

Departmental Committee Meeting Minutes

Friday 9/27/19

9:00 am – 12:00 pm, Room 1158

Attendees:

Gioanni Baiocchi, Brian Barker, Vivre Bell, Kristen Bergery, Rachel Berndston, Meridith Brown, Leila DeFloriani, Laura Duncanson, Sinead Farrell, Kusi Huang Feng, Ruibo Han, Matt Hansen, George Hurtt, Chris Justice, John Keniston, Anil Kommareddy, Shunlin Liang, Tatiana Loboda, Jack Ma, Byron Marroquin, Janet Nackoney, Taylor Oshan, Douglas Rao, Jonathan Resop, Julie Silva, Sergii Skakun, Kathleen Stewart, Laixiang Sun, Alison Thieme

Faculty Absent:

Ralph Dubayah sabbatical

Recent Developments and Chair's Update- Chris Justice

Previous meeting minutes accepted and agenda approved.

International visitors need to be integrated into the department. It is important to keep them engaged and help them. They are introduced at Departmental Committee meetings. Please say hello when you see them in the Department. If anyone has a visa related issue, please contact Eugina Becton or email geog-hr@umd.edu.

The Hartwick building has been sold and we will need to vacate by next September. We are working with campus on space options.

Campus is in the process of selecting a new cloud based enterprise system (ERP) for human resources and student information systems. The current system is 35 years old and does not work well. It is estimated it will be five years before the new system is fully operational.

Julie Silva has agreed to be the Institutional Review Board (IRB) liaison for the Department. The IRB is a committee that performs ethical review of proposed human subjects research. If you have any IRB questions, please contact Julie.

BSOS is piloting a Faculty Dependent Care Travel Fund. This program will offset, up the \$1,000, the financial burden of dependent care incurred by faculty members in primary caretaker roles when they attend conferences or field work. I encourage everyone to apply.

Rebecca Traldi is working on sustainability projects, including recycling single plastic use.

The Graduate Ambassador Program has been very successful and rewarding. Graduate students have been to two universities in El Salvador in 2018 and to Chang Mai University in Thailand in 2019 to teach and conduct seminars. We are proposing having five graduate students going to China in 2020 as a part of the Graduate Ambassador Program.

All faculty members are encouraged to contribute to the department website by submitting news items and new publications.

An external review takes place every 5 years. External reviewers from peer institutions visit the department. The external reviewers will read our internal review, meet with faculty and will prepare a report. Everyone is encouraged to work on the internal review documentation and take part in the Undergraduate committee meetings as a part of the preparation for external review.

Associate Chair Issues - Tatiana Laboda

The Graduate Assistant Performance Evaluation and Funding Renewal Policy has been developed and provides a tool for assessing GA/TA performance.

Policy was discussed and the motion to approve the policy was approved: 27 yes, 0 no, 2 abstentions.

The department of Geographical Sciences offers up to 4 years of graduate student funding, performance and funding permitting. Funding is not guaranteed past four years. Faculty are encouraged to arrange meetings with GA/RA/TA to understand mutual expectations.

November 1 is the deadline to inform graduate students if they are not performing well and will not be renewed for the next academic year. Students can appeal this decision.

Graduate students are encouraged to look for more funding opportunities to support their research apart from department funds.

Undergraduate Committee-Julie Silva

The decline in the number of majors has affected both GEOG and GIS on the intake of students in our classes. We have lost nearly 100 majors compared to 2015.

The committee is considering if GEOG 201 and GEOG 211 should be combined into a 4-credit course instead of having as separate courses in different semesters. The teaching team will discuss this in detail and come up with a proposal.

Goals of the committee:

Focus on retention and recruitment of students. The quantity and quality of majors are of great concern. AAG has put out a manifesto for recruiting majors.

Faculty selfie challenge:

Faculty are encouraged to take a selfie with one of our undergraduate majors and send pictures and introduction about the student.

Areas of improvement:

Retain and recruit students and use them as word of mouth. Be friendly and welcoming.

Writing on twitter and Instagram accounts asking students to share interesting things about their experience in the department.

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80 **Graduate Director-Laixiang Sun**
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82 There are two main issues that have been revealed in the statistics for the internal review.
83 With the increase in part-time PhD students, the time to completion has extended and
84 averages at 6.8 years. We have a larger number of international students than national
85 students applying to the PhD program. This needs to be explored further in the internal
86 review document.

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88 **Graduate Committee – Kathleen Stewart**
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90 It has been proposed that the graduate seminar series could include job talks, professional
91 development and graduate student funding opportunities.

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93 Graduate committee is working on the draft of the internal review document with the
94 Graduate Director.

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97 **Research Director – George Hurtt**
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99 There has been a 40% decline in majors. There is a disconnect between our incredible
100 research success and the classroom.

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102 **Research Faculty – Kuishuang Feng**
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104 The factors to be used by the Research Faculty Merit Committee have been updated. The
105 motion to accept the revised factors was approved 27 yes, 0 no and 0 abstentions.

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107 It was noted that being separated in two building caused issues with attendance at meetings.
108 Research faculty are urged to attend the research faculty meetings and are free to schedule
109 more meetings as needed.

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112 **Computer Task Force-Anil Kommareddy**
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114 HPC comp-ops is being designed so that the HPC is sustainable and the funds will be
115 available for necessary upgrades. We are working with campus to get the model approved.

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117 Campus has yet to implement an Amazon Web Services policy.

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119 The VDI environment in the computer teaching labs will be upgraded this year.

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121 For any IT support questions, please contact geoghelp@umd.edu.

122 It is recommended that the graduate orientation to department computing can be held every
123 semester instead of once in a year.

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125 **GIS Center (CGIS) Update-Kathleen Stewart**
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127 A search for the position of Assistant Professor is currently underway and there are several
128 strong candidates.
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130 **Center for Remote Sensing Excellence (CRSE) Update – Chris Justice**
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132 There was a meeting on the CRSE where details related to a recent visit to Wuhan were
133 discussed. We are considering merging of the CGIS and CRSE to make it an international
134 center. A kickoff of the CRSE is planned with our international partners for next year.
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136 **Plan of Organization – Chris Justice**
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138 The Plan of Organization needs to be reviewed every five years. Our plan is being updated to
139 include approved changes in departmental policy and procedures and updated to reflect new
140 positions, procedures and for consistency. It will be circulated before the next Departmental
141 Committee meeting. The Plan of Organization will be included with the internal review
142 documents.
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144 **Internal Review and Retreat – Chris Justice**
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146 The Retreat will be an opportunity to discuss courses, majors, marketing, branding, the
147 internship program and international and professional developments.
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149 **Workshop on Geospatial Data Science – Sergii Skakun**

150 A workshop is planned for April 2020. Need to discuss how to move forward with limited
151 funding.
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153 **Other Business: Department Advisory Committee – Julie Silva**

154 Statistics were provided about past membership of the Departmental Advisory Committee.
155 The campus requirement that one member has to be an Assistant Professor meant that some
156 of the faculty had served on the committee repeatedly. With the recent hire of new Assistant
157 Professors, this will hopefully not happen again. It was noted that new representation
158 provides the opportunity for new ideas. It was agreed that for future votes, past membership
159 would be listed for all nominees, not just the previous committee membership.