REPORT FOR THE UNIVERSITY SENATE

University Senate Committee: Academic Policies Committee

Brief History of Issue—why the issue is being considered:
Faculty in the Department of Geography and Anthropology were awarded a UW System Growth Agenda Grant entitled “Geospatial Education Initiative” in 2014. The funded grant expanded on prior work enhancing geospatial offerings with an interdisciplinary approach in conjunction with the Departments of Computer Science, Physics, and Information Science at UW-Eau Claire. This grant also helped build relationships with private businesses and enriched our geospatial curriculum. This proposed major was designed in accordance with the timeline specified within the UW System Growth Agenda Grant, as part of the Geospatial Education Initiative (GEI). Geospatial Analysis and Technology majors will have the option to pursue either a Bachelor of Science (B.S.) or Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) degree.

Points Discussed by Committee:
1. The Notice of Intent for the Geospatial Analysis and Technology major was supported by all programs and universities throughout the UW System.
2. This proposed program will not negatively impact enrollment in geography programs on other UW System campuses. Rather, graduates from this program will be well prepared to enter the graduate program in Geographic Information Systems at UW-Stevens Point.
3. This program is based on established curriculum/competency models for geospatial and geographic information science and technology.
4. The department currently offers two majors: Environment Geography and International Geography. Students—members of the industry/private sector—have been requesting a major in Geospatial Analysis and Technology.
5. Interest in Geospatial has been demonstrated through growth in the Geospatial Certificate courses.
6. A grant from the state included developing this major. Students want to specialize in international and environmental geography but also take the geospatial courses because of the relevance of geospatial to international and environmental geography.
7. The Geospatial Certificate is for non-Geography majors, so the Geospatial Analysis and Technology major will not harm the Geospatial Certificate. 30 students enrolled in the inaugural offering of the certificate in 2013. Since students don’t have to declare a certificate until they are about to graduate, an accurate count of students pursuing the certificate does not exist. However, sufficient demand for geospatial knowledge and skills exists to support three offerings of GIS I—a core course for the certificate and proposed major—per year. Whereas the certificate is fairly non-technical, the proposed major is very technical.
8. The Geospatial Advisory Board includes both faculty and industry. A Geospatial Analysis and Technology major would become part of a marketing and outreach mechanism for STEM.
9. The number of Geography majors continues to increase.
10. The proposed major will utilize the geospatial technology we already have on our campus. That technology is not yet integrated into other UW System campuses.
11. All geospatial courses—in both the core and electives—integrate components of social, physical and environmental content. Students apply skill sets across the board. Faculty are interested in collaborative research with other faculty from the social sciences.

Pros of Recommendation:
1. State and national demand for graduates with geospatial technology expertise exists. This program could help meet that demand.
2. Students in this program should be able to graduate in four years.

Cons of Recommendation: None

Technology/Human Resource Impact: None
Development of the two upper-division technology-based courses (GEOG 358—Lidar; GEOG 390—Unmanned Airel Systems) were developed as part of the original grant and will serve both the Geospatial Analysis and Technology major as well as the other two Geography majors.

Committee Recommendation:
Establish a Geospatial Analysis and Technology Comprehensive Major in the Department of Geography and Anthropology.
MOTION FOR THE UNIVERSITY SENATE

The Academic Policies Committee,

by a vote of _9_ in favor and _0_ against on November 10, 2015

recommends that a Geospatial Analysis and Technology Comprehensive Major in the Department of Geography and Anthropology be established.

Implementation Date: 2016-2017 Catalog

Signed: _______.Jean A. Pratt_____
  Chair of the Committee

Send to: University Senate Office