1. Assessment information collected

1. Comprehensive examinations
2. Audience evaluations of oral thesis defense, with rankings on a scale of 1-5 (1 being excellent, 5 being poor)
3. Review of graduate theses by Program Head (rankings: Acceptable, Good, Very good, Outstanding)
4. Presentations and publications by graduates
5. First employment of graduates
6. Exit interview questionnaires collected from graduates to assess satisfaction with program and educational outcomes (rankings: not satisfied, mostly satisfied, very satisfied)

2. Conclusions drawn from the information summarized above

Two students took their qualifying exams for the first time during this time period. One passed on the first attempt. The other failed initially, retook portions of the exam for a conditional pass, and then performed additional revisions for pass.

Five students defended dissertations for graduation during this period; however, audience evaluations were only filled out for two students. Three of the students were based outside Fairbanks and delivered their defenses via VCON to Fairbanks, and this may have been the reason they did not return evaluation forms. Remote students and advisors should in future be reminded to submit evaluation forms. Evaluations for the defenses that were reviewed resulted in average scores of 1.27 and 1.67.

Program head evaluations of written dissertations ranged from good to outstanding, with most comments having to do with editorial issues that affected clarity of writing. Overall, students displayed good writing skills, use of statistics, and command of the literature, and had published at least one chapter prior to submission. All graduates gave numerous public presentations of their research and had multiple first-authored and co-authored publications. Two students took post-doctoral positions after graduating, one is working in outreach at UAF, one is a park ranger, and one is employed at the Alaska SeaLife Center.
In exit interviews, one student expressed disappointment in his research training experience, and stated that while he had been given ample and rewarding experiences for field work, he received little guidance in the lab. This response may be the result of a faculty member leaving the program during the student’s tenure and/or miscommunication regarding expectations for the student. The other students who returned detailed comments were very satisfied with their opportunities to participate in research and outreach activities. Some indicated “mostly satisfied” with required courses, but no reasons were given for any dissatisfaction other than that one course (not specified which course) was taught below the graduate level.

3. **Curricular changes resulting from conclusions drawn above**

GPMSL faculty meet regularly to discuss and improve programs. Overall, students are satisfied with the program, produce publishable-quality dissertations, and go on to find employment in the chosen field. Some outreach to students should be conducted to make sure those based outside Fairbanks are also able to receive evaluations and assessments of defenses and dissertations. This response rate may be improved given the recent modification of the committee membership rules that require more GPMSL teaching faculty on committees of students who have advisors that are associate or affiliate faculty, e.g., from UAA.

4. **Identify the faculty members involved in reaching the conclusions drawn above and agreeing upon the curricular changes resulting**

The program head is responsible for completing dissertation evaluation forms and reviewing exit interviews and accomplishment forms. All attendees are invited to complete defense evaluations. The long-time program head (Katrin Iken) stepped down at the end of fall 2015, and this report was prepared using archived data by the new program head (Sarah Hardy) who only reviewed spring 2016 dissertations first-hand. The GPMSL Outcomes Assessment Committee has in the past contributed to program review, but has been inactive for some time. SFOS is currently in the midst of an organizational restructuring, and the current program head will advocate for this committee to be revived under the new structure, so that a broader group of faculty will be involved in program review and improvement.