



Comprehensive Report

2020 - 2021

Program (CAS) - GEOG - Geography (MS) - 110

General Information

Program Mission Statement

The M.S. program in Geography specialize in three broad areas including nature-society dynamics, cultural-historical geography, and geographic information science including unmanned aerial systems (UAS). This degree program is designed for students to master the theoretical knowledge and skills to design, implement, and present original geographic research in oral and written form. Therefore, master's students study geographic research methods and analysis, the history and philosophies of geography, and knowledge of current geographic research.

Program Information

Program Information - 2020 - 2021

Program Four Column Report

<i>Outcomes</i>	<i>Assessment Methods</i>	<i>Findings</i>	<i>Use of Findings (Actions)</i>
<p>Effective Communications - MS students will develop the ability to communicate geographic information effectively orally and in writing.</p> <p>Outcome Status: Active</p> <p>Planned Assessment Year: 2017 - 2018, 2018 - 2019, 2019 - 2020, 2020 - 2021, 2016 - 2017</p> <p>Start Date:</p> <p>Archived Date:</p> <p>Outcome Type: Skills</p> <p>Reason for Archival:</p>	<p>Analysis of Written Artifacts - All students undergoing a defense of some sort are assessed on their writing and oral presentation skills by all committee members (typically three faculty members on an MS committee). Rubrics are distributed to the committee members before the defense and are usually collected afterwards, although some faculty members return them later. As to the other component of assessment, all instructors of graduate-level courses are requested to provide all Geography student papers from one of their assignments, usually a term paper or project, for evaluation by paid summer artifact readers. These readers have both assessed artifacts in the past, and were given general instructions on the assessment of the artifacts. Instructors were not aware of any identifying student information, including level (MS or PhD), to avoid bias, although the readers were also contributors of some artifacts so likely recognized their courses and their students via their writing.</p> <p>* Learning Outcome Goal/Benchmark: Students will average 3.0 or better (on a 4.0 scale).</p> <p>Timeline for Assessment: Each Semester</p> <p>Other Assessment Type:</p>	<p>Reporting Period: 2020 - 2021</p> <p>Conclusion: 2 - Meets Minimum Program Expectations (Developing) Slightly Below Program Expectations Minimally adequate samples for analysis(09/09/2021)</p> <p>Number of Students Assessed: 5</p> <p>Number of Successful Students: 5</p> <p>How were students selected to participate in the assessment of this outcome?: All students undergoing a proposal defense of some sort are assessed on their writing skills (rubric E) by all committee members, which included 3 students this year. Also, all instructors of graduate-level courses are requested to provide all Geography MS student papers from one of their assignments, usually a term paper or project, for evaluation by paid summer artifact readers. This provided 10 assessments, but for just 5 unique students as several students were enrolled in several classes that were sampled. Via both processes, 5 of the 5 MS students in the program were assessed at least once this year.</p> <p>What do the findings suggest about student achievement of this learning outcome?: The results of this assessment were less consistent than last year. For the 1 student who underwent a thesis proposal defense, scores were more than satisfactory and averaged 3.67 (out of 4) on</p>	<p>Use of Findings (Actions): While these findings could indicate somewhat of a falling off of writing quality, this could be the result of new reviewers as well as students suffering from the effects of the pandemic. We will continue to encourage faculty to make writing quality an explicit aspect of their instruction and grading, as most do. Overall, these results are not worrisome considering the circumstances. (09/09/2021)</p>

Program Four Column Report

<i>Outcomes</i>	<i>Assessment Methods</i>	<i>Findings</i>	<i>Use of Findings (Actions)</i>
	<p>Related Documents: E written communication skills rubric final.pdf</p>	<p>Rubric E, with categories for Content (3.67), Organization (3.67), and Style/Mechanics (3.67). Overall, when committee members assess students' research proposal, the student performed quite well. With only one student defending a research proposal, it is not possible to discern significance. Additionally, the two faculty members who assessed 10 graduate seminar artifacts found writing quality to be lower than last year, with scores on the Content (2.45 compared to 3.25 last year), Organization (2.80 compared with 3.25 last year), and S&M (2.65 compared with 3.22 last year). Overall, the distribution of the 30 total scores (3 rubric categories for all 10 artifacts assessed) were 0 (3.33%), 1 (6.67%), 2 (36.7%), 3 (30%), and 4 (23.3%), compared to last year, somewhat greater distribution among levels than last year.</p> <p>Related Documents: E written communication skills rubric final.pdf</p>	
	<p>Oral Presentation - All students undergoing a defense of some sort are assessed on their oral presentation skills by all committee members (typically three on an MS committee). Rubrics are distributed to the committee members before the defense and are usually collected afterwards, although some faculty members return them later.</p> <p>* Learning Outcome Goal/Benchmark: Students will average 2.2 or better (on a 3.0 scale).</p> <p>Timeline for Assessment: Every semester</p>	<p>Reporting Period: 2020 - 2021</p> <p>Conclusion: 3 - Meets Program Expectations (Proficient) Steady performance. (09/09/2021)</p> <p>Number of Students Assessed: 2</p> <p>Number of Successful Students: 2</p> <p>How were students selected to participate in the assessment of this outcome?: All students undergoing a defense of some sort are assessed on their oral presentation skills by all committee members. This year 2 MS students underwent a defense of some</p>	<p>Use of Findings (Actions): Besides funding for conferences, the department typically holds practice sessions before major conferences, organized by the student organizations in the department, and these definitely need to continue. Getting more faculty to attend these sessions is a goal that will provide better quality critiques that could help students improve their presentation skills. (09/09/2021)</p>

Program Four Column Report

<i>Outcomes</i>	<i>Assessment Methods</i>	<i>Findings</i>	<i>Use of Findings (Actions)</i>
	<p>Other Assessment Type:</p> <p>Related Documents: J oral communication skills rubric.pdf</p>	<p>kind, with 1 of those 2 being assessed twice (proposal and final defense) for 3 total assessments.</p> <p>What do the findings suggest about student achievement of this learning outcome?:</p> <p>Overall, students are performing well, with the average scores (out of 3) in Content (2.67 compared to 2.78 last year), Organization (3.0 compared to 2.94 last year), and Delivery (2.89 compared to 2.80 last year) above the desired minimum average of 2.2, means that on the whole MS students perform fairly well in giving their presentations. No students received a 1 or 0 in any category, and the scores across the three categories are quite consistent which implies that there are no specific weak areas. That said, with only two students, it is difficult to determine significance.</p> <p>Related Documents: J oral communication skills rubric.pdf</p>	

Geographic Knowledge - MS students will develop apposite knowledge in geographic literature and research.

Outcome Status: Active

Planned Assessment Year: 2017 - 2018, 2018 - 2019, 2019 - 2020, 2020 - 2021, 2016 - 2017

Start Date:

Archived Date:

Outcome Type: Knowledge

Reason for Archival:

Course Embedded Assignments - Instructors of the respective courses assess their students on rubrics specific to the course, designed by them (5403 – Rubric B, 5413 – Rubric C; see departmental Graduate Assessment Plan). Instructors are provided with a copy of the rubric and instructions early in the semester, and are left to complete it at their leisure (either as the semester progresses or at the end) but are urged to separate student grades from achievements of specific benchmarks as indicated on the rubric.

*** Learning Outcome**

Reporting Period: 2020 - 2021

Conclusion: 3 - Meets Program Expectations (Proficient)

Overall satisfactory results. (09/09/2021)

Number of Students Assessed: 4

Number of Successful Students: 4

How were students selected to participate in the assessment of this outcome?:

All students enrolled in the classes for this learning objective are assessed by the instructor. This year there was 1 MS student in GEOG 5403 and 4 in GEOG 5413; one student took both classes

Use of Findings (Actions):

Instructors may develop assignments and in-class activities to improve students' abilities to understand and relate broader philosophies and social theories to geographic thought and research. (09/09/2021)

Program Four Column Report

<i>Outcomes</i>	<i>Assessment Methods</i>	<i>Findings</i>	<i>Use of Findings (Actions)</i>
	<p>Goal/Benchmark: Students will average 3.0 or better (on a 4.0 scale).</p> <p>Timeline for Assessment: Yearly</p> <p>Other Assessment Type:</p> <p>Related Documents: B 5403 rubric.doc C 5413 Rubric.doc</p>	<p>last year so there were 4 unique students but 5 combined assessments.</p> <p>What do the findings suggest about student achievement of this learning outcome?: In 5413, students had high levels of preparation and participation, providing for discussion with wide breadth and depth. With COVID-19, it was not practical to conduct an oral midterm exam (the norm the course), so the instructor used a written take-home. The students not only performed well on the exam but enjoyed the questions -- a pandemic pivot that worked very well. While only one student enrolled in 5403, so insufficient data exists to address this course. However, in both 5403 and 5413, students had the most difficulty in understanding as well as relating broader philosophies and social theories to geographic thought and research.</p> <p>Related Documents: B 5403 rubric.doc C 5413 Rubric.doc</p>	

Geographic Skills - MS students will develop skills in tools for geographic data collection and methods of analysis.

Outcome Status: Active

Planned Assessment Year: 2017 - 2018, 2018 - 2019, 2019 - 2020, 2020 - 2021, 2016 - 2017

Start Date:

Archived Date:

Outcome Type: Skills

Reason for Archival:

Course Embedded Assignments - Instructors of the respective courses assess their students on rubrics specific to the course, designed by them (5303 – Rubric A, 6313 – Rubric D; see departmental Graduate Assessment Plan). Instructors are provided with a copy of the rubric and instructions early in the semester, and are left to complete it at their leisure (either as the semester progresses or at the end) but are urged to separate student grades from achievements of specific benchmarks as

Reporting Period: 2020 - 2021

Conclusion: 3 - Meets Program Expectations (Proficient) Moderately Higher than Program Expectations with limited data to assess. (09/09/2021)

Number of Students Assessed: 2

Number of Successful Students: 2

How were students selected to participate in the assessment of this outcome?: Instructors of the respective courses assess their students on rubrics specific to the

Use of Findings (Actions): Instructor of GEOG 5303 is happy with student performance and believes the current course structure and design is effectively serving departmental needs. GEOG 6313 has not been taught for a few years.(09/09/2021)

Program Four Column Report

<i>Outcomes</i>	<i>Assessment Methods</i>	<i>Findings</i>	<i>Use of Findings (Actions)</i>
	<p>indicated on the rubric.</p> <p>* Learning Outcome Goal/Benchmark: Students will average 3.0 (on a 4.0 scale). Timeline for Assessment: Yearly for GEOG 5303 Every other year for GEOG 6313 Other Assessment Type:</p> <p>Related Documents: A 5303 Rubric.doc D 6313 Rubric.doc</p>	<p>course, designed by them. This year there was four PhD student in GEOG 5303 and GEOG 6313 was not taught.</p> <p>What do the findings suggest about student achievement of this learning outcome?: With only two students enrolled/assessed, it is hard to reach any conclusions that would lead to a use of the findings. One student did very well in the course, the other less so and trailed off towards the end, putting average scores on Rubric A averaging about 3.28 (compared to 2.4 last year) across all levels but with higher performance on outcome 1,2, and 3 (3.67 for each) and lower performance on outcome 6 (with a 2.67 average compared to 1.67 last year). GEOG 6313 was not offered.</p> <p>Related Documents: A 5303 Rubric.doc</p>	
<p>Geographic Research - MS students will develop geographic creative components or theses that marshal evidence, analyze data, and synthesize meaningful conclusions.</p> <p>Outcome Status: Active Planned Assessment Year: 2017 - 2018, 2018 - 2019, 2019 - 2020, 2020 - 2021, 2016 - 2017 Start Date: Archived Date: Outcome Type: Skills Reason for Archival:</p>	<p>Review of Thesis/Dissertation/Creative Component - All students undergoing a final defense are assessed on their research and writing skills by all committee members (typically three faculty members on an MS committee). Rubrics are distributed to the committee members at the beginning of the defense and are usually collected afterwards, although some faculty members return them later.</p> <p>* Learning Outcome Goal/Benchmark: Students will average 3.0 or better (on a 4.0 scale). Timeline for Assessment: Each Semester Other Assessment Type:</p>	<p>Reporting Period: 2020 - 2021 Conclusion: 3 - Meets Program Expectations (Proficient) Slightly Higher than Program Expectations.(09/09/2021) Number of Students Assessed: 2 Number of Successful Students: 2 How were students selected to participate in the assessment of this outcome?: All students who defended a thesis or creative component were assessed by their committee members. This year 2 students defended, one thesis and one creative component were defended. What do the findings suggest about student achievement of this learning outcome?: Given the small sample size, these</p>	<p>Use of Findings (Actions): Based on the performing somewhat higher than expected for this year's graduating MS students, no systemic changes are evident. (09/09/2021)</p>

Program Four Column Report

<i>Outcomes</i>	<i>Assessment Methods</i>	<i>Findings</i>	<i>Use of Findings (Actions)</i>
	Related Documents: F research skills CREATIVE COMPONENT rubric final 2010.pdf G masters research skills rubric final 2010.pdf	two students performed somewhat higher than expectations and their rubric scores averaged from a low of 3.0 (out of 4) to a high of 4.0. Thus, both performed well across all categories on Rubric G. With only two students, it is difficult to determine what these results suggest beyond that students in the program appear to continue to be successful in meeting research skills expectations.	
		Related Documents: G masters research skills rubric final 2010.pdf F research skills CREATIVE COMPONENT rubric final 2010.pdf	

Annual Executive Summary

Annual Executive Summaries - 2020 - 2021

Executive Summary

Program Assessment Coordinator
Rebecca Sheehan

Plan Review and Approval

Date Current Plan Was Reviewed and Approved
08/14/2018

Date of Future Plan Review and Approval
08/14/2023

Summary of Assessment Findings

Describe overall assessment findings and faculty members' interpretation of the assessment results

Overall, results indicate that student performance is fairly consistent, particularly during a challenging pandemic, and that while we would always strive to see students achieving higher scores and performance, the average scores (and performance of most students) are at an acceptable level for most learning outcomes. Ultimately, a graduate student's curriculum follows a very specialized path beyond the few core courses, and they undertake a lot of independent work, so effecting curricular changes that can target weak areas (like writing or oral presentations) is especially challenging at the graduate level. Overall, faculty seem satisfied with the general results but will continue to focus on teaching writing skills through examples and extensive feedback on written work.

Dissemination of Findings

Describe the individual(s) or committee responsible for reviewing and interpreting assessment data

The Graduate Coordinator serves a dual role as Graduate Outcomes Assessment Coordinator. The Associate Department Head disseminates and gathers the rubrics from defenses. The Graduate Coordinator gathers the rubrics for the core

courses (Rubrics A-D), and sends out repeated calls for artifact submission for Learning Outcome 1. She then collects, inputs, and preliminarily evaluates the data and computes summary statistics.

Describe the process for sharing and discussing assessment findings with program faculty

The Assessment Coordinator writes and circulates (via e-mail) a draft report for review and comment by all faculty in the department. This is done in early August in advance of an all-day planning conference held by the department the week before the fall semester begins, and discussion about the results, what they mean, and what to do with them subsequently occurs and is incorporated into a final draft of this report. This final draft is sent around a second time for final review before submission.

Program Improvements Based on Assessment

Based on data collected this year, what changes are being considered or planned for the program?

At this point in time, no concrete ideas for making any changes to the program have emerged.

Based on this year's findings, what (if any) changes are planned for the assessment process?

No changes are planned for 2021-22 at this time.

Describe the process for implementing these changes/planned program improvements

Not applicable.

Program Improvements Made in the Last Year

Course Improvements

"Other" Improvements

Goals for the Coming Year

Get more colleagues involved in both assessment generally and in developing ideas to improve student performance.

Is this program report ready for review?

Yes

This program report could not be completed due to low student enrollment

List all individuals associated with this report preparation

Rebecca Sheehan

Related Documents