

Department: Geography
Degree: BA in Geography
College: College of Arts and Sciences

Assessment coordinator (program level):

Dr. Meghan Cope, Professor, Dept. of Geography

Program Outcomes:

Upon completion of the BA degree, students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate familiarity with the breadth of the discipline of Geography and deeper comprehension of at least one subfield
2. Identify and articulate the connections between theoretical concepts and empirical data
3. Demonstrate basic competence in the research methods of Geography, as well as the ability to produce and assess representations of geographical data
4. Conduct clear and rigorous communication through written and oral means
5. Critically engage with and contribute to the production of knowledge through the review of existing scholarship and the conduct of original research using Geographic skills

Components of the Plan Outlined on Multi-year chart (chart is at the end of this document)

The department's assessment coordinator will implement and facilitate the following to create and maintain an on-going, sustainable assessment process involving three types of operation:

I. Identifying and Gathering Relevant Data:

- For each year's target assessment activity in the 5-year cycle, identify specific courses from which materials will be gathered and saved to serve as direct assessments; depending on the course, this might involve exam questions, an essay prompt or free-write exercise, research methods assignments, final papers, etc.
- Develop standardized "comment cards" for faculty to assess students' oral presentations that can be archived every year (and assessed once every 5 years per the cycle).
- Work with department faculty and administrative assistant to maintain the annual majors' survey and allocate time for interpretation of answers for the year's target learning outcome.
- Work with the department chair to conduct and facilitate exit interviews with graduating seniors based on key learning outcomes indicators (as in the chart below)

II. Organizing and Archiving Evidence:

- Set up a section of the department's shared drive with appropriate annual folders for scanned student materials, honors portfolios, and links to students' on-line projects, coded by which outcome(s) they will be useful for.
- Work with the department administrator to scan and archive relevant student materials, including redaction of names as appropriate, and recording of the course name and specific prompt or assignment, at the end of every semester and summer terms.

III. Assessing and Reporting Evidence on Learning Outcomes and Curriculum

- Hold a one-day assessment/curriculum retreat in late May (during the contract period) every other year for faculty to assess materials, identify areas for improvement, and make action plans to implement those improvements.
- Evidence will be incorporated into a biennial *Curriculum and Learning Assessment Report* (completed by June 30th in odd years, starting in 2019) by the Department Chair, in consultation with the Assessment Coordinator, charting evidence of success toward learning outcomes, evidence revealing gaps in the curriculum, and identifying actions to be taken.
- In odd years, the *Curriculum and Learning Assessment Report* will be shared at the August faculty retreat, needed actions will be implemented, and the *Report* will be revisited the following May (even years) to gauge progress.

Communication

The biennial *Curriculum and Learning Assessment Report* will be circulated to faculty, shared with the College of Arts & Sciences, and made available on request to students and alumni. A simplified and anonymized overview of the insights gained from the exercise will be posted on the department's website.

Overview of Plan (Chart form)

(see next pages)

Five-Year Assessment Plan (starting 2018)

| | Year 1 | Year 2 | Year 3 | Year 4 | Year 5 |
|----------------------------|--|--|---|---|---|
| Assessment Activity | <p>Demonstrate basic competence in the research methods of the discipline and the ability to produce and assess representations of geographical data – <i>Direct assessment</i> of a selection of student materials generated in GEOG081, 100-level methods courses (184, 185, and 186), and any 200-level methods courses or methods-intensive projects in other 200-level classes, as well as Honors Theses, from the previous 2 years.</p> <p><u>Questions:</u> Are students competent in a range of qualitative, quantitative, and geo-spatial research techniques? Can students produce data representations through effective visual means (e.g. maps, posters, web-based projects)? What are the gaps?</p> <p><i>Indirect assessment:</i> pull answers to questions re: geospatial technologies and research methods</p> | <p>Conduct clear and rigorous communication through written and oral means – <i>Direct assessment</i> of written samples from 200-level final projects and Honors Portfolio submissions of previous 2-3 years.</p> <p><u>Question:</u> Are students writing clear and convincing prose characteristic of geographic inquiry and reflection? What supports would enhance students' written communication? <i>Direct assessment</i> of oral communication from faculty evaluation of 100- and 200-level student presentations using standardized assessment "comment cards" for this purpose (not part of grading).</p> <p><u>Question:</u> in what ways and how effectively do students convey information in an</p> | <p>Demonstrate familiarity with the breadth of the discipline and deeper comprehension of at least one subfield – <i>Direct assessment</i> of GEOG040, 050, and/or 070 students through exam question (pre-test); review of final papers/project from topical 200-level classes. <i>Indirect assessment</i> through end-of-year survey and/or exit interviews with seniors. <u>Questions:</u> Can students demonstrate familiarity with the breadth of the discipline? Can upper-level students articulate key concepts defining a subfield?</p> | <p>Identify and articulate the connections between theoretical concepts and empirical data – <i>Direct assessment</i> of 100-level and 200-level final papers/projects for past 2-3 years. <i>Indirect assessment</i> through senior exit interviews/survey. <u>Questions:</u> Which theoretical concepts are covered in sampled papers and which ones do students demonstrate more/less facility with? How well do students identify and activate empirical data that relates to these concepts? What supports would help students progress toward this outcome? Which concepts can seniors identify in exit interviews as important to the study</p> | <p>Critically engage with and contribute to the production of geographic knowledge through the review of existing scholarship and the conduct of original research using Geographic skills – <i>direct assessment</i> of 100-level and 200-level reviews/original work, Honors Portfolios, and Honors theses. <u>Questions:</u> In terms of how effective students are at reviewing existing scholarship, what evidence is there of students moving beyond summarizing into thematic reviews and critique? What evidence is there of students conceiving of and conducting original research by, for example, applying concepts to novel empirical data or settings?</p> |

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| | from annual majors' survey and senior exit interviews | organized and articulate fashion in oral presentations? | | of Geography and how do they connect those to empirical settings? | |
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