

## 2019-20 Geography Comprehensive Program Review

### I.A. Program Purpose

Describe the purpose of the program and how it contributes to the mission of Skyline College.

#### **Narrative**

The goal of every geography class is to help make our students better global citizens by showing them the diversity and complexity of the Earth's systems and people. We provide students with an academically rigorous overview of the physical processes that make up the Earth's natural systems, the cultural processes that make up the Earth's social systems, and the technical tools used by 21st century professionals in the field. In this way, we hope to emphasize the "global community of learners" aspect of Skyline College's Mission Statement, and help our students find not just fulfillment, but a better sense of belonging and place. Geography is an extremely multidisciplinary subject, and impacts many departments and subjects including history, economics, anthropology, sociology, social justice, ethnic studies, meteorology, environmental science, earth science, and computer science. Thus, our program especially emphasizes this interdisciplinary aspect. Geography provides the students at Skyline College an opportunity to fulfill their GE requirements while getting an overview of our global community, and the connections between many different academic subjects. Even students who do not decide to major in Geography may find their passion in our classes, and it is our hope that all students who take a Geography class at Skyline College realize that they, too, have been implementing the techniques and theories of geography in their everyday lives without even knowing it.

**I.B. Program Student Learning Outcomes**

List the current program student learning outcomes (PSLOs).

**Narrative**

The Program Student Learning Outcomes are:

1. Analyze, synthesize, and apply core geographic principles, concepts, models, and phenomena.
2. Identify examples of human-environmental interaction and assess their past, present, and future impact.
3. Evaluate and apply geographic methods and associated theories used to analyze and advance geographic concepts.

**I.C. Program Personnel**

Describe the current staffing structure of the program and how it aligns with achieving the purpose of the program.

**Narrative**

Rachel Cunningham, Part-Time Geography Faculty

Christine Hansell, Part-Time Geography Faculty

Professors Cunningham and Hansell are both able to teach a wide-range of GEOG courses, and are both certified to teach online courses. However, due to their part-time status, they are limited in the number of courses they are able to teach per semester.

The Geography Department is in need of a full-time faculty member in order to meet the program's enrollment demands and timely course offerings for degree completion.

**I.D. Personnel FTE**

- Provide the current FTE of each category of personnel.
- FT Faculty FTE:
- Adjunct Faculty FTE:
- Classified Staff FTE:
- Administrator FTE:

**Narrative**

FT Faculty FTE: 0

Adjunct Faculty FTE:

- Fall 2018: 0.54 FTEF
- Spring 2019: 0.54 FTEF
- Fall 2019: 1.06 FTEF
- Spring 2020: 1.08 FTEF

Classified Staff FTE: 0

Administrator FTE: 0

**I.E. Program Review Team**

Comprehensive program review is intended to be a collaborative process which promotes dialogue and reflection. Please identify all individuals who contributed to or shaped the program review narrative. Include names and the title or role of each person.

**Narrative**

Rachel Cunningham, Part-Time Faculty

Christine Hansell, Part-Time Faculty

## II.A. Progress on Prior Program Objectiveness (Goals)

Describe the progress made on prior CPR/APP objectives including identification of achievements or areas in which further effort is needed. If the program is new with no prior CPR/APP, comment on new program implementation.

Below the narrative box, use the Associate Objectives feature to select the related objectives. Once associated, you may also view each objective. If appropriate, edit the status to Completed or Discontinued.

### Narrative

In our previous CPR (2013-2014), there were several goals outlined:

1. Hire a full-time Geography faculty
2. Offer a Geography AA Degree
3. Start the formation of a Geographic Information Systems (GIS) certificate program.
4. Keep on track with our 3-year SLO assessment plan

The biggest success for the Geography program has been the completion of Goal 2: Skyline College now offers an AA-T degree in Geography. This is especially useful for students, as the Bay Area (and the broader state of California) is the home of many 4-year Geography programs that students may now transfer to to continue their Geography studies, including but not limited to San Francisco State University and University of California, Berkeley.

The ability to complete Goal 3 (GIS certificate program) is directly tied to the completion of Goal 1 (full-time faculty). Geography still does not have any full-time faculty members, and instead consists of two adjunct faculty. This is a doubling of part-timers since the 2013-2014 CPR (when the entire department consisted of one part-time faculty). Both part-time faculty are teaching the maximum number of courses they are allowed, with several of their classes enrolled at full capacity. The number one goal for the Geography program continues to be the hiring of a full-time faculty member.

While an actual GIS certificate may have not been created, progress has been made in the GIS course offerings for our department. GEOG 300: Geographic Information Science has now been approved for Distance Education, and we are planning to offer it 100% online for the first time in the Fall 2020 semester. GIS courses often appeal more to second-career or older non-traditional students, as GIS skills are in high demand in the workforce. By offering this course online, we are increasing accessibility to more students. Once more students become interested in GIS, and we have a full-time faculty member to grow and develop our GIS course offerings, then we can revisit the goal of creating a GIS certificate program.

Goal 4 was partially met. Of the six courses offered by the Geography department, four have had their SLOs assessed since the last CPR. The two that were not assessed, GEOG 150 and GEOG 300, were because those classes were cancelled due to low enrollment. Already, the department is on track to improve on this goal. GEOG 150 is being successfully offered this Spring 2020, and is projected to be



offered again in Fall 2020. GEOG 300 is also projected to be offered in Fall 2020, with a switch to an online format that we predict will improve our enrollment numbers. The department has already received the assessment schedule for the next 3-year cycle, and will continue to make this a goal for this CPR.

## II.B Program Effectiveness

Review data related to the program and assess the program's effectiveness at meeting its described purpose. Consider using college-wide data for comparison purposes.

Program data may include:

- Standard program review reports from PRIE including indicators of success, retention, and equity
- Program-specific data such as labor market data, surveys, and custom reports
- Program Student Learning Outcome (PSLO) reports from TracDat
- Prior CPR/APPs
- Feedback from the program's administrator, advisory committees, and/or other stakeholders
- Course outlines of record and offering history (instructional programs only)
- Professional development received
- Other relevant data
- Additional data may be requested from PRIE by completing the Research Request Form available at <http://www.skylinecollege.edu/prie/request.php>

Based on the data reviewed, describe the overall effectiveness of the program and any conclusions drawn from the data

### Narrative

The Geography Program has grown immensely in the past few years, and continues to have strong success and retention rates. Not only have we doubled our number of instructors (although both are still only part-time), we are offering courses that have not been offered in a few semesters, and able to offer multiple sections of some of our core courses. In terms of growth, the Geography Department can certainly be considered a success. However, we are now at the point that a full-time faculty member is desperately needed to take the program to the next level.

### Success, Retention, and Equity

Overall, the success and retention numbers for the Geography Department are on par with the wider Skyline College campus. Our average Success Rate for 2014-2019 was 71.7%, compared to the overall campus's 73.3%. Our Retention Rate is also comparable, at 89.3% (versus 86.6% campus wide).

In terms of Equity, there are two groups with lower success scores than the campus average, and two groups with higher success scores.

- Pacific Islander students had a success rate of 67%, compared to the campus rate of 60%.
- Native American/Alaskan Native students had a success rate of 100%, compared to the campus rate of 71%.
- Black/African-American students had a success rate of 52%, compared to the campus rate of 61%.
- Latinx/Hispanic students had a success rate of 62%, compared to the campus rate of 68%.

Three of these groups (Pacific Islander, Native American/Alaskan Native, and Black/African-American) have a very low number of students, so the percentages can easily be thrown off by 1 or 2 students. Nonetheless, the Geography Department will be continuing its work of reviewing its curriculum for inclusiveness and culturally competent teaching, as well as reaching out to campus Learning Communities to strategize how to better support our students of color. This topic will be discussed in more detail in the section of this report on Program Equity.

### Labor Market

A degree and/or coursework in Geography allows students to pursue a variety of careers and occupations. Geography is extremely interdisciplinary, and geographic methods and principles are found in several other fields of study. We have pulled US Bureau of Labor Statistics figures for 5 possible career routes for students studying geography (BLS printouts are included with the report):

- Geographer - 3% job outlook (slower than average)
- Environmental Scientist & Specialist - 8% job outlook (faster than average)
- Geoscientist - 6% job outlook (average)
- Surveying and Mapping Technician - 5% job outlook (average)
- Cartographer and Photogrammetrist - 15% job outlook (much faster than average)

Based on these figures, the overall field of geography jobs may be growing roughly average, but the demand for workers skilled in cartography (map-making) and Geographic Information Systems is much higher. It is because of this that the Geography Department has been focusing energies on our Geographic Information Science course. This course, GEOG 300, has had a Distance Education component created, and will be offered 100% online for the first time in Fall 2020. It had previously been a goal of this department to create and offer a full GIS Certificate program at Skyline College. However, it is not possible to offer this program without having a full-time faculty member on board, as our current two adjunct faculty members are already teaching at their maximum load and are unable to devote time to creating this program. Even for students not majoring in Geography, GIS is used in many other careers and disciplines, such as Public Health, Urban Planning, Resource Management, Emergency Response, and Criminal Justice. The Geography Department could work with other Skyline programs to promote this skill-set, or even become involved in a Career-Technical-Education program. GIS skills are very desirable job skills for workers in many different fields.

### PSLOs

Our Program Student Learning Outcomes are very well aligned with our individual course SLOs. Even though we did not have any students graduate with a Geography AA-T Degree during the 2014-2019 assessment cycle, our PSLOs can be assessed through the SLOs of our individual courses. All three PSLOs were met during the 2014-2019 cycle. The Geography Department will work with the Social Science & Creative Arts Division, and Skyline Marketing, to increase student awareness of the Geography AA-T degree, and the interdisciplinary nature and wide applicability of the field of geography.

### Professional Development

Both current Geography faculty are part-timers, therefore professional development can be difficult. However, they have both been able to dedicate significant time and energy to nurturing the Geography program at Skyline, while honing their own professional skills. Their connections to other institutions has also allowed them to pursue PD through other outside funding sources. Select recent PD has included:

- TracDat workshop (Spring 2020)
- SLOAC Academy (Spring 2020)
- Online Pedagogy course (Spring 2019)
- National Science Teaching Association Expo (Summer 2019)
- Advancing Racial Justice & Equitable Outcomes in Community Colleges Institutes (Fall 2019)

Our department also keeps abreast of the activities of the Association of American Geographers (the main professional group for geographers in the US), and hopes to send a faculty member to future meetings (faculty member has attended several previous meetings, representing other institutions). One faculty member is currently pursuing the GIS Certificate at San Francisco State University. Another faculty member serves on the GIS committee for another Bay Area community college. Both faculty members teach geography at other Bay Area community colleges, and so are able to keep a pulse on the broader regional demands and needs in terms of geographic education. These connections ensure that the Geography Department at Skyline stays relevant and up-to-date in its course offerings and program structure.

### Program Growth

The Geography Department has seen an immense amount of growth in the past few years. Six course sections were offered in each of the Fall 2019 and Spring 2020 semester, more than has ever been offered before. Our second faculty member began teaching online in Summer 2019, therefore their FTES and Load are not captured in the data for this reporting cycle.

Year	FTEF	FTES	LOAD	Enroll/Section
2014/15	1.53	31.02	610	39.4
2015/16	1.62	32.25	597	44.1
2016/17	1.61	28.35	527	39.2
2017/18	1.41	26.67	566	39.5
2018/19	1.62	30.41	563	39.6

FTEF are summed for the entire academic year, with each semester having an FTEF of about 0.54. During the 2014-2019 reporting cycle, the Geography Department only had one part-time faculty member. Even while working alone, this faculty member was able to maintain enrollment per section at higher rates than the campus average (28.1 - 30.9 during this cycle) and a load higher than the campus rate (513-551 during this cycle).

These numbers are a vast increase from the last CPR, which saw an FTES range of 0.90 - 17.19 for the 2008-2013 reporting cycle. In the next reporting cycle, we expect that these numbers will increase even more, with the addition of another faculty member.

**Evidentiary Documents**

[Cartographers and Photogrammetrists \\_ Occupational Outlook Handbook \\_ U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.pdf](#)

[Environmental Scientists and Specialists \\_ Occupational Outlook Handbook \\_ U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.pdf](#)

[Geographers \\_ Occupational Outlook Handbook \\_ U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.pdf](#)

[Geoscientists \\_ Occupational Outlook Handbook \\_ U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.pdf](#)

[Surveying and Mapping Technicians \\_ Occupational Outlook Handbook \\_ U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.pdf](#)

## II.C Progress on Program Student Learning Outcomes

Describe the progress made on PSLOs including achievements, gaps in learning, and/or areas in which further effort is needed.

Upload the TracDat report to the SPOL document repository in the Program Review folder for the current academic year (Program Uploads). Make sure the file name includes the program name or abbreviation (e.g., PRIE-TracDat 2017).

### Narrative

Of the Geography department's six courses, two had all of their SLOs met, two had some of their SLOS met, and two were unable to be assessed due to course cancellations. While there were no students graduating with a Geography Degree during the 2014-2019 assessment cycle, our PSLOs are well-linked to our course SLOs, and therefore can be assessed that way.

The break down of each PSLO to specific course SLO is as follows:

PSLO 1 - "Analyze, synthesize, and apply core geographic principles, concepts, models, and phenomena"

- GEOG 100 #1 and 2 (met)
- GEOG 101 #3 (met), #1 (not met)
- GEOG 110 #3 (met)
- GEOG 300 (inconclusive)

PSLO 2 - "Identify examples of human-environmental interaction and assess their past, present, and future impact"

- GEOG 100 #3 (met)
- GEOG 110 #2 (met)
- GEOG 150 (inconclusive)
- GEOG 106 #4 (met)

PSLO 3 - "Evaluate and apply geographic methods and associated theories used to analyze and advance geographic concepts"

- GEOG 100 #2 (met)
- GEOG 101 #2 and 3 (met), #1 (not met)
- GEOG 110 #1 and 3 (met)
- GEOG 300 (inconclusive)
- GEOG 106 #2 (met)

Our PSLOs are very well aligned with our course SLOs.

Our flagship course, GEOG 100 (Physical Geography), had all three of its SLOs met in both the 2014-2015 and the 2018-2019 assessment cycles. These SLOs are currently being assessed through a written exam; one of the geography adjunct faculty members is working on the GEOG 100 SLOs in the Spring 2020 Skyline SLOAC Academy, with the possibility of expanding assessments. During the 2018-2019

assessment cycle, the other adjunct faculty member had identified the need to expand assessment assignments for GEOG 100 SLOs.

Our primary lab course, GEOG 101 (Physical Geography Lab), had two of its SLOS met and one inconclusive in the 2018-2019 assessment cycle. The SLO "Analyze and reach valid conclusions from maps (including topographic maps), graphs, charts, and geographic diagrams" was inconclusive, however it was noted that many of the unsuccessful students did not complete the assessed lab exercise. In response to this, more basic skills groundwork has been worked into earlier lab exercises. It is also worth noting that currently, GEOG 101 is only offered online. If the lack of student engagement is the cause of the low success rate, faculty can work to improve this by targeting non-participatory students early in the semester to increase participation.

GEOG 110 (Cultural Geography) had all three of its SLOs met in the 2018-2019 assessment cycle. Both exams and discussion assignments are used to assess SLOs for this course. Faculty have determined that this is very successful and that discussions on complex topics are effective. This course is continuously being updated to incorporate current events and new global issues.

Both GEOG 150 (World Regional Geography) and GEOG 300 (Geographic Information Science) were unable to be assessed during the 2018-2019 cycle, due to course cancellations. Growing the program and increasing enrollment are major goals for the Geography department, so these shortcomings are already being addressed. GEOG 150 is currently being offered in Spring 2020, and GEOG 300 is scheduled to be offered in Fall 2020 in a new online format, so we anticipate having SLO assessment data for the next reporting cycle.

GEOG 106 (Weather and Climate) had three out of four SLOs met in the 2016-2017 assessment cycle. The SLO "Describe Earth-Sun relationships and the resulting effects on weather and climate" was not met, and was assessed through four questions on the final exam. This course is currently cross-listed with the Geology Department, and is "owned" in TracDat by that department. Moving forward, Geography faculty is making it a priority to collaborate with the Geology faculty more on this course.

Being an entirely adjunct-run department, professional development regarding SLOs is often difficult. One faculty member is able to participate in the SLOAC Academy in Spring 2020. Other online or independent professional development opportunities regarding SLOs should be researched.

**Evidentiary Documents**  
[GEOG PSLOs 19-20.pdf](#)

## II.D Program Access

Describe matters of access relevant to your program such as offering patterns, service hours, F2F vs. DE offerings, availability of services to online students, on-campus vs. off-campus locations, unaddressed needs, and/or highly effective practices.

### **Narrative**

Now that the department has a second part-time faculty member, we are able to offer a broader range of classes per semester. Nonetheless, the number of Face to Face classes offered per semester continues to be limited, due to adjunct availability. Overwhelmingly the bulk of Geography courses continue to be offered online. Spring 2020 course offerings: 2 sections of GEOG 100: Physical Geography (one offered online, one offered in-person) 2 sections of GEOG 101: Physical Geography Lab (both offered online) 1 section of GEOG 110: Cultural Geography (online) 1 section of GEOG 150: World Regional Geography (online) The Geography Department is proud to offer all of its courses online, therefore allowing students to complete their AA-T degree entirely online. However, we recognize that online learning is not conducive to all learning styles, and that face-to-face courses are a way to foster community and sense of belonging on campus. This again highlights the need for a full-time faculty member, so that Geography can have an increased presence on campus and do more outreach work to the campus community. All faculty office hours are currently either online, or early in the mornings. Online courses are accessible to students at all times of the day, however having classes and/or office hours during the mid-day would increase engagement with students who do not respond well to online coursework.

## II.E Program Environment

Describe key factors and changes impacting the program such as college initiatives, industry needs, regulatory changes, state mandates, grant requirements, personnel changes, demand for classes/services, and other issues.

### Narrative

The Geography Department occupies a unique niche in that it offers both an AA-T degree, and popular General Education courses. Consistently, the majority of students taking Geography courses list "Degree/Transfer" as their goal: 2014-2015: 174 (71.3%) 2015-2016: 226 (74.1%) 2016-2017: 220 (80.6%) 2017-2018: 208 (84.6%) 2018-2019: 236 (85.8%) It is worth noting that these numbers are higher than the Skyline College campus average (65.4% in 2017-2018, 62.8% in 2018-2019). Because there were zero students graduating with a Geography AA-T in this time period, all of these students were taking Geography courses to satisfy General Education or other requirements for other degree programs. Demand for these classes, especially GEOG 100 and GEOG 101 (science lecture and lab courses), is high. In the Spring 2020 semester, sections of GEOG 100 and GEOG 101 were completely filled to capacity. This again illustrates the dire need for a full-time faculty member, so that more sections and more courses can be offered to meet this campus need. As Skyline College is within the Silicon Valley, and Geographic Information Systems is a booming field, it is all the more important for our Geography Department to offer courses in GIS. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the job outlook for 2018-2028 for cartographers and photogrammetrists is 15%, which is much faster than average. We have chosen to invest our limited faculty energy into the GEOG 300 course, moving it to an online format for Fall 2020. In addition, due to changes in the CSU geography transfer agreement, we now must offer GEOG 300 in order for students to graduate with an AA-T (GEOG 150 was moved from elective to core). With such a large number of non-geography majors taking our geography courses, this provides the perfect opportunity to teach students the interdisciplinary nature of geography and GIS. GIS is used in environmental sciences, public health, crime analysis, city planning, archaeology - many other fields other than traditional geography. Our department is now poised to create a bridge between other campus programs, and a potentially lucrative job skill.

## II.F Program Equity

Based on the data reviewed, highlight any progress and/or effective practices employed in the program to address identified student equity gaps and minimize disproportionate impact. Describe any pre-existing or anticipate program barriers in making progress. If you intend to request resources for objectives related to equity, explain any connections between barriers described and the support/resource(s) requested.

### Narrative

As discussed earlier, the Geography department has lower success rates for African American and Latinx students than the larger Skyline campus (52% vs 61%, and 62% vs 68%, respectively). In our previous CPR (where lower African-American success rates were also noted), several strategies were identified: 1) reviewing our program material for inclusiveness, 2) lowering textbook costs, 3) increasing online resources, 4) encouraging use of the Learning Center, and 5) having projects where students can choose their own topic (to reflect their own interests and background).

Faculty have reviewed lecture material in GEOG 100, and are including examples of knowledge and practices from non-European cultures into the curriculum. It is common for science classes to emphasize Greek or other European contributions - Geography faculty are working to break this cycle by honoring the many cultures that have been contributing to the fields of geography and earth sciences for generations. There is also an increased focus on environmental justice in GEOG 100, with students choosing their own final project topic. Students choose their own topics for projects & field trips in GEOG 150 and GEOG 101 as well. GEOG 150 is currently using a zero-cost textbook, and one section of GEOG 100 is experimenting with having only an optional textbook. Copies of the GEOG 101 textbook are available on loan at the Library. In terms of professional development, one faculty member completed the Enacting Educational Equity Train the Trainer series at College of San Mateo.

From 2014 to 2019, the success numbers for African American students in Geography classes did increase, however the extremely low number of students enrolling should be noted:

2014-2015: 45% success, 11 students enrolled  
2015-2016: 22% success, 9 students enrolled  
2016-2017: 100% success, 4 students enrolled  
2017-2018: 100% success, 2 students enrolled  
2018-2019: 100% success, 1 student enrolled

In addition to continuing to review course material for inclusiveness and culturally competent teaching, the Geography Department would like to increase enrollment of African American students into Geography courses. Collaborations with the Umoja program of CSM and the ASTEP program of Skyline are a priority. We are also looking into developing more zero-cost textbook options for our classes.

For Latinx students, low enrollment is not a concern, but collaborations with the Puente Learning Community should still be a priority to make sure that our Latinx students feel supported and welcome in Geography courses. This is all the more important since Skyline was awarded the designation of Hispanic Serving Institution: the Geography

Department must make sure we are indeed serving our Latinx students, not just enrolling them. Success rates for Latinx students fluctuated between 56 and 73% during the 2014-2019 reporting cycle.

Geography faculty regularly recommend students take advantage of Sparkpoint's financial and food pantry services, and the Personal Counseling services with the Health Center. By educating themselves as to what student services Skyline College provides, faculty are able to be an additional resource and advocate for student needs. Because such a large number of Geography courses are offered online, it would be good for the Geography Department to research what kind of internet hot-spot services are available from the college. Currently, there are no Geography tutors at the Learning Center. There may not currently be funding for a Geography tutor, but this is another resource that the Geography Department should look into.

### III.A. Curriculum Review

There are four steps to program review of curriculum:

1. Request your program's Course Offering Report from PRIE. Based on that report, take action to bank, delete, and/or reactivate courses. PLEASE SEE THE CPR WEBSITE (DIRECTIONS AND FORMS) FOR DETAILED INSTRUCTIONS.  
<http://www.skylinecollege.edu/programreview/cpr.php>
2. Review and update all course outlines on CurricUNET. PLEASE SEE THE CPR WEBSITE (DIRECTIONS AND FORMS) FOR DETAILED INSTRUCTIONS.  
<http://www.skylinecollege.edu/programreview/cpr.php>
3. Complete the Course Outline and Prerequisite Checklist Table. Upload the file to the SPOL document repository in the Program Review folder for the current academic year (Program Uploads).
4. Verify and document the two-year cycle of curriculum offering to ensure that students have access to courses necessary to complete certificates, degrees, and transfer in a timely manner. Review the sequencing of prerequisites.

#### Narrative

1) We are not banking, deleting, or reactivating any courses. 2) All courses were updated in CurricUNET in February 2020, with the exception of GEOG 106 (Weather and Climate). This course is cross-listed with, and "owned" by, Geology. Geography faculty is still in the process of working with Geology faculty to complete the CurricUNET review of GEOG 106. 3) Please see attached. Again, note that GEOG 106 has not been updated in CurricUNET since February 2017. 4) GEOG 100, 101, 106, 110, and 150 were all offered during the 2019-2020 Academic Year. GEOG 300 is scheduled to be offered in the 2020-2021 Academic Year.

#### Evidentiary Documents

[CPR SP20 - Course Outline and Prerequisite Checklist Table.pdf](#)

#### IV.A **Considering Key Findings**

Considering the results of CPR assessment, identify program strengths, challenges, opportunities, concerns, and areas in which further research is needed. Describe how the key findings can be used to improve program effectiveness in order to promote student learning and achievement.

##### **Narrative**

###### Program Strengths

The enrollment and growth in the Geography Department is going quite well. We have increased our number of classes, increased our number of faculty, and some of our sections are still enrolled to capacity. This is even in the face of district wide drops in enrollment.

On average, the Geography Department has excellent success and retention rates, in keeping with the campus averages. We are doing a great job of keeping students engaged in our classes, and keeping them enrolled.

Our AA-T Degree is up and running, and is available 100% online. This will increase access for students who have work or family responsibilities during daytime classes.

Our PSLOs are well aligned with our individual course SLOs. This means that even without students graduating with our degree, we are able to assess the effectiveness of our program. During this reporting cycle, all PSLOs were met.

The Geography Department's purpose is well aligned with Skyline College's mission "to empower and transform a global community of learners." In our courses, students have the opportunity to learn about our world - both the natural environment, and the Earth's people. Our students leave their classes with a better understanding of a huge diversity of topics, from how the United Nations work, to how humans are impacting climate change. The Geography Department helps students understand where they fit into this planet's global community, as well as into the community of their campus, their cities, and their families.

###### Program Challenges

The lack of any full-time faculty member is the main challenge for the Geography Department. A full-time faculty member is not only needed to ensure that all courses are offered on a regular basis, but to participate in campus committees and initiatives, ensuring that Geography has a voice in Skyline College politics and policies. Guided Pathways is one such example - no Geography faculty has been able to attend any GP meetings, and therefore Geography has to be represented in absentia by faculty from other departments.

GEOG 300 is just one Geographic Information Science course. To truly have valuable job skills, students would need to take more than just one course. A robust GIS program at Skyline would need the development of additional GIS courses, ones that could focus on specific aspects of vector or raster methods, or even including techniques such as remote sensing, drone work, and LiDAR.

GEOG 100 (Physical Geography Lecture) and GEOG 101 (Physical Geography Lab) are currently offered as a pre-requisite, rather than as co-requisites. This has presented challenges when students take the lab course several semesters, or even years, after they took the lecture course - potentially forgetting the concepts and material they need to succeed in the lab. Other schools in the SMCCD offer these courses as pre-requisites, therefore the District's registration system applies that setting to Skyline College as well. The Geography faculty have expressed their concern with having students take the lab much later than they take the lecture course, and have recommended to the Counseling Department that students be encouraged to take the two courses concurrently. The Geography Department is considering the possibility of redesigning GEOG 100 and 101 into one 4 unit combined course in the future, most likely if/when a full-time faculty member is brought on board.

### Opportunities

The in-person Geography class has been moved to the new Building 12 (Environmental Sciences Building). These "smart classrooms" allow for students to work collaboratively in groups, with more access to educational technology. The Geography Department is looking forward to exploring new ways to utilize these smart classrooms to enhance student learning.

With the creation of a Distance Education component for GEOG 300, the Geography AA-T Degree is now available 100% online. This opens up the opportunity to target more non-traditional students, who may have work or family responsibilities during daytime classes. This also allows for the targeting of second-career GIS students - students who may already have established jobs, but are being encouraged by their employers to gain GIS skills to expand their current duties.

The Guided Pathways program will allow Geography courses to become mapped within other programs. This will not only increase our enrollment, but will expose more students to the theories and principles of geography, making them well-rounded global citizens.

### Concerns

Enrollment is down across the SMCC District. Sections of GEOG 150, GEOG 110, and GEOG 300 have been cancelled in past years due to low enrollment. The Geography Department will need to emphasize the interdisciplinary nature of its program, in order to attract students outside of the Geography major.

At the state level, the CSU transfer agreement for the Geography AA-T has been changed, eliminating GEOG 150 as an elective (and moving it to core). This means that the Geography Department must offer all of its Geography elective courses every academic year, in order for students to graduate with the degree in a timely matter. Unfortunately, without a full time faculty member, it will be very difficult for the program to develop any new elective courses.

For the second reporting cycle in a row, Black/African-American students have lower success rates than the campus average. While low enrollment numbers do mean that percentages can fluctuate wildly, this is still cause for concern. The Geography



Department needs to focus on finding ways to support our students of color - both in terms of program access (textbook costs, online offerings) and in terms of culturally competent teaching and inclusive curriculum.

#### **IV.B Aspirations**

The key findings and program aspirations will be used as the foundation to build a strategy for program enhancement.

- What is the ideal future of the program?
- What long-term results does the program want to achieve?
- How do the key findings prompt or inform the program's aspirations?

#### **Narrative**

In the ideal future of the program, Skyline College's Geography Department is a robust and sustainable program with healthy enrollment and high student success and retention rates, and a reputation for supporting and inspiring students. It would be especially ideal if each year there were several students either completing the Geography AA-T degree, or transferring to a four-year college to focus on a Geography Bachelors degree.

Long-term, the Geography Department would like to have high enough enrollment to support multiple full-time faculty members. We would also like to nurture relationships with regional four-year schools, in order to provide optimal research and transfer opportunities for our students.

Above all, we would like to be known as a student-centered program with high quality curriculum and teaching practices. We want our student success and retention rates to be high across ALL student demographics, and for all students to feel that Geography at Skyline College is a welcoming and worth-while course of study, even if only for General Education requirements.

Our key findings show that our enrollment has indeed increased greatly over the last several years - providing a foundation for our goals of high enrollment. On average, our success and retention is high, however the continuous lower than campus average success rates for African-American students is a further call for our need to focus on improving our program's equity. In addition, the fact that the bulk of our enrollment is for General Education, and we have yet to have a student graduate with our new AA-T degree, has helped cement our goal to increase the number of students focusing on Geography as their primary course of study, while honoring and supporting our General Education roots.

**V.A. Program Strategy**

Based on the key findings and aspirations, develop a plan designed to enhance the quality of the program. Describe the strategy (or strategies) to be implemented over the next six years. Strategies could include intended changes or areas of inquiry to pursue.

[NOTE: In the next item, objectives will be created with action steps and resource requests to support each strategy identified here. Each objective will also be tied to an Institutional Goal.]

**Narrative**

In order to increase our student enrollment, success, and retention - while improving our students' abilities to complete Geography courses and degree - we have identified three goals for the next reporting cycle:

- 1) Hire a full-time faculty member
- 2) Create a new Geography course, to be offered as an elective within the Geography AA-T Degree
- 3) Implement a Zero-Cost Textbook for GEOG 100 (Physical Geography)

All of these goals are tied into observations of the current status of our Geography program. This is the second CPR cycle where the hiring of a full-time faculty member has been our number one goal. With the addition of a second part-time faculty, and the fact that both current part-time faculty are teaching at their maximum loads (and multiple sections are still enrolled at maximum capacity), we feel that the program's growth has warranted the hiring of a full-time faculty member. A full-time faculty member will also increase the on-campus presence of geography, and will allow the Geography Department to be more engaged in campus committees, initiatives, and events.

Now that the state has updated the CSU Transfer Agreement, Skyline College currently only offers two courses which can be used for the List B portion of the Geography AA-T (GEOG 106 and GEOG 300). The creation of a new course will allow students more agency and flexibility in planning their geography degree course of study. In addition, as such a large portion of Geography students are taking these courses for General Education or degree requirements, we would be able to expose even more students to geographic concepts and principles, even if they are not strictly geography majors.

Even though our program averages for retention and success are in keeping with the campus averages, numbers for African American and Latinx students are below campus averages. In our previous CPR, we identified low-cost textbooks as a possible solution. As GEOG 100 is our main course for GE seeking students, having a ZCT in this course would greatly assist low-income students, and increase their ability to successfully complete this course.

**V.B. Action Plan and Resources Requests**

Develop one or more measurable objectives (goals) to begin in the next year. Each objective will include action steps and any related resource requests. No narrative response will be entered in this section, but the objectives you create will be printed automatically in the CPR report under this item.

1. To begin, click on PLANNING at the top of the page, then CREATE A NEW OBJECTIVE. To view previously created objectives, click PLANNING at the top of the page, then VIEW MY OBJECTIVE.
2. IMPORTANT! Make sure to associate each objective to this standard in the CPR and link each objective to one or more Institutional Goals. Need help? Contact the PRIE Office for further instructions.

**Narrative****Associated Objectives**

[1019-Create New Degree Elective Course](#)

[1018-Hire Full-Time Faculty](#)

[1023-Implement Zero-Cost GEOG 100 Textbook](#)

**Enhanced Budget with Objective and Task Detail**

[Geography Enhanced Budget with Objective and Task Detail](#)