

UNIT REPORT

Geography and Geology, Department of
Assessment Plan Summary

Geography and Geology, Department of

Quality Faculty

Goal Description:

The faculty of the department will provide quality teaching and engage in quality research.

RELATED ITEMS/ELEMENTS

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 1

Quality Research

Performance Objective Description:

The department faculty will engage in quality, peer-reviewed research.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2

Quality Research

KPI Description:

The faculty in the department will publish peer-reviewed books and articles. 80% of the faculty in the department will publish at least one peer-reviewed publication per year.

Results Description:

There were 17 faculty members, with three adjuncts that were not subject to an annual review. Of the faculty members that were reviewed, 79% (11 of 14) authored or co-authored at least one peer-reviewed publication over the past year. Eight faculty members were the sole or first author on their publications, with two faculty members each publishing three first-authored articles. A total of 26 national or international peer-reviewed articles were published. 5 external grant proposals were submitted, 3 of which have been funded so far. Two internal grant proposals were submitted and both were funded. There were 29 first-authored presentations at regional, national, or international conferences.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3

Engagement In Quality, Peer-reviewed Research

Action Description:

Departmental faculty members are encouraged to publish quality, peer-reviewed research. The department will support this by providing time and resources to the faculty members. For example, funding travel for geographical or geological research. Travel for some geographers is equivalent to capital equipment for science faculty.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 1

Quality Teaching

Performance Objective Description:

The faculty will provide quality teaching.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2

Effective Teachers

KPI Description:

The department uses the IDEA system as the teaching evaluation instrument. The IDEA system is a nationally normed, validated and reliable measure of classroom performance. All faculty distribute the IDEA evaluations at the end of their classes each semester. The faculty member's scores are then compared to other faculty across the nation (IDEA database). 90% of the faculty in the department will be in or above the Similar converted score category on the adjusted Summary Evaluation.

Results Description:

94% of the faculty scored at or above the Similar category for the 33 courses evaluated in Spring 2015. 12% were in the Much Higher category, and 58% were in the Higher category. 97% of the faculty scored at or above the Similar category for the 33 courses evaluated in Fall 2015. 18% were in the Much Higher category, and 42% were in the Higher category.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3

Evaluation of Quality Teaching

Action Description:

Once again the only scores in the Lower category of the converted scores on the IDEA form were associated with online courses. The return rate for online courses continues to be low despite faculty encouragement to respond to the evaluation. A way to improve the response rate must be developed, but so far our efforts have not worked. We will monitor the results of the IDEA evaluations Fall, 2016 since now all courses will be evaluated online. We will any best practices that are recommended to improve return rate.

Update to Previous Cycle's Plan for Continuous Improvement

Previous Cycle's Plan For Continuous Improvement (Do Not Modify):

Again, the only faculty that "appear" to be "struggling" are those teaching a number of online courses. We will continue to try to find means of improving the return rates. We will also continue to encourage faculty to go to the PACE Center for workshops and/or one-on-one development meetings.

We will monitor our progress with respect to external funding that is being generated. We are going to continue to develop a graduate student orientation for our department to provide a means for graduate students and departmental faculty to get to know each other. As the number of graduate students pursuing a thesis increases, we are hoping to obtain graduate assistantships. We have applied for four assistantships this year. We will monitor our progress in developing a GIS facility at the University Park campus. Involvement of undergraduate students in faculty research will also continue to grow.

Update of Progress to the Previous Cycle's PCI:

Some faculty members in the department have either sought help from outside sources or have revamped their online courses in an attempt to improve their online IDEA scores. Dr. Jim Tiller continues to work with SAM Online to update a number of his courses. Dr. Velvet Nelson has been working with campus sources as well as a publisher to improve her course. The scores still tend to be generally lower than face-to-face IDEA scores. It is also difficult to find consistency. What seems to work one semester, does not work the following semester. The same for IDEA return rates. We still have not found a way to get consistently high percentages of student completion of the IDEA evaluations in the online courses. This causes concern going forward because all IDEA evaluations will be done online starting Fall 2016. We need to visit with the Office of Assessment to find out what the best practices are for getting optimal return rates.

We have seen some increase in the number of external grants. We have had two major external donations to the research effort. One of these is the donation of over 10,000 pounds of drill core by a Houston petroleum company. The other donation is a \$300,000 SEM from the Texas Department of Transportation. The number of GIS graduate students pursuing a thesis has improved slightly and has resulted in a number of abstracts co-authored by graduate students and faculty members. It does not appear that we will get four assistantships this year. We are not sure at the time of this writing whether or not we will get any assistantships. We are no longer pursuing the GIS facility at the University Park campus since SHSU seems to be withdrawing from that campus. We will have some space for GIS equipment at The Woodlands Center. We did experience some growth in the participation of undergraduates in faculty research.

Plan for Continuous Improvement

Closing Summary:

Again, the only faculty that "appear" to be "struggling" are those teaching a number of online courses. We will continue to try to find means of improving the return rates, especially since all courses will be evaluated online in the future. We will also continue to encourage faculty to go to the PACE Center for workshops and/or one-on-one development meetings.

We will monitor our progress with respect to external funding that is being generated. We are going to continue to develop a graduate student orientation and expand our graduate student manual for our department to provide a means for graduate students and departmental faculty to get to know each other. As the number of graduate students pursuing a thesis increases, we are hoping to obtain graduate assistantships. We have applied for four assistantships again this year. Development of a GIS work room facility is in progress at The Woodlands Center. Involvement of undergraduate students in faculty research will also continue to grow.
