To be completed by the program/department

1. In a paragraph, briefly describe your program’s Mission Statement and how it relates to the University Strategic Mission.

   The Mission of the Department of Geography is to create a vibrant learning environment through the integration of high-impact practices in field, classroom, and laboratory settings that provides excellence in liberal education to UW-Platteville students and inspires reflective, life-long learning and the ethical application of knowledge to enrich our students, region, state, and society. Integral to our mission is to provide exceptional, comprehensive training in geography to a select group of majors through individualized programs of study that incorporates project-based learning, critical reflection, transformative experiences, and a rigorous pursuit of knowledge that produces leaders in the many fields of geography. We will embrace diversity and maintain a supportive departmental culture that promotes the professional development and growth of our students, staff, and faculty, and helps form engaged, global citizens working to make our world a better place.

   Our mission is tied to the mission of the University of Wisconsin-Platteville, which calls for the awarding of baccalaureate degrees, including in Geography. In addition, the university mission statement emphasizes a “personal, hands-on approach,” which describes the interaction between faculty, staff, and students in the Department of Geography – due to our relatively small size, we are able to provide such an intimate learning environment. We challenge our students intellectually, and stress interaction in a diverse global community – both of which are found in the university mission statement.

2. List your program’s long-term (5+ years) goals as reported on at your last APC review and describe how your program met those goals. If there was a need to modify those goals, briefly explain why.

   Goals from last APC review (these are university goals that we adopted as particularly appropriate for the Geography/Geology program):

   a) enable each student to become broader in perspective, more literate, intellectually more astute, ethically more sensitive, and to participate wisely in society as a competent professional and knowledgeable citizen
Geography is fundamentally a body of knowledge which addresses this goal. It is inherently a synthesizing discipline, bringing together widely ranging and disparate ideas, cultures, and peoples into a global perspective. As a result, it would seem to be a critical component in terms of broadening one’s perspective and increasing ethical sensitivity. The faculty within Geography and Geology are themselves committed to these perspectives, and reflect a literate and intellectual approach to every course that is offered.

b) **provide baccalaureate degree programs which meet primarily regional needs in the liberal arts, sciences, teacher education, business, and information management**

The Geography/Geology program offers a baccalaureate degree in Geography. In addition, due to the broad nature of the discipline, we are unique in our integration of four of the five components expressed in this goal. Geography is both a liberal art (social science) and a natural science, and one of our strongest distinctives is that we integrate the two into a common body of knowledge. In addition, information management, in the form of Geographic Information Systems, is the driving force of much of Geography today, and we are well placed to prepare students in this area. Finally, some of our graduates go into teaching as a profession, in both the public school system, in conjunction with the Social Science Comprehensive Major, and in colleges and universities after graduate training.

c) **expect scholarly activity, including research scholarship and creative endeavor, that supports its programs at the baccalaureate degree level**

The faculty of Geography/Geology are all involved in scholarly activity which is manifested in publications, presentations at regional and national meetings, and accumulation of research to directly support teaching. In addition, most of the faculty are directly involved in supervising and supporting student research.

d) **serve the needs of women, minority, disadvantaged, and nontraditional students, and seek racial and ethnic diversification of the student body and the professional faculty**

Due to its very nature, and to the types of people who are attracted to the discipline, Geography has a long tradition of cultural sensitivity. Almost all of our courses are overtly international in flavor and adopt an attitude of discovery about cultures and ethnic groups. This passion carries over in our day-to-day dealings with students and other faculty. We are involved, for example, with the Nagasaki exchange program, and Dr. Stradford of our faculty has been instrumental in arranging cultural exchanges with Japanese groups. Our majors also reflect our interest in diversity: we have a significant number of women majors, as well as those from various ethnic groups.

e) **serve as an educational, cultural, and economic development resource to southwestern Wisconsin**

As is true for many programs on campus, we have had over the years a large number of majors and students from southwestern Wisconsin. The faculty have also been active in going out to public schools and private groups to give presentations on topics of interest. In the past our faculty has been consulted by radio and newspapers for expert analysis of events currently unfolding. In addition, we have a long history of serving the community and campus as resources for various questions and matters of interest. Culturally we have sponsored talks by nationally known figures.
and have also sponsored cultural exchanges with other groups and countries. Our economic impact is probably most strongly felt in the graduates that we send out to work in the area, and who make a positive and important contribution to urban and regional planning and development. In addition, we have an active internship program for our undergraduates, and their work contributes to the economic infrastructure of the area.

3. At this point in your long-range planning, list your program’s most important (5+ years) goals and briefly describe the resources your program will need to be successful, as well as any concerns or issues your program is facing. Also briefly address how these goals support your program’s Mission Statement.

(maximum of three)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Long-term Goal One</th>
<th>Provide exemplary geographic education to our students, both within the major and to the general population of students throughout the university.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Resources Needed</td>
<td>The primary resource for this goal is faculty and staff. A second necessary resource is learning space conducive to learning with appropriate hardware, software, and other educational resources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issues or Concerns</td>
<td>Retention of faculty and staff is paramount in providing long-range stability, which is critical for the nurturing of students. We are concerned about the turnover in faculty and staff in recent years. In addition, we are concerned about university resources, and in particular the availability and quality of university vehicles, as well as appropriate learning spaces and classrooms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How Goal Supports Program’s Mission Statement</td>
<td>This is essential to the heart of our mission statement, which is to “to create a vibrant learning environment... [and] to provide exceptional, comprehensive training in geography.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Long-term Goal Two</th>
<th>Increase recruitment and retention of quality Geography majors, and minors in Geography and Environmental Science.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Resources Needed</td>
<td>Financial support for student learning and research, including support to enable students to present research to the larger professional community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issues or Concerns</td>
<td>Again, the retention of faculty and staff is of great importance in providing the stability and connection which enables students to fully explore their potential.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How Goal Supports Program’s Mission Statement</td>
<td>In our mission statement we find this: “Integral to our mission is to provide exceptional, comprehensive training in geography to a select group of majors through individualized programs of study that incorporates project-based learning, critical reflection, transformative experiences, and a rigorous pursuit of knowledge that produces leaders in the many fields of geography.” This speaks directly to our goal of attracting</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
and retaining quality students to study Geography and Environmental Science.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Long-term Goal Three</th>
<th>Expand our commitment to undergraduate research and high-impact practices for our students.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Resources Needed</td>
<td>Both space and money is needed. A primary resource is the TREES lab, which currently has its own space. It is funded through from both internal and external sources. This facility is critical to our goal of expanding undergraduate research and high-impact practices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issues or Concerns</td>
<td>A concern is the continuation of external funding, primarily for the TREES lab, but also for our other high-impact practices. One type of high-impact practice that has a long tradition in our department is extensive field trips. These are dependent on university vans, and we are concerned about the number and quality of these vans.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How Goal Supports Program’s Mission Statement</td>
<td>This goal directly supports our mission of providing practical knowledge and service to the community. Through undergraduate research and other high-impact practices, students put into practice their geographic knowledge in practical ways.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. If your program was reviewed by any outside accrediting bodies since the last APC review, please identify the review body and briefly summarize the results in 1-2 paragraphs.

Not applicable.

Information Required by the Assessment Oversight Committee
5. Please provide the following information.
   A. Program Assessment Plan
      i. List your program’s learning outcomes.

   **Student Learning Outcomes**

   Graduates will:

   1. Recognize the unique subject and methods of geography, and be able to use geographical concepts contributing to the solution of societal and environmental problems.

   2. Understand the processes and patterns of the physical world and how human actions impact and interact with natural systems.

   3. Develop a perspective that allows them to understand spatial variation and diversity at global, regional and local scales.
4. Have the skills to read, interpret, use and make maps and be able to solve, and communicate spatial problems using geographic technologies.

5. Have the ability to conduct, process, prepare and present empirical geographic research at a fundamental level.

6. Have knowledge of the potential career opportunities for geographers.

a. Indicate when the last time each learning outcome was assessed.

Student learning outcomes 1, 2, and 3 are fundamental to the teaching of geography, and are assessed in every class every semester. Outcome 4 appears in introductory form in Geog 1040, Geog 1140, Geog 1330, and Geol 1140, and a more complete synthesis as the heart of the two course sequence in GIS (Geographic Information Systems) that all Geography Majors complete. This knowledge is applied in Geog 4030, Geog 4920, and by students undertaking research projects. This learning outcome is assessed in all these courses, most of which are taught every year. Not all of our courses address learning outcome 5, but several do. Most commonly that is a part of Geog 4030 (Geography Seminar), which is required for all geography majors – this course is taught every third semester. In addition, a significant number of our graduates complete research while working with individual faculty, most commonly in association with the TREES lab. Students here develop their own research projects, collect and analyze data, and present the research at geographic conferences. The supervising faculty member assesses the students continuously at every step of the way, and given the structure of such conferences, the presentation of the research to professional geographers is an additional form of assessment. Learning outcome 6 is primarily a function of advising, and career opportunities are discussed at each formal advising session (which occurs at least once a semester), and often during informal advising sessions throughout the year.

ii. List your program’s assessment tools. For each assessment tool:
   a. Identify what is considered a “successful” result.
   b. Indicate when the last time each assessment tool was administered.
   c. Provide the most recent result.
   d. For each result, identify what conclusions were drawn.

iii. What changes to the program (if any) were made in response to the program assessment results and how have you assessed the effectiveness of those changes?

iv. Provide copies of your assessment tools.

v. Provide a schedule for the administration of program assessment tools for the next 5 years.

We are a newly formed department, and currently have no tools in place to assess our department. We are in the process of developing these. As a result, we are unable to provide the responses required in sections ii, iii, iv, and v.
B. General Education Assessment
   i. List each UUCC-approved general equation courses within the program/department.
   ii. Provide a chart indicating which general education learning outcomes each of these courses covers.

Within the Geography curriculum, we have courses that meet the requirements for Natural Sciences, Social Sciences, International Education, and Gender Studies general education requirements. On the following page is a table in which each of the general education learning outcomes are tabulated for each course that has general education credit. For ease of reading, the general education learning outcomes will be indicated by the following numbers.

1. Apply their knowledge to recognize and solve a wide variety of problems

   Mathematical Reasoning Skills
   1. Recognize mathematical patterns to solve problems
   2. Demonstrate ability to work with numbers, space, and data

   Effective Communication Skills
   3. Construct articulate explanations using the language of each discipline being studied
   4. Organize written and spoken material in a coherent and logical pattern that is also mechanically sound
   5. Demonstrate knowledge of the processes of human communication and develop critical listening skills
   6. Read, write, listen, and speak at a basic level in a language other than English

   Critical Thinking Skills
   7. Demonstrate skills in problem-solving
   8. Distinguish between valid and invalid reasoning
   9. Assess the plausibility of proposed solutions
   10. Demonstrate knowledge of scientific methods

2. Appreciate and create works of excellence

   Knowledge of the Arts and Sciences
   1. Demonstrate knowledge of the fundamental ideas at the heart of the arts and sciences, including fine arts, history, humanities, mathematics, the natural sciences, and the social sciences. It also includes the disciplines that cut across these categories, namely, ethnic studies, women's and gender studies, and international education.

   Creative thinking skills
   2. Demonstrate appreciation for the creative works of others
   3. Demonstrate the ability to create works of personal expression

3. Develop informed national and international perspectives

   International awareness
   1. Demonstrate knowledge of cultures other than one’s own
   2. Demonstrate knowledge of the ideologies, cultures, places, political, and economic systems that shape the world
Cultural awareness
3. Demonstrate knowledge of the history, culture, customs, values, lifestyles and contributions of the populations of color in the United States
4. Demonstrate knowledge of the cultural constructs that perpetuate stereotypes and social interaction based on gender, race, ethnicity, religion, and sexual orientation
5. Identify the social and political structures that support racism, sexism, and other forms of discrimination
6. Recognize the influence the students’ own culture, gender, racial identity, and experiences have on their own attitudes towards people different from themselves

4. Participate ethically and wisely in a diverse society

Individual Responsibility
1. Recognize that personal choices have consequences on ourselves, others, and the environment

Social Responsibility
2. Distinguish between ethical and unethical behavior
3. Demonstrate knowledge of the multiple viewpoints regarding ethics, justice, and other questions of human meaning and value
4. Recognize the importance of individual engagement on a local, regional, national, or international level
5. Recognize the impacts of technology and scientific innovation on society and the environment

The following abbreviations are used with reference to the general education categories:

NS – Natural Sciences
SS – Social Sciences
IE – International Education
GS – Gender Studies
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Course Name</th>
<th>General Education Category</th>
<th>General Education Learning Outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1040</td>
<td>Planet Earth</td>
<td>NS</td>
<td>1.2; 1.3; 1.4; 1.7; 1.8; 1.10; 2.1; 4.1; 4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1050</td>
<td>Introduction to Human Geography</td>
<td>SS, IE</td>
<td>1.2; 1.3; 1.4; 2.1; 3.1; 3.2; 3.4; 3.5; 4.1; 4.4; 4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1140</td>
<td>Global Landforms</td>
<td>NS</td>
<td>1.2; 1.3; 1.4; 1.7; 1.8; 1.10; 2.1; 4.1; 4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1230</td>
<td>Introduction to Cultural Geography</td>
<td>SS, IE</td>
<td>1.2; 1.3; 1.4; 1.8; 2.1; 2.2; 3.1; 3.2; 3.3; 3.4; 4.1; 4.2; 4.3; 4.4; 4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1240</td>
<td>Weather and Climate</td>
<td>NS</td>
<td>1.2; 1.3; 1.4; 1.7; 1.10; 2.1; 4.1; 4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1330</td>
<td>World Regional Geography</td>
<td>SS, IE</td>
<td>1.2; 1.3; 1.4; 2.1; 3.1; 3.2; 3.4; 4.1; 4.2; 4.3; 4.4; 4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1370</td>
<td>Global Vegetation</td>
<td>NS</td>
<td>1.2; 1.3; 1.4; 1.7; 1.8; 1.10; 2.1; 4.1; 4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3030</td>
<td>Economic Geography</td>
<td>SS, IE</td>
<td>1.1; 1.2; 1.3; 1.4; 2.1; 3.1; 3.2; 3.4; 3.5; 4.1; 4.2; 4.3; 4.4; 4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3120</td>
<td>Geography of Wisconsin</td>
<td>SS</td>
<td>1.2; 1.3; 1.4; 2.1; 3.1; 3.3; 3.4; 3.5; 4.1; 4.2; 4.3; 4.4; 4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3130</td>
<td>Geography of the United States and Canada</td>
<td>SS</td>
<td>1.2; 1.3; 1.4; 2.1; 3.1; 3.3; 3.4; 3.5; 4.1; 4.2; 4.3; 4.4; 4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3170</td>
<td>Space, Place, and Gender</td>
<td>GS</td>
<td>1.2; 1.3; 1.4; 2.1; 3.1; 3.2; 3.4; 3.5; 3.6; 4.1; 4.2; 4.3; 4.4; 4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3330</td>
<td>Environmental Conservation</td>
<td>SS</td>
<td>1.2; 1.3; 1.4; 1.8; 2.1; 2.2; 3.1; 3.2; 3.4; 4.1; 4.2; 4.3; 4.4; 4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3340</td>
<td>Biogeography</td>
<td>NS</td>
<td>1.1; 1.2; 1.3; 1.4; 1.7; 1.8; 1.9; 1.10; 2.1; 4.1; 4.4; 4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3350</td>
<td>Geography and Development of Middle East</td>
<td>SS, IE</td>
<td>1.2; 1.3; 1.4; 2.1; 3.1; 3.2; 3.4; 4.1; 4.2; 4.3; 4.4; 4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3430</td>
<td>Geography of Africa</td>
<td>SS, IE</td>
<td>1.2; 1.3; 1.4; 2.1; 3.1; 3.2; 3.4; 4.1; 4.2; 4.3; 4.4; 4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3530</td>
<td>Topics in Regional Geography</td>
<td>SS, IE</td>
<td>1.2; 1.3; 1.4; 2.1; 3.1; 3.2; 3.4; 4.1; 4.2; 4.3; 4.4; 4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3630</td>
<td>Geography of Latin America</td>
<td>SS, IE</td>
<td>1.2; 1.3; 1.4; 2.1; 3.1; 3.2; 3.4; 3.5; 4.1; 4.2; 4.3; 4.4; 4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3730</td>
<td>Geography of Europe</td>
<td>SS, IE</td>
<td>1.2; 1.3; 1.4; 2.1; 3.1; 3.2; 3.4; 3.5; 4.1; 4.2; 4.3; 4.4; 4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3930</td>
<td>Geography of Asia</td>
<td>SS, IE</td>
<td>1.2; 1.3; 1.4; 2.1; 3.1; 3.2; 3.4; 4.2; 4.3; 4.4; 4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3960</td>
<td>Geography of Japan</td>
<td>IE</td>
<td>1.2; 1.3; 1.4; 2.1; 3.1; 3.2; 3.4; 4.2; 4.3; 4.4; 4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4230</td>
<td>Political Geography</td>
<td>SS, IE</td>
<td>1.2; 1.3; 1.4; 2.1; 3.1; 3.2; 3.3; 3.4; 3.5; 4.1; 4.2; 4.3; 4.4; 4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1140</td>
<td>Physical Geology</td>
<td>NS</td>
<td>1.2; 1.3; 1.4; 1.7; 1.8; 1.10; 2.1; 4.1; 4.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
C. Progress – Describe program changes that were recommended in past assessment and program reviews (at both the institutional and accrediting body level) and describe what progress/changes have been made since those recommendations.

When we went through program reviews and assessment reviews over the past 20 years we were part of the Social Sciences Department, and our evaluation was incorporated with that of the larger Social Sciences Department. As a result, we have no previous reviews to refer to.

Information Required by the Academic Standards Committee

6. Briefly describe how your program is engaged in reviewing its own internal academic standards. In particular:

A. What does your program do to ensure that courses, major options, minor options, etc. are current and relevant? Give examples of two changes that were implemented over the past 5 years in response to these efforts.

Each professor is tasked with the responsibility of maintaining currency in her/his particular area of study and the relevant information that is required for the classes they teach. At regular department meetings we discuss curriculum frequency, and respond to suggestions that come from the faculty with regard to maintaining a high quality and relevant curriculum. Two examples over the past 5 years of major changes that came out of this process is the deletion of the Geology minor (in recognition of a shortage of faculty qualified to teach the breadth of courses required) and the establishment of the TREES lab. The TREES lab integrates biogeographic and geomorphic research, with a specific primary goal of enhancing undergraduate research and fostering high-impact practices among our students. This involves doing research under the supervision of one or more faculty members, research that involves the most recent methodologies and academic content of the sub-disciplines of biogeography and geomorphology.

B. How does your program monitor consistency in course content, course standards, and grading from semester to semester and instructor to instructor? In particular, explain what group or individual are tasked with this effort and outline the expected course of action that is to be followed if an inconsistency is discovered.

In general, faculty openly discuss course content and standards. More specifically, only one course in Geography is taught in multiple sections by different professors, and to promote appropriate content for each section, the professor agree on a single textbook, and discuss relevant course content. Another specific way in which consistency in course content, standards, and grading is maintained is by the requirement that each semester every faculty member in the Geography Department is required to submit their official syllabus for each course for review. The syllabi are reviewed by the Department Chair and the chair of the Departmental DRB – obvious variations in grading policy or content would be immediately apparent. If such an inconsistency is obvious, the Chair would meet with the faculty member and solicit an explanation for the inconsistency, and if the faculty member offers an unsatisfactory explanation it will be factored into the report of the DRB for that faculty member. In addition, the Department Chair then has the responsibility of working with the faculty member in the preparation of their course the next time it is offered.
C. Does your program offer any courses in multiple formats (such as traditional on campus, streaming video, winterim, fully or hybrid online, etc.?)?

The only course that fits this description in the Geography curriculum in Geog 1040 (Planet Earth). It is offered in the traditional semester long format on campus, and also as a fully online course.

D. If your answer to (c) was yes, what are the two most important differences between the formats from the standpoint of the faculty? What are the two most important differences from the standpoint of the students? Explain what measures are taken to mitigate the differences.

From the viewpoint of the faculty, a primary difference would be the delivery of the information. For the on-campus sections of Planet Earth, the course is organized into three one-hour lecture sections each week, and one two-hour lab section each week. The lecture sections are very large (often 168 students each), and professors utilize a lecture format, with abundant use of visuals (photography, maps, diagrams, and videos), and mini-quizzes to gauge student learning. Labs involve group work, and often are conducted outside by the lab instructor. For the online course, the primary course content is transferred to the student via textbooks, essays and information written by the student, and visuals posted online or linked by the professor. To make sure that the course content is consistent, the professor is diligent about providing the full measure of content in each type of delivery.

A second difference for the professor is in terms of scale of the class. In the very large lectures, it is difficult for professors to offer abundant one-on-one instruction with the student. This is far more possible in the online course, in which the professor and the student frequently communicate directly with each other (albeit digitally). To help facilitate increased individual content with the students, the professors strongly encourage students to come to their offices during office hours, and often provide incentives to do so.

From the viewpoint of the student, the labs would be a major difference. During the laboratory time in the on-campus course, students work in teams, bouncing ideas off each other and learning both from the lab instructor and their fellow students. This is more difficult in the online course, although it is possible to provide a similitude of group work digitally through the creative use of conferencing. A second difference for the student is in the outdoors portion of the class. It is common for lab instructors to arrange outside labs for the students (a logical step, given the course is called “Planet Earth”). During these labs, students use various pieces of field equipment to learn about the earth, and again they work together in groups. The online course also requires students to go outside for a number of the labs, but the professors work hard to tailor the lab to the particular physical geography that the students have access to, so even though the general physical system content of the lab will be consistent, the specific detailed physical geography of the lab may vary. An obvious third difference for online students is an increased need for self-motivation to complete the course content. Of course, all college students need some degree of self-motivation, but on-campus students have a regular schedule that they simply know they need to follow. An online student has a much more flexible schedule, and without that enforced schedule must motivate themselves to complete the work. In most cases this is not a serious concern, because online students generally would not have sought out an online course if they weren’t unusually self-motivated.
Once completed, please send Form B electronically to Lisa Merkes-Kress at merkesl@uwplatt.edu. Form B is due on or before October 15.