

Annual Goals for Geography

2010-2011

Title: Research Initiative

Description: To promote faculty research and scholarship in order to enhance the education and increase the opportunities for our students.

Budget: 0.00

University Goals: 1,2,5

Strategic Goals:

Responsibility: Department Chair

Participation: Faculty members

Results: Four faculty members submitted articles to referred journals and nine articles have been or/are in process of being published. Five faculty members presented research at national conferences for a total of 14 presentations. Twelve undergraduate students with faculty mentors and co-authors made presentations at one national conference. The two major conferences are the Association of American Geographers and the National Council for Geography Education. The two large grants from NOAA and DoJ are continuing through the next academic with two faculty PIs. Six undergraduate students and one graduate student provided research assistance.

Actions: The PIs have received reduced loads in order to pursue their research plans as the NOAA and DoJ grants continue throughout the next academic year. The PIs and undergraduate/graduate research assistants will be expected to present research findings at professional conferences and possible submission for publication. There is an effort by the graduate director to secure university funding for graduate student assistance. There is discussion to have undergraduate students also present at regional geography conferences beginning in the next academic year.

Improvements:

Title: Experiential Learning Initiative

Description: To offer outside the classroom learning opportunities for geography students

Budget: 0.00

University Goals: 1,2,4,5

Strategic Goals:

Responsibility: Department Chair

Participation: Faculty members

Results: The internship program continues to attract students with 28 taking this opportunity during the academic year. Seventeen students completed a “Capstone Project” in 2010-2011. Geography faculty incorporated more external learning opportunities into their classrooms during the past year. Of all courses in 2010-2011, 57% incorporated field trips (an increase of 11% from the previous year) including local field trips, local tours, and long distance trips. Dr. Koti and Dr. Gaston took students to the East African country of Tanzania and Dr. Gaston and Dr. Pretes will take almost 40 students on a field experience to the American Northwest during the summer 2011. Two funded research projects, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and Department of Justice, continued during 2010-2011 and at least eight students were involved in supporting faculty with research. Twelve students presented their research findings at the Association of American Geographers meeting in April 2011. All students were mentored by faculty. Seventeen students completed a “Capstone Project” in the 2010-2011 academic year. The Department of Geography’s MS in Geospatial Science program was approved in June 2010 and the Department selected a graduate coordinator. The graduate coordinator created a plan for marketing and managing the program and one part of this plan was experiential learning opportunities.

Actions: Because of economic downturn, co-op programs were practically eliminated. However, as the economy improves, we will search for more co-op opportunities for students. With approval of research proposals, planned or submitted, more students will be incorporated into faculty research projects. The graduate program coordinator created a plan for increased experiential learning opportunities in the first year of the program and this focus will continue in the upcoming year. The Department intends to ask Career Services to manage internships in future years while the faculty will continue to seek additional intern possibilities. The Department will also encourage student participation in the Southeastern division of the Association of American Geographers in the upcoming year.

Improvements:

Title: Outreach Initiative

Description: To promote UNA and geography as a major to potential students and to the community at large

Budget: 0.00

University Goals: 2,5

Strategic Goals:

Responsibility: Department Chair

Participation: Faculty members

Results: As in past years, the department as a whole and individual faculty members participated in a wide range of outreach activities at UNA, in area schools and other venues, and at the state level. With support from the National Geographic Society (NGS), faculty and UNA Geography students assisted with Geography Awareness Week activities by visiting a number of elementary and secondary schools and presenting lessons in spatial awareness and geographic concepts to an estimated 300 students. The office of the Alabama Geographic Alliance sponsored the NGS Giant Traveling Map of South America at locations in Florence with more than 400 elementary and university students attending. Faculty members participated in Geographic Information Systems day and the mayor of the city of Florence recognized the importance of GIS during an address given on GIS day. The Geography department again hosted the UNA Geography Alumni Association annual meeting in Wesleyan Hall. More than 50 alumni from around the country attended with several making professional presentations. Undergraduate students were encouraged to attend sessions to learn about our former students and to network with them. The conference was well attended by faculty, students, administration, and general public. The Department was recognized for its importance in GIS education and Dr. Gaston was asked to serve on the State of Alabama GIS Executive Committee's Education and Outreach advisory committee. Faculty members helped promote the discipline of geography by participating in more than 20 other activities within the community and state. These included presentations at civic clubs (such as Rotary and Kiwanis), the Learning in Retirement organization, Florence/Lauderdale Public Library, Career Day, Geography Club and International Geography Honor Society of Gamma Theta Upsilon, and the University of Dar Es Salaam.

Actions: The Geography Department has long recognized the fact that students and the general public have limited perceptions of the nature of geography as a discipline and as a potential career. Thus, it is imperative that we continue to schedule events and professional development activities to inform the public

of the value of a geography education. In addition, Dr. Keys-Mathews and Dr. Strong will write a strategic plan for participation in professional development activities for K-12 teachers on behalf of the Alabama Geographic Alliance which is housed in the Department and coordinated these two faculty members.

Improvements:

Title: Curriculum Initiative

Description: To provide our students with the appropriate knowledge and skills needed for successful careers in the field of geography

Budget: 0.00

University Goals: 1,2,5

Strategic Goals:

Responsibility: Department Chair

Participation: Faculty members

Results: In order to provide our students with the appropriate knowledge and skills needed for successful careers in the field of geography, the Department of Geography faculty: •Reviewed, evaluated, and implemented a standard learning outcome-based assessment plan for in GE 102 and GE 111 where a pre and post testing system is being used to test learners' proficiency in fundamental geographic concepts taught during the semester. The pretest is usually administered unannounced in the beginning of the semester while the posttest is administered at the end of the semester. A Scantron analysis is conducted and the results compared. An average class score above 80% is considered a positive (and sufficient) indicator of high proficiency in fundamental concepts learned. This process has already produced favorable results in GE 111 where the Scantron analysis for the Fall 2010 produced an average class score of 86%. •Implemented online instruction for all of the following lower level courses including: GE 102, GE 111; GE 112 and GE 260. It is expected that this effort will make lower-level our courses more accessible to our majors. •Extended the technical aspect of GIS instruction to make our graduates more competitive in the geospatial industry job market. This has been implemented by introducing an in-house course in GIS programming and geovisualization. •Broadened departmental course offerings with a focus on international experience and also to reinforce field work. A geography study abroad program in Tanzania, Africa was successfully conducted by two faculty members in the May intersession in 2011 offering 2 courses at both undergraduate and graduate levels. •The graduate coordinator

successfully secured additional funding for graduate assistantships for the new MS in Geospatial Science.

Actions: •To fully implement the learning outcome-based system for all lower level courses, the approach will also be implemented for GE 112 and GE 260; GE 224 and GE 225. •To afford more student-instructor interaction in our introductory technical courses, the Department has proposed curriculum changes to make GE 384 (Geographic Information Systems) and GE 324 (Remote Sensing) four-credit hour courses. This process is underway. •To prepare our students for basic geographic research, the Department has proposed an introductory geographic methods course. This process is underway.

Improvements:

Student Learning Outcomes for Geography

2010-2011

Title:	Spatial Analysis and Reasoning
Description:	Students will observe, interpret, analyze, and understand spatial patterns on Earth's surface.
Budget:	\$0.00
Core Competencies:	4,5
25% Online:	1
50% Online:	
Core Competencies:	4,5
How Often:	Per semester
Assessed this Year?	Yes
Responsibility:	Department chair
Participation:	Faculty members
Direct	

Assessments

graduation exit exam

Indirect Assessments

Results: Graduating seniors in the 2010-2011 academic year scored 62.62% correct on exit exam questions related to this outcome.

Curriculum:

Actions:

Improvements: The Department will continue to develop a plan for assessing the program beyond what is currently being done.

Title:	Human Systems
Description:	Students will analyze and understand the human spatial patterns in the context of cultural, demographic, economic, social, and political processes.
Budget:	\$0.00
Core Competencies:	2,5
25% Online:	
50% Online:	
Core Competencies:	2,5
How Often:	Per semester
Assessed this Year?	Yes
Responsibility:	Department chair
Participation:	Faculty members

**Direct
Assessments**

graduation exit exam

pre- and post- test in GE 102

**Indirect
Assessments**

Results: Graduating seniors in the 2010-2011 academic year scored 71.29% correct on exit exam questions related to this outcome.

Curriculum:

Actions: The faculty who teach this course will establish a list of key issues, concepts and knowledge guide the development of common learning outcomes.

Improvements: The Department is discussing plans for assessing the program beyond what is currently being done.

Title: Physical Systems

Description: Students will analyze and understand the spatial patterns and processes, as well as the interactions of the atmosphere, lithosphere, biosphere, and hydrosphere.

Budget: \$0.00

**Core
Competencies:** 2,5

25% Online:

50% Online:

**Core
Competencies:** 2,5

How Often: Per semester

Assessed this Year? Yes

Responsibility: Department chair

Participation: Faculty members

Direct Assessments

graduation exit exam

pre-test and post-test

Indirect Assessments

Results: A pre- and post-test evaluation system was implemented in GE 111 classes beginning in the spring 2008, and continues today, to measure students' knowledge of subject matter before and after taking the course. The 20-item multiple choice pre-test, which covered all the fundamental concepts of the course were administered unannounced and graded using the Scantron item analysis method during the first week of class. The same test was administered again (unannounced) and graded just before the finals week. The grades for the pre- and post- tests were compared. The results showed a class average score of well over 80% with a significant improvement from the first time the tests were administered in the beginning of the semester. This is consistent with our generic learning outcomes expectation for our introductory-level courses. Graduating seniors in the 2010-2011 academic year scored 60.68% on exit exam questions related to this outcome.

Curriculum: Results from the pre- and post-tests provided information that allowed the faculty to modify the course content, knowledge, concepts and skills to benefit student learning.

Actions: The Department is discussing plans for assessing the program beyond what is currently being done.

Improvements: The Department is discussion a plan for assessing the program.

Title: Human-Environment Interaction

Description: Students will understand the connections and relationships between humans and the environment.

Budget: \$0.00

Core Competencies: 2,4

25% Online:

50% Online:

Core Competencies: 2,4

How Often: Per semester

Assessed this Year? Yes

Responsibility: Department chair

Participation: Faculty members

Direct Assessments

graduation exit exam

Indirect Assessments

Results: Graduating seniors in the 2010-2011 academic year scored 62.05% correct on exit exam questions related to this outcome.

Curriculum:

Actions:

Improvements: The Department is discussing plans for assessing the program beyond what is currently being done.

Title: Tools and Techniques

Description: Students will use maps, aerial imagery, and other tools and techniques including, but not limited to, Geographic Information Systems, cartography, the Internet, field data collection, qualitative and quantitative analysis, or Global Positioning System receivers.

Budget: \$0.00

Core Competencies: 3

25% Online:

50% Online:

Core Competencies: 3

How Often: Per semester

Assessed this Year? Yes

Responsibility: Department chair

Participation: Faculty members

Direct Assessments

graduation exit exam

Indirect Assessments

Results: Graduating seniors in the 2010-2011 academic year scored 66.00% correct on exit exam questions related to this outcome.

Curriculum:

Actions:

Improvements: The Department is discussing plans for assessing the program beyond what is currently being done.

Title: Geographic Tradition

Description: Students will understand Geography's historical and philosophical foundations.

Budget: \$0.00

Core 5

Competencies:

25% Online:

50% Online:

Core 5

Competencies:

How Often: Per semester

Assessed this Year? Yes

Responsibility: Department chair

Participation: Faculty members

Direct Assessments

graduation exit exam

Indirect Assessments

Results: Graduating seniors in the 2010-2011 academic year scored 50.12% correct on exit exam questions related to this outcome.

Curriculum:

Actions:

Improvements: The Department is discussing plans for assessing the program beyond what is currently being done.