

CGA Harvard - Early History of the Center

The Center for Geographic Analysis (CGA) at Harvard University was established in the fall of 2005 with the support of Provost Steven Hyman, the Deans of the Faculty of Arts, and the Graduate School of Design, William Kirby and Alan Altschuler. The Center is one of the "technology platforms" in the Institute for Quantitative Social Science (IQSS). Building on the foundation already created by the [Harvard Geospatial Library](#) and the [Map Library](#), the CGA is creating a more substantial infrastructure for geographic information science. The Center has permanent professional staff who can guide complex projects involving geospatial analysis and implement or develop cutting-edge technologies for research and teaching applications. These include continuous-time monitoring of the social and natural environment; the use of GPS, geographic information systems, and geospatial mapping technologies; and use of mapping systems that combine remote sensing images with vector data such as ArcGIS Explorer and GoogleEarth.

Infrastructure

The professional staff at the CGA have responsibility for supporting research and teaching that relies on geographic analysis, helping select and administer Harvard-wide site licenses, and collecting and disseminating spatial datasets currently residing in isolated locations around the university. They also staff help desks at both the Longwood and Cambridge campuses. The Center is currently working with the Harvard MIT Data Center to create links between the Harvard Geospatial Library and the Virtual Data Center that will enable the online mapping of social science datasets. In addition to our eight staff members we currently offer internships for undergraduates/graduates who are interested in GIS application in research projects. Beginning in 2014 we expect to offer some fellowships for graduate students who are applying spatial analysis in their research and to acquire more advanced techniques. Eventually we hope to create positions for post-doctoral fellows who will work with research projects across the university.

Governance

The Center has faculty steering committee of Peter Bol, FAS, Director of the CGA; Gary King, FAS, Director of the IQSS; Niall Kirkwood, GSD, Chair of Landscape Architecture; Carl Steinitz, GSD; Peter Rogers, DEAS; Louise Ryan, HSPH; Isaac Kohane, HMS, Director of Countway Library; Robert Sampson, FAS; and Dan Schrag, FAS, Director of the Harvard University Center for the Environment. There is a technical staff committee composed of professional staff from across the university.

Curriculum and Faculty

In creating the Center the University has also committed itself to raise funds for two senior positions and two junior that will give us greater strength in such fields as geospatial analysis, geoinformatics, and geography. Beginning in the fall semester of 2006 the Government Department's Preceptor in GIS will offer both introductory and advanced courses in geospatial analysis and GIS applications for the social and environmental sciences.

Location

The Center is located in the IQSS at the Center for Government and International Studies, 1737 Cambridge Street, next door to the Graduate School of Design. The computer labs in CGIS will also provide teaching facilities for geographic analysis.