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MEMORANDUM

ATTENTION: Senate

TEL

FROM: Peter Keller, Vice-President, Academic and Provost, and Chair, SCUP

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Peter Keller".

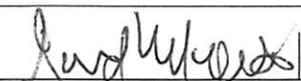
RE: External Review Mid-Cycle Report for the Department of Geography (SCUP 17-09)

DATE: January 16, 2017

TIME

At its January 11, 2017 meeting, SCUP reviewed the Mid-Cycle Report for the Department of Geography which resulted from its 2013 external review. The report is attached for the information of Senate.

MEMORANDUM

ATTENTION: Peter Keller, Chair, SCUP	TEL
FROM: Gord Myers, Vice-Provost and Associate Vice-President, Academic	
RE: External Review Mid-Cycle Report for the Department of Geography	
DATE: December 8, 2016	 TIME

The External Review of the Department of Geography was undertaken in March 2013. As per the Senate guidelines, the Unit is required to submit a mid-cycle report describing its progress in implementing the External Review Action Plan. The mid-cycle report, together with a copy of the Action Plan approved by Senate, is attached for the information of SCUP.

- c: Tracy Brennand, Chair, Department of Geography
- Ingrid Stefanovic, Dean, Faculty of Environment



Faculty of Environment
Department of Geography

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MEMORANDUM

ATTENTION Glynn Nicholls, Director, Academic Planning
And Quality Assurance **DATE** 1 December 2016
FROM Tracy Brennand, Professor & Chair, **PAGES** 7
Department of Geography
RE: Mid-Cycle External Review Progress Report, Department of Geography

Please find attached the mid-cycle report for the Department of Geography that details our progress on the Action Plan stemming from our last external review.

External Review Update for the Department of Geography	
Action	Progress Made
1. Programming	
1.1.1 Undergraduate	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The department will assess whether the reviewers' claim of rigidity in the BA program – specifically, in its upper division concentrations [called "streams" in the review] – turns out to be true. These concentrations were implemented in the hope of providing our majors with some helpful guidance in creating a coherent major program. Since they made their debut as recently as Fall 2012, they are not yet fully operational. Flexibility or the lack thereof is an issue we must monitor over the next few years. 	<p>Monitoring has revealed that students are 'reverse engineering' their Geography BA degree (selecting streams at the end of their program in order to graduate) rather than using streams as useful road maps and calling cards. Consequently, we have elected to rework our BA programs into a Human Geography BA and a Society and Environment BA (a more flexible option allowing students to select courses from across the Department), neither with streams, and at the same time address the educational goals initiative. This process is informed by an undergraduate student survey we ran in Spring 2016 (https://www.sfu.ca/geography/news-and-events/news-archives/news-2016/20160421-report-undergraduate-survey.html). We plan to bring proposals forward for approval in Spring 2017.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will take steps to refresh the Urban Studies Certificate by reconfiguring the requirements, enlarging the choice of courses, and involving more units (e.g., History) across campus. 	<p>The Urban Studies Certificate has been refreshed (2015) and remarketed (2016). It is too early to assess whether or not we have been successful in expanding the number of declared students or diversifying the student body (in terms of their disciplinary homes), but early indications are encouraging.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will work to ensure that the Global Environmental Systems (GES) BENV is integrated with, yet sufficiently differentiated from our existing undergraduate offerings. This has been a continual focus. 	<p>The GES BENV is now administered by Geography (2016). Upcoming changes to the Geography BA programs (above) will ensure better differentiation of these degrees and the GES BENV.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The possibility of modifying the existing GIS joint degree will be explored, in conversation with Computing Science. One option is to develop a FENV GIS major, that will be more SIS focused. 	<p>A proposal for a BENV in Spatial and Geographic Information Science was drafted in 2014. Existing faculty complement at that time was insufficient to mount a major and there were concerns around lab space; since then our remote sensing faculty member has resigned without replacement. Consequently, this proposal has been shelved. We continue to explore avenues by which to mount an online B-Sci course, 'Digital Earth' without the intellectual property issues faced in CODE.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop an experiential learning strategy that recognizes the particular importance of field-related education to Geography, and develop a plan for its better institutional support. 	<p>A hallmark of Geography's programs is the rich diversity of experiential learning opportunities available to students in the form of tutorials, labs, community collaborations, co-op, and field trips and schools at home and abroad. We have hired a new physical geography lecturer (Andrew Perkins, July 2016) with responsibility for mounting and redesigning our 12-day Physical Geography field school (GEOG 310) so that it is less expensive and can be offered every year; his first offering is Spring 2017. Field trip fees were established under a different budget model where up to 50% of costs were supplemented by the department budget. Inflation, the new FAM and budget cuts no longer allow this; cost recovery is required. We have requested a recalibration of supplemental course fees; we understand that SFU is considering options on this matter. In the meantime, and in order to avoid having to cancel field trips and compromise experiential learning, we have been advised to take the temporary measure of requiring students to pay accommodation costs separately in several courses (excl. GEOG 310); fees cover group transportation (mostly). We have sought support from the SFU community engagement fund and a teaching and learning grant to support our latest international field school offering on urban resilience in Germany (GEOG 497); one paid student research internship in Germany is also associated with this course (https://www.daad.de/rise/en/rise-germany/). We have piloted a self-guided (U-Pass) field trip in GEOG 261 (https://www.sfu.ca/geography/news-and-events/news-archives/news-2015/20150305-eugene-geog261.html). We support the annual Geography Student Union (GSU) experiential learning trip (e.g., https://www.sfu.ca/geography/news-and-events/events-archives/events-2016/20160425-gsu-elt.html). We have redesigned our website to better market co-op, adding stories and videos of student co-op experiences (http://www.sfu.ca/geography/coop-program.html). We are currently working on new web pages to better market the breadth of our experiential learning opportunities and their links to career opportunities.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore the possibility of a BENV in 'social environment', 	<p>Initial explorations (2014) did not yield fruit. FENV interests appear to</p>

<p>possibly in collaboration with ARCH, or FASS units.</p>	<p>have switched to the City and/or Planning. We are willing to be a leader or collaborator in this endeavor but have been advised to wait to see if enrolments rise in our refreshed Urban Studies Certificate in order to assess market demand. In the meantime, we are focusing on refreshing our existing programs and addressing the educational goals initiative.</p>
<p>1.1.2 Graduate</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Course offerings: The limited extent of graduate course offerings is a function of our commitment to an apprenticeship training model, and our focus on undergraduate teaching. Running department wide required courses is not appropriate, given the diversity of graduate needs (especially for physical geographers, whose work is lab and/or field based). Some other options may exist: We will revisit this challenge over the next two years to determine the best possible plan. 	<p>In 2000 the equivalent of one course teaching load for research faculty was redirected to graduate education in the form of mentorship and course delivery. This has resulted in a doubling of publication rates by graduate students and substantially reduced (by 3-4 semesters) times to completion in our MA and PhD programs. In addition, their successes (academic positions; careers) post-degree convince us that the mentorship model with limited coursework is the best model for our diverse graduate programs given program size and faculty complement. We are currently working on updates to our graduate program website to clarify program structures and course availability. Our new hydrologist (Jason Leach, January 2017) will ensure GEOG 606 is taught annually. Existing faculty teach GEOG 605 annually. We currently have insufficient capacity to teach GEOG 604, but plan to rectify this with a new faculty hire in the area of human geography. Research faculty teach thematic courses on an as needed basis. We are considering cross-listing required graduate student courses with courses in our Honours' programs in order to boost enrolment and enhance student experience in those courses.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The possibility of a premium fee Masters in GIS/SIS will be explored. 	<p>A proposal for a premium fee graduate Certificate in Geoinformation was drafted in 2014; this was seen as a first step to test the market before expansion to a premium fee Masters' degree. Existing faculty complement at that time was insufficient to mount the certificate whilst maintaining or growing the undergraduate Certificate in Spatial Information Science; since then our remote sensing faculty member has resigned without replacement. We explored the possibility of offering the Certificate online through the POST initiative. Concerns around inadequate faculty resources, program quality and intellectual property led us to shelve the proposal. We have since learned that the new FAM is challenging for such programs.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Although not addressed in any detail in the review, we will also undertake a thorough reexamination of the structure of our comprehensive examinations. In fact, the reviewers' concerns regarding the order of graduate program milestones, i.e. the comprehensive examinations and the proposal presentation, is in our opinion a misidentification of issues around student progress that are better addressed by looking at the examination process. Under the direction of the graduate chair, the department will undertake a review of the process over the next twelve months, in an attempt to develop some clarity regarding (a) the contribution of the comprehensive examination to graduate education, and (b) the most appropriate means by which to realize that contribution in a interdisciplinary department like our own. 	<p>Following a review of the doctoral qualifying examinations, and in consultation with graduate students, we have clarified the process and expanded the qualifying examination scheduling options (https://www.sfu.ca/geography/graduate-studies/information-for-current-students/degree-requirements.html). We are introducing new courses pertinent to progress milestones for doctoral students: GEOG 671 – Doctoral Qualifying Exams and GEOG 679 – PhD thesis Proposal (we are doing similarly for Masters' thesis proposals).</p>
2. Research	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategically pursue Research Chairs (possibly in Aboriginal issues, Coastal environments). 	<p>The Department defined its strategic research priorities in 2015 (http://www.sfu.ca/geography/research.html). We submitted a list of potential Research Chairs that fit with these priorities to the FENV Dean's Office and Advancement in 2015. This list included: coastal dynamics and global change; critical indigenous geographies; earth system modelling; ecohydrology; economic geography of resources and resource dependence; water governance; and youth geographies. We attempted to pursue a tier II CRC in Earth System Modelling at that time, but the internal candidate was deemed just ineligible on the 'time since PhD' criterion.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A CRC Tier II has been allocated to the Department. A search is underway. 	<p>A tier II CRC in Health Service Geographies was filled by Valorie Crooks in Fall 2014.</p>
3. Administration	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue the revival of the departmental Speaker Series, in order to enhance intellectual exchange and departmental cohesion, possibly through a designated time slot, and/or 	<p>The Departmental Speaker Series continues with 1-3 seminars per semester in Fall and Spring in a blocked off time slot (12:30-2:30 Thursday). The Departmental Distinguished Speaker event occurs</p>

<p>collaboration with other FENV units.</p>	<p>annually; this event includes an alumni reception and is paired with a graduate professional development seminar by the speaker. This year the seminar will focus on academic publishing. We will also hold a graduate student academic careers workshop (funded through SCORE). Both events will be filmed and the resulting videos edited and loaded to a new Departmental You Tube channel for use by future graduate students in the Department and beyond. We hold an annual Graduate Student Research Day that showcases the diverse and high quality research conducted by graduate students in the department. We have introduced a new Travelogue series bringing together faculty and graduate and undergraduate students to share mis-adventures in the field (what goes on "behind the scenes" in research); it has been extremely popular and serves to advance departmental unity, as does the Departmental Seasonal Gathering/Christmas Party.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At the request of pre-tenure or junior faculty, senior faculty mentors will be identified to volunteer to provide advice and support related to tenure, promotion and research strategies. 	<p>We have no pre-tenure faculty. Our first research faculty hire since the review will join us in January 2017 (Jason Leach – Hydrology). The Chair will work with him to identify the most appropriate mentor for him. A new Physical Geography Lecturer (Andrew Perkins) joined the Department in July 2016. The Geography Chair is acting as his Department mentor and a Teaching Professor in Psychology is acting as his career mentor.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Actively pursue improvements in FENV governance/communication/vision issues, in close collaboration with the Dean's Office. The appointment of a new Dean provides a useful opportunity here. 	<p>The FENV constitution was established in 2015. The Geography Chair is a member of the FENV DAC and has periodic meetings with the Dean as needed. The Dean has attended two Department meetings since the review. The Dean has requested input from faculty on her draft strategic plan.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to lobby for the appropriate weighting of our AFTEs, in close collaboration with the Dean's Office. 	<p>The new FAM is based on AFTEs not WAFTEs. Nevertheless, the old weightings are baked into the new FAM. The Department has provided data to the Dean's office that has been used by the Dean to repeatedly argue for reconsideration of the FAM; she has our full support in this endeavor. Our STEM (Earth System Dynamics and GIScience) courses are expensive to mount and inadequately funded through both the old and new FAM. Cuts to our operating budget (\$45k) challenge our ability to stay current in these courses moving forward. Our budget cut for 2016-</p>

	<p>17 also included cuts to our TI budget, resulting in a reduction in course offerings and a modest reduction in enrolments. We are implementing changes in our faculty teaching plan, program structure and redoubling marketing and retention efforts in order to grow enrolments.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a Strategic Planning Committee possibly tasked with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Developing an action plan for new hires (thinking strategically around clusters, and perhaps collaborating with other units) in Physical Geography and Human Geography. b. Developing an action plan for Research Chairs. c. Exploring a BENV in social environment (possibly in collaboration with ARCH, or FASS units). d. Strategic planning for new location. e. Developing a plan to advance departmental unity of vision and purpose and mitigate against fragmentation. 	<p>A Strategic Planning Committee (SPC) (3 faculty members appointed by the Chair, plus the Chair) was established in Spring 2014 with the mandate to advise and consult with the Chair on longer term department wide strategic planning related to issues such as new faculty hires, Research Chairs, departmental unity and vision, and broader programming initiatives. The SPC led the Department through a visioning exercise (https://www.sfu.ca/geography/about-us/mission-statement.html) and the identification of strategic research priorities (https://www.sfu.ca/geography/research.html) (2014-15). This interdisciplinary exercise broke the barriers between the silos of Human Geography, Physical Geography (Earth System Dynamics) and Spatial and Geographic Information Science, thus advancing departmental unity. The Department's research priorities informed a list of potential Research Chairs; subsequently ratified by the Department and sent to the FENV Dean's Office and Advancement (Fall 2015). The SPC has also recommended to the Department a strategic plan for faculty renewal that contemplates resignations (2 since the review – remote sensing, biogeography), retirements (2 since the review – economic geography, environmental geography/Asia; 3 more by August 2019 – tourism, economic/resource geography, human geography lecturer), and research priorities; this is reviewed by the SPC and voted on by the Department annually. The SPC has also provided advice to the Chair on matters such as renovation priorities and workload allocation.</p> <p>There appears to be no money or space to move Geography to a new location. Since the review the Department has been plagued with floods, climate control issues, pests and mold, our external space is locked off due to safety concerns, and lab and office facilities still do not meet modern standards for research and teaching; the lack of sufficient or appropriate space for research and teaching remains chronic. The Department continues to work with the Dean's Office on space swaps</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop an External Relations Committee possibly tasked with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Alumni relations – building connections with existing alumni. b. Adjuncts – building stronger connections with existing adjuncts, and exploring the strategic expansion of adjunct numbers. c. Oversight and enhancement of website. d. External promotion and image. e. Blog postings. 	<p>and proposals to renovate existing space.</p> <p>The External Relations Committee (ERC) (3 faculty members elected by the Department plus the Chair and two students, one undergraduate and one graduate) was established in Spring 2014 with a mandate to develop strategies for the better communication of the Department’s mission and accomplishments to the Department, University and wider community through improved external communication strategies, including the development of enhanced relations with alumni and adjunct and associate professors. Through the ERCs work Geography now has an active network of 18 Adjunct Professors (https://www.sfu.ca/geography/people/adjunct-faculty.html) and 8 Associate members (https://www.sfu.ca/geography/people/associate-members.html). In 2015 the Department web site was refreshed (https://www.sfu.ca/geography.html), a facebook page mounted (https://www.facebook.com/GeographySFU/) and a logo launched. The website is continually updated with events, news, and kudos, and highlights our community engagement initiatives (http://www.sfu.ca/geography/community-engagement.html). We will explore using other social media (Instagram, Twitter etc) in 2017. Monthly updates on our activities are sent to the Dean and GeogNews (the Canadian Geography eNewsletter). For alumni we now have two annual events (partially supported by Alumni Relations), an alumni webpage (ongoing project; https://www.sfu.ca/geography/people/alumni.html), and an annual newsletter (that is distributed widely; http://www.sfu.ca/geography/news-and-events/newsletter-archives.html). We are working to create an Alumni Council to advise us on alumni engagement. We have worked with the library to digitize all Geography graduate theses (http://summit.sfu.ca/collection/142) and discussion papers (http://summit.sfu.ca/collection/223); digitization of all Geography undergraduate Honours’ theses is in progress. We are now moving onto video initiatives: alumni speak about careers, course trailers, and student perception of geography (a student video competition), and we plan to launch a Departmental You Tube channel to house these</p>
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	<p>videos. An extra day of undergraduate advisor time (since Spring 2016) is allowing us to begin work on better marketing our programs and retaining students; we are contemplating an annual welcome event for new undergraduate students and additional support for the GSU's annual career night.</p>
4. Faculty/Staff Renewal	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We plan a restructuring of our technical support staff. A new APSA position will be created, to report directly to the Chair. He/she will take responsibility for coordinating the Departmental technical staff, as well as taking a coordination role for technical support within the Faculty as a whole (in part, with an eye to ensuring efficiencies). This will entail an evaluation and reworking of job descriptions within the Department. Once this has been completed, we will assess the need for additional technical support, especially for Physical Geography teaching. 	<p>The new APSA position, Manager of Logistical and Technical Operations (MLTO), was created (2013) and filled (B-Jae Kelly). The MLTO has been working with his team (3 staff) to rework their job descriptions (JDs) so that they better match Departmental needs and address inter-departmental FENV efficiencies. Assessment of additional technical support for the Physical Geography program is part of this initiative. New JDs will be formalized in Spring 2017. Our Manager of Academic and Administrative Services (Anke Baker) updated and restructured the job descriptions of her team (5 staff; 4 positions) to better support the Department's needs. These new JDs came into effect in Fall 2015 and are working well.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seek new faculty hires, especially in Hydrology and Human Geography, to meet gaps in expertise, loss of capacity, and imminent retirements. 	<p>We have hired a new Physical Geography lecturer (Andrew Perkins, July 2016) and a new tenure track Hydrologist (Jason Leach, January 2017). Since the review, two research faculty have resigned (remote sensing; biogeography), one has retired (environmental geography/Asia), and two more retire this year (economic geography; tourism). Two additional faculty (economic geography; human geography lecturer) have begun phased retirement. Our 2-year Faculty Renewal Plan prioritizes tenure track positions in environmental economic geography, remote sensing of global environmental change, urban change and geographies of inequity, and a human geography lecturer, in line with our research priorities and teaching needs.</p>



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MEMORANDUM

ATTENTION Tracy Brennand
Chair, Department of Geography

DATE October 20, 2016

FROM Glynn Nicholls
Director, Academic Planning and Quality Assurance

PAGES 1

COPY Ingrid Stefanovic
Dean, Faculty of Environment

RE: External Review Update for the Department of Geography

As per Senate guidelines, the Department of Geography is to report on progress being made in the implementation of the Action Plan that resulted from its external review in March 2013. This report will be presented to SCUP and Senate for information. The Chair will be asked to attend the SCUP meeting to provide comment and answer any questions about the update on the Action Plan. The Dean may choose to attend the meeting at her discretion.

Please submit your progress report, using the attached template, by Thursday, December 1, 2016 to Bal Basi at bbasi@sfu.ca. Also attached, for ease of reference, is the Action Plan that was approved by Senate on November 4, 2013.

Although your external review took place prior to the requirement to develop educational goals and assessment beginning with the 2013-14 external review cycle, any progress being made in your Department in defining program and/or course level educational goals for academic programs would be welcome in your progress report.

Please contact me at 2-6702, glynn_nicholls@sfu.ca, or Bal Basi at 2-7676, bbasi@sfu.ca, if you have any questions or concerns regarding the external review update process.

Attach.

EXTERNAL REVIEW – ACTION PLAN

Section 1 – To be completed by the Responsible Unit Person e.g. Chair or Director			
Unit under review Geography	Date of Review Site visit March 2013	Responsible Unit person, Nicholas Blomley, Chair	Faculty Dean John Pierce
<p><i>Note: It is <u>not</u> expected that every recommendation made by the Review Team be covered by this Action Plan. The major thrusts of the Report should be identified and some consolidation of the recommendations may be possible while other recommendations of lesser importance may be excluded.</i></p> <p><i>Should an additional response be warranted, it should be attached as a separate document.</i></p>			
1. PROGRAMMING			
<p>1.1 Action/s (description what is going to be done):</p> <p>1.1.1 Undergraduate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The department will assess whether the reviewers' claim of rigidity in the BA program – specifically, in its upper division concentrations [called "streams" in the review] – turns out to be true. These concentrations were implemented in the hope of providing our majors with some helpful guidance in creating a coherent major program. Since they made their debut as recently as Fall 2012, they are not yet fully operational. Flexibility or the lack thereof is an issue we must monitor over the next few years. • We will take steps to refresh the Urban Studies Certificate by reconfiguring the requirements, enlarging the choice of courses, and involving more units (e.g., History) across campus. • We will work to ensure that the Global Environmental Systems (GES) BENV is integrated with, yet sufficiently differentiated from our existing undergraduate offerings. This has been a continual focus. • The possibility of a modifying the existing GIS joint degree will be explored, in conversation with Computing Science. One option is to develop a FENV GIS major, that will be more SIS focused. • Develop an experiential learning strategy that recognizes the particular importance of field-related education to Geography, and develops a plan for its better institutional support. • Explore the possibility of a BENV in 'social environment', possibly in collaboration with ARCH, or FASS units <p>1.1.2 Graduate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Course offerings: The limited extent of graduate course offerings is a function of our commitment to an apprenticeship training model, and our focus on undergraduate teaching. Running department wide required courses is not appropriate, given the diversity of graduate needs (especially for physical geographers, whose work is lab and/or field based). Some other options may exist: We will revisit this challenge over the next two years to determine the best possible plan. 			

- **The possibility of a premium fee Masters in GIS/SIS will be explored.**
- **Although not addressed in any detail in the review, we will also undertake a thorough reexamination of the structure of our comprehensive examinations. In fact, the reviewers' concerns regarding the order of graduate program milestones, i.e. the comprehensive examinations and the proposal presentation, is in our opinion a misidentification of issues around student progress that are better addressed by looking at the examination process. Under the direction of the graduate chair, the department will undertake a review of the process over the next twelve months, in an attempt to develop some clarity regarding (a) the contribution of the comprehensive examination to graduate education, and (b) the most appropriate means by which to realize that contribution in a interdisciplinary department like our own**

1.2 Resource implications ((if any):

While it is expected that the GES BENV will be 'housed' within Geography, yet jointly administered, its management will generate an additional service load.

There are significant resource implications to running additional graduate and undergraduate GIS programming – more lab space and instructional resources will be required. However, it is hoped that this will be offset by the enhanced revenues generated by the premium fee Masters and increased enrolments. It is imperative that our core programming is not compromised, and that we not be 'stretched thin'.

Field related teaching occurs throughout our program, but deserves better recognition and support. We have explored the options that are available to us to provide APEG recognized field experience. The proposal to offer the field course every year is unsustainable, given personnel and resource costs. We hope to offer it every other year. To do so, we will need to explore possibilities for institutional support.

Additional graduate teaching, particularly if required, will place a considerable burden on faculty.

1.3 Expected completion date/s:

The revamping of the Urban Certificate has already begun. We hope to complete a proposal by the end of 2013: nb Geography is not in a position to reshape this interdisciplinary certificate unilaterally.

The modification of the GIS Joint degree is to be considered in the coming academic year.

The 'social environment' BENV is a longer-term project, conditional on the first round of BENV initiatives.

Graduate course offerings: Steps forward on this issue will begin with discussions in the Graduate Studies Committee in Fall 2013, and continuing through the 2013-14 academic year. Proposed changes, if any, will be brought to the department for discussion in either Fall 2014 or Spring 2015.

Comprehensive exam assessment – completed by Fall 2014.

2. RESEARCH

2.1 Action/s (what is going to be done):

- **Strategically pursue Research Chairs (possibly in Aboriginal Issues, Coastal environments)**
- **A CRC Tier II has been allocated to the Department. A search is underway.**

2.2 Resource implications ((if any):

Significant funding must be secured for Research Chairs.

2.3 Expected completion date/s:

New Chairs: Long term

CRC: completion of internal search September 2013. Appointment September 2014.

3. ADMINISTRATION

3.1 Action/s (what is going to be done):

- Continue the revival of the departmental Speaker Series, in order to enhance intellectual exchange and departmental cohesion, possibly through a designated time slot, and/or collaboration with other FENV units
- At the request of pre-tenure or junior faculty, senior faculty mentors will be identified to volunteer to provide advice and support related to tenure, promotion and research strategies.
- Actively pursue improvements in FENV governance/communication/vision issues, in close collaboration with the Dean's Office. The appointment of a new Dean provides a useful opportunity here.
- Continue to lobby for the appropriate weighting of our AFTEs, in close collaboration with the Dean's Office
- Develop a Strategic Planning Committee possibly tasked with:
 - a. Developing an action plan for new hires (thinking strategically around clusters, and perhaps collaborating with other units) in Physical Geography and Human Geography.
 - b. Developing an action plan for Research Chairs,
 - c. Exploring a BENV in social environment (possibly in collab with ARCH, or FASS units)
 - d. Strategic planning for a new location
 - e. Developing a plan to advance departmental unity of vision and purpose and mitigate against fragmentation.
- Develop an External Relations Committee possibly tasked with:
 - a. Alumni relations – building connections with existing alumni
 - b. Adjuncts – building stronger connections with existing adjuncts, and exploring the strategic expansion of adjunct numbers
 - c. Oversight and enhancement of website
 - d. External promotion and image
 - e. Blog postings

2.4 Resource implications (if any):

There are clear implications for service load if new committees are created. However, the External Relations and Strategic Planning Committee will meet infrequently, and will need to be tactical in their choices to avoid burnout.

2.5 Expected completion date/s:

Most of these actions will begin to unfold over the next 1-2 years, or are already underway.

The Strategic Planning Committee will be developed in Fall 2014, to coincide with the appointment of the new Chair

4. FACULTY/STAFF RENEWAL

4.1 Action/s(what is going to be done) :

- We plan a restructuring of our technical support staff. A new APSA position will be created, to report directly to the Chair. He/she will take responsibility for coordinating the Departmental technical staff, as well as taking a coordination role for technical support within the Faculty as a whole (in part, with an eye to ensuring efficiencies). This will entail an evaluation and reworking of job descriptions within the Department. Once this has been completed, we will assess the need for additional technical support, especially for Physical Geography teaching.
 - Seek new faculty hires, especially in Hydrology and Human Geography, to meet gaps in expertise, loss of capacity, and imminent retirements.

4.2 Resource implications(if any):

Additional technical support is needed.

Faculty positions will require institutional support. The absence of an Hydrologist is a significant gap. The faculty complement is down, particularly in Human Geography.

4.3 Expected completion date/s:

- Faculty shortfalls will become increasingly significant in the ensuing years

The above action plan has been considered by the Unit under review and has been discussed and agreed to by the Dean.

<p>Unit Leader (signed)</p> <p>• Name  Title Chair</p>	<p>Date</p> <p>July 10, 2013</p>
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Section 2 - Dean's comments and endorsement of the Action Plan :

Dean's Response

Let me begin with a note of thanks to the Review Committee for such a thoroughly written document, which while very laudatory regarding the strengths of the Department of Geography, provides timely and highly constructive advice on the way ahead. My congratulations to the Department of Geography for a highly successful review outcome.

I intend to respond only to the major 'issues' identified by the Reviewers and the Department.

1) Programming

It has long been our intention to have the Department take responsibility for the proposed BENV *Global Environmental Systems* with administrative assistance from the Dean's office. We need to have further discussions around this arrangement. The suggestion to consider the development of yet another BENV stream, focusing on the *Social Environment*, is a good one so long as it is a longer term initiative.

Further analysis needs to be done on the streams in both the BA and BSc programs to ensure that there is sufficient flexibility for timely completion. And more analysis is also required on the present strength of the BSc majors and possibilities of closer co-operation with the Environmental Science program.

The GIS program is very healthy and could be strengthened further with a stand-alone major independent of Computing Science.

At the graduate level the department will have to weigh the pros and cons of developing more graduate courses. This has been an issue for numerous years with little resource flexibility for its resolution.

The suggestion to develop a premium fee Masters in GIS is a good one and my office is prepared to provide financial support for its articulation.

2)Research

The Review committee is very clear regarding the significant research strengths of the department. I would encourage the Department to consider developing a strategy for increasing their number of research chairs based upon their natural advantages. In this regard a CRC Tier II has recently been awarded to Geography in the area of Medical Services.

3)Administration

I believe my office has consulted and responded in a timely way to a whole host of shared decision making issues. That said a deliberate decision was made not to develop a constitution until we could collectively agree on terms of references for various administrative committees. This I explained in some detail to the Review Committee. I believe that given the recent governance overhaul for Environmental Science we are now in a position to develop a workable constitution.

And with respect to having a broader view of the Environment, I fully support this vision and made that clear in FENV's five year plan.

Within the Departments itself I think the creation of a strategic planning committee is long overdue as is some type of external relations committee. I might add that the Geography alumni have been particularly active and constructive participants in annual Faculty alumni events.

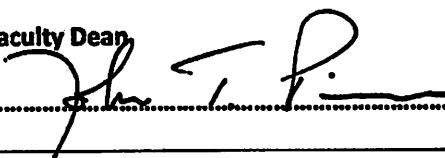
A significant problems remains in the mismatch between the true costs of operations of the Department and its allocated budget based upon WAFTEs. The diversity of its programs combined with the field based and technical nature of program delivery make for significantly high costs of operations. These issues have been recognized and corrected in other Canadian Universities. We know this because we recently completed a study on the budget allocations for Geography Departments across the country.

4) Faculty Renewal and Technical/Staff Support

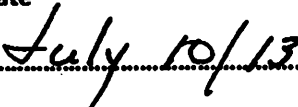
My office is currently working on a revised staffing/technical support plan. In this regard we are well aware of the technical support shortcomings for the Physical Geography Group.

The proposed hires in Hydrology and Human Geography have my full support. Both the undergraduate and graduate programs need these positions if they are to sustain enrollments, so I will be working with Geography to prioritize these positions.

Faculty Dean


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Date


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Departmental comments:

We feel that the reviewers have over-emphasized the inflexible nature of our undergraduate program. If anything, some areas of our program (especially Human Geography) are too flexible; hence the felt need for streams, instituted a year ago. That said, we think it valuable to continue to monitor our program, and work to reduce bottlenecks, such as required courses, and excessive pre-requisites. The Physical Geography program, in particular, may be overly ambitious, given present resources and expertise.

Writing of what they judge to be “the highly structured nature of the undergraduate degree” [internal evidence shows that to be the BA], the reviewers assert that no program in Canada has “such a large number of required courses” [p. 4]. In fact, there are just four obligatory courses, all lower division survey courses that prepare students for more specialized offerings taken later. Beyond that required quartet, students must select courses from a series of lists – a common enough procedure. So when, in upper division context, the reviewers refer to “many of the required courses” [p. 4], they actually mean many of the possible choices. This likely helps explain their use of the term “required choice.”

It would be interesting to have been given a rationale for reducing the number of Human Geography courses required for Physical Geography students and vice versa, especially upper division courses [pp. 4, 20]. The latter qualification is perplexing, since in each case just a single such course is required. One can surely argue that even such modest exposure is enriching and can contribute to an interdisciplinary experience. It’s not entirely clear how a reduction in the number of Physical Geography streams from its present three would reduce workloads and course offerings [p. 21]. But it might well reduce student choice.

The reviewers don’t make any comprehensive suggestions re Physical Geography but at times leave the impression of a program in trouble. Hence: “the status quo is not an option” [p. 21]. Agreed, things look rather bleak if we accept that the number of majors has fallen from 80 to its current 35 [p. 10; cf. p. 21]. In fact, the average number of majors since 1999 is 39.6, with the average during the last five years being 40.8. [IRP, Table ST-04, annualized data.] This of course means that the program has not grown in numbers. This may be reflective of faculty turnover/loss, that raises challenges for the program more generally. Still, Physical Geography has contributed significantly to the revised – and revived – Environmental Science program, which has seen much growth and represents a successful step towards interdisciplinarity. With a couple of minor exceptions, every Physical Geography course is offered to students enrolled in the Environmental Science program. Moreover Earth Sciences, a relatively young department, now competes for students interested in the lithosphere.

The reviewers seem to have confused GEOG 600/601 (a required pass/fail graduate class taken by all incoming graduate students) and GEOG 605 (a theory class for Human Geography grads).

We would love to offer the field school on an annual basis. However, it is very expensive, both in terms of personnel and resource costs.

The reviewers' suggestion that the order of the proposal and comprehensive exams be reversed is not adequately justified or explained, and thus the benefits in terms of time-to-completion etc. are unclear. As it stands, the comprehensive exams precede the proposal because it is assumed that one needs to be familiar with the literature of one's chosen field(s) before one can write a good proposal. The originality, sophistication and extent of the contribution—all of which are expected to be significant in doctoral level research—cannot be assessed by the candidate until they know the full range of existing work and the problems that remain unaddressed. Moreover, unless the structure of the examinations and the proposal change, then merely shifting the order in which they take place will not have any meaningful effect on progress, and if changes are instituted, these would offer the same benefits to students regardless of the order in which the program milestones are arranged. Lacking an argument for 'proposal first', we will instead turn our attention to the question of the structure of the examinations and proposal defence.