REPORT FOR THE UNIVERSITY SENATE

University Senate Committee: Academic Policies Committee

Brief History of Issue - why the issue is being considered:

1. Existing and continued growth exists in the geospatial technology job sector requiring geographic information systems (GIS), global positioning systems (GPS), and remote sensing skills. Recent program graduates who took the geospatial technology courses obtained permanent positions in their field.

2. The Department of Geography and Anthropology houses two fully dedicated geospatial computer laboratories, one dedicated geospatial research laboratory, and an extensive array of geospatial technology equipment.

3. Faculty in the department have the expertise to teach current courses and expand the curriculum offerings related to this certificate.

4. The proposed certificate aligns with the Geospatial Competency Model (developed by the U.S. Department of Labor) and prepares students to meet the Geographic Information systems Professional designation after graduation.

5. Most Geography majors take the courses as electives; the certificate (with or without any of the three specializations) enables them to tailor their coursework for a particular career track. Only one of the core classes in the Geospatial Certificate offerings is required in the major. Geospatial technology is a specific set of skills within the discipline of Geography.

6. None of the courses between the Geospatial Certificate and the Geography minor overlap.

7. The Geospatial Certificate is comprised of 12 credits. All students pursuing any of the four Geospatial Certificates will take the four specified courses. Students who wish to further specialize their academic training can take another 2 courses (for a total of 18 credits) in one of the following areas of specialization for a Geospatial Certificate in…
   a. Geographic Information Systems,
   b. Remote Sensing, or
   c. Mapping

   Each of the specialization certificates includes one required and one elective (from a pre-specified list of electives) tailored to the specialty area.

Points Discussed by Committee:

1. The program is on campus, but targets professionals in the workplace through continuing education as well as high-school students and current students.

2. This certificate is related to the Information Systems program in the College of Business—although addressing the content from a Geography perspective rather than a purely Information Systems perspective. Consideration should be given to each program listing as electives courses from the other program.

3. Funding for technology and faculty was obtained from the student-funded Blugold Commitment and Lab Mod grant.

4. No major changes in technology is expected; the routine upgrades to the technology are covered.

5. The department is interested in collaborating with community partners who want to use the technology to study societal issues.
Pros of Recommendation:

1. This is a budget-neutral certificate, since the faculty, all but one of the courses, and the technology already exist.
2. A Geospatial Certificate will make Geography majors and minors, as well as majors and minors from a range of other disciplines, more marketable and more prepared for graduate school.

Cons of Recommendation: None identified

Technology/Human Resource Impact: None. This is a budget-neutral proposal.

Committee Recommendation:

MOTION FOR THE UNIVERSITY SENATE

The Academic Policies Committee

by a vote of __9__ for to __0__ against on October 23, 2012

Recommends that a Geospatial Certificate Program with four options: Geospatial Certificate; Geospatial Certificate in Geographic Information Systems; Geospatial Certificate in Remote Sensing; and Geospatial Certificate in Mapping be established in the Department of Geography and Anthropology.

Implementation Date: Immediate

Signed: ______Jean A. Pratt____
Chair of the Committee

Send to: University Senate Office