Geography Career Outlook 2009-2010

Geography Programs Available at Bemidji State University:
Major: Geography (B.A.) (B.S.); Wilderness Management and Outdoor Recreation and Planning (B.A.S.)
Fields of Emphasis: Traditional, Regional and Land Use Planning, Park and Recreation Planning, Geographic Information Systems
Teaching Field of Emphasis: Social Studies: Geography (BS)
Minors: Geography, Graphic Information Systems (GIS)
Department Website: http://www.bemidjistate.edu/academics/departments/geography

Major Highlights:
Geography is the study of phenomena and events on the earth's surface, including the activities of human beings. Technical skills in aerial photography, mapping, computer applications, survey research, and writing are the geographer's tools. All terrestrial activities are subject to geographic analysis. Students in the program learn specific geographic techniques and their application on regional, national, and global levels. Studies in the field, and in effective communication and higher-level problem solving, further prepare students for immediate employment in entry-level jobs and for graduate study. Language study and a strong minor (such as computer science, applied public policy, international studies, space science, or biology) enhance employment options for students with bachelor’s degrees. Graduate study broadens employment opportunities.

Program Features: Participation in the North Country Geographical Society may qualify students for induction into Theta Gamma Upsilon (ΘΓΕ), the international honor society in Geography.

Employment Areas:
The "Occupational Outlook Handbook" reports that Surveyors, cartographers, photogrammetrists, and surveying technicians held about 147,000 jobs in 2008. The architectural, engineering, and related services industry—including firms that provided surveying and mapping services to other industries on a contract basis—provided 7 out of 10 jobs for these workers. Federal, State, and local governmental agencies provided about 15 percent of these jobs. Major Federal Government employers are the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the U.S. Forest Service, and the Army Corps of Engineers. Most surveyors in State and local government work for highway departments or urban planning and redevelopment agencies. Utility companies also employ surveyors, cartographers, photogrammetrists, and surveying technicians.

Projected Demand for Geography Majors in Minnesota:
MnCareers reports that about 1,150 surveying and mapping technicians and 860 surveyors were employed in Minnesota in 2008. The job outlook for these careers is good. Surveying and mapping technicians have an average salary of $21.40 per hour; surveyors earn approximately $29.20 per hour. Opportunities are best for those with training in G.P.S. and G.I.S, surveyors are required to have licensure.

Projected Demand for Geography Majors Nationwide:
The DISCOVER guidance system reports that the nationwide demand for cartographers is expected to grow moderately, with a 2.0% expected growth rate per year. The average starting salary was $46,000 in 2009. The "Occupational Outlook Handbook" reports that for cartographers and photogrammetrists the median income was about $51,180 in 2008, while surveyors averaged $52,980 and surveying and mapping technicians earned an average of $37,190.

Placement Information for Geography Graduates:
Of the Bemidji State University 2008-2009 geography B.A. graduates, 50% reported that they went on to continue their education. Of the Bemidji State University 2008-2009 geography B.S. graduates 90% reported obtaining related employment within one year of graduation. This does not include students who were not seeking employment, unavailable, or had unknown status.
A Partial List of Employers Who Have Hired BSU Geography Graduates:

Beltrami County Student Autocadd Technician, Bemidji, MN
Bullberry Systems, Inc. GIS, Bismarck, MN
Choice, Inc. Supported Employment Instructor, Maplesville, MN
City of Maple Grove GIS Intern, Maple Grove, MN
Digital Mapping Solutions GIS Analyst, Scottsdale, AZ
Ducks Unlimited, Inc. GIS Intern, Bismarck, ND
East View Cartographic Procurement Officer, Plymouth, MN
Envirobate, Inc. Supervisor, Minneapolis, MN
Farm Service Agency Digitizer, Fargo, ND
Farm Service Agency Digitizer, Bemidji, MN
Farm Service Agency GIS Digitizer, Bemidji, MN
Farm Service Agency/ISD 31 Digitizer/Substitute Teacher, Bemidji, MN
Great River Energy/United Services Group GIS Technician, Elk River, MN
Laekmaster Lake Maps GIS Analyst, Little Falls, MN
Leech Lake Indian Reservation Community Land Use Developer, Cass Lake, MN
McGhie & Betts Environmental Services, Inc. Assistant Wetland Specialist, Rochester, MN
MN Department of Transportation Surveyor, Bemidji, MN
MN Department of Transportation Research Analyst, St. Paul, MN
National Park Service Lead Forestry Technician, Van Buren, MO
Polaris Industries, Inc. Inventory Analyst, Medina, MN
Pro West & Associates, Inc. GIS Technician, Walker, MN
ProWest Unspecified, Bemidji, MN
Science Applications Int'l. Corp. Geospatial Analyst/Cartographer, St. Louis, MO
Search Resources/Beltrami Co. Computer Research/Team Specialist, Bemidji, MN
Searns County GIS Technician I, St. Cloud, MN
Tier 3 Incorporated GIS Technician, Stillwater, MN
Ulland Brothers Engineer/Surveyor, Hibbing, MN
United States National Parks System Fire Technician, International Falls, MN
Unspecified Employer Legal Descriptions of Properties, Minneapolis, MN
US Forest Service Forestry Technician, Walker, MN
USDA Lead Digitizer, Bemidji, MN
USDA-Forest Service Cartographic Technician, Grand Forks, MN
USGS Northern Prairie Wildlife Center IAP Contractor, Jamestown, ND
US Forest Service Forestry Aide, Duchesne, UT
US Forest Service Forestry Technician, Tofte, MN

Colleges and Universities Where BSU Geography Graduates Have Gone to Continue Their Education:

Bemidji State University, Bemidji, MN
Itasca Community College, Grand Rapids, MN
Northern Arizona University, Flagstaff, AZ
St. Cloud State University, St. Cloud, MN
St. Mary’s University of Minnesota, Winona, MN
University of North Dakota, Grand Forks, ND
University of Redlands, Redlands, CA
Vermilion Community College, Ely, MN

Note 1: Some of the above job/career titles require advanced degrees or specialized training.
Note 2: Degrees alone do not get students jobs. Internships, summer jobs, volunteer work, part-time jobs, work-study positions, and active participation in student organizations on campus are all ways to become more competitive in a tight job market.
Note 3: Personal Competencies: it is also recommended that individuals be competent in a variety of communication methods, and computer skills are a must.

Bibliography:
Bemidji State University Undergraduate Catalog 2006-2008. Bemidji State University, Bemidji, MN (2009)
DISCOVER. The American Testing Program, Educational Technology Center, Hunt Valley, MD (2009)

For more information, please contact the Career Services Office in 102 Sanford Hall or call us at 218-755-2038 or toll free at 800-657-3726.