

Program Assessment Plan Template

Program name: **GEOGRAPHY-LIBERAL ARTS**

Department: **GEOGRAPHY**

Assessment Year: 2003-04

Plan Contributors: Greenow, Mano, McGlinn, Roinila and Sharp

Step One: Who are you and how do you do what you do?

I.A. Mission Statement: (Who are you and what do you do?)

The Geography Department's mission is to offer academic programs of the highest quality with the available personnel and other resources. We are committed to maintaining the traditional strengths of a Liberal Arts Geography program while continually updating both theoretical and applied components of the program.

We offer a major in Liberal Arts-Geography, a major for Elementary Education students (both B-2 and 1-6), a major in Liberal Arts-Geography with a Planning Emphasis, and a minor in Geography. Our mission is to provide students in these majors and the minor with a solid grounding in Geography while serving the needs of the college for General Education and for programs in other departments where our courses are required or recommended for their students.

Currently we have five full-time faculty and three part-time faculty on our staff and we enroll 900-1,000 students per year in our courses. Geography is a wide-ranging and integrating academic discipline that focuses on spatial patterns and relationships found on the earth's surface. A sound geographic education provides perspectives and skills needed for understanding subjects as varied as population problems, food supply, ethnic conflict, global relationships, international affairs, urban and regional planning, resource distribution, migration patterns and environmental quality, among many other topics. Our majors not only utilize maps in processing and analyzing spatial information, they may also learn to apply computer-based Geographic Information Systems/GIS, which provides many employment opportunities for geography graduates.

I.B. Scope of your program (What are the boundaries of your program?)

We are primarily an undergraduate program, although we offer a few courses for graduate students in Education who need work in relevant social science topics. Since the inception of the program we have not planned to offer the Masters degree; historically, we have preferred to have our majors attend graduate school elsewhere. Our courses span the physical and social sciences, supporting our majors and contributing to several categories of the General Education program.

The program for Elementary Education-Geography majors parallels the Liberal Arts program. Liberal Arts Geography majors are required to take two cognates in natural science and statistics; Elementary Education-Geography majors are required to take 48252 Maps and Graphics in place of 48380 Cartography. Our academic goals for our Elementary Education majors are essential the same as for our Liberal Arts majors, as mandated by the State Education Department; our Elementary Education-Geography majors should be as well prepared for graduate-level work as our Liberal Arts-Geography majors. We do not offer any geography courses specifically for education majors except for the 500-level Geography for Teachers course, which is taken almost exclusively by graduate education students and only occasionally by our own majors.

I.C. What activities/processes contribute to the program? (How do you do what you do?)

Our faculty are well-prepared and committed to research and teaching about environmental or physical geography, international topics, human geography, and a range of geographic techniques. We offer courses across a broad spectrum of topics and skills, to meet the needs of our Liberal Arts and Elementary Education majors while serving the General Education program in several categories. For seniors, we have offered an internship for more than 20 years, with regional public or private agencies in planning, environmental and related fields. Faculty pursue active research agendas, supported by internal and external grants, and regularly attend and present their research at regional, national and international conferences. We maintain informal and formal ties with our students after graduation, and this network has broadened our internship and employment opportunities for students, as well as feedback about best practices and new technologies. We aggressively seek resources to maintain and upgrade the Geography Laboratory, a key resource in the technical courses of our program.

Step Two: Where are you heading and what performances show your progress?

II.A. What are your priority goals for the next five years (5-8 total)?

1. *What do you want graduates to know? Be able to do? Believe?*

Within the field of geography:

- a. Students will be academically competent.
- b. Students will be technically proficient.
- c. Students will be effective in synthesizing arguments and integrating them with spatial data.

2. *What goals do you have for your program? (e.g. out of class experiences, advising, curriculum, faculty development)?*

- a. To offer an academic program that is strong in the traditional strengths of a Liberal Arts Geography program while continually updating both theoretical and applied components of the program.
- b. To provide support to faculty for teaching, research and service, to ensure that they maintain currency in the discipline.
- c. To provide up-to-date classrooms, computer and lab equipment, and appropriate software for instruction and for student use.
- d. To develop and maintain strong connections with regional internship agencies and alumni in order to enhance educational experiences and employment possibilities for our students.

II.B. What is the performance you desire to gauge your progress?

1. *Student learning performances (outcomes)*

Academic competence:

- a. Students will produce satisfactory work in geography internships.
- b. Students will be geographically literate, able to define and explain significant concepts, theories and models in geography, and apply them to spatial analysis

- c. Students will specify appropriate geographic questions, propose hypotheses or solutions to problems, employ appropriate methods to answer questions, and identify the limitations of particular methodologies.

Technical competence:

- d. Students will demonstrate proficiency in cartographic and GIS techniques, methodologies, and presentation.
- e. Students will produce effective analysis, evaluation and presentation of information in the social and physical sciences.

2. *Program performances:*

- a. The Department will offer an array of courses and learning experiences that include both traditional and innovative subjects and geographic techniques.
- b. Faculty will participate in research and service activities that contribute to their professional growth.
- c. The faculty and students will have access to and work with up-to-date software, lab equipment and classrooms.
- d. The department will develop contacts with regional agencies and local alumni to provide internships and possible future employment for our graduates.

Step Three: Describe your methodology

II.B. 1 and 2 <i>Desired Performance (from previous step)</i>	III.A. <i>What aspects of the performance are critical to measure?</i>	III.B. <i>How (by what means) will you gather the data?</i>	III.C. <i>When will assessment begin?</i>	III.C. <i>Who is responsible for what?</i>
II. B. 1. a. Students will produce satisfactory work in geography internships.	Skills and knowledge for careers in geography.	Interns' evaluation of instruction; on-site supervisors' evaluation of interns' preparation and abilities.	Fall 2004 develop survey instruments Spring 2005 implement	Mano will develop and implement survey instruments.
II. B. 1. b. Students will be geographically literate, able to define and explain significant concepts, theories and models in geography, and apply them to spatial analysis	Define, explain and apply significant concepts, theories and models	Assessment of course objectives and performance on corresponding exam questions in lower division courses	Spring 2005 create table and procedure; implement in Fall 2005	Faculty compare course objectives & questions in Physical Geography, Environment & Culture and Economic Geography; Roinila, Mano and Greenow implement
II. B. 1. C. Specify appropriate geographic questions, propose hypotheses or solutions to problems, employ appropriate methods to answer questions, and identify the limitations of particular methodologies.	Specify questions and solve problems.	Assignments and performance on student projects in upper division courses with rubric	Fall 2004 create rubric, implement in Spring 2005.	Faculty create rubric; Sharp and McGlinn implement for upper division courses
II. B. 2. b. Faculty participate in research and service activities that contribute to their professional growth.	Faculty research published or presented; manuscripts reviewed or other service to the profession	Annual Reports of Faculty	Spring 2005	Greenow prepares summary of activities and funding at the end of the academic year.
II. B. 2. c. The faculty and students have access to and work with up-to-date software, lab equipment and classrooms.	Adequacy of and needs for software, lab equipment and classroom technology	AER, SCAP and Department Annual Reports	Spring 2005	McGlenn reports on inventory

Resources needed: Maintaining departmental allocation for copier contract; campus-based computer grading system for tabulating and grading objective questions on exams and for analysis of errors by cohorts.