As a result of the first cycle of DePaul University's Academic Program Review Process (Cycle I), the participants in the process enter into the following agreements. The participants understand that this document will be available to be made public once the signatures are in place: for the unit, the chair of the unit's review committee and the department chair/program director; for the college/school, the dean; for the Academic Program Review Committee, the unit subcommittee members; for the university, the Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs.

Acknowledgements

The Academic Program Review Committee congratulates and commends the Geography department on the hard work that has gone into the self-study. The Geography self-study was excellent and has set an example for others. The department had already done much review and strategic planning as part of its 1995 LAS College review. This university review and self-study process complemented the department's ongoing efforts to review and refine the curriculum, to develop learning goals and plans to assess student learning, and to update its strategic plan.

Amidst the significant faculty transitions of the last several years, the department has continuously sought ways to serve the curricular needs of the college and university. Geography has been a leader in academic technology for research and teaching, and reeducated the community on the intellectual depth and richness of the contemporary discipline of Geography. The agreements below have emerged from conversations about the major issues raised in the program review self-study and represent the culmination of the review process.

Common Issues and University-level Commitments

During Cycle I, the unit program review self-studies raised several issues in common that have important university-wide implications. In subsequent conversations about these major issues, the units, the deans, the Academic Program Review Committee members, and the Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs all have recognized the need for university-level coordination to support units in the following areas: a) advising activities; b) recruitment and marketing efforts; c) structures that facilitate cross-departmental and cross-college collaboration; d) improvement of the university-level data collection and reporting efforts on academic programs; e) assessment efforts and research on students; f) efforts to maintain connections with alumni. To follow up on these common issues and determine the appropriate courses of action needed to address them at the university and unit level, the Academic Program Review Committee and the Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs agree to do the following:

1. The Academic Program Review Committee agrees to prepare a summary report on Cycle I to the Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs which discusses these and other issues that have important connections to other university-wide initiatives, especially to the Strategic Plan. That report will be made public, along with the Memoranda of Agreement.
2. The Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs agrees to direct the appropriate university-level offices to work with the units and their deans on how to effectively address these issues.
3. The Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs will require a progress report in June of 2000 from the appropriate offices that will be shared with the Academic Program Review Committee.
4. The Academic Program Review Committee will invite representatives from the appropriate offices to an Academic Program Review Committee meeting in the fall quarter of 1999-2000 academic year to follow-up on these issues and discuss possible courses of action.

In addition to these university-level commitments, the following are issues and actions agreed upon at the unit level.

**Issues and actions agreed upon**

1. The Geography department will continue its ongoing process to refine the Geography curriculum, which it began in 1995. As it reviews the curriculum, the department agrees to consider the following:
   - recent enrollment trends in Geography courses;
   - the need to balance between courses that serve majors and those that serve non-majors; and
   - the need to consolidate the number and focus of concentrations.

2. The Geography department chair and the dean will continue to give careful consideration to the hiring of new faculty.
   - The department was successful in recruiting diverse candidates for a new faculty position and has hired a woman Geographer this year.
   - The department chair and the dean will carefully and constantly review the department's staffing needs given the staffing needs of the college and discuss the possibility of hiring new faculty.

3. The Geography department and the dean will continue conversations about the role of the Geographic Information System (GIS) within the college and its use by other departments.
   - The department and the dean will work together to further clarify and define the way that GIS is shared among social science disciplines to strengthen mutual benefits.
   - The clarification of these relationships will be especially important as other departments look to use the new GIS laboratory being created.

4. The department and the dean will continue to work in collaboration with the university on a process to improve the connections of Geography and the GIS Certificate program to external constituencies.
   - This might include a reclassification of the Certificate from a "student at-large" code to a more specific and meaningful category, which could be accomplished in collaboration with university-level offices.
   - This also might include a better marketing strategy (easier access through DePaul's website; more effective advertising), which could also be accomplished in collaboration with university-level offices.

5. The Geography department chair and the dean will continue to discuss the possibilities for investing resources to expand the department, acknowledging the creative tension that exists in the strategy of "resources following" vs. "resources leading" growth.

**Issues and actions on which there is agreement to do further work and to continue conversations**

1. Refining Curriculum
   - The department has the opportunity to gather more information on students and course-taking patterns that will inform the ongoing efforts to refine the curriculum (Geography student exit
interviews; OIPR data). The department can analyze existing course-taking patterns to find ways to tailor concentrations and course offerings to student needs.

- In thinking about course offerings, the department can identify core courses that serve the major and can also serve non-majors. The department has already rewritten course descriptions so that the courses serve many constituencies in the classroom.
- In refining the concentrations, the department has already dropped two concentrations since 1995. The department might be able to work with other social science departments to design upper-division courses that could count as major courses in both/several departments.
- The new faculty member hired in the department will bring new disciplinary interests and thus possibilities for new courses, which the department can explore.

2. Faculty Hiring

- It will be important for the department and the dean to track issues and share common understandings of where the possibilities lie for hiring new faculty.
- The department chair and the dean agree to continue to discuss the status of hiring decisions for the department.

3. GIS and GIS Certificate program

- The department faculty and chair will possibly propose to the dean the creation of an advisory committee to help advise the department on the development of the GIS itself and related programs.

Issues on which further discussion is needed, as yet unspecified

Faculty hiring:

- Geography has connections to other disciplines beyond LAS (Marketing, International Business, Economics, for example). The department chair, the dean, and the EVP recognize that there needs to be a mechanism that allows departments to draw upon faculty strengths from other departments and colleges. There is a possibility of cross-college collaboration.

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A hard copy of this document was signed by:

Chair of the Unit Review Committee and Department Chair: Alex Papadopoulos

APRC Subcommittee members: Donald Ilko and Steve Jost

Dean of the College: Michael Mezey

Executive V.P. for Academic Affairs: Richard Meister

*The hard copy with signatures is on file in the Office of the Associate V.P. for Academic Affairs and is available upon request.*