

GeoCorps notes/events/comments from 2003 URISA conference held in Atlanta, GA:

October 21, 2003

On Saturday October 11<sup>th</sup>, 2003, following a presentation given by Shoreh Elhami (the founder of the GC) and Juna Papajorgji (GC Core Committee member), URISA Board of Directors unanimously endorsed the GeoCorps as an initiative under URISA's auspices. Shoreh and Juna's presentation was followed by comments from Ed Wells and Martha Lombard (also GC Core Committee members). The resolution to adopt the GC as an initiative under URISA was prepared and presented by Martha Lombard and Ed Wells. (Add the actual write-up here)

The GC was discussed at three other events during the conference, the first one on Monday at round-table luncheon, and the second and third on Wednesday October 15<sup>th</sup>. The second meeting was the committee meeting which brought about many interesting and critical issues. The CC members solicited more members for the CC and Tom Conry and Sanjiv Gandhi accepted the invitation. The third meeting was the GC luncheon meeting where the GC concept was presented to the audience and once again, several interesting ideas and comments were made. Ed Wells took minutes (will be hyperlinked) for all of these meetings.

The following steps were identified as a result of all meetings held in Atlanta:

- 1) First and foremost, it was decided that a Strategic Plan/Action Plan was needed to eliminate as many gray areas as possible. The CC members will prepare a draft (a sample will be distributed to get the process started). Susan Johnson (Board member), Elaine Whitehead (former Board member), and Dan Parr (URISA President) expressed interest in reviewing the document. December was suggested as a possible time to have a finalized plan. The strategic plan should:
  - Serve as a framework for decisions or for securing support/approval.
  - Provide a basis for more detailed planning.
  - Explain the initiative to others in order to inform, motivate & involve.
  - Assist benchmarking & performance monitoring.
  - Stimulate change and become building block for next plan.

The Plan will be comprised of the following:

- a. Vision
- b. Mission (the central purpose and role is defined here)
- c. Objectives (in terms of results)
- d. Values (beneficiaries)
- e. Key Strategies; must do and should do strategies (rules, guidelines by which the objectives can be achieved)
- f. Major Goals (specific interim and ultimate goals, should be quantifiable, consistent, realistic, and achievable)
- g. Strategic Action Programs (sets out the implementation plans for the key strategies and each team member's responsibility)

- 2) Selecting & Defining a pilot project (or two) to be implemented and presented at 2004 URISA Conference in Reno. It was mentioned that we should be looking at and selecting pilot candidates in January 04.
- 3) Re-design the web page to include:
  - a. The history of the GC, minutes of meetings, etc.
  - b. Information about the CC and its members
  - c. A new application form (directly linked to a database)
  - d. A Volunteer Handbook
  - e. Strategic Plan (vision, mission, objectives, values, major goals, and etc.)

The following actions/organizing cells will be formed to undertake tasks such as:

- 1) Developing a Strategic Plan (all CC members will contribute plus other interested parties)
- 2) Developing Public Relations/outreach strategies to:
  - a. Prepare articles/advertisement material
  - b. Recruit volunteers
  - c. Seek projects (through other agencies or NGOs)
  - d. Build partnerships with educational institutions in or out of the US
  - e. Seek financial support/in-kind contributions from any or all of the above

Each of these four activities will be lead by one CC member.

- 3) Coordinating the pre-screening and matching Volunteers expertise with available projects (all CC members and more in the future).
- 4) Administering the GC web site to include all documents, activities, and forms mentioned above (Shoreh and Juna). Need to find out if we could have the information/database outside URISA's server, for example, somewhere on one of U. of Florida's servers. The link can then be available from URISA's home page (have already emailed Wendy about this).