



Deans Office response
Anthropology Department 10-year review

December 22, 2023

I want to express sincere gratitude to the review committee for the care, thoughtfulness, and candor it displayed during the site visit, the meeting it added to speak directly with me in greater length, and for the detailed and forward-looking report. I also appreciate the department's response and am sympathetic to the concerns voiced in that response. I look forward to further conversation regarding how the department can build on its strengths (including impactful research and community-engaged scholarship, strong graduate training, and thriving, large enrollment, undergraduate programs); address its challenges in constructive ways that engage the department's potential for agency; and think creatively about its undergraduate and graduate programs, all while prioritizing a healthy climate and sustainable workloads for everyone. The Deans Office is committed to supporting these efforts in ways that align with College policies and resources. Below, I briefly comment on some issues highlighted by the department in its response to the committee report.

The department has suffered an unusually high level of faculty attrition, and the Deans office has shown support for ongoing hiring, authorizing three searches in the past year. Rebuilding the faculty will take partnership and a multi-faceted effort, given the substantial proportion of faculty losses due to reasons other than retirement. Retention has been an ongoing challenge, and understanding and addressing the reasons why faculty choose to leave the department are essential to any positive strategy for rebuilding.

I welcome the department's efforts to strengthen its graduate programs, with emphasis on two factors: (i) working toward 5-year funding packages for graduate students, and (ii) providing more opportunity for integration and cross-training across subfields. Most departments in the social science division already allocate graduate student funding in multi-year (typically 5-year) packages. Because the department has control over its use of TA funding, it can implement this policy at any time. Departmental funding levels are determined by the resources available to the College as a whole, with an eye on undergraduate enrollment trends, and have been stable for the Anthropology department over the past several years. The costs of graduate student funding will continue to increase, so it will be important for the department, alongside all departments in the College, to consider carefully what size graduate program is sustainable.

I am deeply sympathetic to the challenges the department has faced in its efforts to stabilize administrative staff in the department, and the corresponding stresses on existing staff and faculty. Hiring and retention of staff has been extremely difficult since 2019 throughout the College. I want to acknowledge the hard work of the chair and existing staff to fill vacant positions, and I hope currently vacant positions can be filled soon.

The Deans Office remains committed to helping the department address the climate issues that have developed and persisted over many years. The department's history of conflict and enduring tensions has exacerbated many of the other issues facing the department, and making progress in this arena seems central to the department's health overall. Building community, and the healing that is required, will require understanding, forgiveness, and opportunities to build new positive



collective memory. I am confident that the department can make great progress in this regard if the collective will can be galvanized. I stand ready to be an external partner in that process.

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