

Oregon State University
Anthropology Undergraduate Program Review
Report of the Review Committee

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Introduction

On May 29 and 30, 2014 the review committee participated in a site visit to review the undergraduate program in Anthropology at Oregon State University. The committee met with the Anthropology program coordinator, the head of the School of Language, Culture, and Society, the Associate Dean of the College of Liberal Arts, research and instructional faculty, and groups of undergraduate and graduate students as well as touring research and teaching laboratories. The site visit closed with a short meeting with the Associate Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and the Senior Vice Provost to review initial impressions and recommendations.

Overview. The undergraduate program in Anthropology at Oregon State University provides a vibrant curricular and co-curricular experience that addresses real-world applications and facilitates student engagement and success. Advising of undergraduate majors is a particular strength of the program. Faculty in all areas of concentration are outstanding in teaching, research, and leadership initiatives. Anthropology program faculty have come to terms with the recent college wide reorganization and are capitalizing on new opportunities for interdisciplinary sharing of expertise and resources. In truth, given the backdrop of limited faculty and resources, the overall strength and productivity of the program and its faculty are very impressive.

Outline of review team recommendations. The following is a brief outline of review team recommendations. The Self Study document developed by Anthropology faculty includes an insightful list of recommendations on pages 93-96 which are strongly endorsed by this review committee. The recommendations listed in this document are intended to both underscore and supplement those recommendations. More details are given in the body of the report.

Primary Recommendations:

1. Develop a strategic plan for the program looking 5 to 10 years into the future.
2. Increase administrative support staff to give full time support to the program.
3. Increase faculty strength in the Archaeology and Biocultural sub-programs.
4. Enhance the introductory experience in anthropology for students.
5. Enhance the educational experience for Ecampus students by both involving regular faculty and increasing experiential learning opportunities.
6. Enhance available laboratory facilities; i.e. add an archaeology teaching laboratory.
7. Further develop direct assessment strategies for undergraduate majors.

Detailed Findings

This section opens with a brief factual outline of programmatic attributes (degree programs, administrative structure, faculty and staff, students, and facilities). A listing of strengths and weaknesses is given and then followed by detailed recommendations. Throughout, the review committee has relied on the excellent Self Study document developed by Anthropology faculty. The Self Study document itself highlights key weaknesses and includes positive recommendations for correction of shortcomings. As underscored by many of the following recommendations, the review committee strongly supports the findings given in the Self Study document.

Undergraduate Degree Programs. The Anthropology program offers both BA and BS degrees, with 4 different concentrations (Options) possible; Cultural/Linguistic Anthropology, Biocultural Anthropology, Archaeology/ Physical Anthropology, and, via Ecampus only, General Anthropology. It should be especially noted that the Ecampus Option in General Anthropology gives a uniquely wide-spread geographic foot-print to the undergraduate program.

The structure, degree requirements, and learning outcomes for all these options have been recently revised in a purposeful way. This review report pertains broadly to the evolving program. Indeed, revisions already initiated by faculty address some of the recommendations listed below.

Administrative structure. Anthropology at Oregon State University exists within the School of Language, Culture, and Society (SLCS), which resides as a sister school within the College of Liberal Arts. There are two leadership positions within the program, the Anthropology Program Coordinator and the Graduate Program Director. The undergraduate program is managed jointly by the Anthropology Program Coordinator and three key faculty committees. The Anthropology Program Coordinator has broad responsibilities in the undergraduate program with duties ranging from strategic planning, , handling student complaints and coordinating teaching evaluations, as well as maintaining involvement in course instruction.

Faculty. The Anthropology program is delivered by 11.5 tenure stream faculty, divided fairly evenly between 3 ranks, augmented by 7 instructors with appointment levels of at least .5 FTE. There are 2.5 tenure stream faculty in Archaeology, 2 in Biocultural Anthropology, and 7 in Cultural and Linguistic Anthropology. As documented in the Self Study report, all tenure stream faculty are active in research and contribute in integral ways to the Anthropology undergraduate program. There is also an advisor (0.5 FTE) for on-campus students and an Ecampus advisor (1.0 FTE). Some instruction of lower division and Ecampus classes devolves on graduate students.

Students. There are currently just under 300 undergraduate Anthropology majors, with on-campus majors being apparently slightly outnumbered by Ecampus majors. After a rapid expansion in the number of majors starting in 2008, numbers now seem to have roughly stabilized. The program growth is illustrated by comparing the on-average 27 Bachelors degrees awarded annually during 2004-2011 to the 62 Bachelors awarded in 2013. (Ecampus students received 23 of the 2013 Bachelors degrees.) Some of the growth in the number of Anthropology majors mirrors

growth in OSU's on-campus student population with the significant remainder attributable to Ecampus enrollment. As detailed in the Self Study document, the profile of the Ecampus majors differs in substantial ways from that of on-campus majors. In recent years about 1/3 of Bachelors recipients have participated in an internship during their undergraduate tenure.

Facilities. The facilities in Waldo Hall include office, conference, classroom and laboratory space, with the latter including both research and teaching laboratories. All available facilities are heavily used by faculty and students with some lab space serving double duty as graduate student offices.

Program Assessment Practices. Assessment plans and practices for Anthropology have been somewhat in flux. After recent evolution, the current plan is to use an indirect assessment, carried out by surveying graduating seniors, to evaluate two of the four listed learning outcomes. The remaining two learning outcomes are assessed directly via targeted coursework; the anthropology methods course and a capstone course. Currently, assessment plans are common across all concentrations.

Programmatic Strengths. The following strengths particularly stood out to the review team. This listing is not intended to be exhaustive.

1. The Program provides a vibrant curricular and co-curricular experience that addresses real-world applications (an applied focus), that in turn, facilitates student engagement and success.
2. The Program is composed of outstanding tenure-track faculty in all areas of concentration, as demonstrated in teaching (reflected in student evaluations – eSET Self Study p. 65) and as demonstrated in successful researchers (as noted in awards, honors, and leadership positions, publications, and grants and contracts). The Program's instructors are also noted for their excellence. Overall the faculty bring to students a wide spectrum of personal specialization and focal areas. The diversity and range of opportunities offered to students, especially in the Biocultural and Archaeology concentrations, are very impressive.
3. The Program offers an insightful and timely seminar series – Tan Sack (Self Study p. 38).
4. The overall range and quality of facilities and labs is commendable (Self Study p. 40). It is advantageous that most labs are located in a single accessible and inviting facility (Waldo Hall) with the Archaeometry Lab being necessarily the exception.
5. As especially noted by students, the Program and its personnel offer commendable advising and academic support services for both for on-campus and Ecampus students. The quality of the advising was emphasized by both undergraduates and GTAs.
6. For incoming students, there is an evident “welcoming atmosphere and strong sense of community”. An appreciation for this atmosphere is universally expressed by staff, undergraduates, graduate students, and

faculty. This quality of the program is clearly facilitated by the effective communication and proactive leadership of administrators and faculty.

7. The high quality of undergraduate students, both on campus and Ecampus, is to be acknowledged. That quality is expressed in awards won and the placement of OSU Anthropology graduates in graduate school and professional employment tracks.
8. The administrators and faculty must be applauded for their excellent leadership within the Program, the School and the College. In particular the faculty are doing “a lot with little.” They have been pro-active, acknowledging and identifying challenges and issues, and addressing them, e.g., in developing plans to implement bridging courses between the 100/200 level and the 400 level, consideration of a yearly teaching load for faculty that can include one Ecampus option, and developing a two-year cycle of course offerings, allowing students and faculty to chart course plans more effectively.
9. The faculty seem adjusted to and satisfied with the new organizational structure. As it has resulted in closer links with other programs in the School, greater interdisciplinary and sharing of expertise and resources has resulted.
10. The Program offers a high number of Oregon State University’s Baccalaureate Core courses, influencing a significant portion of all university students with an anthropological perspective and experience.
11. The Program does not seem to suffer from “anthro-silos” syndrome, i.e., a split and tension between archaeology and cultural sub-fields.
12. There are strong offerings in the archaeology sub-field given the size of the faculty. In particular, three great labs (Archaeometry, Historic Archaeology, and Pacific-Slope Archaeology) are offered with classroom space for students to work with historic archaeology collections. Additionally there are excellent field school opportunities. It is impressive that 2.5 faculty can offer three diverse fields of experience.
13. There are strong offerings in the Biocultural sub-program which entails physical anthropology, medical anthropology and global health. There are two unique labs housed by this group – in human osteology and in women’s health. There is strong student-faculty collaboration in a wide range of medical anthropology research activities. It is impressive that 2 faculty can offer such a wide range of courses and research opportunities.
14. Bottom-line: this is a very strong program, of which OSU should be very proud.

Programmatic Weaknesses.

1. The office support staff for SCLS is too small, specifically staff committed to the Anthropology program.
2. There is no clear strategic plan for the undergraduate program (and for the Anthropology program as a whole).

3. There is a need for more experiential opportunities for students enrolled in the cultural anthropology concentration. Such opportunities could include internships, additional laboratory experiences, and more regularly-offered summer field schools.
4. The Anthropology program maintains a high rate of retention among its graduate students. Students appear to often stay for multiple degrees (often Bachelors, Masters and Ph.D.) and are later hired as Instructors. This can lead to GTAs lacking broad and differentiated perspectives of the discipline. Additionally this can potentially reduce the effectiveness of GTAs in teaching undergraduates and reduce their prospects for future hiring as teaching faculty elsewhere.
5. Both the Archaeology and Biocultural sub-programs have insufficient faculty strength given their demands in both teaching and research. There is large student demand in both of these sub-programs, but they only have 2.5 and 2 FTE regular faculty respectively. This over-extends faculty and makes both sub-programs particularly fragile and vulnerable. In either sub-program a single faculty loss would be crippling.
6. Currently the Linguistics sub-field is poorly represented in the program curriculum.
7. GTAs seem to have an extensive and perhaps excessive role in teaching Ecampus courses. In particular, it seems that some first year GTAs are immediately incorporated into the Ecampus instructional effort.
8. There is no classroom or adequate laboratory space to work with the prehistoric archaeological collections and technology available in the Pacific-Slope Archaeology research lab.

Programmatic Recommendations. The External Review Team supports and endorses recommendations made by OSU Anthropology faculty as given in the Self Study (pp.93-97). The following recommendations are targeted to both enhance the existing program and address the weaknesses listed above.

1. **Additional support staff FTE.** Provide the program with an additional 0.5 FTE for office support so that full time support staff are available to program faculty. This should further enhance productivity.
2. **Strategic Plan.** Given the confluence of changes impacting the anthropology baccalaureate program, including administrative restructuring, curricular revision (pending Fall 2014 Category I approval), modification of Learning Outcomes, rapid Ecampus enrollment increases, and in coordination with the University's new Strategic Plan 3.0, (2014-18 *Focus on Excellence*), the College's own Strategic Plan (in development) and the recommendations coming from this External Review, the Anthropology Program is perfectly positioned to "take greater ownership" of their destiny by formulating its own Strategic Plan. From the External Review, it is apparent that the Anthropology Program can readily address and build upon each of the three University Strategic Plan goals and each of its three signature areas of distinction. The reviewers recommend that the Anthropology Program

formulate its own Strategic Plan in consultation and collaboration with key stake holders (including alumni, students, faculty, staff, administration, and associated agencies). The goal will be to address the desired position of the Program in five years, as well as looking farther ahead to the next external review (8-10 years). In addition to specific goals, it will be beneficial to provide a plan for achieving these goals by also providing objectives and benchmarks that are linked to measurable metrics for assessing periodic progress. The Strategic Plan should provide a vision that will serve to guide the program as recommendations for change are instituted. The role and direction of Ecampus learning should be highlighted within the strategic plan given the rapid increase of Ecampus majors and the dominant role in enrollment, funding, and representation of the program in the discipline.

The strategic plan should also include some general strategies in regard to future retirements. To help facilitate the continuity of curricular and co-curricular expertise and corresponding infrastructural support, plan for anticipated retirements with appropriate tenure-track positions.

Archaeology is particularly vulnerable due to the heavy emphasis on historic archaeology in the concentration. In the event of retirement, will the program continue to offer this specialization or reorient the program? If there is a change in direction, dedication of laboratory space and coursework will need to be reconsidered.

3. **Archaeology FTE.** An additional FTE in Archaeology is needed. There are currently 2.5 FTE faculty in this sub-field. Given the high proportion (50%) of majors graduating in this concentration, the strong regional grounding, and the high research productivity of the group, an additional research faculty position is warranted.
4. **Biocultural FTE.** An additional FTE is needed to help support instruction in the Biocultural concentration. A hire should be targeted to bring in an externally granted Ph.D.
5. **Interdisciplinary collaboration.** There are already considerable interdisciplinary collaborations; this review recommends that the Program emphasize even greater interdisciplinary collaborations with programs and departments within the School, College and University, and with local and state-wide agencies and communities. Such interdisciplinary initiatives could be in the following areas.
 - a. The Program's linguistic curricular offerings could be improved through development of linkages with faculty in the World Languages and Cultures Program. This would allow the role and range of linguistics to fulfill the desired offering of all four sub-fields within Anthropology.
 - b. Increase biocultural and medical anthropology experiential learning opportunities through linkages with local health agencies and increase cultural experiential learning opportunities through linkages with e.g. local food banks.
 - c. Build STEM connections, especially with engineering and the sciences.

- d. Build links between cultural anthropology links and the Ethnic Studies Program, especially encouraging collaborations with Native American scholars and by extension connections to the various Native American communities throughout the Pacific Northwest. (This has occurred with some archaeological initiatives, but less so with ethnographic collaborations.)

6. Learning Experiences.

- a. **First and Second-Year Student Learning Experience.** It was noted by this review team that Anthropology has very gifted faculty, but they have only marginal involvement with teaching introductory courses. An initiative to assist in greater first and second-year student exposure to the profession of anthropology, and thus increase enrollment and retention of majors, could include for example, periodic guest lectures on appropriate topics as a regular part of the content of Anth 100-200 level courses in addition to the existing infusion of prerecorded “Ted Talk” type videos by cultural anthropology faculty. This could potentially enhance both on-campus and Ecampus introductory courses. Also consider recording the Tan Sack lecture series and archiving on-line as a resource for on-campus and Ecampus students.
- b. **Bridging into the Senior-Year Student Learning Experience.** Though changes in 300 level Anthropology offerings have already been initiated (Anth 350, Anth 345 and Anth 370), it is recommended that additional 300-level courses be developed to help “bridge” the experiences of entry level students with the curricular expectations of the 400 level courses. One specific recommendation would be to create a common research methods course required of all majors, both on campus and Ecampus. Such a course would further address the bridging issue, provide a common learning environment for introducing best-practices in social science, science and humanities research design, and also introduce students to the four-field issues associated with professional ethical challenges. In so providing such a curriculum at this stage of academic growth, student learning competencies relating to Learning Outcome #4 could be addressed prior to enrollment in Anth 475.

In the interests of stressing depth over breadth, consider restructuring Peoples of the World classes (ANTH 311-319) to focus on diversification within cultural anthropology rather than a culture area approach.

The program has highlighted the need to reduce the split-level (slash) undergraduate-graduate courses. These classes have been valued by undergraduate anthropology students however due to the opportunity to interact and learn from graduate students. Perhaps an increase in

mentoring opportunities between graduate and undergraduate students could compensate for the reduced contact in shared courses.

- c. **Experiential Learning Opportunities** (echoing Self Study Recommendation #9 p. 96). While experiential learning opportunities are well established in the Archaeology and Biocultural concentrations and generally available for the Cultural Anthropology concentration, additional opportunities could be developed. There is a need for regular offering of an ethnographic summer field school each summer, and more hands-on internships for Cultural Anthropology students. A teaching lab for these students should also be considered. Students and faculty also voiced concern around the lack of Study Abroad opportunities. This is of particular impact to students in the Cultural Anthropology concentration where opportunities for participation in research as well as applied and in-service learning are relatively limited. Further links with the Office of International Programs are warranted.
- d. **Experiential Learning for Ecampus students.** The Ecampus student experience in applied and experiential coursework is not now comparable to that of on-campus students. The reviewers recommend working with Ecampus staff in developing more accessible experiential learning opportunities (field school, labs, internships, etc.) and incorporating more “hands-on-experiences” in the online curriculum. This could entail developing hybrid courses, with short-term lab sessions held during the summer (as is being developed as a pilot course already). Additionally, a comprehensive listing of summer archaeological and ethnographic field experiences sponsored by other colleges and universities throughout the region could be developed together with standard articulation to OSU credit. Ecampus students could then enroll in one of these opportunities with transparent transfer credit articulation at OSU. Also consider inviting Ecampus students to attend an optional on-campus Anthropology Day to facilitate interaction with fellow students on campus as well as with faculty and GTAs. Further, brain-storming with the experts in Ecampus may lead to some innovative opportunities to enhance Ecampus student experiential learning; there are new online pedagogical formats being explored and developed on a national level.
- e. **Availability of Course Offerings.** The impression of students is that more anthropology courses are offered during Winter term than Fall and Spring terms, resulting in some students needing to enroll in Ecampus courses or extending their degree-to-completion time. It is recommended that required courses for the on-campus major be equally dispersed between all three terms. As already initiated, a two-year plan for course offerings will assist students in charting their plan of study. If possible, required core classes should be offered annually.
- f. **Ecampus faculty contact.** We applaud the Program’s initiative to increase tenure steam faculty teaching Ecampus courses via considering an Ecampus class as part of their regular teaching load. This will provide

online students with greater exposure to experienced faculty and connect them at a deeper level to more educational opportunities.

g. Archaeology classroom lab. Provide a classroom that can be used as an archaeology lab with layout space and computers for archaeological and statistical analysis. Students need access to both classroom laboratory experience and up-to-date supporting technology. This classroom lab space could be shared with all Anthropology sub-fields.

h. Archaeology curricular suggestions.

- i. The primary job opportunities for students graduating in Anthropology with a concentration in archaeology are in the field of cultural resource management. We recommend that some currently missing supporting job skills (e.g. compass use, map reading, and pedestrian survey methodology) be added to classroom curriculum. An obvious candidate course is ANTH 497 (Archaeology Field Methods). This course should also be offered with greater frequency.
- ii. Current undergraduate classes in archaeology appear to lack discussion of archaeological theory. While ANTH 423 (Method and Theory in Historic Archaeology) offers some theoretical foundation to students, this class appears to be rarely offered (once during the last five years). Consider adding a theory component to existing archaeology classes as appropriate. In particular, consider offering a theory course via Ecampus.

7. Assessment Strategy. This review acknowledges the importance and value of the current “indirect measures” being introduced and used by the Anthropology Program, e.g., Senior Exit Survey, Alumni Survey and individual interview during advising (for Learning Outcomes #1 and #2), and Anth 475 and “methods courses” (not specifically identified in the Self Study p. 82) (for Learning Outcomes #3 and #4). It is recommended that the Program also develop a “direct measure” curricular assessment component to its strategy for assessing student learning outcomes competencies. In addition to continued use of a Senior Exit and Alumni Surveys, and faculty-student interviews, all indirect measures, consider developing assessment artifacts, a direct measure.

One direct measure option could entail assessing key curricular longitudinal curricular points required of all students, e.g., Anth 110, Anth 370, and culminating in their Capstone course, Anth 475. At each of these points, assign short essay (of 1,200 word assessment artifacts) designed to allow students to address each of the Program’s Learning Outcomes. Develop a rubric for the Program’s Learning Outcomes (not unlike the AAC&U VALUE Rubrics <http://www.aacu.org/VALUE/rubrics/>). With a small team of faculty, instructors, and graduate students, the essays could then be annually normed and scored, providing a direct measure of student learning competency growth. As a writing assignment critical to the course, consider

maintaining WIC status for Anth 370, but also extending this important initiative to Anth 475.

In addition, the Program could consider an e-portfolio approach, also a direct measurement, as a way to assess student learning competencies. Though software costs for implementing an e-portfolio approach would have to be considered.

With this combination of indirect and direct measures, a more accurate and in-depth assessment can be made of student learning competencies and possible curricular adjustments that could be made, a “full-circle model.”

As part of the Assessment Strategy, and with the rapid increase in Ecampus students and majors, develop a comparable but adjusted set of assessment tools (Senior Exit Survey, Assessment Artifacts) for Ecampus students that would address the same questions and competencies as that with on-campus students, but also address questions relating to the unique pedagogical delivery of instruction and support services of the Ecampus curriculum. In differentiating Ecampus from on-campus student experiences and levels of competencies, the Ecampus students and their curriculum can be assessed and, if necessary, adjusted more effectively.