

## CONTEXTUAL STATEMENT—DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY

### Summary

Anthropology is a cost-effective department that does an outstanding job of graduating its majors in four years and has seen a 28% increase in majors within the last year. We cater to students with a wide variety of interests, from biology and economics to medicine and public policy. We therefore provide a home for those who otherwise may have withdrawn from the university. Through its many contracts and grants, the department contributes significantly—both relative to its size and in absolute terms—to cost recovery. Students with a degree in anthropology are well-positioned for high demand jobs in cultural resource management, data analysis, and public policy. We continue to revamp our curriculum and recruitment to ensure that the department is prepared for a changing academic and economic landscape.

### Part I

#### Category 1: COST AND REVENUE OF DELIVERY

Anthropology (ATY) is approaching expectations for Category 1e (revenue for the department) and 1f (credit hour production). The new MAC curriculum has hurt ATY's student credit hour production, as many departments have drawn students away by adding courses with markers that fall squarely into the traditional focus of ATY (e.g., Global and Intercultural). Having said that, we recently removed the requirement that non-majors take the lab section of our Critical Thinking and Inquiry in the Natural Sciences MAC course. This change in lab policy, which is consistent with other departments like chemistry, has resulted in a significant increase in enrollment from 40 – 50 in recent years to >90 in the Spring of 2023. We therefore expect our student credit hour production to increase. ATY also invests heavily in honors theses (three since 2020) and independent studies (six since 2021). While neither generates high numbers of student credit hours (in fact, HHS earns the credit hours for honors theses), they require a great deal of faculty time and effort and contribute significantly to student success, retention, and career readiness. We also point out that ATY provides a good return on investment as shown by our score for Category 1g (cost per credit hour).

#### Category 2: ACADEMIC PROGRAM DEMAND & INSTRUCTIONAL PRODUCTIVITY/EFFICIENCY

ATY is approaching expectations for Category 2h.1 (demand), 2h.2 (admit), 2i (headcount enrollment for majors), and 2k (number of degrees awarded over a three-year period). ATY is a "discovery major," so very few incoming students know what anthropology is, much less submit enrollment applications as a major. ATY needs examination for Category 2j (trend in headcount enrollment growth). This is due almost entirely to an anomalously high major count (135) in 2019 and considerable attrition amid COVID. The 2019 major count is anomalous because of a significant push to recruit SOAR students, many of whom, it turned out, were too early in their academic journey to commit to a major and, thus, left ATY as their intellectual interests developed. We have since refocused our recruitment efforts on students in our MAC courses, many of whom are genuinely interested in, and have a better understanding of, the field and are therefore more likely to graduate as ATY majors. While we continue to take part in SOAR as an opportunity to introduce ATY to populations of incoming students, we have also increased our participation in CAS open houses and major fairs, Science Everywhere, and Fall Kickoff—all of which benefit the university as whole. Our student clubs are highly visible at these events as well, which helps advertise a sense of community for potential majors. These efforts are paying off. Our headcount has stabilized over the past two years and the most recent numbers indicate growth: there was an increase from 40 majors (after the departure of graduates) in the spring of 2023 to 64 majors in the fall of 2023 (a 28% increase).

#### Category 3: EXTERNAL CONTRACTS AND GRANTS

ATY meets or exceeds expectations for all categories. It is important to point out, too, that our contract and grants record not only is very strong relative to other similarly sized departments, but also compares favorably in absolute terms to much larger departments. For example, ATY's ~\$900,000/year in grant/contract awards over the last three years is on par with a large STEM department like mathematics.

The indirect costs associated with some of these grants—especially the prestigious federal grants we have received—help the university recover costs.

#### Category 4: STUDENT SUCCESS FOR UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMS

ATY needs examination on Category 4q (first-year course completion rate). Going back to fall 2018, of the 26 courses with DFW rates >40% with enrollments of more than five students, 16 (61.5%) were online or hybrid formats. First year students are often unprepared to implement the self-discipline and time management skills required for success in online courses, which in turn makes it less likely that they will succeed. Nearly half (11 of 26) of the courses with DFW rates >40% are ATY 100 sections. This course enrolls a high number of nursing students (ATY 100 is a cognate for the nursing school), and many first-year nursing students may withdraw so as not to fall behind in what is a highly regimented nursing curriculum. ATY is approaching expectations for Category 4T.2 (credit hours attempted versus completed). Some of this is explained by the fact that, as a discovery major, ATY receives students who bring with them attempted credits from their previous majors (mainly Biology, English, and Psychology). Despite this, ATY exceeds expectations for Category 4r (4-year graduation rate). *This is very important.* ATY does a good job of graduating majors—even those who join us later in their undergraduate career—within four years.

#### **Part II**

Because of its broad scope, ATY is one of the few departments with offerings in nearly every MAC competency. Courses in biological, medical, and environmental anthropology are particularly attractive to students who may otherwise have withdrawn from the university altogether after leaving STEM fields. The safety net that departments like ATY provide increases student retention, which, of course, provides an economic benefit to the university but, more importantly, offers a pathway to a degree that contributes to social mobility. For instance, a 2022 article in *Advances in Archaeological Practice* projects that growth in the US economy and the passage of new infrastructure bills in congress will result in significant demand (estimates range as high as 8,000 new full-time positions over the next several years) for Cultural Resource Management (CRM) archaeologists—individuals who are qualified to assess and mitigate the impact of development projects on archaeological resources. Through its archaeology courses, ATY provides the background necessary for entry level positions in CRM. That is, students with archaeology coursework and an archaeological field school under their belt (something that the ATY department also offers) *are immediately employable*. We also recently modified our curriculum to require a course in either qualitative or quantitative data analysis. This is in response to what the US Department of Labor identifies as a need for data analysts in fields like market research, public policy, and survey research. While a major in mathematics, statistics, or business are commonly associated with these careers, our ATY data analysis courses prepare students for “human-centric” data interpretation that emphasizes cultural sensitivity in data collection and interpretation, ethical considerations of data handling, and unlocking hidden patterns through holistic perspectives. Finally, ATY offers students a variety of high-impact experiences, from archaeological field schools and undergraduate research (the department has received five URCA since 2021 and several students have presented research at professional conferences and even appear as co-authors on peer-reviewed publications) to community engagement and leadership training through the UNCG Campus Gardens and Recipe for Success (a Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program funded through a large grant from USDA). It is well-known that these experiences, while time and labor intensive from a faculty standpoint, contribute to student retention and career success.

## Academic Portfolio Review Contextual Statement Master of

### Arts in Mathematics

**Program Overview:** The M.A. in Mathematics program is one of two master's programs offered by the Department of Mathematics and Statistics, and contributes to the UNC System Strategic Plan goal of increasing STEM degrees. The other master's program in the department is the M.S. in Applied Statistics program, which started in Fall 2020, the first year of data included in the Academic Portfolio Review. Before then, students pursuing master's-level statistics were in the M.A. program with a concentration in Applied Statistics. Splitting master's students into two degree programs was a zero-cost student-centric decision, made so that the degree title reflects what future employers may be looking for. In 2023-2024, we have 7 students enrolled in the M.A. program and 7 students in the M.S. program, for a total of 14 master's students. Having separate programs better serves our students and introduces no additional costs, but it does result in misleadingly low enrollment numbers for those programs.

**Ties to Other Programs:** The M.A. in Mathematics is closely tied in to two other programs in the department. The first is the Ph.D. program in Computational Mathematics, which scored a solid 3.06 on the APR's quantitative rubric, placing it in the top 20% of doctoral programs at UNCG. The M.A. program feeds into the Ph.D. program and provides a pathway to a Ph.D. for students with a bachelor's level mathematics background. Of the 19 M.A. degrees awarded since Fall 2020, 7 students continued to our Ph.D. program. Furthermore, the M.A. program provides a fall-back option for students who start the Ph.D. program and decide not to finish at that level. The second program tied to the M.A. program is our Accelerated Bachelor's to M.A. program, which attracts some of our brightest undergraduate students to continue at UNCG for graduate-level work. There are currently three students in this program, who will be able to complete an M.A. degree in one year after completing their undergraduate requirements. Cancellation of the M.A. program would not only fail to reduce any costs, but would harm these two strong programs.

**Pending Program Changes:** In response to new minimum course enrollment requirements, the department recently proposed a redesign of our master's and doctoral programs. These changes will enable the two degrees to support each other even better and provide a more attractive path for prospective students. These program changes have been approved by the College of Arts and Sciences Curriculum and Teaching Committee, and they will be considered soon by the UNCG Graduate Curriculum Committee.

**APR Rubric Scores:** The M.A. in Mathematics program received an overall score of 2.79 on the APR rubric, which is solidly in the "Meets Expectations" category. In fact, this score is the 23<sup>rd</sup> highest of any master's program at UNCG, putting it solidly into the top half of the 60 master's programs. This score is the 8<sup>th</sup> highest of the 20 master's programs in the College of Arts and Sciences. The department-based category 1 score is the 6<sup>th</sup> highest out of 60 (top 10%) master's programs at UNCG. Category 3 and category 5 scores are solidly in the "Meets Expectations" classification as well.

**APR Category 2 (Academic Program Demand and Instructional Productivity/Efficiency):** This is the only category in the rubric which did not achieve “meets expectations,” with a score of 1.90 that puts it near the middle of the “Approaching Expectations” level (scores at that level range from 1.50 to 2.45).

The lowest individual score within Category 2, and the only one that fell below the “Approaching Expectations” level, was the H.3. metric (yield). The yield metric does not provide a meaningful measure of program quality, since a program that attracts very high-quality applicants, who have options at higher-ranked R1 universities, will result in a lower “yield.” In effect, this metric punishes programs that attract particularly strong candidates who have other options. Furthermore, the low yield in 2022-2023 was clearly an anomaly, bringing down the 3-year average. Considering just the two preceding years, the program would have ranked solidly in the middle of the “Approaching Expectations” level, raising the category score to a 2.0 and the overall program score to 2.82. This would raise the M.A. in Mathematics to the 6<sup>th</sup> highest ranked master’s program out of the 20 in the College of Arts and Sciences.

Other than metric H.3., all other metrics in this category are based on raw size. As described at the beginning of this contextual statement, splitting Mathematics and Statistics master’s students between two programs (the M.A. and M.S. programs) serves students well, but results in the master’s programs in Mathematics and Statistics being cut in half and penalized on metrics that are based on raw program size.

**Future Prospects:** The department has recognized some challenges with enrollments in the M.A. program, even before the APR, with both COVID-induced declines and consequences of the drastic reduction in UNCG assistantship funding for master’s students. In response, the department has instituted a strong recruitment program, including faculty talks and visits to other US and overseas universities. Recent visits were to Appalachian State (where one of our PhD Alumni is a faculty), and to Wake Forest. Upcoming visits include visit to the University of Central Missouri (where one of our PhD Alumni is a faculty), and to the University of Sri Lanka. We note that, to date, we have awarded 6 M.A. degrees and 6 Ph.D. degrees to students from Sri Lanka. The department set up a recruitment table at the recent Joint Mathematics Meeting in San Francisco, and had visits from over 45 prospective students. Another exciting prospect is a partnership with Xiamen University of Technology in China. This partnership was finalized several years ago, but had to be put on hold due to COVID. We have recently been in talks to restart this partnership, which would bring additional students to UNCG to complete a master’s degree that was started in China. We believe that all these efforts will show a good payoff in increased demand.

## CONTEXTUAL DATA

### **B.A. GEOGRAPHY, SECONDARY ED.**

#### **Executive Summary**

The BA Geography Secondary Ed. overall score (2.08) is below the *Meets Expectations* cutoff due to extremely low scores in rubric Categories 2 (Demand) and 4 (Student Success) that “Needs Examination”. This degree program has few if any students (metric I) and very few recent applications (metric H.1). As a result, student success results (3 out of 4 metrics in Cat. 4) are zero as well and “Needs Examination”. Aside from this, we have documented influences on other department-wide metrics that might be relevant. More importantly perhaps, this degree runs on the same courses as the BA and BS in Geography, plus additional courses from History and Teacher Education (TED) courses in Education, and requires no additional resources, while serving as a pathway for teachers to become certified to teach Geography (e.g. AP Human Geography, or other social studies classes).

#### Part I:

##### **1) Category 1: COST AND REVENUE OF DELIVERY**

- a) What specialized roles do staff play in the department?
  - b) What kinds of non-personnel spending is the department responsible for that impacts its overall operation?
- As a department emphasizing earth and environmental sciences and computer-based quantitative spatial analysis, GES maintains both instructional and research labs dedicated to these fields.

GES supports the provision, maintenance, and accessibility of Geographic Information Science (GISc) hardware and software in labs and online for student instruction, faculty research, and various other GIS users campus-wide.

Recent large increases in the department’s non-personnel spending are a result of our successfully seeking fiscal year-end (including HEERF) funds to maintain our computing GISc infrastructure for online and F2F courses, and to upgrade faculty computers for compatibility with Windows 11 (UNCG is ending Windows 10 support soon).

- GES provides funding assistance to graduate students and faculty for travel for professional presentation of research, a necessity particularly important for PhD programs.

- c) What requirements limit credit hour production or cost per credit hour (e.g., secondary

accreditation, safety concerns, etc.)? (This item also may impact category 2, 4, and 5)

- GES hosts a full range of degree programs from BA to PhD. Graduate programs, and the PhD in particular, necessitate offering graduate courses that cannot enroll at typical UG rates. A critical number of faculty is needed to support such courses and mentor students in research-intensive graduate programs.
- Our ability to staff and provision laboratory sections limits enrollment in our three MAC Data Analysis courses. Lab sections are limited to ~25 seats, and we typically can fund enough GAs to cover 9 to 11 sections per semester. These are enrolling at full capacity, and the recent university analysis of MAC offerings states that many more Data Analysis course sections and seats are needed. There is much more demand than we can supply.
- Two faculty took research leave during the analyzed period; The lost teaching SCH from upper division courses cannot always be replaced.
- One Professional Track Faculty (GISc Lab Director) may contribute to our FTE faculty, but has no teaching obligations. One other has only half-time teaching.
- The new General Education system (MAC) has altered SCH in many ways; in particular, the removal of 300-level courses as Gen Ed courses, and the loss of the lab requirement meant total enrollment in several of our 300-level courses declined.
- Chronic lack of sufficient TSR funding to cover courses in the BA in Environment and Sustainability transfers SCH out of GES and into other departments whose courses must substitute.

d) Provision of cognate requirements for other departments and programs

- GES 121/121L (Intro. to GIS) is a core requirement of the Archaeology major, which also features four other GES courses. GES provides GES402/602 (Sust. Urb. Plan. in an Entrepren. Env.) which is equivalent to ENT 410/610 within the B.S. Entrepreneurship. The B.S. in Information Science (GISc concentration) requires 6-12 credit hours of GES coursework. Within GES there is substantial course sharing across environmental studies and geography curricula.
- GES provides seven MAC courses in five different competencies for the university.

e) Cross listed faculty that may impact FTE in one department and SCH generation in a second department

f) What, if any, specialized pedagogy is required for the program that may affect cost and revenue of delivery (e.g., individualized instruction, clinical supervision or oversight, field based experiences)?

- Five of our natural science and GIS courses have separate lab sections requiring TA staffing and materials.
- Student travel is important for our discipline and field-based courses represent high-impact practices. GES offers national and international travel-based summer field camps most summers and sometimes in winter, as well as smaller funds for local and state field excursions.
- As a research-oriented department with a doctoral program, GES provides a regular colloquium series, with speakers receiving an honorarium.

## Category 2: ACADEMIC PROGRAM DEMAND & INSTRUCTIONAL PRODUCTIVITY/EFFICIENCY

g) Recent internal and/or external changes in departments or programs (e.g., new programs, faculty transitions, program closures) that have impacted applications, enrollment and/or demand?

- The department of GES arose via a full merger of the Environmental and Sustainability Studies Program and the Geography Department in 2018. While logical and beneficial, there are inevitably new challenges in creating and arranging programs/curricula, courses, resources, and general optimization of the merger. Ironing these out takes time.
- Most of the 6 metrics in Category 2 are zero or near zero, indicating no current students in this major over the last three years. Although there were two applications and admits, there were no enrolls (yield = 0).

h) What factors impact students' completion of degree?

- The BA Geography Secondary Ed students probably decide on the degree as the result of *discovery* once already in their Education curriculum; if there are impediments to completion, it is going to be on the side of their Education curriculum. We offer all the needed GES courses (12-14 hours) regularly.

### Category 3: EXTERNAL CONTRACTS AND GRANTS

- i) What are the opportunities for grants and contracts within the discipline?
  - The sums available for contracts and grants in Geography are not as great as for some other natural science disciplines (~350K max), and some changes at the federal level have created further impediments. (e.g., the Science Technology and Math Scholarships (STAMPS) NSF interdisciplinary STEM program which was once housed in GES). Our means of compensating has primarily been through increasing the numbers of grant submissions.

GES is in the process of changing our Geography CIP code to *Geography and Environmental Studies (30.440)*, which is both a better reflection of who we are, and will reopen federal grant sources that we previously have won awards from.

- j) Is there community engagement of staff, faculty, and students that is a result of grants and contracts?
  - i) Do the grants/contracts produce community engagement hours for staff/students?
- k) Are there departmental employment expectations to obtain grants and contracts?
- l) Describe any inter-institutional partnership grants and contracts and/or training grants and the impact these have.
  - GES faculty are the originating PIs on a successful grant proposal revolving around the Cape Fear Watershed. This collaborative interdisciplinary and interinstitutional project integrates research and teaching in a variety of physical and social sciences, and other fields to address problems in this large and important area.
  - It is common for GES faculty to have collaborative grants with faculty from other universities.

- m) What factors inhibited the expenditure of grant funds, if any?
- n) Is the department primarily undergraduate, graduate or a mix of both, and how does this impact grant funding or contracts received by the department?

### Category 4: STUDENT SUCCESS FOR UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMS

- o) What factors commonly impact the academic success of the department's first-year students (class size, preparedness of UG student population, progression through tiered coursework)?
- p) What program-based factors commonly impact UG students' graduation rates specific to the department (programs of discovery)?
- q) What UG student-based factors commonly impact students' graduation rates specific to the department (skill proficiency, population served, etc.)?
- r) Do departments provide opportunities for UG students beyond coursework that impact



quality of education (undergraduate research, research assistantships, student University service positions, internships, community service/engagement, etc.)

- GES provides opportunities for undergraduate research and has been active in the UNCG UG research symposium.
- Our summer travel-based field courses (national and international) are also extremely enriching and constitute high impact practices in higher education.

## Part II

- 1) Other factors of the program (not listed above) impact aspects of the criteria on the rubric during the review period.

- Students in the BA Geography Secondary Ed. must take a balanced profile of Earth Science, Human, and Regional Geography, and can't focus on any one content. However, given the other requirements in History, and the need for AP Human Geography in high school, we speculate that most students will not focus on our STEM content, which is an important identity for GES.

- Geography degrees at UNCG should be regarded, valued, and funded as STEM, despite the state's narrow CIP classification in the new funding formula.

GES is STEM with regard to:

- largest class offerings,
- majority of SCH generation,
- courses offered,
- MAC courses (4 of 7 are STEM in Natural Sciences and Data Analysis),
- CiC classification,
- contributions to other STEM programs,

and campus leadership roles:

The newly appointed Director of UNCG's RISE (Research and Instruction in STEM Education) program is Geography faculty in our department, as is the former Co-principal PI of NSF-funded STAMPS (Science Technology and Math Preparation Scholarships).

GES Geography degree programs are changing their CIP codes to federally classified STEM CIPs.

- The new funding formula devalues and defunds out-of-state graduate students, which we have traditionally included in our search for the highest qualifications, to the detriment of our retro-dicted revenues under the new formula.

- 2) Does the department rely on other departments or programs for courses? This may include specific tiered or pre-requisite courses, cross-listed courses, program minors, or certifications.

- The EVS programs, which are highly interdisciplinary, rely on courses from other departments; The BS in Geography has 2 concentrations containing some foundational courses from CHE, BIO, PHY, and MA. The BA Geography Secondary Ed. requires History and Teachers Education courses in addition to Geography.

- 3) Does the department contribute to the success of the student population beyond its own department (i.e., MAC-serving coursework)?

- GES has 7 courses (6 in Geog./1 in EVS) that are current MAC courses: 3 Data Analysis, including Intro Earth Science (GES 103/103L); 1 CTI in Natural Sciences, 1 Global, 1 in CTI Social Sciences, and 1 Foundations course.

4) Comparison of program to other programs (e.g., number of similar programs in the state, state or national ranking of program)

- There are 8 UNC System departments that offer a bachelor's degree with "geography" in the name. None of these lists a BA Geography Secondary Education, so it appears that UNCG is the only one. However, we believe most Education and teaching programs at these universities have a means of certifying their students in geography and social studies independently, and not through a special program of the Geography departments. Most of these institutions also have some kind of geology program where earth sciences for teachers might be taught; whereas **at UNCG all geology, climate/atmospheric science, hydrology, and other earth sciences are provided by geography faculty in GES.**

5) How does the program tie into the mission of the University

- Our BA in Geography Secondary Ed. (and the discipline more broadly) emphasizes interactions between humans and the environment across a broad range of spatial scales from small rural communities to global. It is thus necessarily international and intercultural in outlook. Solutions for creating resilient and sustainable communities in a changing world, a key initiative of the Giant Steps strategic plan, are a dominant subtext.

6) Scholarly products and creative contributions of faculty and staff

- GES research faculty are productive scholars who seek out external funding, publish in high quality peer-review journals, and contribute strongly to leadership in the discipline. In the last 3 years GES faculty have published more than 68 research articles, books, and other peer-reviewed works (40 of these with student co-authors), made 75+ conference presentations (30 with student co-authors), and have served in 21+ disciplinary leadership roles.

The labor market and employment can be an important component of a program's demand and impact. rpk's labor market data (original category 6) will not be considered in the Program Review process, given the data was problematic. Therefore, if appropriate for your department/program, please indicate what types of jobs and positions your graduates get after they graduate from your program (e.g., please provide SOC codes where appropriate)? Do you have additional data or information to reflect your program's job market value?

- We have little knowledge of the job market in Geography Education beyond experts in Geography professional societies attesting that AP Human Geography as being one of the fastest growing AP courses in the nation. Given this datum, we estimate that the market for such a degree is increasing.

## RELIGIOUS STUDIES – Contextual Program Information (October 2023)

“The Religious Studies Department displays a strong, vibrant, and collegial unit, punching above its weight in all three areas of teaching, research and service.”

External Review (2017)

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Our overall rating is "Approaching Expectations." However, it is important to note that our score would have been higher if data errors and omissions had not influenced it. The main error was the inflation in Banner data of REL's salaries by \$625,425.40.<sup>1</sup> This happened because the College of Arts and Sciences maintains lapsed salaries on a reserve line in REL's Banner budget, as explained below in sections §1.1 and §1.2. Our rating also omitted the revenue generated by eSports in state dollars and by Jewish Studies in donor dollars, as indicated in section §2.2. Furthermore, our score was impacted because we fall into both the category of a “major of discovery” and an “off-ramping major.” While this benefits the University's overall financial performance, it had the effect of lowering our four-year graduation rate and subsequently our program's rating.

What's not reflected in this evaluation, but will become evident in future reviews, is our commitment to a more streamlined structure. We have maintained the same number of majors while reducing costs because three faculty members are retiring. These faculty members accounted for 34% of the department's personnel costs while contributing 8% of student credit hour production. As demonstrated by our F2023 fill rate of 82.27%,<sup>2</sup> our performance per faculty member has returned to pre-pandemic levels, resulting in an increase per faculty in the number of graduates<sup>3</sup> and majors.<sup>4</sup> Additionally, we continue to offer some of the most cost-effective student credit hours on campus.

Furthermore, the Rubric doesn't reveal is that the Religious Studies department is on the brink of an exciting period of innovation. As highlighted in §2.1, specifically in the “Training Clergy” section, we have devised a new business model that will reshape our curriculum, positioning us to surpass expectations in the next program review. Furthermore, as indicated in §2.3, we have a long-standing commitment to enhancing diversity training for students across campus, particularly through our MAC program, with a strong focus on Health and Wellness. It's worth noting that our alumni have already embarked on careers in nonprofits and not-for-profits thanks to their Religious Studies education. However, during our portfolio review, we made an intriguing discovery— a significant percentage of our alumni are now working as clergy, the majority in the Black Church. Building upon this revelation, we intend to shift our focus towards a skills-based pedagogy for clergy training, which will boost our program's demand, admissions, yield, and four-year graduation rate.

Religion holds great significance for many current state legislators, and data indicates that religious workers constitute a substantial portion of North Carolina's workforce. When implemented, the new clergy training program would stand out in the state in this regard. There is no other program within the UNC system that adopts this unique approach. Moreover, private schools that do offer similar programs are not tailored to UNCG's student population and mission. Therefore, we kindly request a three-year period to fully implement this transformation and provide concrete evidence of our improvement.

### Section 1: COST AND REVENUE OF DELIVERY

1. [\*UNCG Academic Cost and Revenue Analysis\*](#)

*The bottom line is that we make money.* This is not accurately represented in the portfolio review, because as the “Cost and Revenue Analysis” sheet shows, REL's salary between 2020 and 2023 was inflated by \$625,425.40. This occurred because the College of Arts and Sciences maintains lapsed salaries on a reserve line in REL’s Banner budget to pay Winter and Summer salaries.<sup>5</sup> Anthony Cipolone, the Assistant Dean for Finance and Resource Planning in the College of Arts & Sciences, wrote in an email from Sep 26, 2023, “This has never been a problem because we’ve always been able to adjust for it in our own analyses, but since [the Revenue Analysis] data is generated by simply aggregating expenditures by org (and not by person), these added costs are getting included.”<sup>6</sup> This could not be fixed in the data. As Johnny Lail wrote in an email from Oct 11, 2023, “When we pull the finance data from Banner, these internal business decisions are not known to us, and we can only present the data as it was stored by the finance org. The discrepancy you’ve noted is best addressed in the context statement for the department.”

This means that REL did not lose money in the period under review; rather, we made a profit of \$702,016. This amount is net profit (minus salary and adjusted overhead) not gross. Per the teaching productivity metrics, gross profit from REL’s state-appropriated funding between 2019-2022 was \$6,123,259.<sup>7</sup>

Also, there is no doubt of a dip in student credit hour production in AY2022-23, but this was caused by a 35% reduction in the department’s workforce because of layoffs, paid fellowships, retirement, parental leave and buyouts from Jewish Studies and eSports funds. In AY2023-24, not only have we found our niche in the new MAC with the Health and Wellness category, we've embraced a leaner structure, increasing the number of majors but shedding three senior faculty members through retirement and one lecturer through budget cuts. The faculty who have left constituted 34% of the department's costs while contributing 8% of student credit hour production.<sup>8</sup> Subtracting the retirees' salaries and associated credit hours nearly restored our 2022 cost of student credit hours to pre-pandemic levels. This trend continues in F2023. Our current faculty SCH production almost mirrors pre-pandemic norms, and our fill rate is 82.27%. This transition underscores our adaptability and dedication to maintaining educational excellence during budgetary uncertainty.

## 2. *Academic Program Review Rubric*

*Our overall rating is “Approaching expectations.”* We have taken that to heart and as can be seen in §2.1, “Training Clergy,” we plan on transforming our curriculum so that we will exceed expectations next program review. Our rating also would have been higher if our inflated salaries, retirement of senior faculty, and funds brought in by eSports and Jewish studies were considered.

Category 1: Cost and Revenue’s score (39% of total) was “approaching expectations,” yet this would have been higher if not for the inflated salaries. For example, metric e, “revenue” is underreported, and, as can be seen by looking at the “Teaching Productivity Metric,” if the inflated salaries are considered metric g, “cost per credit hour” would be much lower.<sup>9</sup> Also, in Category 1, metric f, “credit hour production,” is trending upward because of the retirement of senior faculty, as described above in §1.1. In CY2022, the three senior faculty only produced 253 of the 4162 credit hours, which is 6% of total. If these three faculties and their SCH production are taken out of the equation, REL will produce some of the least expensive SCH’s

Category 2: Academic Program Demand and Instructional’s score (29% of total) was also “approaching expectations.” Metric h.1 “Demand,” and Metric h.2, “Admit” are low because, as seen in [“The College Migration Sankey,”](#) religious studies is both a “major of discovery,” and also an “off-ramping major.” REL is presently designed for students to start late, usually at the end of

their second year. As can be seen in §2.1, “Training Clergy,” we plan on transforming our curriculum so that we will exceed expectations in the next program review.

Category 3: External Grants and Contracts’ score (10% of total) fell in “approaching expectations.” As a humanities program, we do not have the same opportunity to apply for large external grants. It should be noted, as can be seen in §2.2, that while we did not excel in grants, we did help bring in revenue through state sources, donors, and also by supporting other departments for grant submissions. The eSports and gaming in the department helped secure state funding totaling \$18 million, and facilitated the application of GP3 Grants for \$6.5 million for other programs on campus. The Jewish Studies program at UNCG is a testament to the generosity of major donors and has raised large endowments.

Category 4: Student Success for Undergraduates’ score (22% of total) also fell in the “approaching expectations.” What needs to be taken into account here is Metric r, four-year graduation rate which and Metric t2, “Degree efficiency measured by the difference between number of hours attempted vs. completed by graduates.” As stated above, and as seen in [“The College Migration Sankey,”](#) Religious Studies is often an “off-ramping major.” We often get students who ‘wash out’ of other majors and help them graduate. Also, as seen below in Section §2.1, “Training Clergy,” we plan to transform our curriculum so that it excels under the new measurements.

## Section 2: NON-QUANTIFIABLE EVALUATION ASPECTS

### 1. *A New Business Plan to Train clergy.*

We innovatively plan to address our shortcomings by retooling to concentrate on clergy training. We have always been a productive program. Our last external review stated, “The Religious Studies Department displays a strong, vibrant and collegial unit punching above its weight in all three areas of teaching, research, and service.”<sup>10</sup>

To fit into the new higher education landscape, however, we are on the cusp of an exciting era of innovation in which we will offer a “pre-Divinity” concentration. We have long known that we trained many people to work in non-profits, but we were surprised to find, when we reviewed our data for the portfolio review, was how many alumni became clergy, mostly in the Black Church. To give an older and a more recent example. Rev. Dr. Kyle Goodman, the lead pastor of Alamance Presbyterian Church in Greensboro, is a 2001 alumnus. After UNCG, he earned his Master of Divinity from Columbia Theological Seminary in Decatur, GA, and later, his Doctor of Ministry from Louisville Seminary. A more recent alumnus is Sulaiman Kabia, who graduated last year, and who now serves as a Special Projects Officer in the Army Reserves and was recently accepted into the Master of Divinity in Islamic Chaplaincy program at the Chicago Theological Seminary. Upon completion of the program, he will be an Active Duty Chaplain in the U.S. Army.

The training of clergy should please the NC legislature. Also as seen in the [U.S. Bureau of Statistics](#), skilled clergy are a needed part of North Carolina’s workforce. The report states that jobs related directly to Religious Studies (CIP 38.000) majors make up 0.14% of the workforce and have a mean annual wage of \$ 87,100. Clergy and other religious workers comprise 1.18% of the workforce, with a mean annual wage of \$60,180. With a program concentrating on clergy training, UNCG would be unique in the state.

## *2. We support eSports and Jewish Studies.*

The [Rubric for Academic Program Review](#) fails to encompass the impact of our eSports and Gaming initiatives<sup>11</sup> as well as Jewish Studies. These endeavors have not only contributed significantly to the enrichment of our academic landscape but have also played a pivotal role in securing substantial funding. Our commitment is exemplified by the Network for the Cultural Study of Videogaming, which serves as the driving force behind these endeavors at UNCG, as well as community outreach.<sup>12</sup> NCSV has help secure state funding totaling \$18 million, and also facilitated the application of GP3 Grants for \$6.5 million. The Jewish Studies program at UNCG is a testament to the generosity of major donors and their enduring commitment to promoting understanding of Jewish traditions within our local community.<sup>13</sup> This program offers a rich array of courses, covering diverse topics such as the Hebrew Bible, Jewish Medical Ethics, and Jewish-Christian relations. It also actively engages the public through curated programming, connecting UNCG with Greensboro residents beyond the academic sphere. Jewish Studies also sometimes pays salary for its director, supports public programming in other areas

## *3. We Train a Workforce to Understand Diversity*

UNCG's curriculum exists in a complex pedagogical ecosystem, that cannot always be measured at the program level. We regularly teach for Honors, IGS, FMS, Nursing, BLS, BPS, and the residential colleges. We also specialize in the teaching of the MAC categories that operate as diversity training for students from all over the campus. As such, Religious Studies makes all UNCG students more competitive in the job market and has a profound impact on their job prospects and future leadership. This includes, for example, students from professional schools such as Business, Nursing, and Education who recognize that a broad cultural awareness and understanding of religion and religious practice will inevitably be an asset as they interact with clients, patients, and students from a variety of cultural backgrounds. In today's workplace, diversity training is an essential component of every employee's job requirement. A 2020 McKinsey & Co. report found that companies with ethnically diverse executive teams were 36 percent more likely to have above-average profits than companies whose teams were the least ethnically diverse.<sup>14</sup>



## BA in Physics

The rating for cost and revenue was “Approaching Expectations”. All metrics here are trending upward, with significant improvement in the 2022-2023 academic year as compared to prior years.

(The data for this part of the rubric was the same for the BS and the BA program, so the contextual statement for this part of the rubric will be the same for the two programs.)

The Three-College Observatory (TCO) and the Planetarium projector are maintained and operated by the Department and provide community-facing services to the University that are extremely popular – monthly Public Nights at the TCO and at the Planetarium are regularly oversubscribed; in addition, Department astronomers provide viewing nights to specific groups (schools, scout troops, retirees, etc). We recently began state-wide Astronomy viewing parties with over 200 people attending.

These are sophisticated technical facilities with routine and unexpected maintenance costs covered by monies from our OTP. We also pay for AnyDesk, an app that allows us to control TCO and collect data remotely. TCO is used by our Astronomy faculty for research involving Physics majors. The TCO has also been used to introduce NC high school students to observational astronomy research. The Planetarium and TCO have been integrated into Astronomy courses.

The rating for Academic Program Demand and Instructional Productivity/Efficiency as “Approaching Expectations” and Student Success as “Needs Examination”. The numbers of declared BA’s and of graduates are both very small.

Most of the students who graduate with BA fall under two categories:

1. Students who come to UNCG with some interest in Physics but who plan to double major. Students have double-majored in a variety of fields such as mathematics, computer science, business or entrepreneurship.
2. Students who came to UNCG to get a BS in Physics but who for some reason or another decided to take a BA and graduate with a degree. Typically, these students have spent significant time and resources at UNCG and decided that they do not want to do a BS in Physics in or after their Junior year. In this situation, the BA provides an exit for students from the program with a degree.

Note that while the number of students who complete the BA in Physics is very small, the courses that they take are the same as the ones taken by BS students for the first three years. The difference is that they are not required to take the advanced 400-level courses. While there is a benefit in maintaining this program, there is expected to be no cost savings in its elimination.

Lastly, the category External Grants and Contracts is rated as “Needs Examination”.

(The data for this part of the rubric was the same for the BS and the BA program, so the contextual statement for this part of the rubric will be the same for the two programs.)

While grant submissions have met expectations, success in getting funded has been poor. A major factor in grant funding is research productivity. As an undergraduate-only department, faculty in the Department of Physics and Astronomy have a 3-3 teaching load, often with independent studies offered to enable students to graduate on time increasing teaching loads and reducing time for research.

The lack of graduate students severely impacts faculty research productivity. While several faculty members in the department have involved undergraduates in their research, we find that their research productivity is low, given the longer time required to train them and the limited time (per week) that they can devote to research. Unlike graduate students, for whom successful completion depends on research productivity, undergraduates have no such requirements for graduation.

## BS in Physics

The rating for cost and revenue was “Approaching Expectations”. All metrics here are trending upward, with significant improvement in the 2022-2023 academic year as compared to prior years.

The Three-College Observatory (TCO) and the Planetarium projector are maintained and operated by the Department and provide community-facing services to the University that are extremely popular – monthly Public Nights at the TCO and at the Planetarium are regularly oversubscribed; in addition, Department astronomers provide viewing nights to specific groups (schools, scout troops, retirees, etc). We recently began state-wide Astronomy viewing parties with over 200 people attending.

These are sophisticated technical facilities with routine and unexpected maintenance costs covered by monies from our OTP. We also pay for AnyDesk, an app that allows us to control TCO and collect data remotely. TCO is used by our Astronomy faculty for research involving Physics majors. The TCO has also been used to introduce NC high school students to observational astronomy research. The Planetarium and TCO have been integrated into Astronomy courses.

The rating for Academic Program Demand and Instructional Productivity/Efficiency was “Approaching Expectations” and Student Success as “Needs Examination”. The numbers of declared majors and of graduates are both small, attributable to two main reasons:

1. the (valid) perception that doing Physics involves a lot of mathematics, scaring a lot of potential students; of who do declare themselves as Physics majors only a small percentage have the math skills to proceed with the major.
2. the (false) perception that the only future for Physics graduates is to go to graduate school and become an academic.

The average number of majors graduating with a BS over the last three years was  $6.0 \pm 2.0$  (mean  $\pm$  SD). This is low as compared to other majors at UNCG, but the [latest data](#) from the AIP show that this is comparable to undergraduate-only Physics departments in institutions with no engineering programs ( $5.2 \pm 4.2$ ).

This number of graduates is small because the degree is heavily dependent on mathematics; many of our courses have math prerequisites. At a minimum, majors who complete their BS in Physics have 18 MAT credits and earn a minor in math; students who aim to go on to graduate school generally complete the credits required for a second major in math. The only other major at UNCG with comparable demands in math is the BS in Chemistry; the average number of graduates in this program over the last three years was similar ( $7.7 \pm 5.5$ ).

Many students need more time to graduate; of the 8 students who received a BS in Physics in 2023, 4 took longer than four years to graduate. Because the numbers of majors at the junior and senior levels are small, the Department offers courses at these levels once a year or every other year, increasing the wait time for some students to take required courses. Often, if a student needs a course to graduate, a faculty member teaches the course as an overload (affecting faculty research; see below). This problem is especially bad for majors transferring in from Community Colleges with an Associate’s Certificate. Many tend to be behind in majors courses; combined with the sparse course offerings in the major, they generally take more than 4 years to graduate.

To address these issues, we have proposed a BS in Physics with a Concentration in Nanoscience in collaboration with the Nanoscience Department at JSNN, with fewer math requirements and

more emphasis on computational and modeling skills. We will use the JSNN recruiting office to recruit students.

Many of our graduates are pursuing or have obtained PhDs from RPI, NCSU, UT-Dallas, UT-Austin, Wake Forest, and JSNN; many have gone on to successful academic careers. Note that Physics at the graduate level remains a white male-dominated field; annually, ~0.5% of PhDs go to [African Americans](#), ~2% go to [Hispanics](#), and PhDs granted to [women](#) has plateaued at 20%. We have been particularly successful in placing minority students in highly-ranked graduate programs; one of our African American graduates was placed in the Fisk-Vanderbilt MS-to-PhD Bridge program and another received an NSF GRFP at Ohio State.

However, the perception that graduate school is the only path forward for students with a BS degree is false. Some of our students have gone to medical school and one former graduate joined the US Navy as a nuclear submarine officer. The strong mathematical, computational, and modeling skills acquired by our majors are valuable in the job market – our graduates have tech jobs with Cycle Labs, Dynaboard, Elphas, IBM, Indeed, Jacobs, Lockheed Martin, Northrup Grumman and Wolfspeed.

The outlook for our graduates is bright; conversations specifically with colleagues who work in the defense industry indicate that there is a significant unmet need for individuals with such skills who are US citizens and can pass security clearance. Employment in these companies can be facilitated if students can complete a co-op (summer+semester) in these companies – defense companies prefer co-ops to internships because it takes up to two months (the length of a typical internship) to get such a clearance. We have started a conversation with Dr. Megan Walters, the Interim Director of the Career and Professional Development Office to explore setting up a Co-op program.

Lastly, the category External Grants and Contracts is rated as “Needs Examination”. While grant submissions have met expectations, success in getting funded has been poor. A major factor in grant funding is research productivity. As an undergraduate-only department, faculty in the Department of Physics and Astronomy have a 3-3 teaching load, often with independent studies offered to enable students to graduate on time increasing teaching loads and reducing time for research.

The lack of graduate students severely impacts faculty research productivity. While several faculty members in the department have involved undergraduates in their research, we find that their research productivity is low, given the longer time required to train them and the limited time (per week) that they can devote to research. Unlike graduate students, for whom successful completion depends on research productivity, undergraduates have no such requirements for graduation.

# Department of Languages, Literatures, and Cultures

## Contextual Data

### Graduate Program | MA in LLC with concentrations in French and Francophone Studies and Spanish

Our MA in LLC with concentrations in French and Francophone Studies and Spanish has been flagged as “approaching expectations” with an overall score of 2.45 (0.05 shy of meeting expectations). Our MAT (French and Spanish Education) meets expectations, according to the rubric. Nevertheless, our MA program and MAT program are not isolated entities; they share over 50% of their credits. Consequently, the MA program and the MAT program are intertwined, and closing one would jeopardize the viability of the other. It is essential to examine them as a collective unit.

In terms of financial performance, our MA program has consistently demonstrated high efficiency with a remarkable score of 3.6/4 (Cat. 1 Cost and Revenue of Delivery). The challenges we face regarding the number of applications and graduates (Category 2, Academic Program Demand and Instructional Productivity/Efficiency) are not unique to our program but mirror a state and national trend within the Humanities and public education. The shortage of qualified teachers in public schools is a pressing issue that our university can help alleviate or exacerbate. Closing our MA program would only worsen the problem, which is already a crisis in our region. In Guilford County Schools there are over a dozen vacancies for World Language teachers, positions they cannot fill.

Our MA program has demonstrated remarkable student success. In the examined period, we achieved a 100% completion rate within the Graduate School’s standard time in two of the three years (Cat. 5.v) but dropped to 0% in the pandemic-affected AY of 2020-2021, which lowered the overall percentage to 66%. Given the demographics of our students (public school teachers, parents, minorities, and other vulnerable populations), this drop is hardly surprising. However, we firmly believe that such unique circumstances are unlikely to recur, and we expect our program to continue graduating students within a standard timeframe as we have done ever since. The effects of the pandemic registered in Cat 5.v naturally emerge again in Cat. 5.w (extension credits) in what is a double penalty in the spreadsheet calculations.

While not explicitly included in the rubric, it’s noteworthy that 100% of our MA students either find employment in their specialty shortly after graduation, enroll in competitive Ph.D. programs in their disciplines, or become skilled professionals in other fields (several even here at UNCG) since their degree has provided foundational skills in research, communication, and collaboration.

To conclude, our MA Program in LLC with concentrations in French and Francophone Studies and Spanish is small, but financially efficient, produces excellent student success results, and has an immediate impact in the region.

CONTEXTUAL  
DATA

# M.A. Applied Geography

## Executive Summary

The M.A. Applied Geography (MA-AG) overall score (2.46) is slightly below the *Meets Expectations* cutoff primarily due to a low score in rubric Category 2 (Demand). The effects of the pandemic were particularly adverse for graduate work in a discipline that requires collaborative fieldwork and/or travel for much of its scholarship. This affected Category 2 metrics, and there are signs of a rebound. The creation of a new fully online M.S. Sustainability and Environment, continuation of a GRE requirement during the pandemic, and multiple financial constraints including our inability to offer competitive TA stipends, all contributed to decreased demand. MA-AG students continue to have high success in publishing research, receiving research awards, and securing good jobs.

### Part I:

#### 1. Category 1: COST AND REVENUE OF DELIVERY

1. What specialized roles do staff play in the department?
2. What kinds of non-personnel spending is the department responsible for that impacts its overall operation?

- As a department emphasizing earth and environmental sciences and computer-based quantitative spatial analysis, GES maintains both instructional and research labs dedicated to these fields.

GES supports the provision, maintenance, and accessibility of Geographic Information Science (GISc) hardware and software in labs and online for student instruction, faculty research, and various other GIS users campus-wide.

Recent increases in the department's non-personnel spending are largely a result of our successfully seeking fiscal year-end (including HEERF) funds to maintain our computing GISc infrastructure for online and F2F courses, and to upgrade faculty computers for compatibility with Windows 11 (ITS is ending Windows 10 support).

- GES provides funding assistance to graduate students and faculty for travel for professional presentation of research, a necessity particularly important for PhD programs.

3. What requirements limit credit hour production or cost per credit hour (e.g., secondary accreditation, safety concerns, etc.)? (This item also may impact category 2, 4, and 5)

- GES hosts a full range of degree programs from BA to PhD. Graduate programs, and the PhD in particular necessitate offering graduate courses that cannot enroll at typical UG rates. A critical number of faculty are needed to support such courses and mentor students in research-intensive graduate programs.

- Our ability to staff and provision laboratory sections limits enrollment in our three MAC Data Analysis courses. Lab sections are limited to ~25 .
- Two faculty took research leave during this period; The lost teaching SCH from upper division courses cannot always be replaced.
- One Professional Track Faculty (GISc Lab Director) may contribute to our FTE faculty, but has no teaching obligations. One other has only half-time teaching.
- The new General Education system (MAC) has altered enrollments in many ways; in particular, the removal of 300-level courses as Gen Ed courses, and the loss of the lab requirement results in lower enrollment in 300-level courses.
- Chronic lack of sufficient TSR funding to cover courses in the BA in Environment and Sustainability transfers SCH out of GES and into other departments whose courses must substitute

#### 4. Provision of cognate requirements for other departments and programs

- GES 121/121L (Intro. to GIS) is a core requirement of the Archaeology major, which also features four other GES courses. GES provides GES402/602 (Sust. Urb, Plan. in an Entrepren. Env.) which is equivalent to ENT 410/610 within the B.S. Entrepreneurship. The B.S. in Information Science (GISc concentration) requires 6-12 credit hours of GES coursework. Within GES there is substantial course sharing across environmental studies and geography curricula.
- GES provides seven MAC courses in five different competencies for the university.

#### 5. Cross listed faculty that may impact FTE in one department and SCH generation in a second department

#### 6. What, if any, specialized pedagogy is required for the program that may affect cost and revenue of delivery (e.g., individualized instruction, clinical supervision or oversight, field based experiences)?

- Five of our natural science and GIS courses have separate lab sections requiring TA staffing and materials.
- Student travel is important for our discipline and field-based courses represent high-impact practices. GES offers national and international travel-based summer field camps most summers and sometimes in winters, as well as smaller funds for local and state field excursions.
- As a research-oriented department with a doctoral program, GES provides a regular colloquium series, with speakers receiving a small honorarium.

## Category 2: ACADEMIC PROGRAM DEMAND & INSTRUCTIONAL PRODUCTIVITY/EFFICIENCY

7. Recent internal and/or external changes in departments or programs (e.g., new programs, faculty transitions, program closures) that have impacted applications, enrollment and/or demand?

- During the pandemic, applications, admits, and yield (H1-3 metrics) dropped for the MA-AG. The effects of the pandemic were particularly adverse for graduate work in a discipline that requires collaborative fieldwork and/or travel for much its scholarship. However, during the last year (2022-23) the headcount trend percentile ranking (metric J) recovered, jumping to 61%. The 3-year average is 43% due to the two preceding pandemic years, but **at 61%, Category 2 would increase by 0.25 (from 1.9 to 2.15), and the overall program score would increase by 0.07 to reach 2.53.**

- Graduate assistantship funding for the MA-AG has been in decline, and the amount of stipend we can offer is no longer competitive with other MA programs in the state. This has an adverse affect on all metrics of demand and headcount in Category 2.

- The department of GES arose via a full merger of the Environmental and Sustainability Studies Program and the Geography Department 5 years ago. Since then, GES has developed a remote-online M.S. in Sustainability and Environment (MSSE) with no GRE requirement, and which became available in Fall 2020. It was highly successful and grew quickly over the last three years.

Our informal assessment suggests that this program drew at least some former GES B.A. students who might have otherwise applied/enrolled in the MA-AG. This would have adversely affected both numbers of applications (metric H.1), admits (H.2), headcount (I), and headcount trend (J).

8. What factors impact students' completion of degree?

- Financial considerations are a huge impediment, causing some students to string out completion over a longer period. (This is perhaps a more important factor for Category 4, so please go to that heading for more detail).

## Category 3: EXTERNAL CONTRACTS AND GRANTS

9. What are the opportunities for grants and contracts within the discipline?

- The sums available for contracts and grants in Geography are not as great as for some other natural science disciplines (~350K max), and some changes at the federal level have created further



impediments. (e.g., the Science Technology and Math Scholarships (STAMPS) NSF interdisciplinary STEM program which was once housed in GES). Our means of compensating has primarily been through increasing the numbers of grant submissions.

GES is in the process of changing its Geography CIP code to *Geography and Environmental Studies (30.4401)*, which is both a better reflection of who we are, and will reopen federal grant sources that we previously have benefited from.

10. Is there community engagement of staff, faculty, and students that is a result of grants and contracts?

1. Do the grants/contracts produce community engagement hours for staff/students?

11. Are there departmental employment expectations to obtain grants and contracts?

12. Describe any inter-institutional partnership grants and contracts and/or training grants and the impact these have.

- GES faculty are the originating PIs on a successful grant proposal revolving around the Cape Fear Watershed. This collaborative interdisciplinary and interinstitutional project integrates research and teaching in a variety of physical and social sciences, and other fields to benefit students, the health of Cape Fear communities, and the economy.

- It is common for GES faculty to have collaborative grants with faculty from other universities.

13. What factors inhibited the expenditure of grant funds, if any?

14. Is the department primarily undergraduate, graduate or a mix of both, and how does this impact grant funding or contracts received by the department?

### **1. Category 5: GRADUATE STUDENT PROGRAM SUCCESS**

- Financial difficulty is an impediment. Our inability to offer sufficient assistantship stipend drives students to seek other jobs instead to remain in graduate school. Such students will take longer to graduate as many take smaller loads, or opt to put their degrees on hold, adversely affecting Category 5 metrics U and W in particular.

Students that do accept assistantships may opt to work full-time jobs in summer and winter breaks to make ends meet; the lack of continuity can reduce degree efficiency. A large proportion of our students must travel and do *fieldwork* for their theses and dissertations, and this is often planned for summer when weather is better, and students and faculty advisors have fewer teaching obligations. Fieldwork itself constitutes a difficult, recurring, and sometimes costly task.

- We have estimated that more than 50% of our second-year students find career-quality jobs that may deprioritize and delay their graduation. While the ability of our students to find such work is indicative of our curriculum's strength, this factor can increase time to graduation and other Category 5 metrics.

1. Number of graduate students teaching courses on campus, and/or SCH generation by graduate student

- Most graduate students (MA and PhD) funded through GES will teach labs more or less frequently, and sometimes also (with advanced doctoral students) lectures on a regular basis. Roughly 8 will be regularly employed in labs, and 2-4 PhDs in lecture sections of 100-level courses each semester. This experience is critical for the career goals of many of our PhD students. Because most students are employed teaching lab sections (1 credit hour), their total contribution to SCH may be small.

2. Graduate students in service or support positions on campus (GAs that serve the institution or undergraduate student needs on campus)

3. Additional impact of the program on graduate student success (e.g., research, publications, community engagement, conference proposals, securing of research funding, creative activities)

- GES graduate students (MA and PhD) are deeply involved in most of these scholarly pursuits. In the last 3 years, GES graduate students have authored or co-authored 40 peer reviewed articles, and made 30 first- or co-authored conference research presentations. PhD students (more commonly than MA students) often participate in the writing of grant proposals (such as for the NSF DDRI program).

4. Do departments provide opportunities for graduate students beyond coursework that impact quality of education (undergraduate research, research assistantships, student University service positions, internships, community service/engagement)

## Part II

1. Other factors of the program (not listed above) impact aspects of the criteria on the rubric during the review period.

- Geography graduate programs should be regarded, valued, and funded as STEM, despite the state's narrow CIP classification in the new funding formula. The application of this new rule

impacts revenue by counting our MA students as equivalent to UG students for funding purposes.

GES as a whole is STEM with regard to:

- role as the sole *Earth Sciences* department at UNCG
- largest class offerings,
- majority of SCH generation,
- courses offered,
- MAC courses (4 of 7 are STEM in Natural Sciences and Data Analysis),
- CiC classification,
- contributions to other STEM programs,

and campus leadership roles:

The newly appointed Director of UNCG's RISE (Research and Instruction in STEM Education) program is Geography faculty in our department, as is the former Co-principal PI of NSF-funded STAMPS (Science Technology and Math Preparation Scholarships).

GES Geography graduate programs are equally substantive with regard to STEM content, as reflected in graduate level earth science and GISc coursework, technical applied GISc content in Urban and Transportation Planning courses, and an abundance of publications by faculty and graduate students in STEM journals, and NSF and other grant funding for earth science research projects.

GES Geography degree programs are changing their CIP codes to federally classified STEM CIPs.

- The new funding formula devalues and defunds out-of-state graduate students, which we have traditionally included in our search for the highest qualifications, to the detriment of our retro-dicted revenues under the new formula.

2. Does the department rely on other departments or programs for courses? This may include specific tiered or pre-requisite courses, cross-listed courses, program minors, or certifications.

3. Does the department contribute to the success of the student population beyond its own department (i.e., MAC-serving coursework)?

- GES has 7 courses (6 in Geog./1 in EVS) that are current MAC courses: 3 Data Analysis, including *GES 103 Intro Earth Science*; 1 CTI in Natural Sciences, 1 Global, 1 in CTI Social Sciences, and 1 Foundations course.

4. Comparison of program to other programs (e.g., number of similar programs in the state, state or national ranking of program)

- There are 4 other UNC System departments that offer a Master's degree in Geography. UNCG's is in Applied *Geography*. Two programs resemble ours to some extent (ECU, UNCC); only one of these also has an Master's program in Environmental Studies major like UNCG (UNCW), but it is F2F

unlike ours which is all online. Most of these institutions also have some kind of geology program, whereas **at UNCG all geology, climate/atmospheric science, hydrology, and other earth sciences are provided by GES.**

#### 5. How does the program tie into the mission of the University

- Our MA-AG (and the discipline more broadly) emphasizes interactions between humans and the environment across a broad range of spatial scales from small rural communities to global. It is thus necessarily international and intercultural in outlook, as well as practice-oriented at more local scales. Solutions for creating resilient and sustainable communities in a changing world, a key initiative of the *Giant Steps* strategic plan, are our dominant subtext.

#### 6. Scholarly products and creative contributions of faculty and staff

- GES research faculty are productive scholars who seek out external funding, publish in high quality peer-review journals, and contribute strongly to leadership in the discipline. In the last 3 years GES faculty have published more than 68 research articles, books, and other peer-reviewed works (40 of these with student co-authors), made 75+ conference presentations (30 with student co-authors), and have served in 21+ disciplinary leadership roles.

The labor market and employment can be an important component of a program's demand and impact. rpk's labor market data (original category 6) will not be considered in the Program Review process, given the data was problematic. Therefore, if appropriate for your department/program, please indicate what types of jobs and positions your graduates get after they graduate from your program (e.g., please provide SOC codes where appropriate)? Do you have additional data or information to reflect your program's job market value?

- Our students get good jobs. Our M.A. Geography graduates find abundant job opportunities in the fields of Regional and Urban Planning (Bureau of Labor Statistics, job growth: +13.4% annually), Municipal Water Resources and Water Quality (+11%), Natural Hazards analysis, transportation logistics, Geographic Information Systems (+10.7%), environmental remediation, retail location, and many other jobs utilizing the technical skills and diverse knowledge that come with the degree.

Job growth for all of the above-mentioned fields matches or exceeds average growth across all occupations. Geospatial Technologies (GISc) has been cited by the Dept. of Labor as one of 14 high growth industries.

Our former students are also found in planning positions throughout the Triad region, and Urban Planning internship participants from our program are much sought after.

Department of  
Interior  
Architecture MFA  
in Interior  
Architecture

Submitted by  
Dr. Lucinda Havenhand, Department Head

The **MFA in Interior Architecture** is a post-professional degree program accredited by the National Association of Schools of Art and Design (NASAD). It is a studio-based course of study that provides a terminal degree in the field. It is the only program of its kind in North Carolina. Graduates of the program practice interior design or teach in interior design or architecture programs. Similar to our undergraduate program, about 90% of graduates find work within the field.

While enrollment in the program has not been robust in the last 10 years, especially in the pandemic years (two to five students entering each year) the Department did an extensive study in 2021 and developed four new strategies for boosting enrollment:

1. Offering a non-thesis, capstone project option.
2. Offering a crosswalk for students with an MS to receive an MFA.
3. Offering a plan of study for students who do not have an undergraduate degree in architecture and design but want to change careers by completing the MFA. In this path, students spend a year taking courses in the undergraduate program to level up for entry into the MFA in year two and completion of their degree in year three.
4. Actively recruiting for the Accelerated Master's program.

These options were all inaugurated last year and have not been in place long enough to show their impact. The Department feels these strategies place it in a good position to increase the program's numbers and reach its goal of 8-10 students entering each year going forward.

In addition, community-engaged design is a hallmark of the program and students in the MFA can work within the department's Center for Community-Engaged Design, an interdisciplinary research facility that fosters community/university partnerships for meaningful research and design. (see <https://iarc.uncg.edu/cc-ed/>) Under the direction of senior faculty Associate Professor Travis Hicks, the CC-ED provides both physical and ideological space for MFA students to engage directly in projects related to the community. Numerous projects have been completed by the CC-ED for a variety of agencies including Tiny Houses Greensboro, the Vance Chavez Library, the Glenwood Neighborhood, and the Duke University Hospital ALS Clinic.

MFA students also work within the Main Street Fellows program (see <https://iarc.uncg.edu/cc-ed/nc-main-street/>) Funded by grant money from the state of North Carolina the Main Street NC program which helps North Carolina's small towns and communities with aesthetic and functional renewals of existing buildings and streetscapes. To date, the program at UNCG has completed designs for over 200 storefront and building facades and fifteen upper-story apartment conversions in small towns in North Carolina.

In an external review performed in 2020 reviewers noted:

“The Center for Community-Engaged Design and the Main Street Fellows are two strong programs that support and enhance the goal of “Regional Transformation” for the University. Through these programs, students have the opportunity to engage with community issues and take part in design solutions that benefit and help transform the socio-spatial fabric of communities in North Carolina. It provides students with opportunities to experience circumstances and diverse populations outside of their typical comfort zone. Engaging students in this process prepares students to remain active and responsive citizens as they graduate from the University.”

The MFA’s link to both these programs also increases the opportunities for outside grant funding. For example, in 2020 the Covington Foundation awarded a grant of \$100,000 over five years to support graduate studies in Historic Preservation. Most students in the MFA program also complete the Post-Baccalaureate Certificate in Historic Preservation.

The MFA in Interior Architecture therefore is closely linked with the university’s commitment to community engagement and regional transformation by providing a path for individuals to become professionals who will work with and in those communities. Deleting the MFA program would delete those opportunities while having little or no effect on reducing budget or faculty numbers in Interior Architecture as most of the course work now is being taught as independent studies with no workload credit given for additional load.