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2009 L.R. Hesler Award

Bruce Ralston has served the geography department, and the university, for more than 30 years. He has been a dedicated faculty member, associate department head and department head. He currently serves as associate department head.

Ralston's expertise lies in GIS systems, geospatial analyses and transportation geography. He teaches advanced courses in these areas for undergraduate and graduate students and also responds to a variety of community needs. Examples include his work on an animation of the history of the settlement of East Tennessee, now on display at the East Tennessee History Center. He also worked with Legal Services to develop Internet-based mapping of services and the socioeconomic conditions of such; and he collaborated with Humanities Tennessee to help map the area's cultural resources.

A portrait photograph of a man with a beard and mustache, wearing a white shirt and a dark tie. The photo is framed with a thin gold border.

Ralston founded Tennessee Electronic Atlas, a resource for the public as well as a teaching tool for students to learn more about Internet-based cartography. He has shared his knowledge with city and county governments, as well as our own civil and environmental engineering students.

Ralston has been honored many times for his service to students and dedication to teaching. He takes an active interest in every student by arranging internship programs and other learning opportunities. He often attends seminars that he funds personally to ensure he is up to date on the latest developments, and he works closely with industry to make sure his courses best prepare students for employment in the field. He founded and still maintains the campus GIS lab. His research work has been recognized at the national and international level.