

Department of Geography Annual Report – 2006

I. Statement of Mission and Purposes

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, and a Graduate Certificate in Geographic Information Systems. 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. Updated Academic Plans

Goal 1: Maintain and Enhance Undergraduate/Graduate Curricula

Action Plans:

1. Examine the possibility of adding additional regional courses
2. Begin to advertise the Master of GIS Degree

Projected Completion Date:

1. Fall 2007
2. Fall 2007

Measures of Success:

1. Department meeting will be held to discuss potential courses
2. Print and electronic media advertisements will be distributed

Resources Required:

1. None.
2. \$250 for advertising

Goal 2: Increase the Number of Majors

Action Plans:

1. Devote time in appropriate courses to career options in geography.
2. Expose students in appropriate courses to geospatial technology by assigning GIS exercises as homework.
3. Host GIS Day in Technology Plaza.

Project Completion Date:

1. Each semester.
2. Each semester.
3. November of each year.

Measures of Success:

- 1a. Each faculty member will devote time to career options in geography in appropriate courses.
- 1b. Each faculty member will declare that they have held career discussions in appropriate courses.
- 2a. GIS exercises will be given as homework assignments in appropriate courses.
- 2b. Each faculty member will declare that GIS exercises were given as homework assignments in appropriate courses.
3. A successful GIS Day is held each November.

Resources Required:

1. None.
2. None.

3. \$100 for supplies and food.

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

Action Plans:

1. Encourage an established research and writing agenda.
2. Review annual professional growth plans.
3. Require interim reports to monitor and track professional growth activities.
4. Review Performance Summaries to track professional growth activities.

Projected Completion Date:

1. On-going.
2. January, each year.
3. April and September, each year.
4. January, each year.

Measures of Success:

1. Encouragement will be given during annual conferences.
2. Professional growth plans will be reviewed each January.
3. Interim reports will be received each April and September.
4. Faculty Performance Summaries will be reviewed each January.

Resources Required:

1. \$1,000 annual travel budget for each faculty member.
2. Reassigned time for professional growth activities.
3. \$5,200 for adjunct professors to enable reassigned time.

Goal 4: Increase Departmental Visibility on Campus

Action Plans:

1. Provide GIS Workshops.
2. Commemorate GIS Day.
3. Participate in Major Fairs, Career Fairs, and Bear Facts Days.

Projected Completion Date:

1. Each semester.
2. Each November.
3. Each semester.

Measures of Success:

1. Conduct at least one GIS workshop each semester.
2. Commemorate GIS Day each November.
3. Participate in Fairs and Bear Facts Days.

Resources Required:

1. \$50 for advertisements.
2. \$100 for brochures and food
3. \$500 for supplies and promotional items.

Goal 5: Improve Community Outreach

Action Plan:

1. Offer GIS workshops to community officials.
2. Train community officials in GIS technology.
3. Hold GIS Seminars for community officials.

Projected Completion Date:

1. Each spring semester.
2. As requested.
3. One per year.

Measures of Success:

1. Hold at least on workshop.
2. Train at least one official in GIS technology.
3. Hold at least one seminar per year.

Resources Requested:

1. \$2,000
2. \$2,000
3. \$5,000

III. Accomplishments

Curriculum

Geography 1300, Geography of World Regions, taught for first time
Geography 3335, Geography of Russia, taught for first time
Geography 3318, Biogeography, taught for the first time
Irby 311 equipped with projector, computer, and symposium

Professional Development

Conferences Attended

Butt – Southwestern Division, Association of American Geographers (SWAAG), University of Oklahoma, Norman, 26-27 October

Green – National Council for Geographic Education, Lake Tahoe, Nevada, October 5 – 7, 2006

Passé-Smith – Western Social Science Association meeting, Phoenix, Arizona (April) ESRI International Users Conference in San Diego, CA (August)

Pearson – AAG Annual Meeting in Chicago in March 2006. Applied Geography Conference in Tampa in October 2006.

Reynolds – Southwest Association of American Geographers, Norman, OK, Oct. 2006

Conference Presentations

Butt – “Food-Place Associations: A Classification“, Southwestern Division, Association of American Geographers (SWAAG), University of Oklahoma, Norman, 26-27 October

Green – “Richard H. Jackson: Mentor and Scholar” National Council for Geographic Education, Lake Tahoe, Nevada, October 6, 2006

Passé-Smith – “Vulnerability to Tornadoes: A Cross-State Comparison with GIS,” Western Social Science Association meeting, Phoenix, Arizona, April 19-22, 2006.

“Exploring Local ‘Tornado Alleys’ for Predictive Environmental parameters” for the ESRI International Users Conference in San Diego, CA, August 8-12, 2006.

Pearson – “The Evolution of the Caribbean Air Transportation Network, 1920 to 2000”. *Applied Geography Conference*, Tampa, FL, October 2006.

“The Evolution of the Caribbean Air Transportation Network, 1920 to 2000.” *AAG Annual Meeting*, Chicago, IL, March 2006.

Reynolds – “The Failures of the United States Government to Increase Public Responsibility in Hazard Risk Areas,” presented at the SWAAG fall meetings, Norman, OK, Oct. 26-28, 2006.

Publications

Green – Review of Mapping and Imagination in the Great Basin: A Cartographic History, Utah Historical Quarterly Vol. 74, No. 1 (Winter 2006): pp. 80 – 81.

“The Land That Yet Remains: Israel’s Future Border,” in Dando, W. A., C. Z. Dando, and J. J. Lu, (Eds) Geography of the Holy Land: Perspectives. Kaohsiung, Taiwan: Holy Light Theological Seminary Press, 2006. pp. 422 – 432.

Passé-Smith – “Exploring Local ‘Tornado Alleys’ for Predictive Environmental Parameters” for the ESRI International Users Conference in San Diego, CA, August 8-12, 2006 (published on CD and electronically online at http://qis.esri.com/library/userconf/proc06/papers/papers/pap_1339.pdf)

Pearson – “Review of Making Maps: A Visual Guide to Map Design for GIS. By John Krygier and Denis Wood.” *Choice Magazine* 43-6279.

“Review of Rhumb Lines and Map Wars: A Social History of the Mercator Projection. By Mark Monmonier.” *The Geographical Review* 95 (2).

“Review of Cities of the World: A History in Maps. By Peter Whitfield.” *Choice Magazine* 44-0479.

“Review of Realms of Gold: Catalogue of Maps in the Library of the American Philosophical Society. By Murray D. Smith.” *Choice Magazine* 43-4820.

Grants Funded

Green – “An Analysis of the Geodemographic Crisis in Rural Russia,” URC - \$2,802

Pearson – “Teaching Mathematics and Natural Sciences in the Secondary Classroom with Geographic Information Systems, Remote Sensing, and Scanning Electron Microscope Technologies” No Child Left Behind grant administered by the Arkansas Department of Higher Education (\$83,626, including matches).

Service

Department

Allender – Advise geography majors and Environmental Science, Planning & Administration track majors; Chair, Curriculum Committee; Departmental Search Committee; Represented Geography and met with students on Bear Facts Day

Butt – Served on following committees: Curriculum (Spring and Fall); Faculty Search (Fall); Promotion, chair (Fall).

Green – Co-writer of MGIS proposal

Passé-Smith – GIS Committee; Search Committee for GIS position

Pearson – Director, Minton Center; Co-writer of MGIS proposal

Reynolds – Member, Geography Curriculum Committee; Member, Search Committee for Geography faculty; Coordinator, Geography Internship Program – 11 students interned during 2006

College

Allender – Coordinator; Latin American Studies program; College Curriculum Committee; College Research Committee; Director, Environmental Science: Planning & Administration track

Butt – Served on Campus Screening Committee for Fulbright Association

Green – Chair, College Curriculum Committee (until Fall 2006); Chair – Search Committee for Sociology Chair

Passé-Smith – Lab Director for the Social Science Lab; Liason between IT and three departments

Pearson – Served as a departmental representative to the University's EAST committee.

Reynolds – Member, College Promotion/Tenure Committee

University

Allender – featured faculty member in a major article in UCA Magazine; Director, New Faculty Orientation; organize and direct the New Faculty Orientation program, including 12 seminar/luncheons; University Public Service Award committee, Vice-Chair; Presented an IDC/Brown Bag presentation, “What’s to do at UCA, in Conway, and around Arkansas”, 9/11/06; University Plagiarism Committee; Intensive English Program’s Out-Of-State Tuition & Scholarship Committee; Campus representative for the Udall Scholarship applications; Faculty advisor, Gamma Theta Upsilon; Fast Mover, assisted new freshman move into the dorms.

Green – Member, Undergraduate Council

Reynolds – Member, SEED Committee; Advisor, Environmental Alliance

Community

Allender – nominated to and accepted as a board member for the City of Conway Tree Commission

Green – Coordinator, Arkansas Geographic Alliance; Vice President, Arkansas Geographical Society; Head Judge at the State Geographic Bee; Planned, organized, and facilitated a two-day workshop for the Arkansas Geographic Alliance; Created a map for Academic Outreach and Extended Studies; Created 11 maps for UCA Institutional Research

Passé-Smith – Mapping project: Community Gardens Map for brochure (Justin Fowler, organizer); Mapping project for Insurance Education seminars to be held in Texas for John Bratton in the Department of Economics, Finance and Insurance & Risk Management

Reynolds – Member, Local Emergency Planning Committee; Member, Arkansas Earthquake Advisory Council; Member, Arkansas Pre-Disaster Mitigation Planning Committee; Category Judge, Arkansas High School State Science Fair

Statistics

Number of new programs: 1

Number of new courses approved: 1

Number of books published: 0

Number of books forthcoming: 1

Number of journal articles and book chapters forthcoming or published: 2

Number of other items published: 5

Number of international conferences where research was presented: 0

Number of national conferences where research was presented: 3

Number of regional conferences where research was presented: 3
Number of external grants funded: 1
Number of internal grants funded: 1
Number of faculty in Technology Associates: 4
Number of faculty teaching in the Residential College Program: 1
Number of faculty teaching in University College: 0
Number of courses taught in the Honors College: 0
Number of College of Liberal Arts committees faculty served on: 4
Number of UCA committees faculty served on: 5
Number of community organizations faculty participated in: 5
Number of professional organizations faculty involved with: 1
Number of student organizations and activities faculty participated in: 2

Internship Report

Twelve students participated in the Geography Internship Program during the Spring Semester - 2006, Summer Session 1 - 2006, and Fall Semester - 2006. The agencies at which these students applied their skills and gained worthwhile on-the-job experience included the following:

Center Point Energy(Little Rock) - 2 interns
Arkansas Highway and Transportation Department(AHTD) (Little Rock) - 1 intern
Audubon Arkansas (Little Rock) - 1 intern
Arkansas Geological Commission (AGC)(Little Rock) - 1 intern
Arkansas Game and Fish Commission (AGFC)(Little Rock) - 1 intern
Arkansas Army National Guard (AANG)(Camp Robinson, North Little Rock) - 1 intern
Arkansas Geographic Information Office (AGIO)(Little Rock) - 1 intern
Conway Economic Development (Conway) - 1 intern
Longing Realty Property Rental (Conway) - 1 intern
FTN Associates (Little Rock) - 1 intern
Pollution Management Inc. (Little Rock) - 1 intern

The list of participating agencies continues to grow and change as the positions at Pollution Management Inc., an environmental consulting firm, and Longing Realty, were identified and obtained through student initiative. The skills enhancement and experience ranged from GIS at AHTD, AGIO, AGC, AANG, and Center Point, environmental education at Audubon Arkansas and AGFC, and environmental assessment and planning projects at Pollution Management Inc. and FTN Associates, to name several. The participating agencies continue to be impressed with the performance, knowledge, and abilities of the interns, with two interning positions resulting in full-time positions.

Narrative Summary of Assessment

Objectives Assessed

The department conducts three assessments each year: 1) an assessment of the General Education Elective, Principles of Geography, 2) an

assessment of the General Education Elective, Geography of World Regions, and 3) an assessment of the level of knowledge attained by our graduating senior geography majors. The goal of the senior geography major assessment is to determine if our graduating majors have attained a certain level of geographic knowledge, and their feelings toward the program and its benefits to them.

The assessments conducted in 2006 were of the Principles of Geography sections and the sections of Geography of World Regions. Because of a revision needed in the Graduating Senior Assessment, it was not completed in 2006.

How Were They Assessed?

Each year during the fall semester, a survey instrument is given to students enrolled in Principles of Geography and Geography of World Regions courses. That survey assesses students' knowledge of three objectives in the Behavioral and Social Science category, five objectives in the Information and Computer Literacy Skills category, and six objectives in the Attitudes/Values category. The results are tabulated to determine if assessed objectives are being met. The Geography Major Assessment is given to each graduating senior during the last week of the semester.

What Was Learned?

Regarding the Principles of Geography assessment, we learned that of the fifteen objectives assessed, nine of the fifteen were successfully achieved. Because of a newly added category, "Neutral," percentages were lower than in previous years. The percent who responded Strongly Agree and Agree are noted below for each question.

After this course, I am better able to:

- 74% use a variety of concepts, principles, models, laws, and theories used to explain human behavior.
- 67% understand how the study of human behavior is founded on empirical/scientific observation.
- 82% recognize the effect of the environment on individual behavior, or recognize the effect of social institutions and processes on human interaction.
- 69% locate information from a variety of resources.
- 68% utilize technology to create written and graphic documents, and to retrieve and communicate information effectively and efficiently.

- 66% critically evaluate information and its sources.
- 78% incorporate information gained outside of textbooks into my knowledge base.
- 66% utilize technology skills to more effectively write, conduct research, and produce graphic representations.
- 67% understand ethical, legal, and social issues surrounding the use of information sources.
- 80% perceive and understand ongoing world events.
- 92% perceive and understand other peoples and cultures.
- 79% perceive and understand the forces and processes of nature.
- 83% perceive ongoing physical and cultural processes at the local, national, and global scales.
- 77% perceive and understand environmental concerns and problems.
- 80% understand the relationships between humans and their natural environment.

Regarding the Geography of World Regions assessment, we learned that of the fifteen objectives assessed, all fifteen were successfully achieved. The percent who responded Strongly Agree and Agree are noted below for each question.

After this course, I am better able to:

- 79% use a variety of concepts, principles, models, laws, and theories used to explain human behavior.
- 78% understand how the study of human behavior is founded on empirical/scientific observation.
- 89% recognize the effect of the environment on individual behavior, or recognize the effect of social institutions and processes on human interaction.
- 79% locate information from a variety of resources.
- 78% utilize technology to create written and graphic documents, and to retrieve and communicate information effectively and efficiently.

- 78% critically evaluate information and its sources.
- 77% incorporate information gained outside of textbooks into my knowledge base.
- 74% utilize technology skills to more effectively write, conduct research, and produce graphic representations.
- 76% understand ethical, legal, and social issues surrounding the use of information sources.
- 94% perceive and understand ongoing world events.
- 95% perceive and understand other peoples and cultures.
- 91% perceive and understand the forces and processes of nature.
- 84% perceive ongoing physical and cultural processes at the local, national, and global scales.
- 84% perceive and understand environmental concerns and problems.
- 88% understand the relationships between humans and their natural environment.

IV. Status of Current Goals

Category: Maintain and Enhance Undergraduate/Graduate Curricula

1. Add one regional geography course.
Not completed
2. Continue to infuse GIS technology into appropriate courses.
Completed
3. Place the Graduate GIS Certificate Program on-line.
Completed
4. Begin the Executive GIS Master's Degree
Not Completed. The Master of GIS Degree has been approved to begin in 2008

Category: Increase the Number of Majors

1. Devote time in appropriate classes to career options in geography.
Completed
2. Expose students in appropriate courses to geospatial technology by assigning GIS modules as homework.
Completed
3. Host GIS Day in Technology Plaza.
Not completed. Dedicated the Minton Center in place of this event.
4. Host an EAST Student Summer Technology Camp
Not completed

Category: Increase Research/Publication Productivity of Geography Faculty

1. Encourage faculty members to have an established research and writing agenda.
Completed, but on-going
2. Carefully review annual professional growth plans.
Completed
3. Require interim reports to monitor and track professional growth activities.
Completed
4. Review Performance Summaries to track professional growth activities.
Completed

Category: Add Faculty Offices and GIS Center

1. Remodel Irby 302 to contain two faculty offices and a GIS Center.
Completed

Category: Increase Departmental Visibility on Campus

1. Provide GIS Workshops.

Not completed

2. Commemorate GIS Day.

Completed

3. Participate in Majors Fairs, Career Fairs, and Bear Facts Days.

Completed

Category: Improve Community Outreach

1. Offer GIS workshops to community officials

Not completed

2. Train community officials in GIS technology.

Not completed

3. Hold GIS Seminars for community officials.

Not completed

V. Goals for 2007

Curriculum

- Advertise for a new faculty member to replace Dr. Paul Butt
- Request a new Lecturer I position
- Propose a Geography of Africa and the Middle East course
- Increase the number of student workers in the Minton Center
- Expand Minton Center work to the City of Mayflower

Scholarship

- Submit 4 items for publication
- Present 6 papers at geography conferences
- Submit 3 grant proposals

VI. Long-Range Goals

Curriculum

- § Examine the possibility of creating a Master of Geography degree

Research/Scholarship

- § Geography faculty members submit manuscripts for publication once every two years

Service

- § Increase the number of geography majors to 70
- § Provide GIS training for community officials
- § Generate GIS contract work for local communities

Technology

- § Purchase GPS receivers
- § Purchase large format scanner
- § Add a 20-seat Geospatial Laboratory
- § Add computer and symposium to Irby 307

VII. Trends – Challenges/Opportunities

We have had a sound geography program for many years. That trend continues. 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, and technical courses.

That does not mean; however, that there are not areas within the program where improvements can and need to be made. The two most important are:

First, the number of geography majors continues to be rather low. That needs to change. Second, professional growth levels remain rather low. That also needs to change.

The challenge, therefore, is two-fold. First, we must do more to attract additional geography majors. That will be accomplished when we: 1) more proactively promote geography as an excellent career choice, and 2) become more visible on campus.

Second, it is important that all geography faculty members become more actively engaged in professional growth, particularly in research

and publication. We have made significant steps to improve these areas, but little improvement was demonstrated in 2006. With more effort, increased activity will be seen in 2007.