

# **GEOGRAPHY & MAPPING SCIENCES ACADEMIC PROGRAM ASSESSMENT PLAN**

## **DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY & MAPPING SCIENCES MISSION STATEMENT**

The Geography and Mapping Sciences Department responds to system, core and select mission statements through its major and minor programs which may be tailored to a variety of emphases, including cultural geography, regional studies, physical geography with a climatology focus, or geographic information systems and cartography. The geography and mapping sciences programs address the select mission in particular through required and elective courses such as Human Geography, The Geography of the United States and Wisconsin, Rural Geography, Historical Geography of the United States, and Poverty of the United States, which provide students “opportunities to develop an appreciation of the richness and diversity of American culture.” All geography courses, regardless of their focus within the discipline, are designed to broaden students’ perceptions and understanding of the world in which they live. Therefore, a fundamental goal of the Geography & Mapping Sciences Department is to give students the “opportunity to increase their global awareness and sensitivity to other cultures”, which is another statement of the select mission of the University.

### **I. Student Learning Objectives/Outcomes**

#### **A. Cognitive Outcomes (Knowledge)**

At the completion of the Geography Major program, our graduates should be able to:

1. identify, describe and analyze relationships and interactions between peoples and their physical and cultural environments and the interdependence of regions throughout the world;
2. demonstrate and evaluate the interdisciplinary nature of geography.

#### **B. Behavioral Outcomes (Skills)**

At the completion of the Geography Major program, our graduates should be able to:

1. identify and describe basic mapping techniques and their uses and explain the power of maps as communication devices, including being able to produce a map for a specific purpose using appropriate techniques;
2. select, assess and analyze spatial data for geographic problem solving and for written, oral and graphic communication;

#### **C. Affective Outcomes (Professional Values)**

At the completion of the Geography Major program, our graduates should be able to:

1. integrate the knowledge and skills of the discipline of geography into their research projects, courses, and internships;
2. evaluate the spatial and integrative way of thinking that provides a framework for dealing successfully with geographic problems in any setting.

## II. Identification of where Objectives/Outcomes are Being Achieved

Mapping Curriculum with Learning Outcomes									
Geography & Mapping Sciences									
Program Learning Outcomes	Core Courses								
	110	111	120	240	250	Systematic	Regional	365	401
A.1 Identify, describe, analyze relationships between physical and cultural regions	I	I/E	I	E	R	E	R		P
A.2 Demonstrate and evaluate interdisciplinary relationships	I	I	I	E	R	R	R		P
B.1 Identify and describe mapping techniques; make a map			I		I/E			E/R	R/P
B.2 Select, assess, analyze spatial data for geographic problem solving, communication					I	I		E	P
C.1 Integrate geographic knowledge into research projects				I	I	I/E	I/E	E	P
C.2 Evaluate spatial way of thinking	I		I	I	E/R	I/E	I/E	R	R/P
I = Introduced    E = Emphasized    R = Reinforced    P = Proficiency Demonstration									

## III. Assessment Tools used to Measure Objectives/Outcomes

Two methods of assessment will be used to determine achievement of student learning objectives and outcomes. Assessment data will be collected at the conclusion of GEOG 401- Geography Colloquium in which geography majors are required to undertake a research project and present the results in both written and oral form. Since GEOG 401 is a capstone experience in geography, the department expects proficiency for all learning outcomes (see Part II, above). Data will include a direct measure of assessment of a student's research project by all geography faculty who are required to attend the oral presentations. The following is a preliminary assessment tool for that purpose (under review and revision):

\*\*\*\*\*

**DIRECT ASSESSMENT BASED ON ORAL PRESENTATION IN GEOG 401-GEOGRAPY COLLOQUIUM COURSE**

Student: \_\_\_\_\_

1. A clearly defined topic has been developed.

0 ----- 1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5  
Not Applicable Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

2. The research has a clear geographic focus.

0 ----- 1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5  
Not Applicable Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

3. Research questions have been clearly identified and answered.

0 ----- 1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5  
Not Applicable Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

4. The student is able to communicate effectively orally.

0 ----- 1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5  
Not Applicable Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

5. The student's portrayal of data in map form is easy to understand, clear, useful to the presentation.

0 ----- 1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5  
Not Applicable Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

6. The student has made good use of the data sources and reference material.

0 ----- 1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5  
Not Applicable Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

7. The student exhibited basic knowledge and application of geographic principles and ideas.

0 ----- 1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5  
Not Applicable Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

8. The student employed appropriate geographic data analysis techniques.

0 ----- 1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5  
Not Applicable Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

9. The student exhibited clarity of speaking style.

0 ----- 1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5  
Not Applicable Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

10. The student showed good organization and use of visual aids

0 ----- 1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5  
 Not Applicable Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

11. Content of the material presented was of a high level and sophisticated.

0 ----- 1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5  
 Not Applicable Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

12. Depth of research in area presented was great.

0 ----- 1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5  
 Not Applicable Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

13. Student displayed deep personal understanding of the research presented.

0 ----- 1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5  
 Not Applicable Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

14. The presentation stimulated and provoked interest in the audience.

0 ----- 1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5  
 Not Applicable Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

15. Displayed positive attitude toward questions and was able to handle questions well.

0 ----- 1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5  
 Not Applicable Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

1. Major strong points of research:

2. Suggestions for improvement:

<b>Overall grade for presentation</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>A-</b>	<b>B+</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>B-</b>	<b>C+</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>C-</b>	<b>D</b>

**RUBRIC for ASSESSMENT of ELEMENTS -- in preparation**

\*\*\*\*\*

A second, indirect measure of assessment will be administered as an anonymous exit interview, completed by all students enrolled in GEOG 401 at the conclusion of the course. The department believes that this is a positive and non-threatening way to determine the effectiveness of the program from the student's point of view. This method has been used by the department since 1994 to collect valuable data that has helped implement change in the geography major program. The questions in the following instrument relate directly to the student learning objectives/outcomes listed in Part I, above.

\*\*\*\*\*

**DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY AND MAPPING SCIENCES  
EXIT INTERVIEW  
Program Assessment by Students enrolled in GEOG 401**

1. What got you interested in the Geography major at UW-RF?
2. Is there a special approach or methodology that geographers share, regardless of their specialty? What is it?

**On a scale of 1- 5, please circle the number that best represents your response to the question. 1 indicates Strongly Disagree, 3 neutral, and 5 strongly agree. Use 0 if the question is not applicable to you.**

3. Geography courses stimulated you to think, probe into the subject matter, and want to understand the subject matter.

0 ----- 1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5  
Not Applicable Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

4. Our curriculum advising efforts have been adequate.

0 ----- 1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5  
Not Applicable Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

5. You were satisfied with the frequency with which geography courses (especially required ones) are offered.

0 ----- 1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5  
Not Applicable Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

6. There is sufficient variety in advanced courses.

0 ----- 1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5  
Not Applicable Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

7. Are there any courses that you would like to see taught that are not currently taught now?

8. What do you hope to do after you complete this program and receive your degree? (What is your "lifetime" goal?)

9. Your experiences in the geography program helped you formulate or reshape your "lifetime" goal.

0 ----- 1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5  
Not Applicable Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

10. If you agreed with #9 above, how did geography help you formulate your goals?

11. The geography program has prepared you well for your future professional work, advanced study (grad. school), or for teaching (if student is in education)?

0 ----- 1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5  
Not Applicable Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

12. Do you have an interest in continuing your studies in graduate school? If so, in what field?

0-----1-----2-----3-----4-----5  
Not Applicable Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

13. You have developed a basic understanding of the operation of the physical environment to be able to work as an individual to interpret, improve and conserve the environment.

0-----1-----2-----3-----4-----5  
Not Applicable Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

14. Your awareness of cultural variation that exists across the U.S. is extensive. And around the world?

0-----1-----2-----3-----4-----5  
Not Applicable Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

15. Your awareness of cultural variation that exists around the world is extensive.

0-----1-----2-----3-----4-----5  
Not Applicable Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

16. How would your knowledge of global cultural patterns/differences help you interact better with people from cultures other than your own?

0-----1-----2-----3-----4-----5  
Not Applicable Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

17. In the Senior Colloquium you learned more about geographic research in your area of interest.

0-----1-----2-----3-----4-----5  
Not Applicable Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

18. The geography faculty members prepared carefully for their courses.

0-----1-----2-----3-----4-----5  
Not Applicable Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

19. There is good communication between faculty members and geography students.

0-----1-----2-----3-----4-----5  
Not Applicable Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

20. The geography faculty are easily accessible for answering questions and helping with class work or projects.

0-----1-----2-----3-----4-----5  
Not Applicable Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

21. Identify an instance where a faculty had been particularly effective in helping you learn.

22. Identify an instance where a faculty had not been particularly effective in the classroom.

23. What did you like most about the Geography Department and your experiences in geography courses?

25. What did you like least about the Geography Department and your experiences in geography courses?

0-----1-----2-----3-----4-----5  
Not Applicable Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

26. Your abilities to express yourself in writing have improved as a result of geography course.

27. You were challenged to write clearly, well, intelligently in geography courses?

0-----1-----2-----3-----4-----5  
Not Applicable Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

28. Concerning your quantitative/analytical skills, your abilities to analyze data improved as a result of various geography courses that you have taken.

0-----1-----2-----3-----4-----5  
Not Applicable Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

29. You used or applied your knowledge of quantitative methods to solve problems or understand concepts in geography courses.

0-----1-----2-----3-----4-----5  
Not Applicable Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

30. You have had adequate training to interpret maps.

0-----1-----2-----3-----4-----5  
Not Applicable Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

31. You have had adequate training to portray geographic data in map form.

0-----1-----2-----3-----4-----5  
Not Applicable Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

32. Did you participate in Student Geography Organization (SGO) activities?

0-----1  
No Yes

33. Did you present any research that you did in a Geography course at Research Scholarly and Creative Activities Day, Geography meeting, or other presentations? Please describe.

0-----1  
No Yes

34. Do you have any other comments about the department, course offerings, activities, or faculty that you'd like to share with us?

\*\*\*\*\*

#### **IV. Timetable Indicating the Cycle of Assessment and Continuous Improvement**

Both assessment tools identified in Part III, above, will be administered in conjunction with GEOG 401-Geography Colloquium, which is given annually in the spring semester. The data are collected in the final week of the semester and will be summarized and tabulated during the following summer. Changes or modifications in the assessment tools will be discussed during a geography faculty meeting focused on assessment held at the beginning of the following fall semester.

#### **V. Data Presentation and Discussion Process**

The results of each year's program assessment (the Annual Assessment Report) will be discussed during a geography faculty meeting focused on assessment held at the beginning of the following fall semester. The entire geography faculty will be present for the discussion. Any problems and concerns that are identified by the assessment analysis will be discussed and a plan of action will be initiated to rectify the problem, if possible.

#### **VI. Implementation of Revisions Based on Assessment Results**

Problems and concerns that are identified by the assessment analysis will be discussed during the fall assessment meeting of the geography faculty and a plan of action will be initiated to rectify the problem, if possible (based on resources and funds needed).

#### **VII. Results Availability**

Annual assessment reports will be available in two places: on the Geography Department's Zeus Data G drive in a folder named, "Program Assessment Reports" and on the department's web page with a button, "Annual Assessment Reports. Presently we have annual assessment reports available from 1994 through 2006, with the exception of 1997, which is missing.

