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**Program Request
Utah State University
MA and MS in Geography**

Section I: Request

The Department of Environment and Society proposes to eliminate the Master of Arts degree in Geography as well as the six specializations within the Master of Science degree in Geography:

- Climatology/Climatic Change/Atmospheric Modeling;
- Geographic/Environmental Education;
- Physical Geography/Ecology;
- Remote Sensing/Geographic Information Systems/Automated Cartography;
- River Processes/Fluvial Geomorphology;
- Rural Development/Land Use Planning/Land Use Analysis.

Section II: Need

The MA in Geography was created when the program was administered within the History Department in what was then the College of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences, and the degree's structure and purpose reflected the academic culture of that College. When the program and faculty moved to the College of Natural Resources more than 20 years ago, the MA was retained as an option for students who wished to market themselves for social science or humanities positions. However, it has been many years since a graduate student pursued the MA, as the MS in Geography fits better with the faculty makeup and academic approach in the College of Natural Resources.

While the MS program has continued to thrive in the years since geography moved to Natural Resources – first in the Department of Geography and Earth Resources and since 2002 in the Department of Environment and Society – the program and its faculty have continued to evolve. The specializations reflect the interests of the faculty of Geography and Earth Resources upon its establishment. None of those individuals now teaches or directs graduate students in Environment and Society, the interests of current faculty do not match the specialization structure, and many of the required courses no longer exist. Accordingly, no student has earned an MS degree *within a specialization* in the past five years. To better reflect current capacities, and to underscore the flexibility that today's students need, the department proposes to offer the MS in Geography without specializations.

Section III: Institutional Impact

No student has completed the MA in Geography since the Environment and Society Department was established, and it has been at least five years since an MS with specialization has been completed. Thus there is no impact on current students. On the contrary, eliminating the specializations may increase the ability to attract students as it will underscore the flexibility of the program and eliminate any impression that the department *only* has expertise in the areas of specialization. No change in staffing, course offerings, or administrative structures will result from these changes.

Section IV: Finances

No financial impacts are anticipated from this proposal, as neither the MA nor the MS specializations are currently used by students.