

## **Incorporating the Concept of Sustainability Across the FAMU Curriculum Using Geospatial Science Technologies**

Katherine Milla, Florida A&M University  
October, 2017

In some ways the concept of “sustainability” has taken on a quality of political correctness. Various definitions of the term abound, depending on the subject matter and the perspective of the proponent. Sustainability has different meanings to the biologist, the ecologist, the economist, the sociologist, the environmentalist or the urban planner. Depending on the intentions of the proponents, the goals and outcomes of sustainability efforts may be in conflict.

The rapid evolution in recent years of the field of geospatial information sciences (GISCI) is providing new sets of tools to explore, analyze and implement the concepts of sustainability. As a discipline in the field of geography, GISCI provides a lens to examine sustainability issues from a multifaceted set of perspectives. It focuses on the study of the physical and human dimensions of the entire globe through the technologies of spatial analysis of geographic data and imagery.

I am currently teaching a geographic information systems course on FAMU’s campus. My experience of student response to this course has been very gratifying. I find that, once students learn the power of the tools of GIS, they become very motivated to use them for inquiry into issues of their own interest. I teach this course in the College of Agriculture and Food Sciences. The course attracts students from the entire spectrum of disciplines in the College, as well as from other colleges across the campus.

It is my intention to collaborate with the FAMU Sustainability Institute, faculty members and academic units across the FAMU campus, to develop a GISCI program on campus. During a previous Earth Educators’ Rendezvous workshop (Geoneeds workshop at 2016 Rendezvous) I developed an Action Plan for implementing a GISCI program. During this sustainability workshop I look forward to taking the next step in developing this plan.