

Post-APR Action Plan – Geography & Environmental Systems

First Draft Reviewed by Chair __ Date: **Dean __ Date:** **Next YTR: 2028-2029**

Senior Administration Review Meeting Date: 06/12/2025 **Edits/Changes to Action Plan Due Date: 7/02/2025**

Attendees: Jeffery Halverson, Kimberly Moffitt, Laila Shishineh, Maggie Holland, Peggy Re, Rex Jarrett, (Kyle Pokorny & Colleen Rebeiro)

Recommendation	Department Action	College Action	Provost's Office Action	Action Plan Update
Space & Facilities				
(a) Secure appropriate lab/research space for newest hire (TT Asst Prof in Coastal Science, to start AY 25/26) & next projected hire (TT Asst/Assoc Prof in Physical Geography);	(a)	(a)		(a) Update the lab in the basement of Sondheim Hall for the newest hire & secure equipment. Possibility of accessing 503 lab for this hire once available. Explore shared space in ILSB for the near future?
(b) Advocate for mold remediation & deep cleaning of existing spaces in Sondheim Hall; Participate in planning for renovation to secure key priorities for the department; and	(b)	(b)	(b)	(b) Request assistance from Facilities/Mgmt. for mitigation of mold; secure any necessary equipment for avoiding future mold outbreaks. Seek assistance in mitigating the effect of occasional chemical odors from the basement breezeway area. Address safety protocols for re-establishing phone connection in the basement and other measures recommended by campus police.
(c) Establish short-term solutions for space needs (meeting rooms, access to classrooms that meet teaching needs)	(c)	(c)	(c)	(c) Explore and reserve an option for hosting regular seminar/colloquium for AY 25-26 (and beyond) until Sondheim Hall renovation is complete.
	(d)	(d)	(d)	(d) Participate actively in final design/planning for Sondheim renovation and advocate for additional space allocation (beyond current footprint).
				By deadline: June 2026
				Responsible Agent: Chair & Director of Labs/Director of Operations, CAHSS

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Graduate Program Growth				
(a) Develop a plan to recruit graduate students and increase the size of incoming cohorts to a minimum of 5 students	(a)			(a) Leverage existing Grad Recruitment fund (1113 - non-replenishing) to expand grad recruiting efforts. Plan to send GPD (MS/PhD & MPS) to regional/national conference in the fall for recruiting. Plan for a small on-campus recruiting event. (AY25-26)
(b) Explore and pursue additional funding for GAs (e.g., foundations & State/local government)	(b)			(b) Work with OIA & CARAT to identify foundation contacts (RWJ & Mellon as examples, but also Doris Duke). Host a proposal workshop with assistance from CARAT.
(c) Offer more opportunities for PhD candidates to serve as instructors-of-record on courses	(c)	(c)		(c) PhD candidates were instructors on 3 courses in the past 3 years. Aim to expand this as an opportunity/option, including for summer offerings. Objective: Each PhD candidate is encouraged to become an instructor-of-record on at least one course offering and encouraged to participate in the teaching certificate program. Be more strategic in the assignment of GTAs to courses they could likely instruct in the future. (For GAs of large classes, would need an additional TA)
				By deadline: June 2028
				Responsible Agent: GPD / OIA / CARAT / DPS

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Graduate Program Curriculum				
(a) Re-structure/re-design introductory graduate course series (701/702) to include more interdisciplinary engagement through discussing “wicked problems” and building on faculty strengths/overlap.	(a)			(a) Dept. GPD and Graduate Committee will survey past 701/702 students and generate a set of recommended alterations to the course sequence, including envisioning a faculty leader with team teaching incorporated (e.g, modules to deep dive into examples of interdisciplinarity in our work)
(b) Aim to offer 2 grad-only elective courses per year (each under GES 700 code- special topics seminars) & consider co-/team teaching options	(b)			(b) Have the GPD & Graduate Committee plan for regular offerings of GES 700 elective classes. Aim for 1 per semester starting SP26,
				By deadline: June 2028
				Responsible Agent: GPD & Grad Committee

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Undergraduate Program Strengthening				
(a) Explore the use of undergraduate TAs;	(a)			(a) Can enhance this for our GIS lab and field lab courses.
(b) Early/strategic advising on BS vs. BA	(b)			(b) Already working with the CAHSS Advising team for students <60 credits. Will host 1-2x per semester strategic advising/info sessions for majors/minors/certificate students
(c) Identify and mitigate bottlenecks for course enrollment (BS especially)	(c)			(c) Undergrad Program Committee will consider and generate a proposal to the faculty for any changes
(d) Evaluate option to streamline & formalize undergraduate "streams"	(d)	(d)	(d)	(d) Undergrad Program Committee will consider and propose a set of options to faculty after surveying current students and alumni on their use and value associated with existing streams. The department will consult with Curriculum Development/Office of the Provost if needed.
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				Responsible Agent: Chair & UPD

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Department Governance & Mentoring				
(a) Complete process of generating new and updating key governance documents, with an emphasis on clarity and transparency	(a)	(a)		(a) Key department governance documents in process of creation (DRIF policy; roles & responsibilities of department leadership) and updating (Merit policy, Faculty affiliation, and DP&TC details for promotion to Full). Senior faculty advisory committee working on drafts for review, editing, and approval by GES faculty.
(b) Establish a formal mentoring program for faculty that extends beyond assistant professors into associate/full	(b)			(b) Had a “soft” beginning of this during AY24-25. Jumpstarting again now (AY25-26) and will generate more streamlined documents for documenting mentoring.
(c) Enhance the annual review process for faculty	(c)			(c) Department Chair implemented 1-on-1 meetings to enhance the annual review. For AY 25-26, will document the process in more formal letters to be included with faculty records.
(d) Provide clarity and support to the process for associate promotion to full professor.	(d)			(d) This clarity will be part of the process for updating department policies and documents in (a)
(e) Deliberate and develop a proposal for the full merger of the Interdisciplinary Science program with GEX	(e)	(e)	(e)	(e) Deliberate and develop a proposal for the full merger of the IntSci program with GES.
				By deadline: June 2026
				Responsible Agent: Chair, Assoc Chair (Director of IntSci), and full faculty

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Strategic Planning & External Visibility				
(a) Lead a collaborative and comprehensive strategic planning process	(a)			(a) Department will make this a priority goal for AY 25-26, to be launched at the faculty retreat in late August. Could use guidance/assistance on the facilitation of such a process.
(b) Promote interdisciplinary research and engagement (especially internal)	(b)			(b) Work CS3 & other research centers
(c) Strengthen ties with other programs/departments	(c)	(c)		(c) Outreach to connect on possible grant applications, cross-listing of courses, and more formal affiliation?
(d) Promote visibility through hosting regional events/symposia and/or features in UMBC publications	(d)	(d)		(d) Forming a new department committee that focuses on seminar/colloquium, and department visibility more broadly (including recognition/awards). Continue to hire a communications intern.
				By deadline: June 2028
				Responsible Agent: GES Department & CAHSS support for visibility

Approved (Initials and Date):

Approved SJF

Approved CPS

Approve JBH

Approved RLJ

Approved MBH (07/14/25)

Approved JSM (07/14/25)