

**SOUTH DAKOTA BOARD OF REGENTS
ACADEMIC AFFAIRS FORMS**

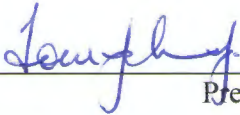
**Institutional Program Review
Report to the Board of Regents**

Use this form to submit a program review report to the system Chief Academic Officer. Complete this form for all units/programs undergoing an accreditation review, nationally recognized review process, or institutional program review. The report is due 30 days following receipt of the external and internal review reports.

UNIVERSITY:	BHSU
DEPARTMENT OR SCHOOL:	School of Natural Sciences
PROGRAM REVIEWED:	Environmental Physical Science
DATE OF REVIEW:	6/16/2017
TYPE OF REVIEW:	Institutional Program Review

University Approval

To the Board of Regents and the Executive Director: I certify that I have read this report, that I believe it to be accurate, and that it has been evaluated and approved as provided by university policy.



President of the University

9/22/2017

Date

1. Identify the program reviewers and any external accrediting body:

Reviewer: Brooke Wilborn Haiar, Ph.D.

No accrediting body

2. Items A & B should address the following issues: mission centrality, program quality, cost, program productivity, plans for the future, and assessment of progress.

2(A). Describe the strengths and weaknesses identified by the reviewers

The evaluator noted the rigor of the program (especially with the faculty limitations) as an important strength of the Environmental Physical Science (EPS) major, which also aligns with the University's mission and vision. Furthermore, the evaluator remarked on the fact that for a single-faculty program the fact that EPS graduates 5 majors a year should be commended. Many of our graduates are working in a field related to the program and this also attests to the high quality of the program (I will personally add that I am informed of jobs often after all my graduates are already employed, and many students not employed in the field have chosen not to be employed in geology or environmental science).

Upcoming changes to the EPS program were also mentioned as positive changes that would like aid in retention of our majors too. Overall, the evaluator states “The obvious strength of this department rests entirely with the sole faculty member in it.”

The main weakness of the program was overwhelmingly the fact that one main faculty (myself, Dr. Domagall) is responsible for the bulk of the instruction, the advising, and any curriculum modification and planning. It is the belief of the evaluator that great changes to this program cannot realistically be made without an increase in faculty dedicated to this major. The evaluator also noted that the demands on the main faculty inhibit said faculty from being available to work on more research, thus making it hard to remain relevant in the educator’s main area of research. It was noted that this is actively NOT in alignment with the University’s vision to lead the region in undergraduate research.

2(B). Briefly summarize the review recommendations

The external evaluator had one clear and main recommendation: hire another faculty member. While the evaluator stated that planned actions suggested in the EPS program review were worthwhile (for example, curriculum mapping the major), she believes the main faculty responsible for the major is already stretched to the maximum and therefore this would be best left until another hire was made. Additionally, she suggested that perhaps the Recruitment and Retention advisor could take over more of the advising to free up Dr. Domagall a little.

2(C). Indicate the present and continuous actions to be taken by the college or department to address the issues raised by the review. What outcomes are anticipated as a result of these actions?

The need for more faculty to assist with the EPS program has been an ongoing concern and frustration, and I agree that, truthfully, no major changes or improvements can really be expected without some change here.

Changes have already been made to the EPS program starting Fall 2017, designed to better serve students specifically interested in the environmental or sustainability side of the program without significantly decreasing the rigor of the program. Hopefully, this should aid in increasing recruitment and retention in the major.

Despite the evaluator suggesting we hold off on writing a strategic plan and curriculum mapping the major until a further hire is made, I will likely at least start on such planning anyway.

Otherwise, I will continue as I have and hope to continue graduating wonderful and successful students.



June 16, 2017

Dr. Abigail Domagall
Department of Environmental Physical Science
Black Hills State University
1200 University Street, Unit 9008
Spearfish, SD 57799

Dear Dr. Domagall:

I am writing in response to your request for an outside review of your program review for the Department of Environmental Physical Science at Black Hills State University. I have carefully examined the very detailed report you have provided and I am able to evaluate all of the areas required by the University, as well as comment on the strengths and weaknesses of the program and provide recommendations.

Firstly, you are to be commended for running a rigorous multi-disciplinary major with only one faculty member and almost no logistical support. The courses and curriculum for the major and minor align with the University's mission and vision statements. The program is of a particularly high quality considering the limitations placed on you. According to the program review, you are able to run 8 courses, advise between 30 and 40 students, conduct field research, present at conferences, and handle all the logistics of department chair, all with a yearly budget of approximately \$800, after paying for the ArcGIS software that is required by all. That is extraordinary. The program is remarkably productive given the limitations placed on you, graduating on average 5 students a year, which is in line with the goals laid out by the University. A majority of these graduates are employed in the field, which speaks to the rigor and strength of the major. The program review outlines several plans for the future which will allow more flexibility for your majors and relieve some of the pressure on the overenrolled courses you teach. For example, allowing students the choice to take a year of Biology will surely increase the number of students in your major, and I would expect it to help with retention. The same is true of allowing different types of math electives. You also suggest you might expand the major or allow electives in other departments to count for your major. I think this is a very good idea and would encourage it, especially as it applies to the sustainability graduate degree courses. The current plan to make a curriculum map of the major, and to update the department's strategic plan, is an excellent way to start a revamp of the program. However, I would suggest that this is unnecessary until another faculty member with a different area of research is hired.

The obvious strength of this department rests entirely with the sole faculty member in it. The dedication to students, the desire to improve the pedagogical experience while at the school, and the continued effort to improve the department, school, and university, is extraordinary. But your efforts cannot be expanded any further without causing a detriment to the students. There is literally not enough time in the day.

The University must hire another faculty member for this department to grow any further. The current faculty is stretched to the absolute maximum. The workload on her is already causing a decline in her ability to conduct research and stay relevant in her field. The University's vision statement is to lead the region in undergraduate research. This is impossible without hiring another faculty member. This would benefit the students immensely. It would allow them to gain knowledge from someone with another skill set, give them the benefit of a deeper pedagogical experience, and allow the University to capitalize on the part of the mission to increase awareness of sustainability in its students. Some smaller recommendations, to work in conjunction with the new hire, would be to require students to either conduct research (outside of the Field Methods course) or an internship as part of their major. This would allow them the opportunity to gain real life experience whether they plan on going to graduate school or head directly into the workforce. I would also recommend that the Retention and Recruitment Specialist take over a larger part of the advising for the major. That could be either taking half of the majors through to graduation, or having her advise them the first two years before they are taking exclusively upper-level courses.

In conclusion, Dr. Domagall, you are running an excellent department, major, and minor. There is little more you can do at this point until steps are made to hire another faculty member. This will allow a greater breadth of knowledge for your students and allow you to increase the opportunities for faculty-student research collaborations.

Sincerely,

Brooke Haiar