

CAL POLY HUMBOLDT
University Senate

**Resolution to Recommend the Suspension of the Geospatial Certificate of Study (Basic)
Program**

04-25/26-ICC – October 28, 2025 – Curriculum Reading

RESOLVED: That the University Senate of Cal Poly Humboldt recommends to the Provost the suspension of the Geospatial Certificate of Study (Basic), offered through the College of Extended Education (CEE) and detailed in proposal [24-2787](#), be suspended.

RATIONALE:

The Geospatial Certificate of Study (Basic) also known as the Online Geospatial Certificate (Self-Support), established in 2015, has not achieved sustainable enrollment or financial viability despite multiple interventions. Over ten years, the program has averaged 10–11 students per course, below the CEE minimum threshold of 12 students per course required for fiscal sustainability. Nearly every annual budget since inception has operated in deficit, with only one year of modest positive revenue that did not offset administrative costs.

Enrollment and Fiscal Trends:

- From 2017–2022, course enrollments averaged 10 students, with **57 total graduates** (approximately six per year).
- After CEE assumed coordination in 2023, targeted outreach and marketing increased completions modestly to 13 per year, but enrollments remain below the level needed for a balanced budget.
- The intended audience of working professionals seeking online upskilling in GIS has not materialized as anticipated. Many participants are current or former Cal Poly Humboldt undergraduates completing two or three additional courses to earn the certificate.

Program Duplication and Advising Challenges:

The self-support Online Geospatial Certificate overlaps substantially with the stateside Geospatial programs offered through the Department of Geography, Environment, and Spatial Analysis. The coexistence of stateside and self-support options has caused confusion among students and advisors, increased administrative workload, and diluted enrollments across both pathways.

Curricular Transition and Stateside Alternatives:

To better serve students and align with workforce needs, new state-support certificates of study are being developed and will replace the self-support option with clearer academic progression and sustainability. These include:

- **Geospatial Basic Certificate of Study (24-2891):** Provides foundational knowledge in GIS and spatial data visualization.
- **Geographic Information Science Certificate of Study (24-2938):** Offers advanced skills in geospatial analytics, modeling, and spatial data management.

- **Remote Sensing Certificate of Study (24-2939):** Focuses on acquisition, analysis, and visualization of remote sensing data for environmental and resource applications.
- **Cartography Certificate of Study (24-2931):** Emphasizes map design, spatial visualization, and professional cartographic principles.

In parallel with this suspension, new state-support certificates of study are being advanced through separate resolutions for Senate review. These new certificates are designed to create clearer academic progression and support sustainable, workforce-responsive programming in geospatial science.

The development of these programs ensures continued access to geospatial education for both matriculated and professional learners and maintains Humboldt's leadership in applied, place-based geospatial education.

Instructional and Software Barriers:

The transition of GIS software from ArcMap to ArcGIS Pro highlighted resource gaps and created inequities for online learners. Updating self-support course materials and coordinating with faculty under the current structure would require extensive new investment that is not viable given enrollment and revenue trends.

Teach-Out Plan:

As of Spring 2025, **29 students** remain active in the self-support certificate, with **15 expected to complete** by the end of that term.

CEE will:

- Advise remaining students to complete remaining coursework through **Open University** or **stateside Geospatial courses**.
- Support completion of required courses (**GSP 216, 270, 316, and 370**).
- Refer future students to the new stateside certificates or related undergraduate and graduate geospatial programs.

No faculty positions will be eliminated as a result of this suspension, and teaching and advising for the teach-out period will be supported through CEE in collaboration with the Department of Geography, Environment, and Spatial Analysis.

While suspended, CEE and the academic department will continue discussions on program redesign or discontinuance consistent with Cal Poly Humboldt's polytechnic focus, applied learning commitments, and statewide workforce priorities.

RELATED COURSES AFFECTED:

- GSP 101 – Geospatial Concepts
- GSP 216 – Intermediate GIS
- GSP 270 – Introduction to Remote Sensing
- GSP 316 – Advanced GIS
- GSP 370 – Spatial Analysis