

Departmental Committee Meeting Agenda

Friday 2/12/16, 10 am – 1 pm

Attendees: Chris Justice, Katie Doyle, Vivre Bell, Keith Yearwood, Sergii Skakun, Brian Barker, Hongmin Zhou, Julie Silva, Giovanni Baiocchi, Alexandra Tyukavina, Kristen Bergery, Matt Hansen, Kathleen Stewart, Eric Kasischke, Naijun Zhou, Ruibo Han, Jack Ma, Kuishuang Feng, Rachel Berndtson, Varada Vaidya, Anil Kommareddy, Mary Mitkish, Klaus Hubacek, Tatiana Loboda, Rachel Marks-Moore, Ralph Dubayah, Martha Geores, Steve Hancock, Delin Fang, Jeff Pickering, Patrick McDonough, Rob Sohlberg, Louis Giglio, Wenjuan Shen, Laixiang Sun, Qian Wang, Elle Lim, George Hurtt, Jonathan Resop, Ben Bederson (VP Learning Initiatives).

- Introductions of new faculty and staff – Justice
- Recent Developments and Chair's Update – Justice
 - Accept previous meeting minutes and approval of agenda
 - We are in the process of hiring a new Assistant Professor for the GIS Center
 - Please send feedback to Kathleen Stewart regarding the 2 candidates who were interviewed (Ran Wei, Grant McKenzie)
 - Will be hiring 3 remote sensing positions in next the 2.5 yrs – Dean Ball is in agreement
 - We are in the process of hiring another Research Coordinator, and are currently conducting interviews
 - Emails received from the Provost and President Loh:
 - Lyterati is required by all faculty in order to receive merit
 - Everyone is required to do OPA
 - Merit may be granted this year, in anticipation all Faculty should submit a one page memo saying why you believe you deserve a special excellence) merit + your CV
 - PRDs due April 18
 - We're increasing the graduate student stipend by \$1k pa (date TBD)
 - We're proposing an increase for RF teaching at 10% of 9 month salary equivalent, with a cap of \$7500, as part of our teaching PTK policy. *This will need to be approved by academic affairs.*
 - Regarding the Chair's Review, Chair had a discussion with the Dean and Associate Dean
 - The Review called for better communication within the Dept.
 - Will organize a "State of the Department" address (once per year) and an associated "Townhall" with the Associate Chair to keep everyone informed and answer any questions.
 - Anil Kommareddy has developed a Department HPC cluster
 - Resource available to all faculty
 - Buy-in will be required for large project users
 - **ACTION:** Send notice around to Dept. explaining how this will work [Kommareddy]

- BSOS has informed us that we need to establish more of a dialogue on issues of diversity, ethnicity and race
- Dean Ball has suggested that we explore MOOCS (Massive Open Online Course)
 - Ben Bederson (Associate Provost of Learning Initiatives) gave a short presentation on the benefits of MOOCS
- Campus initiatives:
 - *Big Data* – tightly coupled with the cyber-security initiative
 - FBI headquarters could be moved to Greenbelt (from D.C.),
 - Dean Ball is working to make BSOS a recipient
 - GEOG is helping to develop a strategy for BSOS Computational Social Science
 - *Climate Summit* – May 4th on campus/Stamp will be an “open day” for MD sessions
 - GEOG developing two sessions one on Poverty and Equity and one on Carbon Monitoring/Modeling
 - Giovanni has been attending all meetings, and the Post Paris Conference, which are organized by School of Public Policy
- Renovations update: We are currently moving people from 1158 to the second floor and in the process we are trying to improve that space
 - 1158 will become a new seminar room
 - Starting construction on CGIS soon (in 1124, which will be out of commission during renovation)
 - *Please send any suggestions on the presented layout/technology to Vivre Bell* (e.g. magnetic, glass boards instead of cork, phone w/ bluetooth and four mics, etc.)
- AAG is coming up (29 March – 2 April)
 - If students require funding, please contact Rachel B.
 - MPS will have a booth and we need student volunteers – please contact Kristen Bergery to sign up
- Associate Chair Issues – Dubayah
 - We continue to get scheduling/classes in order, working with teaching groups is a priority
 - Regarding the undergraduate tracks, perhaps we should add a data/science track?
 - Currently “hot” career track for students, we could call it “Big Data/Data Science”
 - **ACTION:** Discuss further at next Dept. meeting [ALL]
- Undergraduate Committee – Loboda
 - One issue: Assessment needed for Mid-Atlantic Accreditation (see undergraduate attachment below)
 - Discuss at next dept. meeting and vote on it (feedback is requested)
 - Pre-Assessments: will be required before course is taken to establish level prior to course commencement
 - Pre- and post-test necessary to improve our courses (better than letter-based outcome)

- **ACTION:** Review attached proposed UG course assessments methodology and discuss at next meeting – [FACULTY]
- Undergraduate Director Academic Issues – Luna
 - Additional interns enlisting
 - Winter term remains the same (no increase on enrollment)
 - Maryland Day coming up – Saturday, April 30th – currently organizing
 - Career fairs – started to charge companies a \$75 fee for attendance
- Graduate Committee – Baiocchi
 - Discussing option for research assistants to TA
 - Discussed before Christmas and voted on it at retreat
 - TAs should shadow professor, help develop syllabus, grade papers, and learn how to teach well with goal of becoming instructor of record
 1. If listed as instructor of record, they will need to be paid more money than as a regular TA
- Graduate Director Academic Issues – Sun
 - Received Dean's Fellowship support from BSOS – they matched us on funding
 - Students must respond by April 15th (letters that went out requested response by the end of Feb.)
 - 10 offers made and will make 2 more
 - Should we initiate a signing bonus to entice strong students?
- MOOCs on campus – Ben Bederson and Bill Aarhus (11:15 am)
 - Ben manages the teaching/learning center on campus, which promotes efficient, engaging teaching/learning on campus
 - Encourages MOOCs, etc.
 - Designed to teach at scale: must be structured so as not to require one-on-one interaction (student/teacher), thus can have 10k+ students in one class
 - Successful thus far and more specializations are being developed
 - Coursera.org/umd (often free, but UMD charging small fee \$50)
 - Valuable because:
 1. Such branding provides (international) visibility for UMD
 2. High value credentialing/certifications
 3. Making money – 40% goes to Provost, 15% to College, 25% to Professor, 20% to Program
 - RFP = \$10k
- Research Director Issues – Hurtt
 - Research volume has increased
 - JGCCC going into phase 2 – secured another round of funding (internal meeting recently, and Goddard meeting to go over future plans)
 - Planning to grow on the education side, working for additional funding from Goddard (for grad students)

- 6 RF promotions currently under review, (decision by end of spring)
 - Folks will be notified at that time/after recommendation to the Chair and Dean
 - Getting push back from campus for use of the title “Post Doc”
 - If you’ve been a Research Associate for 3+ yrs it’s time to move up
- Research Faculty Committee – Giglio
 - Nothing to report
- FS (FRA) Committee – Sohlberg
 - No meeting yet this year, but the Hartwick Esthetics Committee met, attempting to improve Hartwick
 - FS promotions went through before holidays
- Diversity Task Force – Hansen
 - Kim Nickerson declined our SRI proposal, but we will resubmit
 - If you have funds for a student to intern over the summer, contact Matt Hansen or Ron Luna
- Computer Task Force – Hansen
 - Anil gave a presentation on the new Department cluster
- MPS Advisory Committee Update – Stewart
 - MPS GIS forging ahead – numbers are up, stronger applicants, 26 students admitted thus far
 - Many conferences coming up, so we need to attend them and rent a booth as a means of increasing outreach
 - MPS China is moving ahead – will get update soon
 - MPS GEOINT is in the final stages of approval – Ruibo Han working on a budget
- GIS Center Update – Stewart
 - Faculty hire is currently underway.
 - Developing proposals, hoping to see some return
 - Ruibo did two short courses over the winter term (10 students) – positive feedback, role forward with short courses and with MPS GEOINT continuing.
 - Renovations/plans moving forward.
- Any Other Business
 - Newsletter will include authorship once more
 - Web Site when faculty publish a paper we would be happy to include a brief News note
 - Brian Melchior Fund – raised \$25k for an Endowed Scholarship. Going forward we will have \$1k pa to go towards our BS/MS Masters students to attend a Conference or Field work/Visit

Upcoming Events

- Lunar New Year Celebration February 18th 4 pm
- Departmental Committee Meeting March 4th
- Spring Break March 14 - 18th
- AAG March 29th – April 1st
- Career Day April 1st 9 am to noon
- Departmental Committee Meeting April 29th
- Geographical Sciences Graduation May 20th at 9:30 am

Undergraduate Committee Meeting

Friday, January 29, 2016

11:00 AM - 1:00 pm

LeFrak 1124

Minutes

Present: Tatiana Loboda (Chair), George Hurtt, Erik Kasischke, Keith Yearwood, Byron Maroquinn, Amanda Hall

The committee discussed a new methodology for departmental course assessments. These course assessments serve two major purposes. First, they serve as the method for improving our Undergraduate program. Second, they are used for assessment reporting at the College and University levels.

Following the best practices recommendations found in the recent pedagogical literature and internal guidelines from the University we suggest implementing a pre-test/post-test sequence of assessments designed specifically to evaluate the students' performance in the class mapped to the learning outcomes outlined in the syllabus. In this approach we will request the course instructor to design two in-class assessments. Assessment 1 (pre-test) should be designed to evaluate the competency of students in two broad categories: 1) questions evaluating the base knowledge required for the course to build on (if specific knowledge is expected and pre-requisites are defined); and 2) questions mapped to specific learning outcomes set in the course. The first set of questions will serve as an indicator for how well-prepared the students are for the course and if specific knowledge base or skills are lacking. The second set of questions will serve as a base line for evaluating: a) if the specific learning outcomes are appropriate for the course (e.g. students' ability to answer these questions with a passing grade before the course is initiated indicates that the course contents should be upgraded); b) how much progress students make during the course (established by comparing pre-test and post-test results). Assessment 2 (post-test) presents only the set of questions designed to evaluate the success rate of achieving the learning outcomes for the course and the amount of progress individual students made during the course. The post-test assessment can/should represent the second subset of questions used in pre-test assessment.

We recommend that the pre-test and post-test assessments are developed by the instructor of the course and are reviewed and approved by the teaching teams. To enable this mechanism, the Undergraduate Committee (in consultation with the Teaching Teams) should designate the courses to be assessed at the first Undergraduate Committee meeting in the Spring semester. Whenever possible, the UC members should recommend 1 Physical, 1 Human, 1 Methods, 1 Quantitative course for the 5-year assessment stretch.

We recommend that both pre-test and the post-test assessments are given out during the class time, used by the instructor to discuss the contents with students, but are not used as a grading event. The post-assessment questions should be explicitly mapped to the learning outcomes

identified by the instructor. The instructor may choose to grade the assessment questions on his/her own. Alternatively, the instructor may provide the key/grading outline to the advising office and leave it to the advising office personnel to complete the grading.

Student competency will be assessed following the established categories:

1 – not acceptable; 2 – limited; 3 – acceptable; 4 – proficient; 5 - accomplished

Final course assessment will be considered acceptable if it meets all of the criteria specified below:

1) 80% of students pass the preparedness pre-test (“acceptable” or above) - a failure to pass this metric should result in revision of the preparatory courses to ensure the adequate preparation of the student body for subsequent course work

2) 80% of student should pass the post-test (“acceptable” or above) – a failure to pass this metric should result in course revision

3) 80% of students will improve their performance according to the Learning Outcomes as compared between pre-test and post-test by 2 levels (wherever possible) – a failure to pass this metric should result in course revision.

The assessment results will be aggregated by the following cohorts of Undergraduate students:

1) GEOG, 2) ENSP, 3) GIS , 4) all Undergraduate majors.

For the next round of assessment, the committee recommends:

1) GEOG301 (Advanced Geog Env Systems)

2) GEOG306 (Intro to Quant Methods in Geography)

3) GEOG373 (Intro to GIS)

4) GEOG332 (Economic Geography)

Back up – 376, 472 (mapping the learning outcomes to the components of the final project).