

ASSESSMENT OF NON-ACADEMIC OUTCOMES (FALL 2003 – SPRING 2004)

Unit: CENTER FOR SPATIAL ANALYSIS AND MAPPING **Date** January 30, 2004

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I. Mission:

The Center for Spatial Analysis and Mapping (CSAM), established in 1992, promotes and supports Geographic Information Science (GIS), environmental modeling, computer cartography and spatial analysis research and education at the University of North Texas. The Center functions both as a classroom and laboratory for the Department of Geography and the Institute of Applied Sciences. CSAM maintains up-to-date hardware and software to meet the demands of undergraduate and graduate programs as well as supporting and conducting faculty research.

II. Previous Evaluations of the Unit:

CSAM underwent a Sunset Review in 2000, conducted by Dr. Tom Richards, Dr. Dan Rodeheaver and Dr. Don Smith. Upon its request, the review panel was provided with the following: an extensive list of research databases maintained by CSAM, university classes taught within the Center, undergraduate and graduate student support (classes and research) provided, funded research support, interactions with other schools and departments, training initiatives, student internships outside the university, service to the university, articles and reports generated, and associations outside the university. The review panel stated in its recommendations that “we believe the Center is providing a valuable service and is a valuable resource the University must continue to strengthen as we move in the 21st Century.”

In the past five years there have been no formal evaluations of CSAM beyond the Sunset Review. However, during the summer of 2003, CSAM hosted an invitational luncheon for alumni of the Geography and GIS program. There were eight alumni who attended, the majority of whom are directors of GIS departments in north Texas city and county governments, regional agencies and metroplex businesses. The topics of discussion for the luncheon were:

- How well UNT students were prepared to meet the needs of current and future GIS positions within the state and country
- Areas of improvement for the Center and the Department
- How to align the CSAM mission with GIS programmatic needs in regional high schools, junior colleges and universities
- Internships to help advance students’ GIS skills, build resumes and introduce them to prospective employers
- How to maintain and advance technology and technological skills at the University

- Why students might be choosing GIS programs at other universities
- Areas of expertise for potential faculty and staff hires
- The effectiveness of web-based content delivery
- Night and weekend classes
- Continuing education classes
- Continuing effectiveness of the GIS Program within the Metroplex, the State and Country

The conclusion of the luncheon discussion was that CSAM and the Department of Geography have been very effective to date in preparing students for both technological applications and interdisciplinary program management for both governmental and business applications. However, it is incumbent on the Center and Department that the use of GIS and related technology by students must increase to prepare them to meet the expectations of employers, and to promote and advance the technology as an integrative tool for project development and management.

The results of the luncheon were distributed among faculty members of the Department of Geography to promote discussion and were discussed in a faculty/staff meeting. It is the goal of the director of the Center to maintain close working relationships with GIS professionals, both alumni and non-UNT members, in order to promote the University, build additional internship sites, and to stay abreast of technology within the professional GIS world.

III. Statement of Expected Outcomes:

In the next five years the Center for Spatial Analysis and Mapping will focus its research, educational and outreach efforts in the following areas:

- Continue to offer short-course GIS training for UNT students, staff and faculty, UNT alumni, and outside agencies and businesses
- Continue to provide software, hardware and databases to support undergraduate, graduate and faculty research
- Promote GIS use and education among the following schools and departments: Emergency Administration Program in the School of Community Service, School of Library and Information Sciences, Marketing within the College of Business Administration, and pre-service teachers within the College of Education
- Assist the University in the use of GIS as an administration tool for facility management and emergency preparedness
- Assist the University in planning by facilitating demographic analyses of enrolled students attending classes and participating in distance learning
- Develop and strengthen student internship sites with the Metroplex
- Support technology education within the Department of Geography and the Environmental Science Division within the Department of Biology
- Seek external funding for applied research within the region and State
- Promote links with K-12 programs within the region to assist teachers who use GIS technology for content delivery within the classroom

IV. Measuring Expected Outcomes:

Assessment Measures include:

- Tracking how well UNT graduates are obtaining jobs within the GIS field
- Periodically defining how well student and faculty geospatial research needs are supported
- Comparing the Center's equipment and software with state-of-the-art
- Recording how many short-courses are offered and the number of attendees
- How well the Center is able to promote GIS within the University environment as an administrative and research tool
- The growth of enrollment and analysis of student evaluations within the Department of Geography
- Research grant participation

Something that has become clear as a result of the alumni meeting and this questionnaire is the need for a written record of annual tasks and 5-year goals. This record will provide for better assessment and evaluation of accomplishments and failures.

Frequency of Measurement: Annually

IV. Use of Assessment Results:

Staff and faculty of the Department of Geography meet throughout the year. Developments and progress in CSAM are often discussed as part of the ongoing quest for improving content delivery within the Department. Additionally, the Director of CSAM maintains close ties with the Chair of Geography and the Director of the Institute of Applied Sciences as well as with all the faculty members within the two groups. As a result of the close-knit relationship of faculty and staff within the two programs, the Center is often able to rapidly adjust to meet the needs of students, faculty and researchers as they surface.

VI. Changes Made Based on Assessment Results:

Several changes suggested by alumni reviewers depend on the ability of the College of Arts and Sciences and the Department of Geography to hire replacement and additional faculty to support geospatial technology at the University. The Department is currently searching for a replacement faculty in GIS, specifically to promote applied geography and technology. The new faculty must be able to capitalize upon the strong links CSAM has developed with professional GIS directors and practitioners outside the university.

The Director is pressing forward with technology implementations in CSAM. The use of "enterprise GIS" (technology used within large corporations and agencies) serves two purposes: to provide students with hands-on experience in geodatabase management and development and delivery of web-based mapped information, and to provide students, faculty and researchers with additional databases to support their class projects and research.

Signature of Person Completing the Form:

Date January 30, 2004

Signature of Unit Head after Reviewing the Form:

Date January 30, 2004