



THE GRADUATE SCHOOL

UNIVERSITY of WASHINGTON

July 22, 2011

To: Ana Mari Cauce, Dean, College of Arts & Sciences
Judith Howard, Divisional Dean for Social Sciences, College of Arts and Sciences

From: Gerald J. Baldasty, Vice Provost and Dean
James S. Antony, Associate Vice Provost and Associate Dean for Academic Affairs

RE: Department of Anthropology 2010-2011 Review

This memorandum outlines the recommendations from the Department of Anthropology academic program review. Detailed comments can be found in the documents that were a part of the following formal review proceedings:

- Charge meeting between review committee, department, and administrators (August 18, 2010)
- Department self-study (August 25, 2010)
- Site visit (November 1-2, 2010)
- Review committee report (December 7, 2010)
- GPSS report (December 12, 2010)
- Anthropology response to the review committee report (January 26, 2011)
- Graduate School Council consideration of review (May 5, 2011)

The review committee consisted of:

Stewart Tolnay, Professor, UW Department of Sociology (Committee Chair)]
Gail Nomura, Associate Professor, UW Department of American Ethnic Studies
Craig ZumBrunnen, Professor, UW Department of Geography
William Leonard, Professor, Department of Anthropology, Northwestern University
Miriam Stark, Professor, Department of Anthropology, University of Hawai'i
Robert Weller, Professor and Chair, Department of Anthropology, Boston University

A subcommittee of the Graduate School Council presented findings and recommendations to the full Council at its meeting on May 5, 2011. Specific comments and recommendations regarding the department and its degree programs include the following:

Program Strengths

The Department is organized and virtually all activity is structured around the three sub-disciplines:

1) Archaeology, 2) Biocultural Anthropology, and 3) Sociocultural Anthropology. Its strengths include an impressive degree of collegiality, progress, and improvement currently exists, particularly salient in the wake of recent significant departmental tensions. Examples of this include the following:

- Creation of the undergraduate major track in Medical Anthropology and Global Health (MAGH) has generated considerable excitement among students, faculty, and staff.
- Introduction of the Epistemology Seminar has brought faculty and students from the different sub-disciplines together, has helped to communicate the exciting things that are going on within the sub-disciplines, and appears to be having an important cohering effect.
- The Biocultural sub-discipline is one of the top in the country and is thriving. Since the review, the Department successfully hired an anthropological geneticist, which is an importance advance.

- The Sociocultural sub-discipline overall has significant strengths and a successful record. It is engaged in a constructive and forward-looking self-assessment that should prove valuable for planning and implementing curriculum changes, and for identifying priorities for future recruitment.
- The Department has links to other academic units, such as the Center for the Study of Demography and Ecology, which provide strong assets for collaboration and grant-based activities. Leadership and collaborative roles within the university and community are areas of strength.
- It has benefited from strong recent leadership, and is making substantial and productive progress in restoring the momentum observed in the 2000 review and in improving departmental climate.
- The Department is served by a very capable and dedicated staff. It can make a strong case to restore funding for a professional undergraduate advisor considering the faculty teaching load.
- It has invested a substantial commitment to both increasing diversity and to effectively managing diversity related issues, such as the development of a diversity committee and hiring guidelines.

Challenges & Risks

- Although the Archaeology sub-discipline is highly regarded nationally, it remains threatened as it was in the 2000 review. Actual and anticipated faculty losses could seriously degrade or threaten completely the area's ability to sustain its quality and standing.
- The Department does not have full-time faculty who specialize in the anthropology and archaeology of the Pacific Northwest.
- Although the substantial recent increase in undergraduate majors and minors would ordinarily be seen as a program strength, the increase has seriously strained the advising and teaching capacity, especially considering lost positions.
- Losses through budget cuts and faculty migration or retirements have had substantial impact, increasing teaching loads and straining advising. This situation, along with insufficient funding of students, is partially accountable for the longer than average time-to-degree completion for graduate students, especially in the Archaeology sub-discipline.
- Loss of the Environmental Anthropology sub-discipline was difficult for the Department, with conflicting perceptions regarding the causes. One faculty member retired and another moved to Yale. One faculty request for transfer to another academic unit was not granted.
- Progress has been made among faculty regarding substantive and epistemological differences, but less so among graduate students who largely remain isolated in their sub-disciplines.
- Although important advances have been achieved in managing diversity, the Diversity Committee appears to be a lightning rod for unsettled issues.
- Recent interpersonal difficulties continue to reverberate within the Department; active fault lines may exist that could jeopardize future planning and progress.

Areas of Concurrence and/or Disagreement

Archaeology Sub-discipline: The Department agrees with the assessment of its strengths and concerns related to its diminished size, but it differs somewhat from the Committee's recommendations for addressing the program.

- Develop a hiring plan that balances breadth with areas of focus. The Department developed a strategic plan after the 2000 review, which it will update as the field changes.
- Broaden the curriculum to serve students who will not pursue academic careers. More courses cannot be offered without having more faculty.
- Include more Pacific Northwest-oriented courses. The strategic plan includes archaeology of the Pacific Northwest and faculty research links to ethnicities that are unique to this area.
- Decrease the size of the graduate class. The policy of limiting admissions will be continued.
- Develop four-year funding packages by consolidating RA and TA opportunities. The Department will have serious discussions about this policy.

Bio-cultural Anthropology Sub-discipline: The Department agrees with the assessment of its strengths.

- Develop a strategic plan that either continues a broad program or develops areas of focus. A strategic and hiring plan will be developed over the next five years.
- Secure laboratory space. The Department has already negotiated space with the Dean's Office.

The Department did not address the Review Committee's recommendations to:

- Use the Medical Anthropology/Global Health undergraduate initiative as a model for fostering interdisciplinary graduate training and faculty research.
- Attempt to convert a half-time research appointment into a full-time teaching appointment, given the person's major contribution to undergraduate and graduate education.

Sociocultural Anthropology Sub-discipline: The Department agrees with the assessment of its strengths and underscores its recognition of this sub-discipline's disproportionate contribution to undergraduate teaching.

- Build areas of strength to attract funding and top graduate students. An analysis of areas of strength has already been made and is being used to plan cluster of undergraduate courses.
- Establish a hiring plan that makes a case for replacing lost faculty lines. Its analysis of strengths can form the basis of such a plan.
- Decrease the size of the graduate class. Based upon an analysis of other admissions procedures nationally, it has decided on an alternate-year admissions process.

Department:

- Continue to develop cross-sub-discipline courses. It takes issue with the Committee's characterization of its sub-disciplinary structure as "intellectual silos," noting the varied teaching and research collaborations among the faculty. However, the Department recognizes that graduate students are more isolated and will continue to promote interaction.
- Explore new options for funding graduate students. It will do so.
- Continue its tremendous progress in addressing diversity. It affirms its progress but states that "more progress has been made among the faculty than graduate students." Perhaps this refers to graduate students feeling more isolated in their sub-disciplines than faculty. However, the perception that the problem of discrimination lies within the student body rather than within the faculty counters the GPSS Report on its graduate student survey which describes instances of faculty discrimination: "There is great discontent in this department that treads into the issue of hindering diversity. Tables seventeen, eighteen and nineteen illustrate a disturbing presence of discrimination. Fourteen students reported witnessing discrimination, and eight students reported experiencing discrimination based on gender alone."

Undergraduate Program:

- Address uneven teaching loads. A uniform load of four courses across sub-disciplines has been implemented.
- Revise the Honors Program to accommodate transfer students. The Department noted its past efforts and will continue to improve its advertising of requirements.

Staffing:

- Seek ways to restore funding for the undergraduate advising position. The position has been restored with funding assistance from the College of Arts and Sciences.
- Return a portion of RCR funds to PIs. Additional efforts will be made to provide support and incentives for faculty to seek extramural funding.

Graduate School Council Recommendations

The Graduate School Council recommended continuing status for the Department's degree programs, with a review in 10 years (2020-2021 academic year). The recommendation is contingent upon the Department submitting an interim progress report in two years, by Spring Quarter, 2013, regarding the following issues:

- Diversity and students' concerns about experiences of discrimination.
- Develop more intellectual links across the sub-disciplines.
- Develop a strategic plan that balances separate priorities expressed in each sub-discipline's strategic plan with commitment to shared vision and mission of the department and discipline as a whole.

We concur with the Council's comments and recommendations.

c: Phyllis Wise, Provost and Executive Vice President, Office of the Provost
Douglas J. Wadden, Executive Vice Provost for Academic Affairs and Planning,
Office of the Provost
Janice DeCosmo, Associate Dean, Undergraduate Academic Affairs
Bettina Shell-Duncan, Professor and Chair, Department of Anthropology
Members of the Anthropology Review Committee
Members of the Graduate School Council
Augustine McCaffery, Senior Academic Program Specialist, The Graduate School
GPSS President