The primary mission of Geography Program, as identified in the self-study for its 2005 program review, is to provide students in the geography major (B.A.) with a solid undergraduate liberal arts education focused on geography. A secondary goal is to prepare majors with the knowledge and skills needed to pursue a graduate degree in geography or to obtain employment in a geography-related field. The Geography Department has been formally assessing its performance in these areas via its own internal assessment process since 2000-2001. The process has undergone continuous modification since then, most notably as part of a 2002-2003 university-wide assessment initiative undertaken by Academic Affairs under the direction of Linda Buckley, and in response to recommendations from the Department’s 2005 program review. The current assessment process described below builds on these earlier efforts.

Goals and Learning Outcomes

The Geography Department has identified the following goals and learning objectives for students in the undergraduate Geography program:

Goals: Students completing the B.A. degree in Geography will:

1. Have an understanding of the nature of Geography as an academic discipline, including familiarity with its history and principal subfields;

2. Demonstrate (a) a knowledge of the basic concepts of physical and human geography and (b) competency in selected geographic techniques;

3. Display competency in the graphic expression of geographic/spatial data (maps, photographs, graphs, data bases);

4. Display competency in written expression with respect to clarity, logical expression, and effective argument;

5. Understand and apply the basic research skills, including the ability to (a) critically evaluate the research of others and (b) effectively design a research project on one’s own.

6. Acquire knowledge and skills sufficient to allow one to pursue advanced study in geography or find employment in geography-related field.
**Learning Outcomes:** Various learning outcomes are identified to help the student achieve the above goals. The outcomes reflect the different levels of learning set forth in Bloom’s taxonomy, including basic knowledge and comprehension, application, analysis and evaluation, and synthesis. Key outcomes, along with the means for their assessment, are found in the accompanying table. Although the learning outcomes are addressed in required courses throughout the major, there are nonetheless key courses that play a central role in helping students achieve these outcomes. These are also identified in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Outcome</th>
<th>Relevant Course(s)</th>
<th>Means of Assessment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>One</strong></td>
<td>GEOG 1, GEOG 2, GEOG 11, GEOG 118 and upper-division breadth requirements</td>
<td>Baseline knowledge quiz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify and describe basic concepts and patterns in physical and human geography.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Two</strong></td>
<td>GEOG 102, GEOG 190</td>
<td>Baseline knowledge quiz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Display knowledge of the history of Geography as an academic discipline and a familiarity with its contemporary models, approaches, and theories.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Three</strong></td>
<td>GEOG 3 and the upper-division techniques courses</td>
<td>GEOG 190 senior project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrate competency in one or more of the basic geographic tools/techniques for data collection, display, and analysis.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Four</strong></td>
<td>GEOG 3, GEOG 105, GEOG 107, GEOG 109, GEOG 110, GEOG 163</td>
<td>Baseline knowledge quiz; GEOG 190 senior project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrate graphic literacy in the use and analysis of maps, graphs, and spatial data sets.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Five</strong></td>
<td>GEOG 102, GEOG 190</td>
<td>GEOG 190 senior project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Show written competency in the description and analysis of geographic subject matter.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Six</strong></td>
<td>GEOG 102, GEOG 190</td>
<td>GEOG 190 senior project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analyze and evaluate scholarly writing within the discipline.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Seven</strong></td>
<td>GEOG 190</td>
<td>GEOG 190 senior project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Synthesize geographic models, data, and methodologies in research design.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Eight</strong></td>
<td>The major as a whole</td>
<td>Graduating senior interview; periodic alumni survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acquire the overall competencies necessary to success in graduate school and post-graduation careers.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Methods of Assessment

The Geography Department’s assessment process is designed (1) to evaluate the degree to which students in the Geography B.A. program achieve the goals and outcomes above and (2) to identify potential areas for improvement. While course-level assessment of student performance takes place within the courses themselves, assessment of student performance at the programmatic level employs an additional set of assessment measures. Central to the Department’s assessment process are two courses: GEOG 102 (Ideas & Skills in Geography), a gateway course taken by all students during their first fall semester in the major, and GEOG 190 (Senior Research Seminar in Geography) a capstone course, which requires the student to synthesize much of what he or she has learned as a major through design of an individualized research project. The latter course is taken during the student’s final semester before graduation. Based on recommendations from the Department’s last program review, these two classes have become central to the Geography assessment process.

In all, the Department employs the following five assessment measures:

1. **Baseline Quiz**: This instrument assesses student knowledge of basic geographic concepts and facts. It consists of approximately 40 objective questions and is brief, taking only about 20 minutes to administer. A version of it is given to students in both the gateway course (GEOG 102) and the senior seminar (GEOG 190). Its purpose is twofold: to identify the student’s level of basic geographic knowledge at both the time of entering the program and at the end of his or her time in the major (thus measuring “value added”), and to identify those areas in which student knowledge is deemed deficient and corrective measures may be called for. The quiz contents are divided more or less evenly among topics in physical geography, human geography, and graphic literacy (maps and graphs).

   *Faculty responsible:* Prof. Krabacher

2. **Senior Research Project**: The central focus of the capstone course, GEOG 190 (Senior Research Seminar in Geography), is design and implementation of a research project. In doing so students have to complete the various phases of the research process (articulating the research question/hypothesis, literature review, selection of methodologies, data collection and analysis, graphical presentation, discussion of findings), and report their findings in a paper and oral presentation. The exercise is one of synthesis, requiring the student to draw upon the broad range of skills and knowledge acquired in the major. A standardized grading rubric based on a model proposed by the Center for Teaching and Learning was employed in the evaluation for the first time in Spring 2008.

   *Faculty responsible:* Profs. Datel and Wanket

3. **Senior Seminar Reflective Evaluation**: Students in the GEOG 190 senior seminar are asked to complete a questionnaire as part of the end-of-semester course evaluation. While most questions relate to the student’s GEOG 190 experience, some of them are broader in scope, asking topics such as: subject matter in which students felt it would have been desirable to have had greater experience prior to taking the seminar, prior
courses that were most useful to them in completing the seminar research project, etc. These responses are useful in identifying student perceptions of curriculum strengths and weaknesses.  *Faculty responsible:* Profs. Datel and Wanket

4. **Graduating Senior Exit Interview:** At the end of each semester, the department chair invites graduating seniors to participate in an unstructured conversation about their experiences in the major. This ordinarily takes place in a relaxed setting, usually over pizza and beverages in the University Union. The purpose is to assess the level of student satisfaction with the major and identify what students perceive as strengths, weaknesses, and desirable changes. *Faculty responsible:* Department Chair

5. **Periodic Alumni Survey:** The Office of Institutional Research conducts a survey of each program’s alumni on a regular basis. Geography’s next OIR-conducted survey is scheduled for 2010. These surveys assess alumni perceptions of (1) the usefulness of the major in realizing post-graduation academic and/or career goals and (2) the strengths and weaknesses of the Geography curriculum, given the perspective lent by time. Because these OIR surveys occur only every six years, the department has started to experiment with conducting its own e-mail based surveys of recent graduates. *Faculty responsible:* Department Chair

The Geography Department’s assessment process has been undergoing regular modification over the past several years, and several pieces only recently have fallen into place. For example, only during the past three years has GEOG 190 been offered in the current format that requires an integrative capstone experience. In addition, the standardized grading rubric for measure #2 used in GEOG 190 was only introduced in Spring 2008. As another example, although the baseline quiz (measure #1) has been administered in GEOG 190 for several years, the Department only started to administer it in GEOG 102 in Fall 2006. Thus, the ability to examine changes over time will improve over the next few years.

**Feedback**

Assessment is useful only to the extent that the results are used to inform curricular and programmatic planning. The primary means by which the Department incorporates assessment results into its planning is through the annual faculty retreat. Initiated in 2002, the Geography Department annual retreat is held in the week before the fall semester begins. At the retreat, broader issues concerning the program and its curriculum are discussed and needed changes or modifications identified. Assessment results inform a significant part of that discussion.

**Assessment Cycle**

The Geography program’s annual assessment activities occur over a 12-month cycle, beginning in the fall semester of a given academic year and culminating at the annual Geography Department faculty retreat in August just prior the opening of the fall semester of the following academic year. Thus:
• Fall Semester  Baseline quiz administered in gateway course (GEOG 102); capstone course evaluations conducted if course (GEOG 190) is offered in the fall; graduating seniors interviewed.

• Spring Semester  Capstone course evaluations conducted; informal e-mail surveys sent to recent alumni; graduating seniors interviewed.

• August  Geography faculty retreat: discussion/analysis of assessment data and possible program changes identified in response; possible modifications to assessment process proposed.

For the 2008-2009 academic year, therefore, the assessment cycle began with the Fall 2008 semester and will conclude at the Geography faculty retreat on August 24, 2009.

The survey of alumni is conducted in cooperation with the Office of Institutional Research on a six-year cycle. The most recent survey was in 2004; the next is scheduled for 2010.

PART II: 2008-2009 ASSESSMENT OUTCOMES

As explained above, the 2008-2009 assessment cycle will not be completed until the Geography Department faculty retreat takes place in August 2009. As a result, this section contains:

• Summary of actions taken based on discussion of 2007-2008 assessment results.
• Summary of the 2008-2009 assessment results for selected learning outcomes.
• Possible points for consideration at the August 2009 Geography Department retreat.

Department Response to 2007-2008 Assessment Results

During 2007-2008 Learning Outcomes #1, #4, #5, #7, and #8 were selected for assessment. The detailed discussion of those assessment results is in last year’s report. Here we report on our response to those results, which we formulated at our August 2008 retreat.

Learning Outcome #1: Identify and describe basic concepts and patterns in physical and human geography.

This outcome was measured using the department’s “baseline quiz.” The faculty discussed the fact that quiz scores in the subarea of physical geography were lower for the group of GEOG 190 students (seniors) tested than for the group of GEOG 102 students (mostly juniors) tested. Some of this, we agreed, can be attributed to fact that we are testing two different sets of students. We decided that we would like to see at least another year of data (see discussion of this in the next section) before taking any action to address this situation.

We discussed the quiz itself and agreed to submit new questions, each of which should concern core geographic concepts or facts, for Prof. Krabacher’s consideration and use. This was subsequently done.
We reviewed the very low performance by students in both GEOG 102 and GEOG 190 on questions dealing with the following topics:

- Köppen climate classification system
- The U.S. Public Land Survey System
- Primary, secondary, and tertiary classifications of economic activity

Faculty teaching these topics in both thematic and regional courses were alerted to the need to be sure they are adequately covered.

**Learning Outcome #4: Demonstrate graphic literacy in the use and analysis of maps, graphs, and spatial data sets.**

Overall, student performance on the baseline quiz questions in this area was weaker than we would have liked, while student use of graphics in their senior projects was deemed adequate. No action was considered necessary at this point, given that

- Prof. Krabacher had already committed to providing more work with mapped data in GEOG 102 starting in Fall 2008, and
- Our new lower division course, Introduction to Maps and Geographical Technologies (GEOG 3) was already scheduled to be taught in Spring 2009.

**Learning Outcome #5: Shows written competency in the description and analysis of geographic subject matter.**

Our assessment of this learning outcome takes place in GEOG 190, which also meets the intensive writing graduation requirement for geography majors. Assessment results showed that students were performing adequately with regards to this outcome, and no actions were taken with respect to it.

**Learning Outcome #7: Synthesize geographic models, data, and methodologies in research design.**

Our assessment of this learning outcome takes place via the student research projects that are the focus of GEOG 190. Assessment results showed that students were performing adequately with regards to this outcome, and no actions were taken with respect to it.

**Learning Outcome #8: Acquire the overall competencies necessary to success in post-graduate education (graduate school, et al.) and careers.**

Assessment of this learning outcome was based on informal interviews with graduating seniors, who were generally highly satisfied with their geography education. Students keenly felt the empty position in our techniques faculty, which has been filled by Prof. Matt Schmidtlein, who joined us in Fall 2008.

We mentioned in last year’s discussion that we would have more information with respect to this outcome based on a 2008-2009 alumni survey, but we learned from Jing Wang, Director of the
Office of Institutional Research, that our turn for such a survey does not actually come up until 2010.

We discussed implementing a more formal survey of graduating seniors, but decided to stick with our informal “focus group” approach.

**2008-2009 Assessment Results**

During 2008-2009 Learning Outcomes #1, #3, #4, #6, and #8 were selected for assessment.

*Learning Outcome #1: Identify and describe basic concepts and patterns in physical and human geography.*

This outcome was assessed by means of the baseline quiz, which was administered to entering majors in Fall 2008 in GEOG 102 and students completing the major in two sections of GEOG 190 in Spring 2009. Quizzes averaged 40 questions in length; questions were divided approximately evenly among the three broad categories of physical geography, human geography, mapping & graphic literacy. Overall results are shown in the accompanying table; last year’s results are shown for purposes of comparison, although it is important to keep in mind that a few of the questions were different on the two quizzes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Physical Geog.</th>
<th>Human Geog</th>
<th>Mapping</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GEOG 102</td>
<td>55.6</td>
<td>52.3</td>
<td>47.6</td>
<td>51.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GEOG 190</td>
<td>66.2</td>
<td>58.3</td>
<td>66.5</td>
<td>63.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Numbers = overall percentage of questions answered correctly
n = 35 for 102 (F 2008)
n = 19 for 190 (S 2009)

Regarding the seemingly low percentages of correct answers: while not optimal, this result is not entirely unexpected. While one can always hope, it is not likely that a student will have been exposed to all topics in our discipline, which traverses physical science, social science, and humanities. Nonetheless, all students should have been encountered some of the subject matter being tested. What is important, therefore, are the relative performances among categories and anomalous high or low results for specific questions/topics.

In 2008-2009, GEOG 190 students did better than GEOG 102 students in all three categories (in contrast to the previous year). This was also the case on 33 of the 39 individual questions; where it was not the case, the scores for the two groups were close.
Insofar as performance in particular subject matter areas is concerned, especially low performance was observed by students in both GEOG 102 and GEOG 190 on questions dealing with the following:

- Köppen climate classification system
- Cloud composition
- The U.S. Public Land Survey System
- Language geography
- Types of spatial diffusion

**Learning Outcome #3: Demonstrate competency in one or more of the basic geographic tools/techniques for data collection, display, and analysis.**

This outcome was assessed by means of the senior project in GEOG 190. The relevant senior project rubric item is “Presentation of Results (Data and Analysis)”:

- 5 points – Data are complete, properly reported, and correctly analyzed.
- 4 points – Data are appropriate but some mistakes in reporting and/or analysis are evident; may be less than complete.
- 3 points – Data are seriously incomplete or improperly reported; major gaps and/or mistakes appear in the analysis.

Students taking 190 in Fall 2008 (n = 7) had an average score of 4.0 on the above scale, while those taking it in Spring 2009 (n = 23) had an average score of 4.4. Of these 30 students, only two received a score of 3. Even so, in the reflective questionnaire administered to GEOG 190 students at the end of the class, a total of 9 out of 23 respondents (7 from the fall section and 16 from the spring sections) expressed the wish that they had had more experience with “gathering data and presenting it in table or chart form” prior to taking 190. Only “choosing a research topic” elicited more expressions (12 out of 23) of wished-for prior experience.

**Learning Outcome #4: Demonstrate graphic literacy in the use and analysis of maps, graphs, and spatial data sets.**

This outcome was assessed by means of questions on the baseline quiz, which tested the student’s general knowledge of the subject matter, and the senior seminar student project in which students are expected to apply their knowledge of maps, charts, graphs, and other graphics.

Results from the 2008-2009 quiz had students in both 102 and 190 doing better than their peers did the previous year. Very likely, quite a few of the people who took the exam as 102 students in Fall 2007 also took it as 190 students in Spring 2009, in which case the improvement in scores (on the map questions) by almost thirty percentage points is encouraging.
The rubric used to evaluate the student research projects in GEOG 190 includes an assessment of the students’ ability to use maps and other graphics. On a 5-4-3-point scale, students taking 190 in Fall 2008 (n = 7) received an average of 4.4 points on this part of the rubric and those taking it in Spring 2009 (n = 23) received 4.3. These results (from two different instructors) suggest that students’ use of graphics is generally relevant, fairly complete, and of acceptable quality. Six out of 23 students completing the 190 reflective questionnaire in Fall 2008 and Spring 2009 expressed the wish that they had had more prior experience “making maps.”

Learning Outcome #6: Analyze and evaluate scholarly writing within the discipline.

This outcome was assessed by means of the senior project in GEOG 190. The relevant senior project rubric item is “Literature Review”:

- 5 points – Relevant, thorough, organized.
- 4 points – Generally relevant; some extraneous material and/or key sources missed; organization needs tightening.
- 3 points – Merely lists studies; little or no logic to selection of sources; poorly organized.

Students taking 190 in Fall 2008 (n = 7) had a average score of 4.0 on the above scale, while those taking it in Spring 2009 (n = 23) had a average score of 4.1. Of these 30 students, only two received a score of 3 on this rubric item. In the reflective questionnaire administered to GEOG 190 students at the end of the class, only 4 out of 23 respondents (2 from the fall section and 2 from the spring sections) expressed the wish that they had had more experience with “searching for and making use of scholarly publications” prior to taking 190.

Learning Outcome #8: Acquire the overall competencies necessary to success in post-graduate education (graduate school, et al.) and careers.

Data to evaluate this learning outcome came from graduating senior exit interviews and responses to three questions e-mailed to alumni by the department chair. Graduating seniors are invited to participate in a group conversation in a relaxed setting (the Hive in the University Union). Six students were interviewed in December 2008 and 12 in May 2009. Commonly mentioned sources of satisfaction with the program included the relatively small number of geography majors (about 100), permitting plenty of interaction with faculty who were praised for their knowledge and desire to help students succeed; the major’s many lab and field courses encouraging the development of a tight-knit student cohort and many opportunities for learning from peers; the availability of internships; the active Geography Club; and the multiple cross-cutting perspectives of geography: technical, physical, human, and regional.

The interviewed students also identified some things that they would like to see changed: more courses just for majors; more GIS courses; computer science courses complementing GIS courses; more upper division human geography courses (examples: historical geography, political geography); restoration of the regional courses that departed faculty used to teach (East
Asia and Latin America); once-a-year mandatory advising; a common room suitable for meetings, seminars, and hanging out; better organization and dissemination of internship information.

Of the six December interviewees, two already had jobs, two had been accepted to graduate school, and two were looking for jobs. Of the dozen May interviewees, one had been accepted to graduate school and a second would be applying for Fall 2010, one had major travel plans, and several already had jobs, including jobs related to their geography degrees.

Generally speaking, student perceptions held that the program was providing them with the skills and knowledge needed to be successful in their post-graduation careers.

This year for the first time we sent three questions about our major to 41 alumni for whom we happened to have relatively current e-mail addresses. The five replies we received are summarized below. These five alumni, who graduated between two and eight years ago, have the following jobs: Associate Land & Water Use Scientist, CA Department of Water Resources; Transportation Planner, City of Sacramento; Investment Manager, Security Properties, Seattle, WA; Assistant Planner, Sutter County Community Services; Research Analyst I (GIS), CA Department of Forestry and Fire Protection.

1. Please indicate what role, if any, GIS plays in your job, and comment on the extent to which your GIS course work at CSUS prepared you for that aspect of your job. What other GIS courses would you have liked to take?

Every respondent valued his (all respondents were male) GIS coursework. For two respondents, “doing” GIS is a central part of their jobs; for two others, it is among the “software suites” they use on a daily basis; for one, he is “not involved with the GIS side of things currently.” The person not using GIS actively sees the GIS courses he took as part of the more quantitative—and more valued by employers—side of his training. He urged more computer programming and statistics courses for geography majors. The two people using GIS most actively mentioned the importance of the department’s cartography course. They also mentioned the benefit of taking more specialized GIS courses such as those offered through American River College. The following GIS topics would be valuable additions to our program: raster analysis, GIS task automation, GIS programming, database design and management, and Internet mapping. It was acknowledged that some of these skills could and would be learned on the job, building on the solid conceptual understanding developed at the university.

2. Please indicate other skills and knowledge acquired as a geography major that have proved to be useful on the job, and suggest any job-related topics that should be added to our curriculum.

The following courses were mentioned as containing useful job-related information or skills: GEOG 111, Meteorology; GEOG 118, Changing Earth Ecosystems; GEOG 148, Urban and Regional Planning; GEOG 161, CA Water Resources; “urban geography classes” for their content on development and transportation; “all the field classes”. One alum commented that, “the general skills of writing papers, performing research, giving presentations, note taking,
communicating ideas (as in Seminar) are also very important job skills that I definitely sharpened as a geography major.”

Ideas for useful new courses: California Fires [we are planning to propose a new course on human vulnerability to hazards]; a course integrating “land economics, land use planning, transportation, and real estate development” [note: the student making this comment graduated before we implemented GEOG 148, Urban and Regional Planning]; “more coursework devoted to planning and particularly CEQA” [our new Metropolitan Area Planning concentration will recommend to students ENVS 122, the Environmental Studies course on CEQA and NEPA].

One respondent suggested that students interested in planning should be involved with a professional organization such as the Urban Land Institute (ULI) or the American Planning Association (APA). Coincidentally, this spring, another alum (not one of the survey respondents) who is involved with both the ULI Sacramento Young Leaders Group and the Sacramento Valley APA Young Planners Group contacted the department and successfully solicited our students’ participation.

3. Please indicate other aspects of your life in which your geography major has proven useful or rewarding. Here we are thinking of geography’s contribution to a liberal arts education. It might make one a better-informed voter, volunteer, parent, traveler, outdoorsperson, etc.

Some responses: “The geography major has . . . increased my passion for the outdoors. I have a greater desire to become greener.” “Because of my geography major . . . I have become both an advocate and a volunteer for environmental and social issues. These are foundations that I will pass on to my daughter and hopefully she will also pass them on.” Geography has “certainly increased my awareness of local issues and in that sense has made me a better informed voter. Population Geography and regional courses on Latin America made me better informed about international issues. GEOG 118 gives everyone a better awareness of environmental issues.” Geography is useful for “just life in general . . . welcome to the science of everything!”

The five alumni who responded to our inquiry were obviously limited in number. Still, they gave us the sense that our major is doing a good job preparing majors for careers in the GIS and planning areas and is broadly enriching their lives. They also made some valuable suggestions for our major, and we hope to get more input along these lines when we team up with OIR for a more expansive and rigorous survey next year.

Feedback/Anticipated Actions

We will discuss the 2008-2009 assessment results contained in this report and take appropriate actions at our annual retreat in August 2009. Proposed discussion and action items include:

1. Review of the Table on p. 2 of this report and particularly the second column. Consider adding more courses, especially to Learning Outcomes Five and Six. Review and clarify how the courses listed will contribute to achieving the learning outcomes.
2. Improvement of the baseline quiz. Prepare, and agree as a faculty on, a master list of key concepts, terms, and facts on which questions will be based. These should include material from “the history of Geography as an academic discipline,” which currently is missing from the quiz, yet is needed in order to assess Learning Outcome #2.

3. Improvement of student performance on the baseline quiz. Identify which courses will cover which key concepts, terms, and facts on the master list. Much of this will be fairly obvious, but consistently low student performance on some existing quiz questions suggests that some material is falling between the cracks or is not being utilized with sufficient frequency to really lodge in student brains.

4. Examination of GEOG 190 as our writing-intensive course. In the past, GEOG 190 was the writing-intensive course that geography majors took after passing the Writing Proficiency Exam. Under the new system, the course becomes the means for certifying that students are writing proficient. This may place additional demands on the 190 instructors (e.g., collaboration with instructors in other departments, use of standardized writing rubrics) and raises the question of whether combining the assessment of writing and the assessment of numerous geographical skills in the same capstone course is the best strategy. Perhaps the department should consider designating and developing one or more other courses (perhaps our regional courses?) as writing intensive. This would permit the major product of the senior research seminar to become a poster rather than a paper, which might have certain advantages for assessing graphical skills and for ease of presentation.

5. Discussion of how we might gather data efficiently on some other measures of the success of our program. We don’t currently collect in a systematic way data on our students’ geography-related internships, jobs, scholarships, research or community service activities and awards, presentations at scholarly meetings, attendance at scholarly meetings, and acceptances to graduate school.

Acknowledgment

The current Geography Department chair and author of this report, Robin Datel, would like to acknowledge the department’s debt to its previous chair, Tom Krabacher, who developed much of our assessment process and the format of this annual report.