

Geography Unit Plan

Division Science/FCS Academic Year 2010-2011

Division Chair Joyce Parker

Executive Summary

Geography at L.A. Harbor College continues to be activities-driven, is both global and regional, and includes hands-on, online, and outdoor learning. Spring 2010 marks the 350th outdoor field trip and nature walk for Harbor geography students! A strong tradition in the Earth Sciences, nature walks in the nearby Harbor/Machado Lake wetlands allow us to study biosphere, water and landform processes in 3-D for Physical Geography. In World Regional Geography, creating salt clay relief maps helps us grasp how physical topography influences a region's climates and population, and charts of economic activities show how regions vary in their crop focus, manufacturing output, and contributions to global markets, including outsourcing in the services, and quaternary (information processing) sectors. The world is rapidly globalizing, and understanding a geographical world view is key for international business, dealings on the Internet, the global media, and the "green movement" to preserve Earth's resources.

Activities Description Narrative: please describe suggested activities, including grant proposals to be written, new course or program initiatives, or program viability studies in priority order.

1. L.A. Harbor College's location is ideal for nature study because of its proximity for short walks to Ken Malloy Harbor Regional Park, including a freshwater marsh just across Lagoon Drive from the baseball field. Native plants, birds, water pathways and how the lithosphere responds, are in view; plus wide open views of the sky, necessary for students to grasp the invisible dimensions of air pressure, temperature, humidity, and wind, which are key to understanding the atmosphere. We can also see mountains at the edge of L.A. Basin, and the sun's pathway in the sky, which helps students grasp radiation, earth-sun relations, and international time zones. It's healthy: outdoor air and short walks stimulate oxygen intake and brain activity. Sensory learning and an attitude of fun stimulate all the brain's regions to learn and take in new information, and countless students each semester report that the book did not "click" with them until they started going outside and seeing it in 3-D. Field learning is excellent pedagogy.

SLO Assessment Results Narrative: please describe assessment activities that support proposed unit initiatives.

1. Geography 15 Physical Geography Laboratory success rates are high: students locate latitude and longitude coordinates, draw isobar and isotherm maps from raw weather data, analyze and interpret landforms in satellite photos, draw and explain plant adaptations to our Mediterranean climate, and write field trip reports about their observations of physical geographic processes.

3. Geography 7 World Regional Geography success rates are also healthy: students compare and contrast global economic systems, population, language and religion patterns, physical geography, and production regions in Europe, Russia and 'The near Abroad' (former Soviet region), Middle East/North

Africa, Monsoon Asia, the Pacific World, and Latin America .

4. Geography 1 students are learning through diagrams and forecasts how the weather works, how plants and animals adapt to the physical environment, about climate change, and how rain, waves, rivers, and glaciers shape the land. Drawing plants, rocks, and landforms have helped students recognize and interpret scientific patterns.

5. Offering the Friday “hands-on, outdoor emphasis” section of Geography 1 (after a 2-3 year hiatus) is proving to be successful for 3-D learning.

6. Studying geography should be part of every college education: we live in a rapidly globalizing world. Many students in their 30s – 60s ages are enjoying taking both world and physical geography these years to make up for gaps in their education, because neither has been widely taught in most school systems. Effort is made in every class to stimulate more accurate, detailed views of Southern California, our proximity to Northern Mexico and the Pacific World, our continent, and the world as a whole.

7. Success stories of Harbor College Geography student transfers include Juan Gonzalez from Wilmington, who graduated from UCLA and works in Washington, D.C. at the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency, and Christine Zuhlsdorf, Nikolai Sivovol, Mirna Dukic, Flavio Mercado, and others from San Pedro and Wilmington are also successful at transferring to UC and CSU as Geography majors. UCLA Geography Professors tell me how my students from Harbor are the best in their classes at recognizing outdoor landform features. **Transfer excellence requires rigor.**

Staffing Implications: if any request will require additional classified support or training, please describe its extent.

1. I recommend funds for tutoring students who have difficulty grasping geography basics because of lack of background, under-developed spatial brains because of the flat-screen focus of today’s society, and/or spatial brain disabilities. I believe the brain can be rewired from injuries.

2. Continuing to offer Geography 1, 7, and 15 during morning and evening time schedules, in the PACE program, and Banning High School outreach, with full-time and part-time instructors, is the best plan of action to service the needs of the Harbor community. We are not equipped right now to expand the program to include Geography 2 or 31, but may want to try offering more sections of Geography 1 and 7 during the TTh 9:35 and 11:10 time slots, since the 2 offered on MW are always full.

Technology Implications: if any request involves technology, please describe its impact on the network, licensing, repair, training and support.