

Department of Geography
Dr. Michael Hernandez, Dr. George Hepner

Executive Summary

The review team composed of Dr. Michael Hernandez, Weber State University, Department of Geosciences, and Dr. George Hepner, University of Utah, Department of Geography performed a site visit to the Department on February 22, 2017. On this day, the team met with Dean Harrold, and Geography faculty, staff and students to discuss all aspects of the Department.

Based on this visit, the self-study document and other documentation, the review team developed several observations, evaluations and suggestions for the Department into the future. The Department has very strong faculty and departmental leadership functioning well in teaching, research and support of the university interdisciplinary mission. The Department has solid course and program learning assessment processes that substantiate the high quality of the instruction and student satisfaction with the outstanding faculty and courses. Furthermore, the course enrollments and number of

Standard A Mission Statement

- a Good
- b Good
- c Good
- d Good

The mission statement is clearly defined and includes

The department has five clearly defined and appropriate measurable learning outcomes that ensure students will have the essential knowledge, skills, and behaviors upon graduation. The learning outcomes are fully in line with the department goals defined in the mission statement. The learning outcomes are clearly linked to the curriculum as presented in the curriculum table in the self study (Standard B).

Evaluation of Effectiveness of the Assessment Process

- a Strength
- b Strength
- c Strength
- d Good
- e Good

The department is particularly strong in assessing both lower division general education courses and upper division majors courses. They have developed and implemented well-

	nd rd E ↑ c y
a	Strength
b	Concern
c	Good
d	Good
e	Good
f	Good
g	Good
h	Good

All full-time faculty are highly qualified with superior credentials and reputations as outstanding educators, researchers, and mentors with solid research publication records. All have earned a Ph.D. (terminal degree for geography). They consistently have outstanding student evaluations, ranging from 4 to 5 (out of 5) across criteria. Every single student we met with during the review noted how passionate faculty are about the discipline and student success. They said department faculty were genuinely concerned that students learn the value of a geographic education and its societal impact as well as doing whatever they could to help students succeed (e.g., co-curricular opportunities, discussions about the big picture, not just course work).

A major concern is three out of six tenure-track faculty have ½ time release from teaching that support college and university level appointments. While this is another commendable achievement as all three faculty have been recognized for their excellence to receive such positions, it has put undue pressure on the department to cover upper division courses along with other faculty responsibilities (advising, mentoring, service, etc.). The Provost's office has provided funds to hire a full-time instructor, but long term, this will strain the department and potentially affect the quality of student education. Temporary/adjunct faculty can't fill the diverse expertise or the mentoring through research component provided by the tenure-track faculty.

The six adjunct faculty have provided students with quality educational experiences. They all have earned Master's degrees and bring external professional and educational experiences that complement the full-time faculty.

Of the 6 full time faculty, one full time instructor, and 6 part time adjunct instructors, three of 13 are female, 12 are Euro_American ethnicity, one is Hispanic, and one is a veteran. The Department is concerned about adding diversity to the faculty.

Orientation for new/contract faculty is provided by the university Teaching and Learning Forum office. They host a multi-day orientation program off campus that provides excellent information about the university, benefits, and professional development.

