

**Program Reviewed: Department of Anthropology (BA in Anthropology),
Sonoma State University
External Reviewer: Dr. Rachel F. Giraud
External Reviewer's Institution: California State University, Northridge
Date of External Reviewer's Visit: April 4, 2018**

Meetings

Dr. Karen Moranski (AVP for Academic Programs)
Dr. Maureen Buckley (Dean, School of Social Sciences)
Dr. Alexis Boutin (Chair and Associate Professor, Anthropology)
Dr. Margie Purser (Professor, Anthropology)
Dr. Richard Senghas (Professor, Anthropology)
Dr. John Wingard (Professor, Anthropology)
Dr. Tom Whitley (Director, Anthropological Studies Center; Associate Professor, Anthropology)
Dr. Ben Smith (Assistant Professor, Human Development)
Anthropology Students (11)

This five-year review of the BA in Anthropology program follows the one that occurred in AY 2012–13, and it focuses on AYs 2013–14 through 2017–18. It is based on the Self-Study Report and Appendices provided by the Department, consultation with the Department's website, current University catalog, and a site visit at which I met five of the seven faculty members in Anthropology, a faculty member in Human Development, two administrators, and 11 students during a pizza lunch. I also toured the facilities of the Anthropological Studies Center (ASC), where I was introduced to the staff members. This report is organized by the following subsections: Mission and Program Goals, Student Learning and Success, Faculty Resources, Students as Partners in Learning, and Commitment to Learning and Strategic Improvement.

1. Mission and Program Goals

The Department has the following mission statement: "The Anthropology Department is an active, integrated, intellectual community that emphasizes (1) an informed, critical understanding of the diachronic and synchronic complexities of human cultural expression and its evolutionary antecedents, and (2) opportunities for hands-on application of that understanding in field and workplace contexts." While this mission statement is contained within the Self-Study Report, it does not appear on the Department's website.

The Department offers a BA in Anthropology, BA in Human Development (transferred to the Department in AY 2014–15), Minor in Anthropology, Minor in Gerontology (transferred to the Department in Spring 2018, though there are plans to discontinue it during the next review cycle), and oversees the MA in Cultural Resources Management (CRM) program. This review focuses on the BA in Anthropology program.

The Department has two sets of program goals for the period under review, Intellectual Goals for Majors and Curricular Goals for Majors (see pp. 6–7 of the Self-Study Report), which are available on its website. As part of the current program review cycle, the Department developed six new Program Learning Objectives (PLOs) in order to comply with the University's mandate for departments to create assessment plans by AY 2020–21, and to be in compliance with

Western Association of Schools and Colleges Core Competencies (WASC CCs) (see pp. 7–8 of the Self-Study Report). The Department does not yet have an assessment plan in place, and it is unclear if it achieved the previous program goals due to the lack of assessment data and analysis in the Self-Study Report (the only data available is through the exit survey administered to students before graduation).

The Department recognizes its fit with the University’s core values—via its Strategic Plan 2025—of “diversity and social justice; sustainability and environmental inquiry; connectivity and community engagement; and adaptability and responsiveness” in the following ways: (a) its educational focus on cross-cultural studies and the Social Justice Undergraduate Research Conference that Dr. Foiles Sifuentes organized in Fall 2016 and Fall 2017; (b) multiple faculty members’ (Drs. Boutin, Whitley, and Purser) involvement with recovery efforts after the recent wildfires in Sonoma County and other counties in California; and (c) faculty and student involvement in community-based research (Drs. Purser and Jaffe). However, I think the Department does a more thorough job of meeting these goals than just the examples provided.

In the previous review (AY 2012–13), which was commented on in the Self-Study Report, the external reviewer recommended that the Department (1) offer more non-GE major courses, especially upper division ones; (2) expand the applied anthropology component of the program through community-based student research, a formalized internship program, adding service-learning opportunities to the curriculum, and offer more internships to undergraduate students at the ASC.

The Department responded to the first recommendation by adding new courses to the curriculum: ANTH 315 (Forensic Anthropology Theory and Practice), ANTH 321 (Archaeology of Contact and Colonization), and ANTH 328 (New Technologies in Archaeology and Cultural Heritage). The external reviewer’s suggestion for fulfilling the second recommendation was by offering reassigned Weighted Teaching Units (WTUs) to a faculty member to take on the role of Applied Anthropology Coordinator. However, due to the fact that several of the TT faculty members had WTUs time to serve in administrative capacities and for other purposes, the Department decided, with such a reduced faculty, to instead focus on core curricular needs than on expanding the applied anthropology component of the program. While there are opportunities for students to gain more applied experience in courses and internships, the Department was unable offer more undergraduate internships at the ASC.

Commendations

1. The Department is to be commended on developing new PLOs that are more thoroughly developed than the earlier program goals.
2. The Department is to be commended for adding new upper division, non-GE major courses.

Recommendations

1. The Department needs to address its lack of formal program assessment. It should have a multi-year assessment plan for PLOs (or program goals) not only to ensure that it is in compliance with the University and WASC, but also to evaluate its program in order to improve its programmatic mission and goals.

2. The Department needs to make a more committed response to addressing its needs for expanding an applied anthropology component of the program, which is part of its mission statement.
3. The Department needs to post its mission statement and the new PLOs on its website as soon as the University-wide website completes its transfer to the Drupal web system.

2. Student Learning and Success

The Anthropology major is 40 units and entails: a lower division course in each subfield, an upper division course in each subfield, an upper division theory course, an upper division methods course, an upper division elective, and ANTH 491 (Senior Seminar). The program's curriculum content aligns with the first part of the program's mission and the program's goals, especially in emphasizing the four fields, but it is less clear if it supports the second part of its mission to emphasize "opportunities for hands-on application of that understanding in field and workplace contexts."

Some students' research that begins in the classroom evolves into formal research presentations at University symposia and professional conferences, and even co-authored work with faculty members. Students can also participate in faculty-led research, such as Dr. Jaffe's work on applied primate ethology, Dr. Foiles Sifuentes' work on nutritional anthropology, and Dr. Boutin's bioarchaeology work, though students commented that they want more opportunities to be involved. At least one faculty member is also involved in mentoring through the McNair Scholars Program. These accomplishments are to be commended, and I recommend that faculty continue to find ways to include students in their research projects.

Students have (limited) opportunities to get internships at the ASC, such as the Collections Management internship, and some advanced students can get internships there in archaeology fieldwork. Students also get internships and paid staff positions at the Northwest Information Center (NWIC). They have also acquired internships with a number of community partners, and it is recommended that the Department continue to foster these partnerships to ensure ongoing student opportunities. However, given that most students will not pursue graduate studies in anthropology, I advise that the Department reconsiders how it will incorporate curriculum and extra-curricular opportunities in the application of anthropology, particularly outside of archaeology (students mentioned that they want opportunities in sociocultural and linguistic anthropology). The Department would like a position of Applied Anthropology Coordinator, and one administrator suggested that in order to make this more plausible, faculty members should document their existing service in providing internships and demonstrate their deliverables in order to justify reassigned WTUs to work on having time to set up a position or quasi-position to manage internships (and/or service-learning). This administrator also thought that even an MA student could help with this function, or some other option outside a TT faculty member. While I do agree with the administrator that documentation will be helpful, and in fact, can be rolled into assessment for the program, I do not agree that a non-faculty member can maintain an internship program because maintaining long-term relationships with community partners is key to providing regular internship and service-learning opportunities.

The number of Anthropology majors and minors took a slight dip since the last review period, from a range of 103–112 in (around AY 2012–13) to 96 (AY 2017–18), but averages around 100

(however, in Fall 2018, numbered 118). The mean number of majors is 88.2 students. Two-thirds of the majors are transfer students. The majority of Anthropology majors identify as female for gender and White for ethnicity, though the number of Hispanic students is increasing. The Self-Study Report notes that the student-faculty ratios for teaching and advising are manageable and contribute to the “community” environment of the Department. Majors make up 3.6% of the School, but the Department’s full-time equivalent students (FTES) are 6.5% of the School’s. During the review period, the annual mean for students graduating with a BA in Anthropology was 27.6 students, and time to degree improved since the beginning of this review cycle but is still longer than other programs at the University. The Department provided examples in its Self-Study Report of these graduates’ achievements, such as graduate school and employment.

The Department attributes the slight decline in the amount of majors and minors to the lack of TT faculty members teaching majors courses, and to large GE courses with higher DFW rates. It has hired a new sociocultural anthropologist, Dr. Foiles Sifuentes, and multiple TT faculty members who were reassigned from teaching have since come back to the Department to teach. The Department would like its TT faculty members to teach at least 50% of the GE courses for consistency of content, to improve the DFW rates, and to help with recruitment and retention in the major. It would also like to involve students enrolled in ANTH 400 (Teaching Praxis) to help address some of these issues (see Students as Partners in Learning). To boost recruitment and retention, the Department also plans to create a course on Latinx cultures in the US that it hopes will appeal to the changing demographic of the University (and fulfill the Ethnic Studies GE requirement), which is now a Hispanic-Serving Institution, and to concentrate on more effective advising for first and second year Anthropology majors, which it expects will contribute to timely degree completion. It also plans to have alternate offerings of the course, ANTH 300 (Nature, Culture, and Theory: The Growth of Anthropology), every other semester to fulfill the Writing Intensive Curriculum (WIC) requirement within the major to help with timely degree completion.

The Department is concerned with how the CSU Executive Orders 1100 and 1110 will impact FTES, and predicts that enrollment in ANTH 200 (Introduction to Linguistic Anthropology) and ANTH 203 (Introduction to Cultural Anthropology) will decrease by two-thirds while enrollment in ANTH 341 (Emergence of Civilizations) will increase. Its strategy is to improve accessibility to more students through online and blended lower division GE course offerings, which might help with larger student enrollments (meeting School FTES) and perhaps with major recruitment and retention (though larger courses might lead to higher DFW rates). However, the decrease in enrollment in ANTH 200 might help majors with their timely degree completion since this course is currently impacted, an issue students also expressed.

Commendations

1. The Department is to be commended on its commitment to prioritizing a four-fields curriculum, and thus upholding its goals; for emphasizing student learning, including learning applications, such as participation in TT faculty members’ research and available internships; and for its commitment to mentoring students.
2. The Department is to be commended for pursuing online and blended course offerings to meet the needs of students at the University, as a strategic move to protect its enrollments as GE undergoes a major revision, and to potentially recruit more majors.

Recommendations

1. The Department needs to formulate a plan to expand its efforts in offering students curricular options in applied anthropology and extra-curricular opportunities to help students apply their anthropological skills and gain experience. The Self-Study Report identifies the desire of creating a coordinator as a position. The School or University should offer reassigned WTUs to the Department so that an existing faculty member could undertake this task. Another option is for the Department to hire a practicing anthropologist who can teach an introduction to applied anthropology course (and manage internships and community partnerships for service-learning) in addition to courses in his/her/their field, but again, that person would need reassigned WTUs for this component of the position.
2. The University can also provide more financial relief to the ASC in order for the center to be able to offer additional internships to undergraduate students.

3. Faculty Resources

As of Fall 2018, there are seven TT faculty members for 118 undergraduate students, though one (Dr. Whitley, Director of the ASC) has only a half-time appointment in the Department and another is on an extended professional leave of absence. There are two sociocultural anthropologists, two archaeologists, one biological anthropologist, one bioarchaeologist, and one linguistic anthropologist. Six of the seven faculty members are White and one is Latinx. However, the Department anticipates a significant turnover in TT faculty over the next few years as multiple faculty members plan to either retire or participate in the Faculty Early Retirement Program (FERP), and will lose a sociocultural anthropologist, archaeologist, and the sole linguistic anthropologist. The Department urgently needs a hiring plan to address how it will fulfill its programmatic goals, and during this planning it should also consider how to further diversify its faculty.

In upholding its mission and goals, the Department puts great emphasis on having faculty members who represent each of the four fields of anthropology. During the previous review cycle, it was especially challenging for the Department to have TT faculty members teaching sociocultural courses when Dr. Wingard was serving as Dean of Social Sciences throughout the entire review cycle and only returning to faculty during the year of this review. While the Department was able to hire an additional sociocultural anthropologist, this faculty member started a two-year professional leave of absence during the year of this review, and it is uncertain if she will return to the Department afterward. In addition, even though the normal teaching load is 12 WTUs per semester, the majority of faculty members receive reassigned WTUs due to service obligations. While there is currently a strong lecturer pool, the Department found it difficult to provide adequate coverage to teach across all four fields of anthropology during the review cycle, particularly GE courses such as ANTH 203, which was only taught by a lecturer from AYs 2013–14 to 2016–17 (four out of the five years of this review cycle). These conditions have, faculty members believe, also negatively affected advising during the review period, since TT faculty members share advising responsibilities. Interestingly, administrators did not see advising as a problem for this Department, and, in fact, one stated that Anthropology is known for its “strong mentoring.” Furthermore, given the heavy service load of Anthropology faculty

members to the School and University, the Department requires that reassigned WTUs be directly returned to the Department in order to maintain its curriculum.

The University has recognized faculty members in Anthropology for their teaching and educational services, such as Dr. Jaffe's Educational Experience Enhancement Award in AY 2015–16 and Dr. Senghas' nomination for Excellence in Teaching Award in 2014. The Department is also dedicated to teaching development as evidenced by its involvement in learning management systems (LMSs). For instance, Drs. Jaffe and Senghas participated in the pilot in Canvas in AY 2017–18 and received more extensive training in online and blended course delivery, and since then multiple faculty members in the Department have taken workshops on Canvas and all are now incorporating it into their courses.

Faculty members are not only involved in the Department, but also participate in cross-campus teaching through the MA in CRM program, with Drs. Boutin, Purser, and Whitley serving as core members of the graduate faculty; the Human Development BA (now housed in the Department) coordinated by Dr. Jaffe with instruction by Dr. Smith, a new hire in Human Development who has training in linguistic anthropology (Dr. Senghas is an advisor); the Linguistics Minor program (Dr. Senghas); the Paleontology Minor program (Drs. Jaffe and Boutin); the School of Social Science's Sophomore Year Experience program (SSCI 299) (Drs. Boutin, Purser, and Senghas), and teaching with faculty from other departments within the School.

The majority of TT faculty members maintain active research and regularly publish: Dr. Boutin is Co-Director of the Dilmun Bioarchaeology Project, Dr. Jaffe runs the Sonoma State University Primate Ethology Lab (SSUPER), Dr. Purser runs the Santa Rosa Neighborhood Heritage Mapping Project (an example of the Department's commitment to community-based research), and Dr. Whitley works on projects related to computer applications in archaeology. Much of this work is innovative and some of the research foci distinctive to SSU Anthropology. In fact, students' commented that they think the faculty members need to do a better job of promoting themselves, the Department, and the major—they need to “toot their own horn”—on campus. This could help with recruiting more majors, and the School and University could assist with this. Students see that this could help with more cross-campus collaborations, like the one between Geography, Environment, and Planning and Anthropology (i.e., MA in CRM).

Faculty members require more support from the School and University in maintaining their research, such as assistance locating and applying for external grants, release time to work on developing grants, and seed grant funding. One administrator encourages more grant writing from the faculty members, and states that there is University-level support for faculty members in this process. Faculty members should look into this opportunity. However, faculty members maintain a heavy teaching and service load and are already concerned about lack of time to dedicate to independent research. Competitions for one-time course release could be an enticing incentive for faculty members to increase their research and involve students in it.

Within the next review cycle, the Department is moving from Stevenson Hall to Library during building renovations. During this time, the Department will not only lose its private office space, it will also lose its lounge (part of the community feel of the Department, which an administrator

agreed encourages student accessibility to faculty members), lab space (teaching and storage for archaeological and osteological collections, and for meetings), and a classroom also used for storage and teaching. Although, faculty members will have temporary desk space in the Library to conduct advising and work on their scholarship, it will be difficult for some faculty members to maintain active research without the use of lab space. It will also likely impact teaching with the collections currently stored in the lab. While there is a possibility for some office and lab space at the ASC, it is further away from the center of campus (and classrooms) than ideal. The University should assist the Department with arrangements, especially with the osteological materials, as there are serious ethical matters at stake in the storage of human remains. One administrator commented that the Department should keep in mind the longer-term vision of the building renovation (and not complain about its temporary effects). However, I agree with the Department that the loss of space in conjunction with the loss of faculty through retirement/FERP within this next review cycle can do major harm both to teaching in the short term and to the program in the long term. The University should maintain at least the current amount and general layout of space for the Department after the renovation is completed.

Commendations

1. The Department is to be commended on upholding its mission to the four fields by having TT faculty members representing these fields.
2. The Department is to be commended for its dedication to teaching excellence, teaching development, and student mentoring.
3. The Department is to be commended for its service and to the School and University, especially multiple faculty members' roles in governance.
4. The Department is to be commended for the scholarly productivity of its faculty members given their heavy teaching and service load. This includes faculty members' community-based research projects and research in service to the broader community.
5. The Department is to be commended for its collaboration with other campus units, such as the Geography, Environment, and Planning Department, and Linguistics Department, and its collaboration across curriculum (see Appendix D in the Self-Study Report).

Recommendations

1. The Department needs to come up with a five-year hiring plan that takes into consideration how its mission will be affected with the retirement/FERP of a sociocultural anthropologist, archaeologist, and linguistic anthropologist (three of the four fields of anthropology and nearly half of the Department), and the possibility the other sociocultural anthropologist will not return. As part of this plan, the Department should consider the role that the Human Development program will have within the Department as a whole, and the roles between the faculties of both programs. The University needs to allocate lines of hire to this Department so that it is able to uphold its mission during the transition. This is also a time to consider that one of the hires might help to fulfill the role of an applied anthropologist.
2. As part of a five-year hiring plan, the Department needs to consider further diversifying its faculty. A more diverse faculty will not only be in accordance with the University's core values, but might also help the Department recruit and retain a more diverse student body.

3. The School needs to recognize how stretched thin in terms of teaching the Department is when its TT faculty members take on administrative roles or take other leaves of absence, and it should return reassigned WTUs to the Department in order to hire lecturers and maintain the program's curriculum.
4. The Department needs more support from the School and University to aid in its ability to maintain scholarly productivity, especially in applying for external grants. This includes assistance locating and developing grants and release time to work on grants and/or research.
5. The School and University need to work with the Department come up with a clear plan for lab space during the building renovations, especially with the bioarchaeologist, to make a clear plan on how best to house human remains and other artifacts used for teaching. The School and University should also ensure that the Department maintains at least the same amount and type of space (i.e., office, lounge, and labs) after the building renovations are completed.
6. The School and University need to help promote the Department, its faculty, and the Anthropology BA program on campus.

4. Students as Partners in Learning

Students are very happy about instruction, are proud of the faculty members' research, and see value in the program as it promotes the four fields of anthropology. They feel there is a strong sense of community in the Department (e.g., several instructors go by their first names or less formal versions of their last names, and this helps the students feel like doing anthropology and being an anthropologist is more accessible to them). They also characterize the Department as a place welcoming to "intellectual misfits;" several students commented that they began higher education in other majors but were unsatisfied until they found Anthropology.

However, students suggested more outreach to aid in recruitment and student success. In addition to the Department making itself more visible on the campus, students mentioned that the Anthropology Student Club could visit local high schools, creating more awareness of the major for incoming students from the region. They advise that there should also be more outreach to first and second year students on campus. They expressed the need for more help transitioning to the major and learning about applied work in anthropology, paths to graduate school in anthropology, etc. before their senior year when they enroll in ANTH 491, which they feel is too late to either prepare for a career right after graduation or to know how to prepare academically in order to apply to graduate school. One way to do this is by having an orientation in the Fall semester for third year students, and perhaps a separate one for transfer students, who might have extra needs as they adjust to the campus. They want the Department to illustrate what it has to offer earlier on in their degree. During the outreach and orientations, faculty members could explain what marketable skills Anthropology has to offer. Students said that they understood these marketable skills by their final two years in the program. They believe that other students on campus do not know much about Anthropology and stick to well known majors that more actively advertise job skills and career relevance.

Students requested more centralized communication of information, such as opportunities for local internships, local field schools, and campus-wide programs. Currently, students feel like they rely on word-of-mouth to hear about these opportunities. The Department, which already

has a student listserv, could explore utilizing social media (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter) for unofficial communication. The University is currently updating the campus-wide website, and during that process the Department might also consider adding a feed on the Department homepage that links to a social media account so that there are multiple points of communication intersecting.

Also, in terms of communication, students requested a better sense of course rotation. They expressed that they selected this major based on the list of course offerings, only to learn later that many of the courses are not regularly taught. The Department currently lets students know a semester/year in advance which courses will be offered, but students would like a two-year window; however, this might not be possible given the numerous variables that go into scheduling. Students suggested the option of having the opportunity to give input on electives before scheduling decisions are made, which, again, might be impractical. However, such information may be incorporated into annual assessment or the exit survey (e.g., which courses were students' favorites, and which courses did students want to take but were not offered).

An example of how students are involved as partners in learning is ANTH 400 (Teaching Praxis), a course that offers students the opportunity to learn educational pedagogy. It also aids faculty teaching large GE courses, as these students will also perform instruction-related duties. The Department wants to expand the program to have these students involved in all lower division GE courses to help lower the DFW rates. This teaching experience is great for the students and continues to contribute to the community feel of the Department.

Commendations

1. The Department is to be commended for the strong value its students see in the Anthropology BA program and in faculty members' research.
2. The Department is to be commended for the development and success of its course, ANTH 400, which provides pedagogical training and experience for students, and that contributes to overall student learning in GE courses and the sense of community in the Department.

Recommendations

1. The Department should do more outreach for recruitment and retention, not only to entice more majors, but also to demonstrate to a more diverse student body the relevancy and potential of a degree in Anthropology. The Department should also work on adding an element to its advising through Fall semester orientations at the junior year, since this is the time in the degree when most transfer students begin their studies at SSU. It might also have an orientation for first year students, or else do more outreach to freshmen and to local high schools.
2. The Department should explore additional means of delivering information to students about opportunities, such as through the use of social media.

5. Commitment to Learning and Strategic Improvement

The Department's ability to demonstrate formal assessment of its program and teaching is weak as evidenced in its Self-Study Report. During our meetings, both administrators immediately stressed the lack of assessment. One administrator commented on the need for more assessment

on the part of the Department in order to it to justify getting more stable faculty time and to plan for a more stable graduation rate; in other words, using assessment to help “close the loop.”

In the Self-Study Report, the Department provides examples of how its courses can be assessed with the new PLOs and WASC CCs, but it would be helpful if there were an appendix with a spreadsheet illustrating how all of the courses can be assessed. While there is a new assessment coordinator at the School who confirms whether or not departments have syllabi that contain student learning objectives (SLOs), it is unclear from the Self-Study Report whether they have been regularly assessed. While the University assesses instructors on teaching-effectiveness for each course, none of the questions posed assess SLOs, so the assessment of student learning is missing. One must not underestimate how crucial program and student-learning assessment is to continuous revision in order to meet educational needs. While the Department states that it has a plan to ensure that all syllabi have SLOs that articulate with the new PLOs, it must have an assessment plan in order to accomplish this goal.

Currently, most formal assessment takes place in the form of an exit survey for graduating seniors that they complete as part of ANTH 491. However, there are limits to only conducting assessment with students so close to graduation, such as missing reasons why students might not graduate or graduate in good time, or why they change majors. Furthermore, the questions on the exit survey related to the old PLOs do not make sense: how can students properly determine whether or not they met the PLOs? There are better forms of assessment to measure these areas. Still the exit surveys are useful to determining student input in the Department. Through the exit survey, the Department learned about student desires, which they are trying to accommodate.

Finally, although the Department has a plan for assessing TT faculty for tenure and promotion, including regular teaching evaluation, it does not have a plan in place to assess the teaching of lecturers, which is something the Department would like to correct in the next review cycle.

Commendations

1. The Department is to be commended on its development of its exit survey, which is a great tool to capture feedback from graduating students.
2. The Department is to be commended for identifying the need to implement teaching evaluations for lecturers.

Recommendations

1. As stated earlier, the Department needs to address its lack of formal program assessment. It should have a multi-year assessment plan for PLOs (or program goals), and it should regularly assess student learning. This includes assessing courses in relation to its new PLOs as well as WASC CCs.
2. The Department needs to spend time developing its assessment plan during this pivotal time of transition, and thus I recommend that the School or University offer a faculty member some reassigned WTUs to take on managing this task.
3. The exit survey should be revised once a more formal assessment plan is in place with metrics to assess PLOs. The exit surveys might then be better used to assess student-identified needs, such as which courses did students want to take but were not offered during students' time in the program or ideas for new courses.