

## Diversity Initiatives Mini-Grant Application

Submitted by the Graduate Geography Student Association (GGSA). The following individuals were involved in writing the proposal: Tyler Mitchell, Jesse Lane, Avery Catherwood, and Mary Harward

### Project Overview

Within the discipline of Geography there has been an emphasis on diversity, although primarily at the higher education level (Monk, 2017). The foci of much of the previous research pertains to diversity “most commonly dealing with “race,” ethnicity, and gender, but also with national and immigrant origins and status, (dis)abilities, sexualities, indigeneity, and social class” (Monk, 2017, p. 1). However, geography at the K-12 level has not received much attention. In fact, geography is not taught as a standalone course in the North Carolina K-12 social studies curriculum (North Carolina Course of Study: Social Studies, 2020), hence such limited geographic knowledge amongst graduating seniors across various groups (Richmond, 2015; *A Study of Young People’s Geographical Knowledge*, 2016).

To promote inclusion in the field of geography and at the university at-large, we propose an event where undergraduate and graduate students, and faculty of the department of Geography, Environment, and Sustainability would host a semester event for local K-12 school children using National Geographic’s South America Giant Map (information available online at: <https://www.nationalgeographic.org/education/giant-maps/>). The Giant Map includes lesson plans for all K-12 age groups and gives students the opportunity to learn geographic principles in a fun and interesting way. This program would improve access to geographical education in school children of all ages, genders, ethnicities, races, and income groups.

This is an excellent opportunity to bring the world to local schools around the area. Often primary and middle school students in disparate communities around the Piedmont Triad do not have the opportunity to explore other regions. The Giant Map is an excellent opportunity for the University of North Carolina at Greensboro to perform outreach in local schools and provide necessary education on physical geography, political geography, demography, and basic map reading schools in a fun and engaging format. The Giant Map has dimensions of 20’ x 26’, which allows students to walk, crawl, and roll around the map, and all lesson materials are available for print online.

In 2013, the University of North Alabama (UNA) participated in the Giant Map program (see **Fig. 1**). During this period, National Geographic rented the map for a limited time and provided a trunk full of activities. UNA arranged the logistics between schools across Alabama and provided additional instructional support when needed. Several schools opted for the instructional support and UNA sent a graduate student (Jesse Lane) to work with children at these elementary schools. Several lesson plans were used, depending on the age group. Students learned about the field of geography, how to read maps, how to measure distances, how to interpret population densities, and much more. Many of these students and schools were in minority and underserved communities. This event provided a valuable service for the local community, provided an opportunity for children to discover other cultures and promoted the field of geography.



**Fig. 1** Students at Highlands Elementary School in Huntsville, AL using mapping tools to measure climate zones in Africa in 2013.

### **Target audience and implementation plan**

This program is directed primarily toward primary aged children (K-8), however, activities are viable for secondary school children as well. While the Giant Map is an activity designed for K-12 students, it is also an opportunity for Undergraduate and Graduate students to apply their knowledge of geographic principles in an educational setting. Past experiences by participants have suggested that students who rarely travel benefit the most from this type of activity, which is especially true for students in minority communities and students under the poverty line. The Giant Map allows students to learn about the global community in a way that is engaging and fun.

To implement this activity, organizers will work with Dr. Jay Lennartson and the Geography Club (an organization of undergraduate students interested in the discipline of geography). Members of the Geography Graduate Student Association (GGSA) will collaborate with Geography Club members to design activities based on the student population participating in each lesson. Other departments will be contacted to promote cross-discipline collaboration. Prior to creating each lesson, a database of local schools and specific age groups will be created, and each school administrator will be contacted to discuss inclusion in the activities. Once administrators respond, dates are organized, and age groups are determined, organizers will structure lessons toward the target audience. Each activity will take place on UNCG's campus (preferably the EUC) and the proper paperwork will be filed with the CAP office to ensure early reservations. Once lesson plans are developed, documents will be distributed to the teachers and administrators from the school involved in the activity.

Each activity will provide an avenue for graduate students to mentor undergraduates on the discipline of geography and community engagement. UNCG graduates and undergraduates will benefit from actively applying their knowledge within an educational framework and grade school students will benefit from an expanded knowledge of global cultures, peoples, and physical landscapes. The Giant Map is an excellent opportunity for students to build relationships with faculty members and departments to work across disciplines. By actively engaging with the local student population in Greensboro, UNCG and the departments involved can promote the values of UNCG and build an inclusive relationship with the community at-large.

Understanding current COVID-19 regulations on UNCG's campus, activities associated with the Giant Map would be limited and would need to be implemented once meeting group sizes are expanded. This activity requires a large auditorium and is intended for a large audience (between 20 and 40 students), therefore it would be difficult to implement under current university guidelines. However, this would be an on-going activity that would be organized each semester with different schools across the region. Understanding the current predicament, we would take the utmost care for the health of those involved and would implement strict guidelines when necessary for the safety of the students.

### **Assessment mechanisms**

Surveys that measure the effectiveness of the proposed activity will be dispersed after the completion of each event to the following groups involved: primary school teachers, undergraduate students, graduate students, and faculty members. A Likert Scale will be used to evaluate changes in satisfaction scale so that adjustments can be made after each event. The Likert Scale is a common method used in surveys that ask respondents to rank answers on a scale of strongly disagree to strongly agree. This allows surveyors to analyze qualitative data in a quantitative fashion. Survey results will help evaluate the effectiveness of the activity and increase the effectiveness in each successive event.

### **Estimated total budget, funding request and justification**

The current estimated cost of the Giant Map and materials needed for the events amounts to \$1,663.53 (see **Table 1**). This includes the South America Giant Map, a briefcase to store educational materials, and lamination costs for 13 full-page lessons and 42 double-sided activity cards. We are requesting the maximum amount of \$1000 awarded for Diversity Initiatives Mini-Grant proposals to cover the majority of expenses directly associated with the Giant Map. The Department of Geography, Environment, and Sustainability, care of Department Chair Corey Johnson, has agreed to offset the costs not covered by this

grant (an additional \$700). With the combined total of \$1,700, we will be able to purchase the map and laminate materials necessary for each educational event. If awarded, these funds will be used appropriately and, to ensure transparency, all receipts will be turned over upon request.

**Table 1**

Budget for all materials necessary for the Giant Map project.

Product	Price Per	Total Price
S. America Giant Map	\$1,550.00	\$1,550.00
Briefcase	\$35.16	\$35.16
Laminate 13 Lessons	\$1.99	\$25.87
Laminate 42 double-sided cards	\$1.25	\$52.50
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$1,663.53</b>

- South America Giant Map Cost: [https://media.nationalgeographic.org/assets/file/GTM\\_Price\\_Sheet\\_8.20.20.pdf](https://media.nationalgeographic.org/assets/file/GTM_Price_Sheet_8.20.20.pdf)
- Briefcase Costs: [https://www.amazon.com/RoadPro-SPC-931R-Silver-Aluminum-Briefcase/dp/B001DEPOLC/ref=sr\\_1\\_8?crid=345Z1GJ5KCT5Y&dchild=1&keywords=hard+briefcase&qid=1601648437&srefix=hard+breif%2Caps%2C144&sr=8-8](https://www.amazon.com/RoadPro-SPC-931R-Silver-Aluminum-Briefcase/dp/B001DEPOLC/ref=sr_1_8?crid=345Z1GJ5KCT5Y&dchild=1&keywords=hard+briefcase&qid=1601648437&srefix=hard+breif%2Caps%2C144&sr=8-8)
- Lamination Costs: [https://www.allaboutlaminators.com/Laminator\\_Service.php](https://www.allaboutlaminators.com/Laminator_Service.php)

## References

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