Shashi Shekhar, 2014–15 Distinguished Teacher
Postbaccalaureate, Graduate, and Professional Teaching Award

Shashi Shekhar is one of his department's "most prolific, effective, and innovative graduate and professional educators," says one colleague.

But his impact and contributions extend far beyond his classroom walls. Shekhar is, without question, one of the pioneers in the burgeoning field of geographic information science (GIS), and in the mid-1990s he o-designed a new master's degree program in GIS at the University.

His book on spatial databases is considered the leading text in the field, and the *Encyclopedia of GIS*, which he co-edited, is also well regarded. In addition, Shekhar's recent massive open online course, "From GPS and Google Maps to Spatial Computing," was a colossal success—attracting an astounding 21,800 students from 182 countries.

He is considered an "outstanding advisor and mentor," and routinely involves graduate and professional students in his scholarship. Shekhar "far exceeds the call of duty to help students," notes a former student, and another describes him as "clearly the best teacher I came across."

A colleague states that Shekhar's contributions to graduate and professional education "have shaped the GIS field worldwide," which may be an understatement. "In a nutshell," adds one protégé, he is "a great teacher, research scholar, collaborator, and human being who cares for students across the board, and works toward their success."

His many former students—now in great demand in industry, government, and academia—are a glowing testament to that appraisal. ✂

Professor

Department of Computer Science and Engineering

College of Science and Engineering

University of Minnesota Twin Cities

"I have regularly engaged all my students in research and creativity … and encourage them to choose projects with a potential to not only innovate but also to transform the thinking in our field."

A metaphor for the source of knowledge, this tree has been the emblem of the Academy of Distinguished Teachers since 1993.