Geographic Information Science (GISc) is a field that utilizes computer technologies to capture, analyze, and map all types of spatial data. Ten years ago the U.S. Department of Labor identified the geospatial technology sector as one of fourteen high-growth and economically vital sectors of the American economy, and the market has only continued to expand since then. An understanding of GISc is vital in the growing number of fields that utilize geographic information, including all governmental sectors and agencies, law enforcement, public health administration, real estate, urban planning, and education.

Lehman’s Department of Earth, Environmental, and Geospatial Sciences has been offering graduate-level courses in GISc since 2001, and the department was able to build on the popularity and success of these courses when developing its Master’s program. In July 2012, the department received final approval of the program from CUNY and the New York State Education Department. The MS-GISc program gained national affiliation with the National Professional Science Master’s Association (NPSMA) in January 2013. This was the first CUNY PSM to be affiliated with the national PSM association. The students will be required to choose a specialization in: Environmental and Health Spatial Sciences, Urban Sustainability, or GISc Technology.

In its second year, the MS-GISc Program at Lehman enrolls approximately 30 students; it welcomed sixteen new graduate students in the fall 2013. Several of the incoming GISc PSM students rose up through the Earth, Environmental, and Geospatial Science Department at Lehman, however the program has drawn graduates from other CUNY and area schools including Fordham University, New York University, SUNY Binghamton, and the College of Mount St. Vincent (one student came all the way from Iceland, where he was active in the GISc field).

The GISc PSM already had its first two graduates in May 2013. Efrata Zegeye Asrat and Kristen Grady both began taking GISc graduate courses prior to the establishment of the PSM in GISc. In summer 2013, Ms. Asrat held an internship with the United Nations in Ethiopia, where she contributed to an atlas of HIV/AIDS for Ethiopia. Ms. Efrat was also on the organizing committee for the Global Geospatial Conference sponsored by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa held in Addis Ababa this past November. Kristen Grady secured a position as a GIS Specialist at NYC Office of Emergency Management even before graduating.

About Professional Science Master’s (PSM) Programs at CUNY

The GISc PSM at Lehman is one of five PSM programs have launched at CUNY since 2012, including Photonics (Queens), Earth Systems and Environmental Science and Technology (CCNY), Biotechnology & Public Health (Hunter) and a Biomedical Lab Management program (Hunter). The Professional Science Master’s (PSM) degree is a two-year graduate degree designed to enable students to pursue advanced training and excel in science while simultaneously developing valued professional skills with real world applications. The CUNY PSM programs combine Master’s level study in science or engineering, graduate courses in business, management, communications and/or other industry-relevant fields, and internships and cross-training at industry partner sites.

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