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REVISION APPROVAL COVER SHEET FOR CONTINUATION OF W-DESIGNATION

TYPE I PROFESSOR COMMITMENT

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Please provide answers to these questions on the next page:

1. List up to three of the W courses that you have taught since your appointment as a Type I professor.
2. Using your most recent W course, discuss what the writing activities are intended to accomplish. You do not need to describe the amount of writing, frequency of assignments or fill out the summary chart for writing assignments.

Approvals:	Signature	Date
Professor (s)	Gail Sechrist	3/20/14
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Liberal Studies

TYPE I PROFESSOR COMMITMENT

PROFESSOR Dr. Gail S. Sechrist

DEPARTMENT Geography & Reg. Planning

List up to three of the W courses that you have taught since your appointment as a Type I professor.

- 1) GEOG 230 Cultural Geography
- 2) GEOG 411 History of Geography

Using your most recent W course, discuss what the writing activities are intended to accomplish. You do not need to describe the amount of writing, frequency of assignments or fill out the summary chart for writing assignments.

GEOG 230 Cultural Geography is organized by five themes (Culture Regions, Cultural Diffusion, Cultural Ecology, Cultural Interaction, and Cultural Landscape) introduced in the textbook and in class. About half the writing assignments address one or more of the five themes. For example, in the bagel assignment students are assigned two articles from The New York Times that address the history and growth of the bagel. Students use this information to identify the five types of cultural diffusion (the spread outward of an idea or innovation). Most students easily find examples from the articles that illustrate how diffusion takes place, and many are surprised how an ordinary food item can relate to a geographic class theme. The Cultural Landscape theme shows how human built features on the earth's surface reflect a culture's values. The students watch a video or read an article examining cultural landscapes. Each then writes an essay reflecting on how landscapes represent what our culture values. At the end of the video the narrator says that understanding cultural landscapes is largely a matter of learning how to see. Many students are able to make insightful observations about how the built landscape reflects our culture's values and ideals others just repeat the opinions of the expert in the video or article.

Alternately some of the assignments deal with the topic covered verses the over arching course themes. While studying language, the students watch a video about the wide spread use of English internationally; then they write a short essay about why the world needs a lingua franca (a second language) and how English become the lingua franca. Later with agriculture students are asked to find articles about genetic engineering and to decide whether they are for it or against it and why. This essay assignment is accompanied by an online discussion of the pros and cons of genetic engineering. In the family migration assignment students write about the movement of their own family, which allows them to apply the information learned in class about migration movements to their own family's history.

The longest paper in the class is a five page paper on the Liberal Studies required second book: The Power of Place: Geography, Destiny, and Globalization's Rough Landscape. The students are asked to identify examples of the five themes from the book to illustrate their understanding of the five themes and the concept of globalization. Lastly, the final exam has a 20 point essay question where the students define each of the themes of the course, provide two examples, and show how the examples relate to the theme.

Students in the class fall into three groups: 1) those taking the course because it is a Liberal Studies Elective, 2) Geography majors for whom it is a required core class, and 3) Social Studies Education or International Studies majors for whom it is a required class. Each semester I teach a writing intensive section and a nonwriting intensive section (most of the geography majors are in the nonwriting intensive section). In the summer I try to offer both a writing and nonwriting option for students. There are 100 additional points of writing assignments in the writing section verses **+**

the nonwriting section. Several of the writing assignments are also in the non-writing intensive section because of the value they have for understanding the theme or topic. For all students, writing is used as a tool to increase their understanding of the five themes and the aspects of culture covered during the semester. Besides the one and two page papers, students write opinion paragraphs, postings, short exercises and exam questions allowing students to express themselves with writing.