

External review report: M.A. in Cultural Resources Management

Reviewer: Katherine Hayes, PhD, Assoc. Professor of Anthropology, University of Minnesota

Context of the program: The SSU CRM masters program is one of the oldest such programs in the country, and has an excellent reputation and legacy particularly among the professional field of cultural resources management and the academic subdiscipline of historical archaeology. CRM programs historically have responded to the need for qualified professional archaeologists who can work under the requirements and regulations of federal and state historic preservation laws. These laws require the survey, identification, and recommendation for protection of sites, buildings, neighborhoods and landscapes. Decades ago this professional work was far more siloed along disciplinary lanes, wherein archaeologists focused narrowly on archaeological resources while historic preservationists coming from the fields of architectural history and urban planning attended to historic buildings, neighborhoods, and landscapes. Professional work in that setting was driven by 1) compliance with regulatory frameworks by (largely) corporate interests, and 2) an adherence to more formal definitions of style, cultural period, and historical significance - in other words, a top-down structuring of heritage.

As the professions matured, however, and recognized inherent inequities of access and impact of their work on marginalized communities, these fields have listened both to their colleagues in affiliated fields and to cultural stakeholder communities to move towards a more holistic and grassroots perspective on heritage preservation and protection. That has driven two major changes in professional CRM; first a greater emphasis on interdisciplinarity, and second, and increased awareness and responsiveness to communities beyond the traditional clients such as engineering and construction firms. The terminology of this change, from cultural *resource* management to cultural *heritage* management, mirrors a shift in practice away from one which sees landscapes, sites, and material culture as assets towards one which sees them as meaningful in multiple ways to multiple connected communities. The SSU CRM program has long been a leader in both of these progressive changes. Even more recently, the field has become more capacious and inclusive of sites of cultural production in archives, museums, community heritage organizations, schools, language and intangible heritage preservation projects, parks and other landscapes, and the digital/virtual realm. While no one professional will have expertise in all of these domains, it is highly likely that they will intersect and collaborate with some or all of them in their work. It is in this context that the SSU CRM program is proposing revisions, and thus in this review I will address both the current and proposed program structure.

What programs are out there now addressing this need for professional training? There are a large number of programs, mainly in Anthropology departments, which offer some curriculum and experience in CRM, but a much smaller subset with well-developed focus on training towards professional careers. Terminal masters degree (MS or MA) programs for professional development in the CRM field have evolved a range of interdisciplinary foci in line with the

changes in the field outlined above. Some have arisen from either strengths in historical archaeology or departments that include both history and anthropology. Another area of development can be seen in programs with strong partnerships with CRM service units or state/federal agencies, which provide students with excellent experiences and project opportunities. A third area of growth has been interdisciplinary programs responding to the employment scene, for example, recognizing the intersection of natural and cultural resources work, or the cross-over of archaeology with historic preservation and public history. The following are a few examples that may serve as comparisons, though I offer the caveat that I am in no way suggesting a ranking or making claims as to the quality of the various programs. Rather, each of these programs has some aspect which is shared with the SSU CRM program and which lends particular advantages to it.

Interdisciplinary programs:

- University of Maryland (College Park), Master of Applied Anthropology (M.A.A.), the Master of Applied Anthropology and Master of Historic Preservation (M.A.A./M.H.P. Dual Degree), the Masters of Professional Studies in Cultural and Heritage Resource Management (M.P.S. (CHRM)). This program benefits from a close relationship with the National Parks Service and its location proximal to Washington DC. Most degree programs can be completed in a minimum of two years (the MAA/MHP dual degree takes three), with internships geared towards the development of the thesis project. Students may be funded through grant-based projects.
- Adams State Univ (Colorado) - MA in CRM. This program focuses on more “traditional” CRM training, that is archaeology in the regulatory context, but is situated in a department with multiple disciplines (Anthropology, History, Political Science, and Philosophy) and does offer multiple history electives towards the degree. At 30 cr total, likely can be completed in 2 years if courses are offered regularly.
- Central Washington University, MS in Cultural and Environmental Resource Management. Interdisciplinary program with career support and coursework towards both natural and cultural resource management as well as mutually supporting fields like GIS and tribal programs management. Collaborating departments include Anthropology, Geography, and Economics. Program completion in 6 quarters minimum.
- University of West Florida MA in Historical Archaeology. The unique advantage of this program is its connection to the Florida Public Archaeology Network, a state-funded organization which coordinates public education and awareness programs for heritage preservation, and its Archaeology Institute which offers contract CRM services. Students are supported in part through these facilities, and they may apply for fellowships with FPAN. The program requirements generally take three years minimum to complete.
- University of Minnesota Masters in Heritage Studies and Public History program. This program has three tracks (Archaeological Heritage, Historic Preservation, and Public History) but requires all students to take core seminars in common, including a core

practices survey and Race and Indigeneity in Heritage Representation. Through a strong partnership with the Minnesota Historical Society, students take two funded internships and a major paid professional experience during interim summer leading to a capstone project. Program is designed to be completed in two years.

Program review:

To facilitate my review of this program, I was provided in advance with key materials, including the program self-study (which includes proposed program revisions), the graduate program handbook, and syllabi for core courses. Program coordinator Dr. Margaret Purser scheduled a virtual visit for me on February 8 and 9. Over the course of these two days I met with core program faculty, graduate students, ASC director Dr. Tom Whitley (who provided me with a virtual tour of the facility and provided perspective on the role of ASC in the program), Anthropology department chair Dr. Alexis Boutin, Anthropology department faculty, Dean of Social Sciences Dr. Troi Carleton, and Associate VP for Academic Programs Dr. Stacey Bosick.

Program summary: The CRM program remains one which SSU should take pride in. It is viewed nationally as one of the most recognizable and respected graduate programs in CRM and, by association with faculty leaders, historical archaeology. The curriculum is based on long experience in and understanding of the field (including the proposed revisions), its applicant pool in terms of numbers has ranged from adequate to outstanding, the students are from increasingly diverse backgrounds and experiences, and their time to degree has come down significantly. Graduates of the program are employed at extremely high rates, and given the long history of the program, many are positioned to provide a strong professional and employment networks for new graduates.

The program has a number of significant facilities and advising advantages for students. The Anthropological Studies Center (ASC) has existed for nearly 50 years and as such has witnessed and participated in the evolution of this professional field. It currently houses significant collections and has capacities to undertake a broad range of heritage preservation projects which students may be employed by and gain invaluable experience from. In particular the ASC has done excellent work in the realm of digital preservation which is on the cutting edge of the field. The ASC has also the capacity to manage longer-term and larger community-engaged projects, a critical aspect of heritage-oriented work. This kind of engagement is exemplified by their partnership in 2019 with the NWIC to host the California Indian Conference, and work for the Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria.

In addition to the ASC, the program has benefited significantly from already expanding its focus through affiliations with faculty in other departments who are now regarded as core program

faculty (Drs. Goman and Watt in GEP, and Dr. Jolly in History). This expansion tracks with the changes in the professional field as described above, but has also contributed greatly to sustaining the program. Since the last program review, the Anthropology has also welcomed two new faculty members: Dr. Tom Whitley who has taken over as the director of the ASC and who adds significant expertise in “prehistoric” contexts as well as in teaching CRM practice, and Dr. Andriana Foiles Sifuentes, who is not program-affiliated faculty but as a cultural anthropologist can teach ethnographic research methods which are valuable tools for heritage work. Thus the program has a very strong interdisciplinary base.

As directed by the SSU guidelines for program reviewers, I will focus my understanding of the CRM program as gleaned from these materials and conversations on five areas as listed below. Following those areas, I offer a set of concerns and recommendations or options for their mitigation.

1. Curriculum coherency and currency.

The CRM program curriculum has a mix of core required seminar, credited internships or practicums, and electives. The requirements themselves represent a good balance of theory and praxis or methods with some context-focused learning via the California History requirement. A proseminar on research development and design is also required in the first semester. The balance and coherency of the curriculum is excellent and fulfills the mission of the program to reject the artificial polarization of technically excellent work from theoretically rich and innovative research. While it might be somewhat unusual among similar programs to place the research design proseminar at the very start of the program sequence (often it is situated later for thesis prospectus development), it works very well to set expectations. In conversation with graduate students, I see that has been quite successful and the students are very appreciative of the framing. Although it is not strictly a product of the curriculum other than its requirements, students also benefit from developing strong and supportive cohorts in taking seminars together.

With respect to the currency of the curriculum, I am also impressed with the extent to which it already reflects the “heritage” framing in the readings and thematic areas in core seminars. For example in the Anth 502 seminar on archaeological theory the scope of topics already reaches far beyond archaeology, and a similar breadth is evident in Anth 503, another required seminar. As noted in the self-study, the proposed revisions to the program that would formalize this turn which is already apparent in the curriculum. While it is possible that other themes have escaped my notice, I might have expected to see a bit more attention to important theoretical contributions via Black feminist theory and Indigenous archaeologies, but I know the faculty to already be attuned to these.

Returning briefly to the question of curricular coherency, the heritage turn does suggest some potential in *loosening* coherency, particularly in the strong focus on the regulatory context of CRM professional work. While this program will always have strengths in archaeology and historic preservation, it may be worth considering changing some of the core requirements into requirements to select among a set of approaches that better reflects the breadth of the field. In the proposed program revision, one such change is already included: rather than requiring a specific California history course, the program proposes selecting among five history seminar offerings. There may be other places in the requirements appropriate to such flexibility; for example, perhaps the Practicum in the National Register of Historic Places (Anth 592) could be one choice among others to accommodate students who wish to work in settings with different legal frameworks. For example in museum careers, NAGPRA and property-oriented concerns are more important, while in tribal resources management a broader purview of federal Indian law and policy is needed.

2. Relevance and clarity of learning outcomes and integration with curriculum.

In the program's self-study I found the program learning outcomes which include the following:

- Writing and speaking proficiency
- Competence in relevant data analysis
- Capability in field and lab techniques
- Mastering the regulatory context and its application to CRM
- Identifying and assessing the significance of cultural resources
- Competence in resource and data management
- Internalizing the scholarly canons for professional work
- Gaining the technical skills, knowledge and ethics requisite for thesis research
- Proficiency in research design and theory
- Demonstrating of scholarly and professional competence
- Demonstrating commitment to stewardship of cultural resources

These are excellent and thorough learning outcomes for a program focused on CRM within the regulatory setting, evidently developed through decades of programmatic refinement. In particular this program has created a great scaffolding for teaching research design, methodology, and writing skills for thesis-based research projects. As noted above, this learning begins in the first semester with the proseminar, and in my conversation with the graduate students they were not only very comfortable with the project development process but were also able to describe their projects to me in clear and compelling terms. Another indicator that the program is achieving its learning outcomes is in its rates of degree completion; this is all the more impressive given the increasing rates of completion and the decreasing time to degree reported in the self-study.

The program's learning outcomes are also supported throughout by experiential learning. This aspect should neither be understated, nor reduced in any way. In fact, better access to such learning via internships and work opportunities with ASC should be facilitated in any way possible. Dr. Whitley has many specific and feasible ideas for how to increase this access that deserve serious consideration.

As excellent a report as I am giving on the current learning outcomes, the program is proposing in its revision to update them to better reflect the broader heritage framework they aim to prepare students for. I strongly encourage this. This may involve stepping back from the great strengths of the program in teaching the regulatory framework and the thesis-based research process in order to support other kinds of career goals with different experiences. These should still be regarded as developing research skills in the service of heritage work, but may produce very different-looking project deliverables (for example, an exhibition plan, an educational program, or a community-based archive). The revised program learning outcomes should be carefully considered to encompass this kind of breadth of project planning and execution.

3. Meaningfulness and effectiveness of learning outcomes assessment and use of assessment for program improvement.

The CRM program assessment of student learning outcomes occurs mainly in the context of course completions, a first-year review, and the advising system. More broadly, as noted above, indicators of learning outcomes are also inherent in the program completion rates because the program maintains rigorous thesis completion standards. It is evident to me that faculty mentoring is of excellent quality, and the students are very appreciative of it.

Assessments of other types were not available to me, and I note that within the program self-study there is explicit discussion of developing new program-specific and graduate level assessment tools. These should be tied to the program's learning outcomes, and in light of the proposal to update these PLOs, the assessment tools can and should be developed at the same time. The self-study also suggests the development of a standardized alumni survey for program assessments.

4. Sufficiency of resources and how they affect the quality of the learning experience; consider, for example, faculty, facilities, support, information resources, and research resources.

Resources are a very clear issue for the program. It is indeed remarkable that the program is as successful as it is with the relatively low number of faculty members directly supporting it. This is a testament to the strong structure provided by the long-term association with the ASC providing experiential learning opportunities and incredible facilities to the students. It is also a testament to the devotion of the program faculty in providing excellent and time-consuming

mentoring support to the students. However, the ability to cover the program required courses is currently very strained and will only become more so upon the retirement of two faculty members in the next year or so.

For example, currently only two of the program's core courses are offered annually (the proseminar and the California history seminar), and all others are offered every other year. This requires a very careful scheduling effort, especially for courses with only one qualified instructor who must either time course releases and sabbaticals around the program or risk extending students' time to degree. Ideally, students should be able to complete all required coursework within four semesters, but with the staffing constraints, they may need five semesters. While it is not unusual to have degree completion times over two years in comparable masters-level programs, typically this time beyond two years reflects research time after coursework is completed. This constraint poses some ethical challenges, in that additional semesters of coursework are costly to students yet arise from circumstances not of their making.

While it was made quite clear to me that the university's fiscal stringency does not leave much hope that the retiring faculty will be immediately replaced, this should be a goal in the longer-term outlook. And in the short and medium term, other strategies of support should be put into place in order to at least maintain and preferably improve the timeliness of course offerings. These may include hiring of adjunct instructors, providing additional personnel in the ASC to allow Dr. Whitley to increase his teaching load, adjusting one or two of the course requirements to allow for substitutions offered in other areas *if they fulfill the broader heritage framework* of the program's proposed revisions. In opening up such curricular flexibilities, however, the program should take care to retain sufficient opportunities for cohorts to remain connected.

The program should be applauded for already extending its core faculty to include members from other departments (GEP and History), as this will help to mitigate the effects of the impending retirements. In addition, Anthropology faculty who are not currently core program faculty should be encouraged to consider how they may become so in light of the program updates. Given the turn to a heritage framework, the program should also strongly consider mutually beneficial partnerships with the Ethnic Studies departments and programs at SSU, up to and including the possibility of joint-appointment faculty hiring. In light of the strategic planning priorities of SSU currently, this may be the quickest route to hiring new program faculty, although these departments are often among the most resource-poor and marginalized in universities so care should be given to making these equitable partnerships. Nonetheless, these departments are already in service to communities which the CRM program hopes to connect with or grow existing relations with, so the grounds for partnership should be self-evident.

The issue of faculty numbers was the single greatest resource concern I heard from students, faculty, and administrators. Since the last program review, the program has been successful in

growing other kinds of resources for student support, including graduate assistantships. This kind of support must be maintained, and could be increased. One way to do so that might also contribute to the problem of teaching coverage would be to create teaching assistantships; this would address student desires for teaching experience, and could allow faculty to expand the scope of particular classes to grow enrollment with support from TAs.

Finally, there are some resource issues that can likely be addressed through policy adjustments. In particular, the ASC has operated under particular constraints imposed by bureaucratic firewalls from the academic program. Given the extraordinary success and efficiency of the ASC, the program would benefit greatly from having those policies and firewalls changed or removed. This may require some funding to start up (for example, in hiring an administrative replacement for Mary Praetzellis) but would likely be fully repaid in increased grant funding if Dr. Whitley had time to give to it, in addition to increasing his teaching load. University administration should fully support bringing the ASC and the academic program back into closer alignment.

5. Understanding of students' needs, challenges, and characteristics and ability to effectively serve the program's students.

First, I'd like to say that it was delightful and insightful to have been able to spend time speaking with CRM program graduate students. They are an engaging, mature, and professional group and they represent the program extremely well.

The program self-study gives a very good picture of both the student demographics and their average progression through the program. The program does very well with recruiting and admissions, with normal variations in numbers, and I would anticipate that a more explicit shift towards the heritage framework (as demonstrated in course and program naming, and website/social media updates) they will have no problem increasing their applicant pool. Few programs nationally have made this turn despite the evidently changed employment scene.

Student cohorts are increasing in diversity, particularly with respect to racial/ethnic heritage. This is to be applauded; and is understandable given that SSU program faculty are known for their research in diverse communities and this alone is a recruitment factor. With increasing student diversity the program likely also sees changing student needs for both support and learning opportunities. Several students were quite clear with me that they were attracted to the SSU CRM program because of its commitments to community engaged research. They are satisfied with the inclusion of community engagement and social justice in their curriculum, as they learn ethics of practice, but also wish for more opportunities to incorporate them into their own thesis projects. To do so ethically would require drawing on the expertise of community partners that core faculty members and the ASC already have relationships with, and to assure

the compensation of that expertise. In particular, students noted wanting more opportunities to work on NAGPRA cases and on tribal consultations and collaborations.

While the graduate students generally seem satisfied or happy with the program support they receive, especially with respect to advising, there are two areas of support they note could be improved: time to degree, and funding. The program identifies “normative” time to degree as 3-3.5 years. This is not significantly higher than other programs nationally, but the program will not be able to reduce that, or the overall average time to degree, without addressing the concerns about staffing core courses as discussed above. Most significantly at issue for students is the delay introduced by a single faculty instructor taking a leave, or being re-directed to undergraduate teaching, adding time and of course a financial burden for them. Students who come in with developed project ideas and some professional experience already could conceivably complete the degree in two years. I probably need not also emphasize that cost and time to degree can pose significant barriers to efforts to increase student diversity.

Student funding is an area where the program does well by comparison to other terminal masters programs nationally, but the best and most competitive programs offer enhanced support. The students I spoke with noted that funding was most readily provided in their first year in the program, but was more difficult to find in subsequent years. Ideally, more GA or TA should be available to them, and could also address curricular needs as well as student desires for teaching experience. Perhaps a more feasible solution in the short term, however, would be to address the bureaucratic barriers to student employment via ASC contract projects. With some additional administrative support to ASC, the range of employment opportunities might be even greater if that unit could pursue more grant-funded community engaged projects. This approach to student funding can also contribute to efforts to recruit more students from underrepresented communities, if they see the ASC working in their own community. A particular opportunity with plentiful groundwork already laid is with Native communities.

Finally, this program has served its students very well in the post-graduate employment area. The legacy and excellent reputation of the program serves it well, in that its alumni are placed in a wide array of heritage fields and organizations and they provide a built-in network for current students to pursue employment opportunities.

Recommendations:

This is evidently a very strong program with an excellent history and long experience preparing students for professional employment in cultural heritage management. It is equally evident that there are significant challenges currently and on the horizon. Though I have touched on these in addressing the above areas, I offer a summary of my recommendations for surviving and ideally thriving in the coming years of the program.

- 1) The proposal to update the program by embracing the shift to a heritage framework is excellent. Here are a few additional strategies to consider that will position the program as a heritage field leader.
- a) *Amplify and communicate the potential of cultural heritage management to support racial equity and justice initiatives in the university and the wider community.* There are numerous topics within the purview of heritage studies that are relevant: migration/immigration studies, language revitalization and tribal sovereignty, NAGPRA, LGBTQ heritage, settler colonialism, etc. This focus will not only align with university priorities, it will add to student experience and will boost recruitment of students from underrepresented communities.
 - b) *Consider additional changes to the curricular requirements that both accommodate the broader professional career aims of future students.* It is already observed in the proposals for change that heritage frameworks extend well beyond the regulatory setting of the CRM profession, thus some courses currently required (like the National Register of Historic Places practicum) could become one option among several. Loosening the requirements by adding flexibility (without sacrificing the cohort structure) may also help the program weather shorter-term outlook of staffing shortages.
 - c) *Create more opportunities for students to work in digital preservation.* Pandemic conditions have highlighted the essential role of digital access that are equally important to the future relevance of heritage institutions. Digital preservation has created incredible new opportunities for the way we do community engagement, and students aiming to work in this field should have experience in at least some aspect of it, whether through communication media, production of digital 3D models of objects and landscapes, or in the creation of digital archives for capture of community-produced content. The ASC already has facilities and expertise in this area; find pathways for students to access these.
 - d) *Forge or strengthen community collaborations, especially with tribal nations and communities.* A heritage framework emphasizes longer-term relationships with stakeholder communities, in distinction from a more transactional relationship with clients in the development sector. The ability to equitably forge and build reciprocal relations will be a skill in demand for program alumni. But across similar programs, we have ethical concerns about how to foster student learning in community engagement practice without treating communities as mere laboratories. The solution lies in having institutional partnerships with communities that can be nurtured and maintained, while students participate and learn in the shorter term of their degree programs. This will contribute also in the longer-term to the recruitment of students from community partners who are underrepresented in the heritage field as practitioners.

- 2) Address the staffing situation for instruction (shorter term). University administration is clear that hiring to replace faculty lines lost to retirement is unlikely in the near future, but there are strategies to pursue in assuring that program quality does not suffer in the meantime.
- a) *Fund adjunct instruction*. For some of the more specifically praxis-oriented courses, ASC staff might be excellent candidates.
 - b) *Expand core program faculty* to include more Anthropology faculty, and faculty from other relevant departments. It is evident that some faculty in the Anthropology department do not necessarily see they have any connection to the program, yet within the capacious heritage framework could contribute. For example, the higher-enrolling Human Development program courses could be encouraged to consider how historical trauma relates to the conditions and life-course of marginalized communities, and how those heritage work includes the recognition, truth-telling and reconciliation of such trauma. Program TAships could contribute to the development of this course content. Continue also to connect to affiliated faculty in other departments offering courses that may support the CRM student degree curriculum. While the coverage of core seminars may not be impacted by these affiliations, affiliated faculty may serve as an expanded pool of thesis chairs.
 - c) *Loosening program requirements*, or rather making them more flexible in their fulfillment, can contribute to the timely completion of MA students while lessening the pressure to staff core seminars yearly. As noted above, this change is not only about program efficiency, but also responds to the changing focus to heritage frameworks.
- 3) View the ASC as a major asset of the program, and work to bring it into closer alignment with the academic mission. While historically pressure from university administration had made it desirable to protect the ASC by distancing it from the academic program, new university leadership appears to be taking a much different stance. The ASC is an evident source for student support through employment, experience through internships, and theses through extant collections and projects. A realignment could make all of these resources more robust. It is strongly recommended that the university administration prioritize policy changes that would help bring the ASC into closer relation with the academic program by facilitating student employment, promoting staff leadership and development, and creating pathways for student engagement that contribute to credited learning and curriculum.
- 4) Cultivate more cross-departmental partnerships, particularly with ethnic studies areas as they are critical to a heritage focus. The California public university system is a leader and model for all others in their legal mandate requiring all undergraduate students complete coursework in Ethnic Studies. Graduate students who seek to learn methods of community engagement with racialized and marginalized communities should similarly

be encouraged to take ethnic studies courses, and may benefit greatly from mentoring and advising by faculty in those departments and programs. At SSU this includes the American Multicultural Studies department, the Native American Studies program, and the Chicano and Latino Studies department. Partnership and collaboration with these departments and programs may begin with curriculum, but the program might also benefit from proposing joint appointment faculty hiring with a focus on heritage preservation.

5) Long-term aim for hiring to bring program and department faculty numbers back up.

Even in the event that the program is successful in expanding its core faculty through affiliations with other departments and programs, if the administrative home for it is in Anthropology there will be a need for additional faculty in that department. Leadership and coordination is best undertaken there, and thus there is a threshold number of faculty needed to assure both adequate curricular coverage and administrative service. The program should not delay in building the case for hiring even if it may not happen in the near future. I would recommend in particular recognizing the long history of historical archaeologists as core to the program, and even beyond the national reputation of the SSU Anthropology department in historical archaeology from the scholarship of Adrian Praetzellis and Margaret Purser. With the retirement of Dr. Purser that specialization is lost. Another approach might be to learn from community collaborators what kind of specialization they might hope the program can hire in.