

**ANTHROPOLOGY PROGRAM FACULTY RESPONSE
TO EVALUATION TEAM REPORT
April 2012**

The Anthropology faculty appreciates the care given by the evaluation team in making its review. The team's overview of the program, quoted here in part, clarifies their relative ranking of the strengths and concerns discussed within this response:

Overview and Summary

The committee's main impressions of the program can be summarized in three basic points:

- *The program is of exceptionally high quality, likely one of the most rigorous, vibrant and engaging majors on campus.*
- *This is all the more remarkable for the chronic under-staffing evident. That such a strong program has been built and maintained is a true testament to the quality of the faculty, both full time and adjunct.*
- *Thus, our principal concern about the program is whether its current high standards and high enrollments can be maintained at current staffing levels, especially considering the impact of faculty leaves, retirements, etc.*

These are the three fundamental impressions the team derived from our site visit and review of available documents. We also found weaknesses in the program, but these are small in comparison to the strengths.

Strengths: The Anthropology faculty **concur** with the team's identification of the **program's primary strengths:**

- (1) the esprit de corps of the anthropology faculty, staff, students, alumni and community partners;
- (2) the solid commitment to the four fields program and emphasis on theory and research, with appropriate assessment and planning;
- (3) the emphasis on high impact learning, including fieldwork and study abroad courses; and
- (4) the Archaeology program's combination of academic rigor, fieldwork, high public profile, and strong working relationships with agencies such as the USDA Forest Service.

Weaknesses:

(1) "The program is understaffed, hence overworked...[The team's] chief concern is the small number of full-time faculty, which increases the program's vulnerability in the event that faculty are unavailable to teach a full course load (e.g. due to illness, leave, administrative duties, retirement)."

a. Program Response: **Agree**

i. Rationale: We agree that we need additional full-time, preferably tenure-track faculty in order to be able to respond to our increasing student demand and our programmatic complexity. Our number of SCHs and Majors are rising steadily, yet we remain at the same faculty FTE level (less than 4) that we had before the Major was established in 2000.

b. Action Plan and Timeline: We reopened the discussion of a new faculty line again with the Dean of Social and Behavioral Sciences in AY 2011-2012 and will continue to pursue the topic.

c. Assessment of Action Plan and Evidence of Results: Following the last two program reviews, discussion on this topic with the Dean of the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences led to Anthropology being scheduled to receive an additional faculty line contingent on availability of funds and favorable needs assessment. The subsequent budget climate since 2008 has prevented implementation.

(2) "...the lack of full-time faculty means the program is increasingly dependent on adjuncts... Although the program has done an exceptional job of incorporating adjunct faculty, and the adjunct

faculty are generally of very high quality, the availability of adjuncts is understandably less predictable than for full-time faculty.”

a. Program Response: **Agree**

i. Rationale: We agree that increased use of adjuncts is a fact and potential problem, given both a growing number of Majors and a growing student body. We note that 2010-12 was anomalous due to a two-year leave granted to one tenured faculty-member, but we feel the Committee correctly underscores the vulnerability of our small program to faculty illness, sabbaticals or other types of extended leave, given the unpredictable nature of adjunct availability.

b. Action Plan and Timeline: We renewed our request for another full-time tenured faculty line in autumn 2011 to the Dean of the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences and will continue to make that case to the WSU administration.

c. Assessment of Action Plan and Evidence of Results: There are no results to date.

(3) “Lack of remuneration for study abroad faculty makes that aspect of the program vulnerable to the willingness of faculty or adjuncts to take on additional, uncompensated work. Because study abroad is a critical part of an undergraduate education in Anthropology, the institution needs to financially strengthen and solidify support for this program.”

a. Program Response: **Agree**

i. Rationale: We agree that the study abroad program can only be stabilized by the university’s willingness to fiscally support faculty participation. This is particularly true in a small program like ours, which cannot give release time from normal teaching loads without compromising other core elements of the program.

b. Action Plan and Timeline: Because study abroad programs must be run through Continuing Education, the source of faculty support is unclear. We will pursue this through the Dean of Social and Behavioral Sciences, Continuing Education and the Provost’s Office.

c. Assessment of Action Plan and Evidence of Results: Earlier requests for faculty funding to both Continuing Education and the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences have been denied. There are no further results to date.

(4) “Although the Archaeology Program has a strong public face in the community, the evidence available to the committee did not indicate a similar profile in the [General] Anthropology track.”

a. Program Response: **Somewhat Agree**

i. Rationale: We agree a strong public program is important. Because the General track is more diverse, the students are more diffuse in their interests. We note that there are several opportunities for students in the General track to become involved in community projects. These include our Anthropology Research Methods class, which has conducted research in the greater Ogden area, including at an Ogden middle school, since the class’s inception. Non-archaeology students have also worked with the Community Involvement Center and local museums and refugee programs through internships and Reading and Projects courses, and note as well the Anthropology Club’s public programs and engagement in fund-raising for aid projects in Guatemala and Rwanda and on the Navajo Reservation. Students have spoken about the discipline in high schools, and faculty participate in the annual Ogden Greek Festival, local science fairs, the S4 science project for Ogden high school students, and as speakers for community organizations.

b. Action Plan and Timeline: We plan to continue to have our Anthropology Research Methods class conduct community-based research projects within the greater Ogden area. We are currently investigating further involvement with the CIC in service-learning and community-based research and will continue to seek and build opportunities for faculty and students to use their anthropological skills both in and outside the local community. Future plans include involving Anthropology majors in after-school programs at Ogden middle schools to teach

about anthropology at this level.

- c. Assessment of Action Plan and Evidence of Results: Beginning in Autumn, 2012, students will participate in teaching about anthropology in a science after-school program in ten area middle schools. There are no other new results to date.

In addition to strengths and weaknesses, the team also listed these concerns and recommendations:

Review of the content of the program:

(1) "...our review of the catalog listings leave us with the strong impression that, while the faculty are clearly committed to the four-field approach, this commitment does not carry through the curriculum in a systematic way beyond the introductory level, especially for cultural anthropology."

a. Program Response: **Disagree**

i. Rationale: We note first that the four-fields approach refers to anthropology's integration of the four subfields vital to the discipline: cultural anthropology, linguistics, biological anthropology and archaeology. Of these, students here may choose either the specialized Archaeology track or the General Anthropology track, which is primarily cultural, but also including linguistic and biological anthropology. The variety of course offerings presented in the 6-year period reviewed is proportional to the interests of our majors as measured by their chosen major "tracks. Each student is advised by the faculty member with the appropriate expertise. The program is appropriately balanced between the two tracks, offering a 1:3 ratio in faculty and subfield coursework offered to meet a similar 1:3 level of student demand. Students in both tracks engage in fieldwork, internships and study abroad, and present conference papers.

b. Action Plan and timeline: Not applicable.

c. Assessment of Action Plan and Evidence of Results: Not applicable.

(2) "...coursework readings, especially in cultural anthropology, emphasize classical work; exposure to the most recent, cutting edge scholarship is limited."

a. Program Response: **Disagree**

i. Rationale: Recent work in the field was examined in all twenty-five of the cultural anthropology courses offered during the evaluation period, using current ethnographies of many types, journal articles from important thinkers in the field, and alternative ideas from outside the field, including writings by the "others" themselves. Students are encouraged to examine and discuss how they might use these materials in constructing their own careers, both inside and outside of anthropology, and we provide them opportunities each summer in study abroad to encounter other cultures directly. We use the Special Topics and Seminar course-numbers to provide freshness and vitality. Exposure to high quality and current cultural anthropological thinking and work is central to the program.

b. Action Plan and timeline: Not applicable.

c. Assessment of Action Plan and Evidence of Results: Not applicable.

Sensitivity to community and professional needs.

(1) "Because WSU's four- fields approach diverges slightly from the lower division curricula in other state schools," we suggest a written policy guiding articulation of courses between WSU and other state institutions.

a. Program Response: **Disagree**

i. Rationale: We disagree that there is a need for this. WSU's Anthropology Program fully participates and cooperates in the articulation process of the Utah State Higher Education system. Our articulation has been provided electronically throughout the period under evaluation and is

constantly updated in the USHE system. Whenever a course from another USHE school does not have a match in our program, we accept that course as an anthropology elective.

b. Action plan and timeline: Not applicable.

c. Assessment of Action Plan and Evidence of Results: Not applicable.

(2) "...there is no data to indicate what...fields of employment [graduates enter] and how many students are employed after graduation...and what levels of success they achieve."

a. Program Response: **Agree**

i. Rationale: We **agree** that mechanisms should be developed. The current status is not a case of no data, but of limited, more anecdotal data collected to date. It should be noted that the Anthropology Major was first approved in April 2000 and is now statistically significant for collecting meaningful data.

b. Action plan and timeline: We are currently working with the Alumni and Development Offices to update contact information for our alumni. In addition, we are developing an alumni survey to collect systematic data on our graduates, to be sent out in AY 2012-2013. Also, in AY 2012-13, we plan to develop a social-networking site for Anthropology alumni to allow them to remain connected with one another and with the program.

c. Assessment of Action Plan and Evidence of Results: Yet to be determined.

Sufficiency of the evidence of student learning.

(1) The specific program assessment survey and learning outcomes strategies should be fine-tuned or new ones developed.

a. Program Response: **Agree**

i. Rationale: We agree that both learning outcomes and evaluations should be re-designed to utilize direct measures, rather than the indirect measures used to date. In addition we note one misunderstanding of exit interview data on the acquisition of research methods skills that was contained within this section of the team's report. The average rating for the research methods class over the 6 years of data is 4.19, 4 meaning High, 5 Very High, which is not anomalous among program course ratings.

b. Action Plan and timeline: We will develop the needed direct measures prior to the next re-accreditation site visit.

c. Assessment of Action Plan and Evidence of Results: No results available yet.