UAS Geography Program Assessment Report

Academic Year 2011-12

Date: September 24, 2013

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Assessment methods:

1. Faculty meetings

   We held Geography faculty meetings in both the fall and spring semesters. These meetings were used to assess class offerings in our newly established Geography B.A. and B.S. degrees. Of primary concern was making sure that faculty offerings could meet all of the required courses for the two degree programs. In particular, it was necessary to develop a course in Natural Resource Management for the B.S. Geography students. This course was developed by faculty member Lori Sowa and was taught in Spring 2012. In addition, substantial time was devoted to the development of an assessment plan for the Geography Program. The assessment plan was ultimately developed in Spring 2012 by UA Geography faculty Sarah Ray, Eran Hood, and Sanjay Pyare and is attached as an addendum to this report.

2. Student Retention and GEOG Degree Statistics

   Majors and graduates

   During AY11-12 there were a total of 43 UAS students declared as Geography majors: 26 in the Geography BA and 17 in the Geography BS. Of the 26 Geography BA students, 7 are enrolled in the degree program that includes the Outdoor Studies concentration. We had two Geography graduates in AY 11-12, one with the BA degree and one with the BS degree. In addition, there were three GEOG graduates (two BS and one BA) in AY 10-11, which was the initial year of the program.

   Enrollment and student credit hours

   During AY11-12 there were 15 classes offered with the GEOG designator. One of those classes, GEOG 101 was offered at both Juneau and Ketchikan. In total, there were 159 students enrolled in GEOG classes for a total of 437 student credit hours.
Evaluation of trends

Academic year 11-12 was the first year that the GEOG degrees were being fully offered so there are no data from previous years to which these data can be compared. The GEOG graduates to date were students who transferred into GEOG degree programs from the ENVS degree which shares a number of class requirements thus allowing them to graduate with GEOG degrees despite the fact that the GEOG program has only been in existence for two years. The 43 GEOG majors include both new students who declared a GEOG major, and existing students who switched to the GEOG major from other degree programs. The data reported here will be used to assess program growth, student retention, and program resource needs in future years.

3. Student Tracking and Assessment

We did not do any tracking of student data related to student feedback on the GEOG program and outcomes for graduates (what they chose to do after graduation). A process for tracking student feedback and outcomes was established in our assessment plan that was finalized in AY 11-12 and these data will be included in future assessment reports. In particular, we will track alumni employment data and institute a declaration survey that will be administered in the capstone Geography Seminar (GEOG 490) each spring. This survey will be used as one metric to measure the effectiveness of the program.

4. Overview of GEOG program status

The program is growing rapidly as evidenced by the number of GEOG majors in the two degree programs. We expect that we will see a sharp rise in graduates in coming years if we maintain or increase the number of declared majors. Two primary goals identified by program faculty for future years are 1) to ensure that all of the courses in both GEOG degrees are locally available catalog courses and 2) to ensure that all of the required courses in the GEOG degrees are offered every year (although alternate years may be via distance from Ketchikan). In addition, program faculty recognize the need to amend some degree requirements so that they are aligned with the current GEOG faculty (i.e. that they reflect changes in class offerings resulting from faculty turnover and new hires). The GEOG faculty will address these issues in the AY 12-13 report.