

Surveying Education - A University of Maine Perspective

By

Knud E. Hermansen

P.L.S., P.E., Ph.D., Esq.

I believe it is important to keep practicing surveyors aware of the evolving state of surveying education. I cannot speak for all surveying programs. I can speak for the surveying program at the University of Maine. Let me say that there are many excellent surveying programs and surveying faculty members across the United States. Contacting the program in your state will probably reveal similar initiatives.

Surveying education at the University of Maine takes place in the Surveying Engineering Technology program. The program is one of four programs within the School of Engineering Technology. The School of Engineering Technology is part of the College of Engineering.

The Surveying Engineering Technology program is an ETAC/ABET accredited program. ABET establishes standards for engineering and surveying programs Nationwide.

Faculty within the Surveying Engineering Technology program must have at least a master's degree in surveying or related field, have at least three years of practical experience, and must be licensed as a surveyor. Currently, all faculty within the program have a Ph.D. and are licensed as surveyors in at least two states. Two of the faculty are also licensed as professional engineers. One is also licensed as an attorney at law.

Graduates of the program meet the minimum education qualifications for licensure in every state. They also meet the minimum educational qualifications for licensure as a professional engineer in Maine.

Students at the University of Maine can opt to obtain a dual degree in surveying and forestry without taking any extra credits. Of course, students choosing this option have no elective courses to choose from.

Students that pursue only the surveying engineering technology degree have a heavier concentration on engineering aspects, geodesy, construction, and land development.

As with many surveying programs across the Nation, student enrollment is less than optimal and is always a concern to the university administration. While there are plenty of jobs with excellent salaries for graduates, it is hard to attract students to the surveying program. Enrollment in the surveying program at the University of Maine is around 70 students. Recent trends show the enrollment is rising.

In the future, the surveying program plans to expand distance education courses allowing students to obtain many if not all surveying courses utilizing distance education. There is now a Professional Science Master's degree in Engineering and Business with a concentration in surveying that is offered entirely on line.

As an aid to distance education students, the tuition for distance education courses for non-Maine residents enrolled in the Professional Science Master's degree

program is only 1.25 times the in-state tuition. Veterans receive in-state tuition rates.

In the near future, the surveying program plans to partner with community colleges, engineering, or forestry programs in those states that do not have a surveying program in order to be able to offer dual degrees to provide surveying graduates for that state. For example, a student entering an engineering program in XY state university would have the option of taking surveying courses on line that are offered by the University of Maine. Judicious use of electives in their engineering program, established through cooperative arrangements between the programs, would allow the student to obtain both degrees without taking excess credits. Upon graduation, the student would receive a bachelor of science degree in engineering from XY University and a bachelor's of science degree in surveying engineering technology from the University of Maine.

If the distance education surveying engineering technology program is approved the tuition rate will be 1.25 times the Maine in-state tuition. Veterans already receive in-state tuition rates.

If any state surveying society or non-surveying program would like to explore this option for their state, contact Ray Hintz at Raymond.Hintz@maine.edu You can also contact Ray if you would like information on the master's degree with a surveying concentration.