Assessment Plan for Geography

Program Mission Statements

1. Geography students will have a solid understanding of geographic principles.

2. They will be prepared to understand, communicate, and use this knowledge in both theoretical and practical ways. Theoretical use is the ability to understand the framework of the discipline and synthesize ideas based on learned concepts, and practical is the ability to use the tools of the discipline, such as GIS, cartography, and other spatial-analytical skills.

3. They also will be prepared to demonstrate the link between theoretical and practical knowledge by conducting original research.

Our mission is tied to the University of Wisconsin-Platteville mission, which calls for providing students with a broad education, to provide baccalaureate degrees in programs that provide service to the people in our region, and to expect scholarly activity. Our students learn theoretically, meaning that they are exposed to a wide diversity of ideas that broaden their knowledge base. In addition, they are imbued with practical skills that will enable them to put their knowledge to use in service to the people of Wisconsin and beyond.

Goals and Objectives

By the time they graduate, we expect our majors to have the following abilities:

I. To be able to identify the Earth’s physical and cultural regions, with an understanding of the processes that go on within these regions that make them distinct from other regions (see Program Mission statement 1)

II. To be able to demonstrate technical geographic skills (see Program Mission statement 2) including
   - The production and interpretation of professional maps.
   - The ability to read Topographic Maps and Air Photos
   - The ability to use GIS to analyze geographic data.

III. To be able to think in and logically express in written form important geographic concepts. (see Program Mission statement 2)

IV. To be able to conduct, process, prepare and present empirical geographic research at a fundamental level. (see Program Mission statement 3)
Assessment Measurements

To assess how well these outcomes are being met, the following approaches include:

1. Objective exams and quizzes,
2. Short answer tests,
3. Essay tests, which vary in depth and scope,
4. Short, topical writing assignments,
5. Term papers,
6. Cartography (Geog 4920) final project,
7. Oral presentations and evaluations of class participation,
8. Independent research (Geog 4920) reports,
9. GIS (Geog 3230) final project,
10. Seminar (Geog 4030) research project
11. Exit Exam, which will be comprehensive exam over Geographic principles written, administered, and evaluated by the Geography faculty.

Assessment Plan

The Geography and Geology faculty will meet annually to review data on student performance and evaluate program effectiveness. Specific attention will be given to the performance of program majors who express goals of attaining further graduate or professional training. Similar attention will be given to non-program majors who seek assistance in gaining admission to graduate school. As a measure of the department's success, the faculty will monitor Graduate School Admission and Job Placements of its graduates.

The X's in the matrix below indicate which tools, as numbered in the above list, are used to assess which sets of goals and objectives, as listed on the previous page.

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