

Department of Geography Annual Report – 2010

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I. Department Mission Statement

The Department of Geography seeks to deliver to its students the best geography education in Arkansas. The Department offers a Bachelor of Arts Degree, a Bachelor of Science Degree, a minor in Geography, a minor in Geographic Information Science, a Graduate Certificate in Geographic Information Systems, a Master of GIS degree, and a Master of Science in Community and Economic Development. The Department strives to maintain the highest academic quality and to assure that its curriculum remains current and responsive to the needs of the students it serves. The Department's mission is expressed in its commitment to the personal, social, and intellectual growth of its students; its support for its faculty members' advancement of knowledge; and its service to the community.

The Department of Geography implements its mission through its emphasis on the following central purposes:

- To deliver excellent curricula in degree programs at the undergraduate and graduate levels,
- To support its programs with personnel of the highest quality and with optimal resources and facilities,
- To create a departmental community that supports students in their personal, social, and intellectual growth,
- To enhance interaction and understanding among diverse groups and to cultivate global perspectives,
- To foster learning and the advancement of knowledge of its faculty through research and other scholarly and creative activities, and
- To serve the public in ways appropriate to the mission and resources of the Department.

II. Status/Achievement of 2010 Goals, Significant Accomplishments, Statistics, Internship and Assessment Reports

Goal 1: Maintain and Enhance Undergraduate/Graduate Curricula

This goal was successfully completed. The department continuously monitors undergraduate and graduate course offerings and makes adjustments and adds and deletes course as needed.

Goal 2: Increase the Number of Geography Majors

This goal was not met. The number of geography majors declined this last year and is lower than we would like. As the university has grown, the number of geography majors has not grown. More effort on in classes recruitment is needed.

Goal 3: Increase Research/Publication Productivity of Geography Faculty.

This goal was successfully met. Collectively, faculty members were engaged in research activities that led to presentations and publications. More could be done in this area, but improvement occurred when compared to previous years.

Goal 4: Be more active in Undergraduate Research

The department was not as successful in that category as it could have been. While some undergraduate research occurred, it came primarily from a very few students. The department needs to be more proactive in inviting our better students to become more active in research. We also need to develop more faculty/student research-oriented projects.

Goal 5: Be more active in Academic Service Learning Activities

Faculty members were less active in this area this year. While there will be expected ebbs and flows, geography faculty have been supportive of academic service learning. We were less involved this year than last, but we understand the value of academic service learning and will continue to pursue those experiences for our students.

Goal 6: Be more active in Study Abroad Experiences

We were not become successful in this area. While a few students have participated in travel and short-term study experiences with Dr. Green in Russia and Dr. Allender in China, for the most part, we have not pursued study abroad experience for our students. This is a goal where more planning and work is needed.

Significant Accomplishments

Curriculum

GEOG 2302, Conservation and Land Use was moved to the junior level and renamed:

GEOG 3301, Conservation of Natural Resources

The course description for CED 6310 was changed

Required credit in the CED program was reduced from 27 to 24 credit hours

GEOG 6360 was changed to an elective in the CED program

A planning concentration option was added to the CED program

Curriculum-based Workshops Attended

Allender – AP Human Geography Reading – Lesson Plans for Teaching Human Geography

Passé-Smith – ESRI Workshops; “Geocoding-Advanced Techniques;” “Fundamentals of GIS Analysis, Proximity;” “Fundamentals/Overlay;” “Advanced Cartography;” “Animations in ArcGIS;” “Wildlife Analysis and Habitat Suitability;”

“Labeling/Annotating/Editing;” “Spatial Analyst: Suitability Modeling;”
“Statistical Modeling;” and “Site Selection and Suitability Modeling.”

Professional Development

Conferences Attended

Allender – Southwest Division of the Association of American Geographers
Conyers – Association of American Geographers
Green – National Council for Geographic Education
Green – Mid-American Conference on History
Passé-Smith – ESRI International Users Conference
Yoder – Southwest Division of the Association of American Geographers
Yoder – Arkansas Community Development Society

Conference Presentations

Allender – “Vernacular Rock and Brick Construction in the Southern Ozarks,” Southwest Division of the Association of American Geographers
Conyers – “Notes on a month of field work in the San Juan Mountains, Colorado,” Association of American Geographers
Green – “Response to Logan and Porter,” Mid-American Conference on History
Passé-Smith – “Effect of Surface Characteristics on Tornado Vortex Signatures,” ESRI International Users Conference
Yoder – “Entrepreneurial Governance and Economic Development in Micropolitan Cities of Arkansas,” Southwest Division of the Association of American Geographers

Publications

Yoder – “La infraestructura del transporte y la planeación urbana en la zona fronteriza México y Texas: El caso del desarrollo de tres puentes internacionales,” in Antonio Trujeque and Robert Garcia Ortega, eds., *El noreste de México y Texas: asimetrías y convergencias territoriales en las relaciones transfronterizas*. Tijuana: Colegio de La Frontera Norte, pp. 89 – 119.

Grants Funded

Allender – UCA Honors College - \$300
Green – National Geographic Education Foundation - \$30,000
Pearson – No Child Left Behind - \$107,911
Yoder – UCA Research Council - \$3,000

Other Professional Development Activities

Allender – Review editor, *Society and Natural Resources*
Allender – Review editor, *Journal of Southeastern Geography*
Allender – “Service Learning at UCA,” with Joe Howard, IDC presentation

Allender – “Community and Tourism Development,” presentation at the Community Development Institute

Green – “Factors Impacting Rates of Population Decline in Rural Russia,” grant proposal submitted to International Research and Exchanges Program - \$3,681.20

Green – “The Russian South: A Study in Cultural and Ethnic Diversity,” grant proposal submitted to Fulbright-Hays Group Projects Abroad Program - \$80,386

Passé-Smith – Submitted proposal for paper, “Livability or Lip Service? Environmental Justice Fifteen Years Later,” with John Passé-Smith, to ESRI International GIS Users Conference

Reynolds – Review editor, *Introduction to Geography*

Yoder – Archival research at UALR Library

Yoder – Field work in Hope, Arkadelphia, Russellville, Searcy, Batesville, and Blytheville

Yoder – Submitted manuscript “Entrepreneurial Governance and Economic Development in Micropolitan Cities of Arkansas,” to *Mid-South Political Science Review*

Yoder – Presentation, The Sierra Club of Little Rock, “The New Urbanism Movement and Micropolitan Cities of Arkansas: What Might They Learn from each Other.”

Yoder – Presentation, 2010 Humanities Fair, “The Love of Towns and Green Spaces: The New Urbanism Movement in Architecture and Urban Planning.”

Yoder – Lecture, “Post Be-Bop Trends in Jazz,” Hendrix College.

Service

Department

Allender – Chair, Search Committee; Member, Personnel Advisory Committee; Member, Tenure/Promotion Committee; Member, Graduate GIS Programs Committee; Sponsor, Gamma Theta Upsilon; Coordinator, Internship Program (Beginning Sept.)

Conyers – Member, Curriculum Committee; Member, Graduate GIS Programs Committee; Conyers – Member, GIS Day Committee

Green – Chair, Department of Geography

Passe-Smith – Chair, GIS Day Committee; Member, Curriculum Committee

Pearson – Director, Graduate GIS Programs Committee; Advisor, GIS Certificate and MGIS Students; Director, Graduate Studies; Member, Personnel Advisory Committee; Member, Promotion/Tenure Committee; Member, Search Committee; Member, Curriculum Committee

Reynolds – Chair, Curriculum Committee; Member, Search Committee; Member, Tenure/Promotion Committee; Coordinator, Internship Program (Jan. – Aug)

Yoder – Member, Curriculum Committee; Member, Search Committee

College

Allender – Member, EDGE Committee; Member, Grievance Panel; Member, Promotion and Tenure Committee

Green – Chair, World Languages Department Chair Search Committee

Passe-Smith – Director, Social Science Laboratory

Pearson – Member, Curriculum and Assessment Committee; Member, Grants Committee; Member, Seminar Series Committee
Yoder – Chair, Research Committee

University

Allender – Chair, Academic Adjustments and Appeals Committee; Member, Sexual Harassment Committee; Member, Assistance Program for Students with Exceptional Circumstances; Judge, Arkansas State Envirothon
Pearson – Member, Faculty Salary Review Committee;
Reynolds – Advisor, Environmental Alliance
Yoder – Director, MS in Community and Economic Development; Member, University Research Council; Member, Internship Award Committee; Member, SEED (Sustainability) Committee; Participant, Exquisite Corps Fund Raiser

Community

Allender – Member, Conway Tree Board; Reader, AP Human Geography Exam; Judge, State Geographic Bee
Green – Coordinator, Arkansas Geographic Alliance; Judge, State Geographic Bee
Passe-Smith – A/V Setup, State Geographic Bee
Reynolds – Judge, Arkansas High School State Science Fair
Yoder – Chair, Conway Safe Routes to School Committee; Participant, Conway 2025 Master Plan Project; Member, ad hoc committee on bylaws (SWAAG)

Statistics

Curricular/Pedagogical

Number of new programs: 0
Number of new courses approved: 1
Total number of faculty who have been through Technology Associates program to date: 4
Number of faculty teaching in the Residential College Program: 2
Number of faculty teaching in University College: 0
Number of courses taught (including tutorials and theses) in and for the Honors College: 2
Number of independent studies, undergraduate scholars, supervised by faculty: 13
Number of internships supervised: 12
Number of service learning courses taught: 3
Number of study abroad courses delivered: 0

Research

Number of books published: 0
Number of books forthcoming: 0
Number of journal articles and book chapters (forthcoming or published): 1
Number of other items published: 0
Number of international conferences where research was presented: 1
Number of national conferences where research was presented: 1
Number of regional conferences where research was presented: 3

Number of state conferences where research was presented: 0
Number of external grants funded: 2
Number of internal grants funded: 2

Service

Number of College of Liberal Arts committee assignments: 8
Number of UCA committee assignments: 8
Number of community organizations faculty participated in: 8
Number of professional organizations faculty involved with: 1
Number of student organizations and activities faculty participated in: 2

Internship and Assessment Reports

Internship Report

Our students had participated in 12 internships during 2010, for a total of 54 credits. They were spaced rather evenly throughout the year with four in the spring semester, three in the summer, and five in the fall. They were also evenly split between 3399 and 3699:

Semester	# of students taking GEOG 3399	# of students taking GEOG 3699
Spring, 2010	2	2
Summer, 2010	1	2
Fall, 2010	3	2
2010 Totals	6	6

The internships represented a wide range of agencies and employment skills gained. The Arkansas Game and Fish Commission offered the largest number of internships with four of our students working for them. Their positions ranged from enforcement and working at the firing range to designing displays, leading hikes, and working with school groups at their education center. Other government agencies our students worked with were the National Park Service on the Blue Ridge Parkway, the U.S. Geologic Service as a Hydrologic Technician Assistant, and the Arkansas Highway and Transportation Department in the Mapping & Graphics Division.

One student worked on a box turtle habitat study in Adirondack State Forest in New York State, and another convinced a small town in northern Louisiana that they needed a GIS technician to map all their utilities. He rapidly became the “go to” expert for several smaller cities in the region and seems to have set himself up as the primary GIS advising/planning agency for the region.

All of the students felt they had very positive experiences and while some hope to continue on in that particular field, such as law enforcement in the parks or developing GIS programs to meet the needs of small towns, many will either go on to graduate school or other options in the future. Two of the students had taken a 3-credit internship

but did so well that they were asked to stay on and took a second 3-credit internship at the same agency the following semester. The responses from the supervisors in these agencies was likewise very positive and considering roughly half our internships are paid and most are well above minimum wage, they felt they received very qualified and hardworking students for their investment.

As of the end of the spring semester in 2011, it appears that we will have roughly the same number of internships with our students this year as we had in 2010.

Assessment Report

The department conducts the following assessments each year: 1) an assessment of the General Education Electives, Principles of Geography and the Geography of World Regions; and 2) a graduating geography major assessment.

General Education Results

After this course, I am better able to (the goal is 70%):

- 90% use a variety of concepts, principles, models, laws, and theories used to explain human behavior.
- 85% understand how the study of human behavior is founded on empirical/scientific observation.
- 94% recognize the effect of the environment on individual behavior, or recognize the effect of social institutions and processes on human interaction.
- 90% locate information from a variety of resources.
- 71% utilize technology to create written and graphic documents, and to retrieve and communicate information effectively and efficiently.
- 79% critically evaluate information and its sources.
- 88% incorporate information gained outside of textbooks into my knowledge base.
- 73% utilize technology skills to more effectively write, conduct research, and produce graphic representations.
- 88% understand ethical, legal, and social issues surrounding the use of information sources.
- 96% perceive and understand ongoing world events.
- 98% perceive and understand other peoples and cultures.
- 99% perceive and understand the forces and processes of nature.

94% perceive ongoing physical and cultural processes at the local, national, and global scales.

98% perceive and understand environmental concerns and problems.

97% understand the relationships between humans and their natural environment.

Senior Exit Assessment Results

We are in the midst of redesigning this assessment instrument. It will be another year before we get results that will be meaningful. This section will be more accurate and complete with the 2011 Annual Report.

III. 2011 Goals

Goal 1: Maintain and Enhance Undergraduate/Graduate Curricula

Goal 2: Increase the Number of Majors

Goal 3: Increase Research/Publication Productivity of Geography Faculty

Goal 4: Be more active in Undergraduate Research

Goal 5: Be more active in Academic Service Learning Activities

Goal 6: Be more active in Study Abroad Experiences

IV. Five-year Goals

- Increase the number of geography majors to 70
- Increase the number of MGIS students to 30
- Increase the number of CED students to 35
- Add an additional tenure-track line
- Add additional regional courses
- Successfully replace Dr. Reynolds after his retirement
- Successfully replace Dr. Green after his retirement
- Successfully replace Mrs. Rogers after her retirement
- Hire a new department chair

V. Challenges

We have had a sound geography program for many years. When students leave our program, they leave very well prepared to enter the workforce or continue their education at the graduate level. Students in our program receive excellent instruction in our topical, regional, technical, and methods courses.

That does not mean, however, that there are not challenges as we attempt to improve each element of the program in the department. The four most important challenges are: 1) increasing the number of majors in geography, 2) meeting the demand for and covering undergraduate General Education courses, 3) employing a sufficient number faculty members to provide the number and type of courses needed in a quality geography program, and 4) transitioning from a department that has consisted of senior faculty members to one consisting of more junior faculty members.

VI. Opportunities

Opportunities for the Department of Geography lie generally in two areas. First, we must be vigilant in our assessment of current trends in geography so that each element of our program remains relevant and cutting edge. Second, related to that, is the necessity of maintaining the most current technology in software, hardware, and other pedagogical equipment needed in the classroom.

VII. Summary

Each faculty member in the department has been engaged in a wide range of professional growth activities and has excelled in his or her attempt to maintain the best geography program possible. Students have received an exceptional education and have been well prepared for careers and/or graduate degrees. Our goal is to continually grow the department. The year 2010 played an important role in reaching toward the goal.