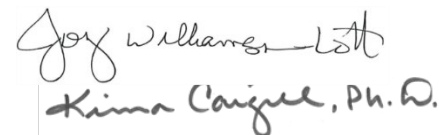


February 20, 2024

To: Dianne Harris, Dean, College of Arts & Sciences  
Andrea Woody, Divisional Dean of Social Sciences, College of Arts & Sciences

From: Joy Williamson-Lott, Dean of the Graduate School

Kima Cargill, Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, Graduate School



RE: Review of the Department of Anthropology (2022-2023)

This memorandum outlines the Graduate School's final recommendations from the Department of Anthropology academic program review. Detailed comments on the review can be found in the documents that were part of the following formal review proceedings:

- Charge meeting between review committee and administrators (September 20, 2022)
- Self-Study (September 19, 2022)
- Site visit (October 20-21, 2022)
- Review committee report (April 11, 2023)
- Department of Anthropology response to the report (November 3, 2023)
- Divisional Dean of Social Sciences comment (December 22, 2023)
- Graduate School Council consideration of review (January 4, 2024)

The review committee consisted of:

- Sara Curran, Professor, Henry M. Jackson School of International Studies; Professor, Evans School of Public Policy, and Governance; Professor, Department of Sociology; Director, Center for Studies in Demography and Ecology Department, University of Washington (Committee Chair)
- Marina Alberti, Professor, Department of Urban Design and Planning, University of Washington
- Clarence Spigner, Professor, Health Systems and Population Health, University of Washington
- William Beeman, Professor, Department of Anthropology, College of Liberal Arts, University of Minnesota
- Stephen Mrozowski, University Professor of Anthropology, University of Massachusetts Boston; Director, the Andrew Fiske Memorial Center for Archaeological Research
- Josh Snodgrass, Professor, Global Health Program, Department of Anthropology, University of Oregon

The Department of Anthropology offers the following degree programs:

- Minor in Anthropology
- Bachelor of Arts
- Bachelor of Science
- Master of Arts with options in:
  - Archaeology (only awarded to students in the PhD program)

- Biological Anthropology (only awarded to students in the PhD program)
- Sociocultural Anthropology (only awarded to students in the PhD program)
- Archaeological Heritage (available as a stand-alone master's degree)
- Doctor of Philosophy with options in:
  - Archaeology
  - Biological Anthropology
  - Sociocultural Anthropology

Andrea Woody, Divisional Dean of Social Sciences in the College of Arts & Sciences and Sven Haakanson, Professor and Chair of the Department of Anthropology, attended a Graduate School Council meeting to discuss outcomes from the review. The Council reviewed all documents from the review prior to the meeting. A summary of the review documents and the Graduate School Council discussion are attached to this memo.

#### Graduate School Council Recommendations

The Graduate School Council commends the Department of Anthropology on the strength of its programs, faculty, and students. After discussion, the Council recommended the following:

- Continuing status for all programs with the next review in five years (2027-2028).
- Additionally, the department should submit a very *brief* interim report in 3 years (2025-2026) providing an update on efforts to improve transparency in tenure and promotion criteria addressing the cited challenge of epistemological differences.

We concur with the Council's recommendations.

cc: Tricia Serio, Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs  
 Patricia Moy, Associate Vice Provost for Academic and Student Affairs, Office of the Provost  
 Jackie Belanger, Director, Libraries Assessment and Planning, University of Washington Libraries  
 Michaelann Jundt, Senior Associate Dean, Undergraduate Academic Affairs  
 Sven Haakanson, Professor and Chair, Department of Anthropology  
 Review Committee Members  
 GPSS President

**Summary prepared by the Graduate School Director of Academic Program Review**

**Summary of Review Committee Report:**

In its report, the review committee stated:

- The UW Department of Anthropology is small in comparison to those at peer R1 universities, but they are mighty, with 23 non-contingent faculty across the three subfields of Archaeology, Biological Anthropology and Sociocultural Anthropology.
- Undergraduate programs and graduate programs are of high quality and provide substantial training for students.
- The department faces five sets of challenges, which must be addressed immediately, or the department risks significantly diminished national stature.
  1. Deeply rooted divisions within the department that have long and well-known histories
  2. Highly siloed administrative structures created to avoid confrontations and conduct business-as-usual.
  3. Steady attrition of faculty (retirements or failed retentions), as well as failed searches, contributing to a top-heavy department with over 50% of faculty at full professor rank.
  4. Rapid growth of undergraduate majors placing stress on teaching loads.
  5. Inability to provide multi-year funding support for graduate students and siloed graduate training that limits professional development and undermines a coherent, productive departmental culture.
- The review committee strongly recommends university administration support a series of interventions that aims to overcome the department's scholarly siloes to create one productive and intellectual community. These interventions must be pursued by both the department and the college administration, possibly including:
  1. A 5-year plan for multiple strategic, mid-career faculty hires from diverse backgrounds with demonstrated ability to work across sub-disciplines.
  2. Implement a series of interventions with outside guidance that centers every departmental member's humanity and life experiences as assets and worthy of support and encouragement.
  3. Immediately implement transparency around four aspects of faculty life – (1) promotion criteria, (2) service and teaching loads, (3) explicit acknowledgement of extra burdens faced by black, indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC), 1st gen, women, non-binary, and diverse faculty, and (4) explicate and implement better structures to support faculty without tenure (WOT) to minimize their sense of precarity and maximize their sense of belonging within the department.
  4. Provide flexibility and empowerment to graduate students so that they are at the core of the department's intellectual life and a source of generative energy for a productive and cohesive scholarly department.
  5. Implement intentional administrative management that seeks to grow staff capacities and communication, as well as build community among both staff and faculty.

6. Growing opportunities for undergraduate research experience and engagement, including greater involvement by graduate students in mentoring undergraduates.

### **Summary of Unit Response**

In its response, the Department of Anthropology stated:

Many of the interventions the review committee identified address cross-cutting themes and we thus group the report into four core areas:

1. Faculty Attrition and the need for hires
2. Graduate student funding and intellectual life
3. Creating a equitable, inclusive, and supportive department climate
4. Building the capacity of department staff and enhancing communication across faculty and staff.

### **Faculty attrition and the need for hires**

- The department acknowledged the review committee observation about the toll of faculty attrition. In the past 10 years, the department has lost many faculty:
  - 8 to retirement
  - 4 to other units on campus
  - 5 to other institutions
  - 4 who have moved a portion of their lines to other units on campus
  - 1 to untimely death
- This creates challenges in offering and teaching undergraduate and graduate classes; the department has 538 undergraduate majors and 50 undergraduate minors, in addition to 48 graduate students. The programs continue to produce successful graduates in multiple fields.
- The department is stretched dangerously thin and its students are suffering from scarcity of faculty mentors and unpredictable schedules for required graduate courses. These issues are particularly acute in the Sociocultural Anthropology program.
- It is urgent that college administration commit to a 5-year plan to hire multiple early and mid-career faculty who have the time, energy and position to “remake the department.”

### **Graduate Program**

- The life of the graduate students and graduate program is negatively impacted by 1) inability to guarantee funding for students, 2) siloing of students within their mentor network and sub-discipline, 3) trickle-down effects of tension between faculty and sub-disciplines.
- There is inordinate pressure on junior faculty and faculty of color to meet career development and mentorship responsibilities.
- The department chair negotiated ten five-year packages for graduate students, but this is not enough to sustain the graduate program.
- The department emphasizes the following:
  - Guaranteed five-year packages: declining TA commitments from the College threaten the long-term feasibility of funding graduate students through TA-ships. Strongly request that the College match the TA-ships to undergraduate course demands.

- Programmatic interventions planned include a year-long symposium (3-credit course) for all incoming graduate students to address siloing and quality of life, sponsored social activities, shifting faculty and graduate expectations around graduate teaching.

### **Department Climate**

- The work of “changing the chemistry of the department” (as the report puts it) is active and ongoing, but largely unsupported.
- The climate in the department perpetuates feelings associated with the discipline’s colonial legacy – past and present.
- In the past ten years, the department has worked with numerous facilitators to remake departmental community and address hostile climate BIPOC and untenured faculty have reported.
- Last academic year, College of Arts & Sciences also provided funding to host a year-long seminar focused on the intellectual life of the department.
- Department efforts to recruit and retain faculty from historically excluded communities have been stymied by lack of resources for faculty and issues of department climate.
  - Four BIPOC faculty have left the department, with two additional moving portions of their lines to other campus units.
  - Except the Department Chair, there remain no BIPOC full professors and three associate BIPOC faculty. Other faculty members seen as contributing to diversity, equity and inclusion efforts are either non-tenured assistant professors or non-tenure-track faculty.
- The department proposes four actions to resolve department climate:
  - Creation of a three-person Executive Committee, composed of a member of each sub-discipline.
  - Specific opportunities for “humanity centered” interventions that create support, including coaching and access to development funds for BIPOC, LGTBQIA+, faculty with disability, and faculty without tenure who, as the report notes, are disproportionately affected by the departmental climate.
  - Creating increased transparency around administrative decisions, including tenure and promotion, teaching responsibilities, service assignments, departmental budgets.
  - A facilitator to join faculty meetings once per quarter to help with communication around strategic planning and action.
- The department notes that a lack of continued funding and explicit support from the College remain roadblocks to building a collegial department community. The department outlined requests for support from the College:
  - Continued support from the College to provide ongoing facilitation and faculty coaching.
  - The addition of an ombuds person within the department trained and capable of conflict resolution and ensuring safety in reporting.

- Teaching faculty professional development funds to attend conferences or participate in pedagogy workshops.
- Enabling the department to enact a transparent system of differentially weighting of teaching and service obligations and ensuring that time and effort are distributed across tenure-track, teaching, and jointly-appointed faculty
- Increasing the length of appointments for teaching faculty to the maximum allowed by the Faculty Code will reduce their precarity.

### **Increasing Staff Capacity**

- Due to critical understaffing across the department since 2020, many normal functions remain seriously delayed.
- It took two years to find stability in the department's administrator position, one year to replace the Graduate Program Coordinator with a permanently appointed employee, and nine months to hire a fiscal analyst. Extended vacancies put additional burden on existing permanent and temporary staff.
- Department now has permanent staff in the above three roles, but the Anthropology Advising Office remains critically understaffed following retirement of Academic Services Director, resulting in serious impacts to the department's ability to advise and serve over 500 majors. The recent search failed and will be opened a second time.
- The department notes significant decline of majors over the last two years. If the undergraduate program is to remain at its current size, the department needs an immediate 1.0 FTE academic counseling staff position in addition to the vacant Academic Service Director position.

### **Summary of Dean's Comment**

The Divisional Dean of Social Sciences in the College of Arts & Sciences submitted an additional comment indicating the following:

- Grateful to the review committee and sympathetic to the concerns expressed in the department's response.
- The Deans Office is committed to supporting department efforts in ways that align with College policies and resources.
- Amid unusually high level of faculty attrition in the department, the Deans Office has shown support for ongoing hiring, authorizing three searches in the past year.
- The Deans Office welcomes department efforts to strengthen its programs, with emphasis on two factors: working toward 5-year funding packages for graduate students, and providing more opportunity for integration and cross-training across subfields.
- The department has control over its use of TA funding and can implement change at any time.
- Departmental funding levels are determined by the resources available to the College, with an eye on undergraduate enrollment trends, and have been stable for the Anthropology department the past several years.
- As costs of graduate student funding continue to increase, it will be important for the department to consider carefully what size graduate program is sustainable.

- Deeply sympathetic to the challenges the department has faced in its efforts to stabilize administrative staff in the department – hiring and retention of staff has been extremely difficult since 2019 throughout the College.
- The Deans Office remains committed to helping the department address the climate issues that have developed and persisted over many years and stands ready to be an external partner in that process.

**Summary of Graduate School Council meeting on January 4, 2024**

The Graduate School Council discussion of this review included the following key topics:

- *Department hiring plan:* The college leadership highlighted a recent development that the department submitted a unified hiring plan for the first time in years, a testament to the department chair's leadership in addressing siloing discussed in the review.
- *Department culture and faculty attrition:* The Council expressed concern about the cited issues in the review documents regarding culture in the department and significant faculty attrition. The department and college leadership responded that work to change the culture is in progress and ongoing, for example by concerted efforts to build more social interaction among faculty and students and to ensure new hires feel supported.
- *Transparency of policies:* A Council member noted the perceived lack of transparency in promotion and tenure guidelines based in part on epistemological differences in the sub-disciplines. The Council suggested that the department could revise its faculty handbook to be more inclusive of promotion criteria as well.