

**DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY**

**External Consultant Report**

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CSU SACRAMENTO  
Department of Anthropology PROGRAM REVIEW  
External Consultant Report

COMMENDATIONS:

1. The department has made a concerted effort to address the recommendations of the previous program review.
2. The curricular offerings and areas of expertise of the faculty reflect current interests and trends within the discipline.
3. The department is to be commended for its efforts to maintain an integrated perspective on anthropology as a “four-field” (or when linguistics is subsumed within cultural anthropology, “three-field”) discipline while at the same time juggling debates within the discipline about “sciences vs. humanism,” “materialist vs. interpretivist.”
4. The department is to be commended for its awareness of and sensitivity to issues of enrollment and program quality in balancing GE courses with courses in the major.
5. The department is to be commended for its efforts to provide students with theoretical and applied knowledge to attempt to meet the needs of the surrounding community.
6. The department has unique opportunities in its archaeology and museum resources. The ARC maintains an effective balance between pedagogy and hand-on CRM training, is self-sustaining, and requires no additional resources; the only issue is space (see below). The museum has excellent resources, a knowledgeable director, and good space; but some reorganization of duties and additional resources are suggested below.
7. The faculty have strong research and publication records and are dedicated to teaching and service.
8. Students, part-time faculty, and full-time faculty appreciate the library and IT resources available on the campus. Part-time faculty in particular expressed their appreciation for having an office and a computer (and printer) with access to the internet, and for the training classes and other forms of support offered by the university.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Curriculum:
  - Discussions with faculty and students suggest that the department would benefit from the creation of an undergraduate curriculum with a more flexible structure. The department is to be commended for its commitment to four/three-field anthropology but the rigor with which this commitment is sustained (A.

Prerequisites, B. Method and Theory, C. Breadth Requirements, and D. Distributed Electives) results in students not having sufficient access to enter courses, confusion over advisement and prerequisites, redundancy in the various levels of required classes, and faculty feeling that they are unable to develop and teach courses within their professional interests and abilities. Both faculty and students express concern that depth is being sacrificed for breadth; that students are unable to focus sufficiently on particular areas of interests, which makes them less well trained than they would like to be to qualify for jobs and graduate schools.

- One possible solution would be to retain the structure of category A and category B or C, keep ANTH 104 (History of Anthropology) as a required course to integrate the subdisciplines, and place the remaining courses in a pool of undistributed electives so that students would have flexibility in designing a course of study that best meets their needs. The increased flexibility should make access to classes and advisement easier. It should remove the need to make “substitutions,” and enable students to develop a schedule based on both ideological and pragmatic needs (what they’re interested in and what’s possible for them to take with their schedules). The department makes a concerted effort to provide effective advisement through the work of an undergraduate program coordinator and information available in print and on the web, so it is likely that confusion arises from the structure of the curriculum rather than ineffective advisement.
- Efforts should be made to respect the professional integrity of each faculty and to recognize that no one particular faculty member owns any particular course, and that some variation in the approach to teaching particular courses is expected and fruitful to departmental offerings rather than detrimental. Discussions among faculty about standardizing course content should be balanced with recognition that faculty are professionals who should be allowed to develop teaching materials as they consider appropriate.
- Efforts should be made to offer required classes as frequently as possible, with variations in times and dates (for all classes) to maximize access to the classes by students with different schedules. The movement of many classes from required to undistributed would give greater scheduling flexibility to the Chair, and the Chair should be sensitive to the needs of both faculty and students in varying the times (day/night) and days of the week (TR/MWF) in scheduling classes—with priority given to student needs.
- Efforts should be made to clarify the needs of separate constituents and how they all serve the needs of the department. When possible, balance teaching assignments to include lower-division GE and upper-division/graduate classes. When not possible (for example, the particular constraints that affect ARC faculty), encourage discussion and awareness of the role that all constituents play in serving the department, with attention paid to the history of the department. Provide forums for communicating the expertise of the faculty (for example, by

providing access to CVs, perhaps on the web; and possibly by highlighting new faculty by having them give talks to student groups, or disseminating information about faculty presentations and encouraging joint attendance). Distribute awards equitably (assigned time, small classes, the opportunity to teach new courses in their area of specialty) so as to tap the tremendous energies of a talented department.

- The structure of the *graduate program curriculum* appears to be flexible (three core seminars in the three subdisciplines, eighteen electives, and the Master's thesis). However, I did hear comments that more focus appears to be on archaeology, with not enough cultural anthropology, and that the Graduate Program Coordinator is always an archaeologist. My understanding is that archaeology has played an important role in the history of the graduate program, and that there is a demand for archaeology. More curricular development and a more flexible schedule at the undergraduate level could create a greater demand at the graduate level (for example, in Museum Studies). However, as I was unable to interview graduate students (none came to the scheduled time), my knowledge is sketchy and limited, and you will probably receive more input from the first external reviewer. The department has an explicit commitment to serving the needs of the community through hands-on, practical training and has the potential to develop more special programs, but whether this is possible depends on juggling of limited resources and scheduling issues. Use of internships and variable-topics classes (as Anth 296 appears to be) could be used to meet these needs. Perhaps faculty who mentor a large number of graduate students could be given assigned time for every 15 graduate students of theirs that graduate successfully.
- Given all these points, it would be fruitful for the faculty to conduct some focused discussions (perhaps in a retreat) about what the major should look like, what vision they have for the undergraduate program and for the graduate program, how to balance GE with the major, how best to prepare students for jobs and graduate schools, what goals can be accomplished within the constraints of a CSU system whose budgets are derived from enrollment. One question to address regarding the undergraduate curriculum is how many units should be in the major (49 is at the upper end of the range of required units in similar programs; 40-45 is average), and how many classes from outside the major can be accepted as contributing to the major.

## 2. Structural recommendations:

- *Hiring suggestions:*
  - **Full-time Faculty:** With a number of retirements looming, hiring new faculty would be appropriate, so that more faculty will share the burdens of service work for the department. One of the strengths of the department is its commitment to four/three-field anthropology; but the form that this commitment appears to take is separate tracks rather than an integrated view (for example, faculty are listed by subdiscipline, meet in subdisciplinary interest groups, and refer to each other by their subdisciplines rather than as "anthropologists"). I strongly recommend

that if the department wishes to avoid the fissuring process affecting many departments, that they focus on strategies that reduce barriers, for example by hiring faculty in the future who bridge the materialist/interpretivist divide, such as anthropologists with a strong background in history of anthropology, or anthropologists who do research across the subdisciplines. With a more flexible curriculum, it may also be possible to introduce classes that promote an integrated view (for example—and these are off the top of my head, not real courses--“Four-Field Approach to Primatology Issues” that includes ethnographic/semiotic studies of how indigenous groups perceive and classify primates for different uses, in addition to evolutionary and ecological studies of primate adaptation; or “Anthropology of Food” that includes nutritional, evolutionary, historical, social-structural, and semiotic approaches to food).

- **Part-time Faculty** indicated that sometimes they were not notified that they were teaching, and that (while they said things were much better now) sometimes they didn't get their teaching assignments until the last minute. They said that they received inconsistent messages about their inclusion in the department (some receive minutes of faculty minutes, some don't; they have no voting rights; they would like to be informed about other events, such as retirement parties; they would like to have the contributions to the department's slush fund be optional rather than required). They asked why they were eligible to teach certain classes at community colleges but not eligible to teach them at CSUS.
  - Full-time faculty expressed their concerns about the ethics of having part-time faculty teaching introductory courses where many majors are recruited.
  - Efforts should be made to inform part-time faculty of curricular changes.
- **Staff:**
  - 1) More support in the department office to provide continuous coverage of the office; increase the amount of staff support in the department office to assure that the office is covered at all times.
  - 2) change the Christie Hunter's position to full-time archaeology curation technician to enable her to curate, inventory, control access to the collection, and manage volunteers and students in the archaeology lab;
  - 3) define and fill a separate IT line to provide computer and web support; included in this job description would be assistance in putting archaeology and museum collections in digital form (to be available in DVD records, on a server, and, as appropriate, on the web);
  - 4) add a NAGPRA Coordinator (full or part-time) that will enable the university to meet federal and state requirements (this is critical; the department has a very large number of human remains and burial goods, and inability to meet federal and state

requirements can result in serious legal problems for the university);

- 5) add a full-time curation technician to the museum, which would enable Dr. Castaneda to focus on curriculum development for a museum program, add museum classes to her teaching load, support students in developing student exhibits, develop a docent program involving members of the community, and “cultivate” private donors from the community.
- *Space:*
    - 1) The archaeology collections do not meet curation standards and prevent the university from meeting NAGPRA requirements; they are housed in substandard and crowded conditions that make it difficult to maintain an adequate inventory to identify burial remains and goods, and create hazards that could result in lawsuits. Better (and more) storage space is highly recommended for both the archaeology and museum collections.
    - 2) The department office is crowded and could be more effectively organized with smaller and more modular furniture, including additional storage; the ASC should be given a separate space that helps her maintain confidentiality of documents.
    - 3) If Foley Hall is torn down, additional space for ARC should be found on campus rather than located off-campus; locating the company off-campus would make it impractical as a teaching/training resource.
    - 4) If possible, more large classrooms should be made available to the department to enable high-demand classes to be taught as K-2. Another way to address space is to explore ways of developing more online classes (which raises other issues probably being addressed by the university itself regarding standards, expectations, recruitment of appropriate personnel, and assessment).
    - 5) The part-time faculty who teach the Physical Anthropology lab expressed a desire to be consulted about what rooms are used.
  - *Equipment and supplies:* Students, staff, and faculty expressed general satisfaction with the resources available but a few suggestions were made for improvement that appear reasonable and appropriate:
    - 1) Because only part-time faculty teach the Physical Anthropology Lab (Anth 001A), they need a full-time person designated to whom they can go for help (for example, if materials need to be replaced, such as PCP paper and artificial blood). They expressed concern that no one seemed to be overseeing the lab, and messages at the end of the year asking if materials were needed were not clear about whether their input was requested.
    - 2) Staff would appreciate the opportunity to give more input into how departmental resources are used. I recommend that the Chair have regular meetings with all staff (including the technician[s]) so that issues can be vented, suggestions made, and the different perspectives be heard and resolved as they come up.

3. Summary Statement: The Department of Anthropology at CSU Sacramento has a talented faculty actively involved in scholarly and creative activities, professional development, teaching, and service; the department has special programs and resources that benefit the university and the community as a whole. The department has responded to developments within the field, as well as developments within the academic community to address issues such as assessment (including indirect and direct measures of student learning, emphasis on writing, and training in information competence). The department's enrollment is increasing; they have reasonable retention and graduation rates; and they have good institutional resources and support.

The undergraduate curriculum would benefit from having a more flexible structure, which would resolve student concerns about effective advisement and sufficient access to required courses, and might also ease conflict among faculty with different subdisciplinary specializations. Suggestions have been made about staff changes and organization of space.