

## **THE CHALLENGES OF SUSTAINING AN UNDERGRADUATE GEOGRAPHY PROGRAM: TEACHING GEOGRAPHY AT HOFSTRA UNIVERSITY**

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**ABSTRACT:** *This paper examines the difficulties faced in maintaining undergraduate geography departments in the US. After outlining the history of geographic education in the US, the paper uses the case of the Geography Department at Hofstra University to illustrate strategies that have been used to maintain and build a sustainable undergraduate geography program. The teaching of geography at Hofstra dates to 1936, but it was not until 2008 that the geography program gained a solid institutional foundation (as the cornerstone of the new Department of Global Studies and Geography). While never a large program, by the early 1990s there were only two full-time geography faculty members and no geography majors. Since the mid-1990s the program has revived, to the extent that it is now larger than at any time in its history. This paper pays particular attention to the strategies that have been used to grow the program, ongoing problems with program building, and provides suggestions about how small undergraduate geography programs can maintain enrolments within the current economic environment.*

**Keywords:** *Hofstra University, Geographic education, New York*

### **INTRODUCTION<sup>1</sup>**

This paper looks at the evolution of geographic education in the United States, paying particular attention to the problems encountered in maintaining stand-alone undergraduate programs. The geography program at Hofstra University is used as a case study for the above, showing how the growth and decline of the program largely mirrored national trends. Latterly, partly in line with national trends, the program has revived, to the extent that it larger than any time in the past.

The Geography program at Hofstra University became a part of the new Department of Global Studies and Geography in Fall 2008. Prior to this, the geography program had been part of the Economics Department, and even earlier the Geology Department. As will be shown in this paper, for much of that time the department remained small and was at various times almost completely moribund. This paper traces the evolution of the geography program, situating this evolution within broader national trends in geographic education. Particular attention is paid to the problems encountered in trying to maintain and build an undergraduate geography program with few faculty members, limited financial resources and as a very peripheral part of a larger department. More importantly, the paper presents the recent strategies that have successfully been used to raise the profile of the Department, increase enrollments, and leverage greater resources from the University administration. These strategies provide pointers for other programs faced with same problems as outlined in the Hofstra case.

### **GEOGRAPHIC EDUCATION IN THE UNITED STATES**

An assessment of the successes and problems encountered by the geography program at Hofstra must be situated within the context of U.S. geographic education, as for much of its history, the difficulties that Hofstra has faced in establishing a viable and vibrant geography program were, to a large degree, a reflection of the general decline of U.S. geographic education. Murphy (2007: 121) notes that while “U.S. colleges and universities play host to some 60 geography Ph.D. programs, 90-odd masters programs, and over 200 bachelors programs...Geography departments are generally smaller than those of neighboring disciplines, and there are many small colleges, and even some prominent universities, that do not have geography programs.” De Blij (2005: 5) echoing the above, argues that one of the problems that geography faces is that few people actually know what geographers do and fewer still know what geography is. This is partly due to the wide scope of the discipline that prevents an easy explanation of what it is or what binds it together. As De Blij (2005: 11) notes, the U.S. is also unique among developed countries in that an

American student could go from kindergarten to graduate school without ever having taken a class or course in geography. This was not always the case as, at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, geography was widely taught in American schools, and the most prestigious U.S. universities had geography departments. For a number of complex reasons, geography education began to fall out of favor after the Second World War. Murphy (2007) argues that geography was never as entrenched in American universities as it appeared and that its status was very vulnerable to post-war challenges within the academy. In particular, Murphy (*ibid*: 122-3) isolates the following six factors for causing the relative decline of geographic education:

(1) the early twentieth-century trend toward American isolationism, (2) the subsequent emergence of an internationalism premised on the idea that American-style capitalism provided a template for an emerging global political-economy that would render place differences increasingly irrelevant ..., (3) the growing prestige of the sciences and the concomitant privileging of those social sciences that treated differences from place to place as “noise” in their model-building efforts, (4) the growing institutional division between the physical and social sciences in American universities, making it difficult for a discipline that sat astride that divide to find a niche, (5) the marginalization of geography in the primary and secondary schools with the rise of a history-dominated social studies curriculum..., and (6) the sense that geography had little to offer beyond the cataloging of Earth facts or problematic generalizations about environment-human relations.

Also of importance were inter- and intra-departmental rivalries, which is one of the main reasons cited for Harvard closing its geography department in 1948 (see Wright and Koch, 2008). By the 1980s all of the other Ivy League universities, with the exception of Dartmouth, had also stopped teaching geography. Despite the loss of the Ivy League programs and those at a few other high profile institutions (such as the University of Michigan, the University of Chicago, and Northwestern), the number of students taking geography grew with the general rise in university attendance that accompanied the baby boom generation entering higher education. Between 1960 and 1970 the total enrollment in geography programs in the U.S. increased from 336,787 to 762,954 (Murphy 2007: 123). Regardless of this impressive expansion, Murphy (*ibid*) points out that this was still well below the growth rates of other social science disciplines. The 1970s and 1980s proved to be a difficult time for geography programs as they faced enrollment declines and the fiscal pressures caused by the U.S. economic recession. Between 1970 and 1976 there was a net loss of 32 U.S. geography departments (Murphy, 2007: 124). De Blij (2005: 15) argues that one of the major causes for the relative decline of geographic education was that from the 1960s social studies began replacing individual social science disciplines in schools. This not only decreased interest in geography as a discipline, but as was the case at Hofstra, the move to social studies also meant that fewer education majors were required to take geography courses. At a college level, the number of geography graduates increased in the 1950s and 1960s and then declined until the 1990s, when the rise of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) helped fuel a comeback in enrollment. In 1947-48, only 357 students received undergraduate geography degrees in the U.S., this increased to 4,326 in 1971-72, fell to 2,948 by 1987-88, and then slowly recovered to the mid-4,000 level by 2003-4 (Murphy 2007: 124)<sup>2</sup>. The most recent statistics, 2007-8, show 4,320 undergraduates receiving geography degrees (AAG 2010: 282-3). Hofstra to a large extent echoed the above, with declining enrollments from the late 1960s until the mid-1990s.

As noted by Murphy (2007), by the 1980s, two trends had begun to converge that proved very important for the revival of US geographic education: a growing awareness that globalization was increasing, which requires a greater understanding of other societies and of basic geographic literacy, and a general awareness among U.S. educators that most American students were not only lacking in geographic literacy, but that they were also less knowledgeable about geography than students in other developed countries. These trends were highlighted in the Global Geographic Literacy Surveys (conducted by the National Geographic Society) in 1988, 2002, and 2006, whose findings received much press coverage. The press coverage of the 1988 Survey that had found that U.S. students had an abysmal level of geographic awareness helped make the case for increasing the level of geographic education at high schools and colleges. By 2002, the Survey found that 55 percent of U.S. respondents indicated that they had taken geography courses, compared to 30 percent in 1988 (National Geographic Educational Foundation 2002:4). Nevertheless, the 2002 Survey, which looked at the comparative state of U.S. geographic knowledge, placed U.S. as next to last in geographic literacy, just above Mexico.<sup>3</sup>

Given the issues highlighted above, there has recently been a greater emphasis on geography in K-12 education (see Bednarz and Bednarz 2004). Murphy (2007: 129) notes that the outrage that greeted the

results of the surveys highlighting the geographical ignorance of American students can help explain heightened official recognition of the discipline, including the U.S. Congress's recognition of a national Geography Awareness Week in 1987. Another measure of the increasing recognition of the importance of geographic education is that in 2000-2001, the College Board added its first Advanced Placement (AP) geography test. Since that time, the number of students taking the annual AP Human Geography test has increased from 3,272 in 2001 to 50,730 in 2009.<sup>4</sup> Nationally, the renewed interest in geography is also linked in large measure to the rising importance and usage of Geographic Information Systems (GIS). It is fair to say that the growth of GIS from the 1980s provided a very compelling reason for universities to show greater interest in the teaching of geography. Hofstra may have benefitted from the increased awareness of GIS, but as will be shown later, the geography program has struggled to build a self-sustaining GIS program.

A further reason for the recent growth in interest in geography is linked to globalization and the realization by scholars of various disciplines that an understanding of geography is essential to grasp the full extent of these global social, cultural, political and economic processes.<sup>5</sup> Given this greater awareness of the importance of geography, it is not surprising that the number of Ph.D.s awarded annually in geography has risen since the 1980s (see Gailie and Wilmot 2003, AAG 2010: 282-3). For all the reasons cited, since the 1980s, a number of new geography degree programs have been established, and there has been an expansion (through new hiring) of many existing departments.<sup>6</sup> Johnston (2004: 1003-5) notes, however, that for all the recent successes of geography in the United States, the number of students majoring in geography is much the same now as it was in the 1970s and that the U.S. produces fewer undergraduate geography majors than the number of geography honors graduates in the much smaller British system.

The lack of U.S. student knowledge about what geography is and what geographers do is reflected at Hofstra where very few students choose the university with the specific aim of studying geography. This is not unusual in the U.S. case, where even large programs have relatively few undergraduate majors. For example, in 2008 Rutgers listed 69 geography majors, Syracuse listed 70, SUNY Buffalo listed 84, SUNY Binghamton listed 55 and Montclair State listed 71 (AAG Guide to Geography Programs, 2009/10). Further, geography programs clearly gain most of their academic reputation from their graduate programs, and small undergraduate programs are, therefore, bound to struggle in attracting students to their specific institutions.

At Hofstra, the vast majority of students entering geography classes have little to no idea of what geography is or what will be expected of them. In this context, most students only decide to minor or major in geography after taking a class to fulfill a university requirement, and then discovering an affinity for the material and/or the instructor. It is clear from our experience that unless the U.S. school system does a much better job at introducing students to geography, small undergraduate geography programs will continue to struggle in attracting freshmen as incoming majors.

## **THE GEOGRAPHY PROGRAM AT HOFSTRA**

The first record of geography being taught at Hofstra is in 1936.<sup>7</sup> In 1957 the program was incorporated into the Geology Department and then in 1958/9 moved into the Economics Department. The geography program grew during the 1960s, with new faculty joining the program and the consequent addition of new geography courses. The geography program was thus transformed into a small but viable major, offering diverse courses taught by three full-time geographers and one part-time geographer. Nevertheless, between 1962 and 1972, only 14 students graduated from the program, illustrating that the program performed mainly a service function for other larger programs. The growth period of the geography program came to an abrupt end when the New York Education Department dropped the geography requirement for teachers in the early 1970s. This forced the geography program to compete with other social science electives for students. Simultaneously, the general U.S. popularity of geography was declining as school children were less exposed to the discipline.

The problems faced by the Hofstra geography program at that time was not unique to Hofstra. What was perhaps different was that the university also entered a relative period of financial uncertainty in the late 1970s, which affected both enrollments and the quality of students. A further reason for geography's difficulties in attracting students has to do with inherent difficulties in being a subordinate part of a larger joint department. Economics was always the much larger program, and the running of the Department was dominated by economics faculty. In this situation a self-fulfilling prophecy is created, in

that the smaller program has fewer faculty members and is thus given fewer teaching sections. This results in attracting fewer students, which in turn negates the need for either new faculty or more teaching sections. Thus, without strong advocates within the administration, and with department chairs focused on their own program (Economics), it is very difficult for the subordinate program to break this cycle of decline. The geography program struggled to attract students during the 1980s and reached a critical juncture in 1991 when one of the two remaining full-time geographers retired. At this stage enrollments had declined substantially, and the professors were teaching some economics classes to fulfill their teaching obligations. Until the Fall 1992 semester, Hofstra faculty were required to carry a four-class per semester teaching load.<sup>8</sup> This means that the Geography Program, with two full-time professors, should have been offering a minimum of eight geography sections per semester. Instead, the program was only offering between five and six sections per semester, and by Fall 1991 total enrollment in all classes had fallen to 66 students (average of 11 students per taught section, with two sections cancelled due to low enrollment).<sup>9</sup> Between 1962 and 1986, 32 students graduated with a B.A. in Geography, but then no more were to graduate from the program until 1996. Due to these dire enrollment numbers, there was an understandable reluctance on the part of the economists to hire a replacement geographer. Fortunately, the remaining geographer was able to prevail upon the Chair and Dean to keep the line in the geography program.

With the new hire, the geography program began a slow process of recovery, with new courses being introduced that could fulfill the College's new core curriculum requirements. This paid immediate enrollment dividends, and by Fall 1992 enrollment had risen to 154 students (average of 25.6 students per section, with no sections cancelled due to low enrollment). This illustrates the crucial role that selecting good faculty plays in the future of departments. The change in fortunes had little to do with anything other than a new faculty member understanding that for geography to survive it had to introduce new courses that could satisfy the core curriculum and thus draw new students into geography courses. Once enrolled, there was always a chance that a few students could decide to pursue the major and minor in geography. This process accelerated, as more new faculty entered the program, and by 1997 the geography program had clearly turned the corner; "core" classes were mostly full, electives often drew over twenty students, none of the classes were being cancelled due to low enrollment and the program had produced the first two B.A. geography graduates since 1986. Between 1996 and 2010, thirty-three students graduated with a Bachelor's degree in Geography, compared with only thirty-two students in the preceding thirty-four years.<sup>10</sup> With higher enrollments and the growing national importance of GIS for geography and other disciplines, the geographers were able to successfully make the case to the Dean that the Department should be awarded a new faculty line (1998) to introduce GIS courses. Following increasing student enrollment, a fourth geography line was added in 2007 and a fifth line was allocated in 2010.

### **The Introduction of Global Studies**

While the geography program was clearly growing after 1996, it is highly unlikely it would have reached its current favorable situation without being administratively linked to a newly introduced major in Global Studies. In Fall 2006, I was asked to create and direct a new program in Global Studies. This presented the geography program with an opportunity to make the case that combining the Geography and Global Studies programs into one department would not only create a permanent structure and home for the new Global Studies program, but also strengthen the Geography program. The timing of our request to the Dean in Fall 2007 proved fortuitous. The Geography program now had four full-time faculty members, our student numbers and curriculum were growing, our faculty members were highly productive scholars, and a geographer was already administering the new Global Studies program. The Dean was sympathetic to our needs and saw potential for growth in both Global Studies and Geography. It also helped that in Fall 2007 the university was doing very well; enrollments were up despite more selective entrance requirements, the university had successfully moved toward becoming a more nationally recognized institution, and we were set to host one of the 2008 presidential debates, bringing a great deal of added positive publicity to the University. The process then moved very quickly, and the new department, now called "Global Studies and Geography," was officially approved in Spring 2008, and since then has gained an additional two full-time faculty members.

The new Department has enabled us to spend a lot more time focusing on recruitment and retention of students, and we have redesigned the geography program to make it as easy as possible for Global Studies majors to minor in Geography. We have also made some of our geography courses

requirements for Global Studies majors, thus creating a very positive synergy between the two programs (see Table 1).

Table 1. Geography and Global Studies Majors/Minors, Fall 2008 – Spring 2011

<b>Year</b>	<b>Geography Majors</b>	<b>Geography Minors</b>	<b>Global Studies Majors</b>	<b>Global Studies Minors</b>	<b>Double GS/Geography Majors/Minors</b>	<b>Total</b>
2008 (FALL)	5	2	4	5	0	16
2009 (FALL)	10	6	37	6	2	59
2010 (FALL)	9	10	50	7	11	76
2011 (SPRING)	13	17	57	18	14	105

One of the great advantages of becoming our own Department and gaining faculty was that we also were allocated more teaching sections. This allows us to reach more students, some of whom in turn decide to major or minor in our programs. This illustrates that a failing department creates a self-fulfilling cycle of decline, while a successful department has the opposite effect.

### **The New Economic Realities**

The creation of the new Global Studies and Geography Department in Fall 2008 virtually coincided with the beginning of the economic crisis.<sup>11</sup> Hofstra has so far weathered this crisis better than many other similar institutions, but it has still lost a considerable number of incoming undergraduates and has to offer more financial aid to attract students than was the case in the past.<sup>12</sup> As Kamenetz (2010: 49) notes, “Hofstra happens to be in the worst value-for-money quadrant in higher education: private, yet nonelite.” With lower freshman enrollments, budgets are becoming tighter, forcing departments into greater competition for new majors. While non-tuition driven universities have the freedom to offer any programs that they desire, and state universities should have a duty to provide a very wide array of programs, institutions such as Hofstra do not have that ability or perhaps that mission. When pressed by the University administration, our Department cannot justify our existence by making some “intangible” argument that our discipline(s) is essential for ensuring that students receive a well-rounded education (however true that may be). We cannot simply argue that a knowledge of geography and global studies are essential for producing educated students and good citizens because, in truth, in times of shrinking budgets, we are expendable in a way that the English or Economics or Political Science Departments are not. We can argue that this is not fair, but within the context of a private university, it makes more sense for us to embrace the new realities of higher education. In the language of modern management, we are now a “cost-center,” which must generate a positive return to the University. This is not something that we should necessarily welcome, but it is the reality that we face. This means that we have to generate revenue, and the only way to do that is through a combination of attracting students to the University, bringing in grants, getting donations from alumni or generating majors to justify our salaries.

As demonstrated in the previous sections, it is unlikely that an undergraduate geography program will be able to specifically attract students to a University. Global Studies, however, because of the variety of its offerings, may be able to do so, and this can be a springboard for channeling many more students into the Geography program. This has to some extent already occurred (see Table 1) as more and more Global Studies majors decide to double major with geography. What is already clear is that, for the first time in the history of the Geography program, we really have the opportunity of building a self-sustaining program, and that hopefully over time we will be able to generate more of our own funding. To do so, however, also requires a level of financial support from the University administration. Many geography departments have built highly successful and lucrative GIS programs (both certificate programs and graduate programs), but to build these programs requires a substantial upfront financial commitment with no guarantee of future success. It is likely that if current economic trends continue, students will increasingly seek out academic programs that offer professional training, thus enhancing their future employment opportunities. A GIS Masters Degree or professional diploma should, if marketed correctly, be a very attractive choice for students. It is clear, however, that to generate revenue requires an adequate upfront institutional investment that many universities are not willing to make. A “market-driven” approach cannot be a one-way process,

with departments asked to create new programs while at the same time not getting anything close to the adequate resources needed to make these programs thrive. Further, institutional support has to be provided for a substantial amount of time prior to a program (perhaps) becoming self-sustaining.

Our experience with trying to build an undergraduate GIS program is highly illustrative of the problems faced without a strong institutional commitment. In Fall 1998 we hired a faculty member to create a GIS program (and also to offer courses in transportation and regional geography). Two new GIS course offerings were added to the curriculum but we struggled to develop a GIS program. A problem was that while the university had given us a geography line, they had no real idea of what GIS or any interest in investing in the costs of developing a program. A further frustration for our Department was that the initial GIS course offerings failed to attract many students. Neither of our two courses were (despite much lobbying) made requirements of other programs, nor were the courses eligible to become part of the Hofstra “core (distribution) curriculum.” We thus faced the real possibility that if we offered the courses with any regularity, they might not attract sufficient students to run. Our program’s experience with building an undergraduate GIS program illustrates how hard it is for a faculty member to create a program from scratch while at the same time being responsible for teaching various other courses, conducting research and performing university service. A lesson we learned was that to build a self-sustaining GIS program, you should have at least one faculty member, whose only responsibility is toward building, running and teaching in the GIS program and that you need a substantial university funding commitment to provide lab space, computers and publicity for the new program to succeed. Ironically, the current financial crisis has given us a new opportunity to build a successful GIS program. As part of the 2010 five-year College planning process, we made the case that a GIS graduate program could potentially attract new students and grant money to the College and the University. Given our recent positive track record, the Dean has recommended the establishment of both a masters and certificate program in GIS. Building on our past experience, we are also being allocated a new dedicated faculty line to teach in the program. If the current plans come to fruition, the program should start offering its first courses in Fall 2012.

## **CONCLUSION**

The history of the geography program at Hofstra reveals some interesting lessons about trying to build and run a successful small undergraduate geography program. While some of these lessons and proposed remedies may be institutionally unique, most will be familiar, and have relevance to, anyone who has worked within a small U.S. undergraduate geography program.

Murphy (2007: 128) notes that many programs have been attracting greater numbers of students by, “paying attention to undergraduate education, developing effective mentoring and advising programmes for students, working closely with administrators, creating effective websites, collaborating with programmes sharing similar goals and subject-matter concerns, encouraging faculty to participate actively in the larger campus community, and aligning the department’s mission with that of the larger university.” The Geography Program at Hofstra has taken all of these strategies to heart, and this has in no small measure played a role in our expansion since 2008. From our experience, the following lessons and strategies can be drawn:

- It is very difficult to create a thriving undergraduate program within a very divergent joint department (Economics and Geography). A joint department can only work with a shared focus and programs that allow students to easily share credits between the programs. A traditional discipline (geography), paired with an inter-disciplinary program (global studies) is perfectly suited for this synergistic relationship.
- To grow, a department needs an adequate number of committed faculty members and necessary teaching sections. For much of its history it is clear that the geography program at Hofstra did not have either of the above. The result was that faculty members had to teach far too many diverse courses, while at the same time there were never enough sections to build momentum for growth.
- A successful department also needs a full-time chair that is entirely invested in the actual program that he or she is administering. The chair must also constantly advocate for a program’s interests and engage in program promotion.
- For departments such as geography to thrive, they have to be offered an adequate number of teaching sections, which remains the main tool for attracting majors. Unfortunately, despite universities

constant talk of making their institutions more “market friendly” the current structure of most universities is ill-suited to rapidly respond to economic challenges in a “market-driven” way. This can be illustrated by looking at how teaching sections are allocated to the various programs at Hofstra. At present, the number of teaching sections allocated is based on the number of existing faculty lines, how many sections one had in the past, how many other programs one services and so forth. A department with virtually no majors can thus still command a hefty bounty in the section allocation scramble. Conversely, without positive administrative intervention, it can take years for a growing department to add teaching sections (and by that time, it may no longer be growing).

- If academic departments are viewed as needing to justify their keep, then they should also be “rewarded” for attracting majors and empowered to become more competitive (such as more flexibility to rapidly create new courses, setting their own upper enrollment limits for classes, more control over budgets and so forth). It seems, however, that when the fiscal position of universities worsens, the natural administrative tendency is toward centralization and less flexibility for departments.<sup>13</sup>
- When faced with a fiscal crisis where departments compete for diminishing university resources, all faculty members need to take ownership of a program and work tirelessly at promoting the program. It is not enough for faculty to simply come in to teach a few days a week and then spend the rest of their time at home doing research. Faculty have to be actively involved in program building, which takes a much greater level of commitment than many faculty members have been used to in the past. This is hard and often unrecognized work. New faculty do not get credit toward tenure because they recruited students, and they don’t receive extra salary because they spent long hours advising students. But this is the only way to keep a department growing, and the rapport that you build with the students now will eventually be paid back when they become your supportive alumni.
- For long term success, departments must provide graduates with a sense of pride in their old department, part of which is to create a sense of shared identity and history. It is also necessary to maintain access to your alumni, which can be difficult at Hofstra as the Alumni Office guards contact information and prefers that all fundraising and outreach be directed through their office. This is problematic as many alumni of small departments have often developed a closer connection to their old Department than to the University, making them more open to giving financial and other contributions to the former rather than the latter. The centralized fund raising model thus potentially misses donors which individual departments could reach. Some strategies that we have introduced since 2008 to cater to the needs of our majors and reach out to alumni, are; creating a Facebook page which enables us to make direct contact with alumni,<sup>14</sup> trying to employ our majors whenever we have openings for student aides to work in the Department, helping to find them internships, working with majors to find study-abroad opportunities, and encouraging them to use our available office space as a communal work and meeting place. We have also worked with the students to help them form a Global Studies and Geography Club.

This paper has shown that geography at Hofstra has gone through some very challenging periods, but has always managed to remain as part of the Hofstra curriculum. It has survived being shuffled between departments; it survived when it only had one faculty member; it came back from the brink of extinction in 1958; and it is now for reasons outlined in the paper, despite the fiscal crisis, in better shape than at any time in its history. It is possible, with the correct combination of hard-work, strategic planning, and no small measure of luck<sup>15</sup>, for small geography programs to not only survive, but also to grow.

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<sup>1</sup> The author thanks Adrienne Gillespie who conducted much of the research into the history of the Department (including interviews with past faculty members and administrators). A full history of the program that includes this research can be found at: [http://www.hofstra.edu/pdf/Academics/Colleges/HCLAS/GEOG/geog\\_final.pdf](http://www.hofstra.edu/pdf/Academics/Colleges/HCLAS/GEOG/geog_final.pdf). All opinions expressed in this paper are those of the author and do not reflect the official position of either the Department of Global Studies and Geography or Hofstra University.

<sup>2</sup> For a more detailed breakdown, by degree awarded, see Pandit, 2004: 13.

<sup>3</sup> The 2002 Survey polled more than 3,000 18- to 24-year-olds in Canada, France, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Sweden and the United States. Sweden scored highest; Mexico, lowest.

<sup>4</sup> Murphy 2007, p.136 and

[http://apcentral.collegeboard.com/apc/public/repository/ap09\\_HumGeoGradeDistributions.pdf](http://apcentral.collegeboard.com/apc/public/repository/ap09_HumGeoGradeDistributions.pdf).

<sup>5</sup> See for example, Krugman (<http://krugman.blogs.nytimes.com/2008/02/20/fashion-and-geography/>) and Brooks ([http://www.nytimes.com/2005/08/10/opinion/11brooks\\_done.html](http://www.nytimes.com/2005/08/10/opinion/11brooks_done.html)).

<sup>6</sup> Murphy (2007: 127) counts 16 new geography degree programs established between 1995 and 2005.

<sup>7</sup> Hofstra was established in 1935. The geography major was created some time between 1958 and 1960, as the first recorded BA geography graduates are in 1962.

<sup>8</sup> The teaching load was altered in 1992 from a four-four to a three-three load. This allowed the university to become a much more attractive destination for research oriented faculty.

<sup>9</sup> In Spring 2010 semester, the geography program offered 14 courses on load, with a total enrollment of 335 students. The Department also offered 6 Global Studies classes with an enrollment of 182 students (enrollment for 11 of the classes were capped at a maximum of 35 students per class; the GIS class was capped at 25, and two were first-year seminars capped at 15 students).

<sup>10</sup> To illustrate the current growth of the Department, in the 2010-11 academic year, it is projected that 8 majors will graduate with a Geography degree, and a further 9 with a Global Studies degree.

<sup>11</sup> See Selinger, 2009.

<sup>12</sup> The full-time, entering undergraduate class fell from approximately 1,650 students in September 2008 to 1,450 in September 2010.

<sup>13</sup> It is crucial that departments have clear goals and objectives and that these are assessed at least annually.

<sup>14</sup> [www.facebook.com/home.php?ref=logo#!/group.php?gid=20914446655](http://www.facebook.com/home.php?ref=logo#!/group.php?gid=20914446655).



<sup>15</sup> We were lucky to ask for the creation of a new Department prior to the 2008 economic crash and to gain control of Global Studies at a time of increasing student awareness of globalization.