

BUDGET NEEDS ASSESSMENT APPLICATION

Name of Person Submitting Request:	Vanessa Engstrom
Program or Service Area:	Geography and GIS
Division:	Science- Division Ranking #4
Date of Last Program Efficacy:	Fall 2011
What rating was given?	Continuation
Amount Requested:	Additional \$1500 for 5611 Account (Bus Rental)
Strategic Initiatives Addressed:	Access and Student Success

1. Provide a rationale for your request.

At present, the Geography and GIS Program (4671) account has a total of \$2878 within the bus rental category (5611). Unfortunately, this funding is insufficient to support more than two full-day bus field trip(s) during each academic year. This means that the budget dictates course content, at least in terms of site visits. Geographical concepts are best experienced in the field and therefore site visits (field trips) are an integral component of these courses. Many field sites are some distance from the SBVC campus and cannot be easily accessed by students, especially those without reliable transportation (including students who regularly utilize public transportation). Please refer to the discussion of “San Bernardino Area Family Income Levels” within the EMP (Table 9, p. 13). Aside from car pool transportation, college-sponsored buses are the most financially feasible, effective, and safe means to conveying students from the SBVC campus to particular sites of physical and cultural interest.

2. Indicate how the content of the latest Program Efficacy Report and/or most current EIS data support this request. How is the request tied to program planning? (*Reference the page number(s) where the information can be found on Program Efficacy.*)

As stated in the Geography Challenges (page 6 of the Program Efficacy report), we see the benefit in expanding our field based courses. Having funds to incorporate a site visit into a variety of courses (such as Physical Geography Lab, Cultural Geography, and World Geography), would provide a better experience for our students. This facilitates student access and success not only at our institution but also for those students who endeavor to transfer to a four-year institution. If our students are equipped with field research skills, they are better prepared for success within their transfer institution, regardless of their declared degree program.

The Geography Department has served a large number of students during the past six academic years, ranging from 952 to 1,183 students (EMP one-sheet, 2012). Unfortunately, current funding levels prevent most geography students from participating in enriching field trips.

3. Indicate if there is additional information you wish the committee to consider (*for example: regulatory information, compliance, updated efficiency and/or student success data or planning etc*).

Bus rental prices have been on the rise due to increased fuel costs. For the Fall 2012 semester it costs \$1050 for a full day 55-person bus. Currently, this means we can fund only one field trip

per semester. To maximize the number of students benefitting from this funding, we have selected multiple sections of our Physical Geography Lab class. Typically, the department offers five Physical Geography Lab sections per semester, for a total of 125 students (25 students per section). This means that not all lab students will have the opportunity to benefit from an institution-sponsored bus field trip. In addition, students enrolled in other geography courses, including Cultural, World Regional, Weather and Climate, and Environmental classes will not benefit from site visits at current funding levels.

4. Evaluation of initial cost, as well as related costs (including any ongoing maintenance or updates) and identification of any alternative or ongoing funding sources (for example Department Budget, VTEA or Perkins).

At present, the Geography-GIS program has a small annual budget. The budget allotted for bus rentals is insufficient to fund more than two all-day field trips (for an entire academic year). Therefore, it may become necessary to transfer remaining instructional supply funds, as well as apply for other public and private funding sources.

5. What are the consequences of not funding this budget request?

The vast majority of community college and four-year university Geography programs incorporate field trips into their courses. Indeed, this is the preferred method by which students may integrate classroom and textbook concepts and theories (secondary data) with real-world processes (primary field data). If our students are deprived of the hands-on, field component of Geography courses, then they are less prepared to transfer to four-year universities and less likely to succeed in science-related disciplines and careers (refer to EMP, Table 6, p. 12), including education, government, and professional and technical services (refer to EMP, Tables 13 and 14, pp. 95-96).

We cannot rely on “caravan” field trips, where students provide their own transportation for two primary reasons. First, many of our students do not own an automobile and must rely on public transportation. Even those who own a car may be unable to afford fuel and other costs associated with a field excursion. Second, bus-sponsored field trips include hiring a professional driver. This vastly increases the safety factor of each field trip and reduces the potential for accidents and injuries.