

CALIFORNIA STATE POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY, POMONA

ACADEMIC SENATE

ACADEMIC PROGRAMS COMMITTEE

REPORT TO

THE ACADEMIC SENATE

AP-021-234

Geography, B.S. - Geographic Studies Option Discontinuation

Academic Programs Committee

Date: 02/21/2024

**Executive Committee
Received and Forwarded**

Date: 10/02/2024

Academic Senate

**Date: 10/16/2024
First Reading**

BACKGROUND:

The Department of Geography and Anthropology offers a Bachelor of Science degree in each discipline. In the discipline of Geography, which is the focus of the Senate referral, the Geography major includes three options: 1) Geospatial Analysis (e.g., technical aspects of geography that are computer-based such as simulations and geographic information systems); 2) Environmental Studies (e.g., applied environmental aspects); 3) Geographic Studies (e.g., blends physical, cultural, and regional geography courses with fieldwork). Program learning outcomes for the Geography major have been designed broadly to enable students in the three options to gain utility in the following:

- Students will acquire a broad knowledge of fundamental concepts and principles in physical, human, and social economic environment at various scales.
- Students will develop spatial analytical skills, both quantitative and qualitative; they will learn to compare solutions that have been attempted in various parts of the world; and they will be trained to use the latest available geospatial technologies in the field.
- Students will be able to communicate their understanding and analysis results by making maps, writing research papers and technical reports, giving oral presentations, and developing multimedia presentations.
- Students will be prepared for employment or to pursue advanced study in geography or a cognate discipline. They will be able to apply geographical knowledge to ethical and social responsibility in everyday living.

In addition, the department has developed and implemented Poly X courses, featuring intense mentorship, dissemination beyond the classroom, multidisciplinary perspectives, and community/global engagement: ANT 3500 Environment, Technology, and Culture; GEO 4090 Applied Cultural Geography.

Of the three options in the Geography major, Geospatial Analysis and Environmental Studies are vibrant; however, Geographic Studies is under-enrolled (< 9 students).

RESOURCES CONSULTED:

Dr. Kristen Conway-Gomez, former Department Chair, Geography and Anthropology
Dr. Kelly Huh, Department Chair, Geography and Anthropology
Associate Deans from various colleges
Curriculog: Geographic Studies Subplan Option

DISCUSSION and RECOMMENDATION:

The Department of Geography and Anthropology has submitted a referral to request the discontinuation of the Geographic Studies option effective 2024-2025. The aim is to streamline their course offerings, which will focus on the remaining two options. The Geographic Studies option will remain open for several years to enable current students to graduate and will not accept new students into the option. Currently enrolled

Geographic Studies students will be able to take courses from the Geospatial Analysis and Environmental Studies options; the department remains committed to enable such students to complete their education without delay or disruption, maintaining access to a quality education that prepares them for successful careers. The plan is to combine and integrate elements of the Geographic Studies option along with elements unique to the Geospatial Analysis and Environmental Studies options. The last term Geographic Studies students can graduate with this Subplan/Option is Spring 2027.

Accordingly, three reasons have been stated by the current Department Chair and former Department Chair as justification for discontinuing the Geographic Studies option:

- Geographic Studies is the smallest option in the major, indicating declining student interest; the department is trying to align with trends in the discipline.
- The Department of Geography and Anthropology does not have sufficient faculty to support three distinct options due to a lack of tenure density.
- The department's aim is to increase FTES, which will be more conducive due to fewer options.

As a result, resources will be redirected to facilitate timely student matriculation while reducing petitions. Two existing options, Geospatial Analysis option and Environmental Studies option, combine the Geographic Studies option to enhance student success and efficacy. The department hopes that discontinuing the Geographic Studies subplan/option will lead to an increase in demand for the program, as students will be exposed to a broader range of geographic studies fields.

Presumably, tenure-track faculty will have greater bandwidth to deliver courses in the other two viable options. There will be no effect on the employment of faculty, since faculty delivering courses in the Geographic Studies option also teach in the other two options. There will be no effect on the quality of the other two options, which will likely be strengthened due to the reallocation of faculty talent, expertise, and time.

The Academic Programs Committee concurs with the request from the Geography & Anthropology Department (e.g., Chair and faculty) and recommends the discontinuation of the Geographic Studies option, which will take effect fall 2024 till the last student graduates in the spring 2027.