

May 1, 2012

Dean's Response to the Program Review of the Anthropology Program

I appreciate the thought and effort that went into the Program Review Team's report, and the Anthropology faculty's self-study and response to the report.

The Review Team found that the Anthropology Program is a vibrant, high-quality four-field program that delivers a rigorous curriculum taught by an experienced faculty. They note a strong esprit de corps among students and faculty (including adjunct faculty), and very good experiential learning opportunities for students.

Their principal concern, shared in the faculty response, is the relatively small size of the Anthropology faculty, its degree of reliance on adjunct faculty, and the potential impact of factors such as sabbaticals on the small program's teaching capacity. A program size of four faculty is not rare in Anthropology; I worked for ten years in a program of that size that had a major. But it is true that Anthropology enrollments and majors have been increasing in most recent years, and that, before recent budgetary reverses, there were discussions with the former Dean about adding an Anthropology faculty position. Unfortunately, the budget cuts of recent years in the College were achieved by not replacing a number of departing faculty. Several departments are "short" a faculty member, and they too are facing rising enrollments. And while budgetary stability has, hopefully, been achieved, there is no prospect in the near term for an increase to the College salary budget which would allow for creation of a new position. Future retirements in the College offer the possibility of salary savings that might support additional hiring, and the benefit to the Anthropology program and its students of an additional position will certainly be a factor I will keep in mind.

I will address several other issues raised in the report and response:

- The team concluded that in the General Anthropology track, there was more room for a strong public face in the community. The faculty response noted an already current practice of community research in the Anthropology Research Methods course. They also are intensifying their community efforts, notably in upcoming grant-funded participation in an after-school program in Ogden junior high schools.
- Regarding the "lack of remuneration for study-abroad programs" cited in the report: The model for learning-abroad trips led by faculty at WSU is similar to what I have seen at other institutions, where such trips are self-supporting. A budget, including remuneration for faculty, is drawn up, and a minimum number of student participants is specified for the trip to be self-supporting. Sometimes a faculty member, rather than see a trip

canceled, will voluntarily reduce or eliminate their stipend so that the trip can go forward with fewer than the specified minimum number of students. This is not the same as a lack of remuneration. I am not familiar with any models in which there is a source of funding for faculty remuneration apart from student payments for learning-abroad trips.

- Regarding program content, I was unclear about the Review Team's finding that the four-field commitment did not extend beyond the introductory level, particularly when the faculty response noted the variety of course offerings available to students.
- The Review Team did not provide details in support of their assertion that recent, "cutting-edge" research was insufficiently stressed in cultural anthropology course, a conclusion with which the faculty response took issue.
- To the Review Team's conclusion that links with alumni need to be strengthened, the faculty responded with several concrete steps that they are taking in this area.
- Similarly, the Faculty Response notes that they will be developing direct measures of student learning for their assessment program. I encourage them to consult with the Director of Institutional Effectiveness, who stands ready to assist them.

I believe that the Review Team report correctly identified and stressed the considerable strengths of the Anthropology Program, while making a number of useful suggestions. I support the positive responses of the Program's faculty to these suggestions.

Francis B. Harrold

Dean, College of Social and Behavioral Sciences