

## Faculty Report Template

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Faculty/Rank: Professor

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Proposal title: Collaborative US-European Program in Geographic Information Science

Country/ies visited: Germany, Greece

Institution visited: University of Muenster, Association Geographic Information System Laboratories Europe (AGILE).

Dates of travel: April 20 – May 8

Previous IP proposals submitted and grants awarded  
(list titles, countries and dates): None

Have all required reports been submitted? Yes

Proposal Abstract (75 word maximum):

A trip to Heraklion/Greece and Muenster/Germany, will be taken during 2003/04. In Heraklion the PI will meet with partners from the European Community to discuss a framework for student and faculty exchanges in Geographic Information Science. In Muenster the PI will work with German colleagues to discuss the details of exchange program between SDSU and the University of Muenster.

## **Travel report:**

### **I. Opening/overview of intentions/activity**

Geographic Information Science (GIScience) is a new area of study and research that has attracted attention in the US and overseas, in particular in Europe. Since the contents of academic programs in GIScience overlap only partially and the expertise is distributed among the academic institutions in the US and Europe, exchanges of students and researchers can benefit both SDSU and our European partners. SDSU and the University of Muenster have been the recognized leaders in GIScience education in their respective countries. Hence, the motivation for creating an exchange program in GIScience between SDSU and the University of Muenster.

### **II. In preparation for the trip abroad**

- collaborated with Christoph Brox broxc@uni-muenster.de and Prof. Werner Kuhn kuhn@uni-muenster.de
- researched university statistics and compared to SDSU; there are approximately 44,000 students at the University of Muenster. The program in Geoinformatics has approximately 60 undergraduate and 60 graduate students, which makes it comparable with the number of graduate students in Geography at SDSU.
- The University of Muenster is the 3<sup>rd</sup> largest university in Germany and it is recognized by the German Ministry of Education as one of the leading institutions of higher learning.

### **III. Upon arrival/specific activity**

Visits in Greece and Germany resulted in meetings with colleagues from various AGILE member institutions, the comparison of teaching curricula in GIScience, and the identification of exchange categories that would benefit the future partners. Meetings with colleagues from the University of Muenster resulted in clarifying the details of the exchange between SDSU and the University of Muenster in the area of GIScience/Geoinformatics and putting the exchange program on track to start in September 2004. We expect the first students from SDSU to go to Muenster in April of 2005 and the first students from the University of Muenster to visit SDSU in the fall of 2005.

### **IV. Conclusion, recommendation, and next step?**

- Why is this particular institution valuable for SDSU?

The University of Muenster is well regarded in Germany and in Europe. Its program in Geoinformatics is one of the strongest in Germany and in Europe. The fact that both programs are compatible but courses and research projects at the University of Muenster do not

overlap with ours (SDSU-Geography) makes the exchange program attractive for both sides. It also provides a solid foundation for making the exchange sustainable.

- How will this exchange program (or expansion) increase participation by students in international activities, or enhance international learning environments for students?

The exchange program will allow students from SDSU to study and research for one or two semesters at a leading German institution of higher learning. Because the University of Muenster maintains strong ties with a number of foreign universities and the Institute for Geoinformatics is particularly active in foreign exchanges, students from SDSU will have an opportunity to study, research and interact with students and researchers from various countries.

- What will be their activities (e.g. course work, international internships, field research, etc.)?

SDSU students will have an opportunity to take 2-3 courses each semester taught in English and/or participate in research projects conducted at the Institute for Geoinformatics. Those students who have sufficient German language skills will have an opportunity to participate in a number of additional courses taught in German and to take part in weekly research colloquia.

- What will be your role in promoting and supporting these activities?

I will be the point of contact for both SDSU students going to Muenster and Muenster students coming to SDSU. I will promote the program each semester, advise the students on educational opportunities made possible thanks to the exchange, and collaborate with my counterpart at the University of Muenster – Mr. Christoph Brox on the logistical details of the exchange.