



CENTRAL OREGON
community college

2600 NW College Way
Bend, Oregon 97701
Telephone 541.383.7700
www.cocc.edu

June 9, 2026

Geographic Information Systems
Central Oregon Community College

Dear Pat:

Thank you for taking part in Department & Program Review (DPR) this year. The DPR process reveals critical connections that link your strengths, needs, values, priorities, and plans to those of the College. Further, it supports our commitment to innovation through continual improvement. We commend your dedication to empowering our students, engaging our communities, and supporting our values.

Successes

The Geographic Information Systems (GIS) program has achieved significant growth and alignment with both industry standards and student needs over the past several years. The launch of a new AS degree has strengthened transfer pathways, particularly through alignment with Oregon State University, while curriculum revisions have ensured that student learning outcomes reflect recognized frameworks in the field. The program has made meaningful strides in diversity, with female and BILAPOC students now enrolled in numbers more reflective of Central Oregon demographics and the evolving demographics of the GIS profession. You have made notable strides in expanding access to a variety of students as well. Your collaboration with Summit and Redmond High schools to align AP Human Geography through College Now helps build a stronger pipeline of future students, and the program's model of late-day classes continues to serve working professionals seeking to enter or advance in the field.

Equally important has been the program's commitment to student success beyond the classroom. You have developed internship opportunities that ensure students graduate with real industry experience, supported by scholarships through S-STEM and other grants so that these internships are paid. Part-time faculty who are actively recruited from professional practice in GIS bring current industry perspective into the curriculum and ensure that your students have skills that meet the needs of employers. The program has also prioritized access to technology by working with the library to provide loaner laptops with appropriate software, though planning for the eventual replacement of this equipment as it reaches end of life will be an important next step.

Challenges

The GIS program faces several challenges: these include preparing students for a rapidly evolving profession; fluctuating enrollments, especially at branch campuses; and managing the program's evolution and growth with only one full-time faculty member. By requiring an internship for all degree-seeking GIS students, the program addresses the need for industry experience and is considering extending this internship requirement to students pursuing a certificate of completion, with the caveat that providing financial support for those students may be difficult. Regarding unpredictable enrollment, the program has advocated for 200-level courses to run at least once per year so students can finish their program in a timely manner and for introductory GIS courses to be offered despite low enrollment on branch campuses. The proposed change to the minimum enrollment threshold (to 3 students) should help with these efforts, as well as the anticipated growth of the Madras campus. With only one full-time faculty member, who also serves as the program director, the program has

been relying on part-time faculty, and the ability of the program to evolve has been limited. Perhaps an adjunct faculty position with both teaching and administrative responsibilities could address this challenge. In the DPR, it was noted that the BILAPOC student success rate is lower than the non-BILAPOC student success rate and that challenges remain in supporting students aged 19 and under. In our discussion, it was clear that the GIS program remains committed to monitoring student success rates and seeking solutions.

Goals and needs

You have developed three specific goals, and we appreciate how you have mapped out a year-by-year approach to achieving these.

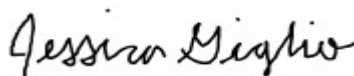
- **Expand internships in the GIS programs. Build on the success of the required internship for AAS GIS students by requiring internships for GIS Certificate students as well. Explore methods by which transfer students in the AS Geospatial Science program can gain project-based GIS industry work experience.** One of your goals in the next five years is to expand internship and industry work experience opportunities, particularly for transfer students. Achieving this goal will require a candid conversation with the dean about capacity, as current faculty load is already stretched. Adding load units would mean the program director would need to teach less, increasing the need for part-time faculty. As you have noted, the ideal candidates are professionals actively working full time in the field, so finding a person with sufficient time and capacity may prove challenging.
- **Integrate UAS and GIS across our disciplines, building on the strengths of the GIS and UAS programs.** A second goal involves the integration of UAS into the GIS program—a timely goal, given ongoing internal discussions about moving UAS under the GIS program. You have already begun conversations with the aviation program director, and we encourage you to work with your dean to discuss the budget and capital requirements that such a transition would entail.
- **Prepare GIS students for the workforce where Artificial Intelligence is becoming increasingly important.** Your third goal has identified AI preparedness as a priority specifically with an eye to how you might call upon the expertise of your advisory board partners, part-time faculty working in industry, and a speaker series to inform the program's approach to AI in the classroom. We agree with these strategies and encourage exploration of low-cost and free AI tools and materials as an accessible starting point.

Thank you for your ongoing dedication to student learning. Together, we can build on our achievements, address the challenges ahead, and meet the evolving needs of our students. If you have any questions or need further clarification, please reach out. We look forward to working collaboratively to enhance the quality and impact of the GIS program.

Sincerely yours,



Annemarie E. Hamlin
Vice President of Academic Affairs



Jessica Giglio
Instructional Dean



Gabrielle Orsi
Assessment and Curriculum
Administrator