

## Geography Department 2012-2013 Assessment Plan (Draft) (By Steve Graves)

Students who graduate from CSUN Geography Department are supposed to have acquired 1) a knowledge set 2) a skill set 3) and dispositions that commensurate with our expectations for a graduate of our program. Our assessment task is to devise means capable of measuring student growth in, or acquisition of knowledge, skills and dispositions. Below is a draft proposition for expanding and coordinating our assessment tool kit.

1. Knowledge: To assess knowledge programmatically is difficult in a disciplinary based program, but there are means by which we can measure student retention of basic, core knowledge.
  - a. Each 100-level GE course will administer a pre-semester knowledge assessment quiz containing questions that will be embedded in midterm/final exams.
  - b. Typically, this sort of embedded assessment works best for course assessment, but we can use the same questions to assess students in the program in both the 300 (gateway) and 490 (capstone) courses.
  - c. Questions regarding the 'awareness' of geography skills (cartography, GIS, field techniques) could be incorporated into the test bank to demonstrate the significant growth curve students display in skills.
  - d. Shall it be mandatory for all 100-level GE course instructors?
  - e. Testbank questions can be shared among all faculty via MOODLE.
  - f. Can a "mother course" be created for all 100-level GE courses?
  - g. Can a "grandmother course" be created for all Geography Department Courses?
2. Skills: Currently, we try to assess a large variety of program SLO's via the 490 Capstone paper. This device is appropriate for assessing some SLO, but for others, it falls short. A failed experiment with LiveText was attempted around 2005, but a lack of participation by faculty and a the cost associated with the software doomed the program. A cheap alternative is proposed below.
  - a. Each student will be required to maintain a Google based e-portfolio using a template provided by the Department of Geography.
  - b. Here's the link: <https://sites.google.com/site/csungeogportfolio/>
    - i. There are questions about the ADA compliance of these Google-based webpages, so CSUN does not support the software. GIS and cartography as a rule are largely non-compliant as well; so the point is partially moot for geographers. Alternative software is available for students with disabilities should the need arise.
  - c. Students, upon visiting this site will be prompted to use this site as a template for their own website/e-portfolio. They will be instructed in its use in Geography 300. Dr. Graves (or whomever teaches 300) will build a roster of majors and their portfolio addresses that can be shared with the assessment team.
  - d. Under ideal circumstances, each course a student takes in the Geography Department at CSUN should require at least one addition to the student e-portfolio.

- e. When the student enrolls in Geography 490, the student would then submit for inspection their e-portfolio web address to the assessment committee via their 490 instructor.
- f. The assessment team would assess student e-portfolios with a single, inclusive rubric that would address many of the shortcomings of the current 'capstone paper only' assessment strategy.
- g. A single database could be created and shared among faculty on the geography server.

#### Questions and concerns

1. Can we get faculty "buy-in"? E portfolios don't work if students are not required/strongly encouraged to maintain them in most/all program courses.
2. Too much work for the assessment team? Could a broader assessment team (full faculty?) be assembled to reduce the workload and broaden the network of contributing opinions?
3. Is the MOODLE toolkit robust/flexible enough to allow a seamless adoption of embedded questions.
4. How to encourage/enforce part-time faculty to adopt tools?