in ways that previously were simply impossible," said CAS Dean Greg Budzban, PhD. "This technology upgrade allows us to offer our students the state-of-the-art educational experience they need for today's competitive professional landscape."

SIUE's Laboratory for Applied Spatial Analysis Assistant Lab Director Nancy Davis and Research Associate Felipe Rivera will assist the department by setting up each workstation, connecting accessories and installing software this August between summer and fall classes.

The CAS TFI program was launched in 2016. It utilizes funds acquired through the College's Winter Session courses. This year, the program funded 36 projects totaling \$200,000.

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