

**Florida Atlantic University
Department of Anthropology
Program Review
February 19-21, 2020**

Review Team:

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Committee Process:

This report provides the findings of the review team, Dr. Kathryn Kozaitis, Dr. Randy Daniel, and Dr. Jesse Saginor, on the program review of FAU's Department of Anthropology. The findings are based on a review of the Department's self-study document, web materials, and a site visit on February 19-21, 2020. The site visit was organized around numerous meetings with students, faculty, and administration. Beyond the approximately 23 combined undergraduate and graduate students we met with during the site visit, we met with the faculty as a whole. In addition to these group meetings, the review team met with the following individuals separately during the site visit:

In the Department of Anthropology:

Sara Ayers-Rigsby, M.A., Director of the SE/SW Center of the Florida Public Archaeology Network (FPAN)

Dr. Clifford Brown, Professor, Archaeology

Dr. Susan Love Brown, Professor and Graduate Advisor, Cultural Anthropology

Dr. Mary Cameron, Professor, Cultural Anthropology

Dr. Kate Detwiler, Associate Professor, Biological Anthropology

Dr. Meredith Ellis, Assistant Professor, Biological Anthropology

Dr. Arlene Fradkin, Professor, Archaeology

Dr. Michael Harris, Associate Professor and Chair, Cultural Anthropology

Dr. Max Kirsch, Professor, Cultural Anthropology

Valentina Martinez, M.A., Instructor and Director of the Ecuador Field School Program, Archaeology

Dr. Nancy Stein, Adjunct Professor, Visual and Cultural Anthropology

Dr. Michael Horswell, Dean, College of Arts and Letters

Dr. Russ Ivy, Senior Associate Provost for Academic Affairs

Dr. Ed Pratt, Dean of Undergraduate Studies

Dr. Robert Stackman, Dean of Graduate Studies

Dr. Karin Scarpinato, Senior Associate Vice President for Research

Each individual meeting lasted for approximately 30 minutes and covered a wide range of topics included in this program review report.

Department Overview

The department consists of eight tenured/tenure-track, one instructor, one adjunct, and a program administrator. The tenured/tenure track lines include five professors, two associate professors, and one assistant professor. With respect to diversity, the faculty is particularly well represented for its small size with over half of the faculty being female, including one African American woman and one Hispanic woman. There are several more individuals associated with the grant-funded Southeast/Southwest Florida Public Archaeology Network Center (FPAN) that primarily offers public outreach opportunities for students (discussed further below). The department offers a Bachelor of Arts (and minor), Honors Program, and Master of Arts degrees in anthropology.

Department Strengths

Curriculum: With respect to teaching, the department follows a conventional “four-field” approach to anthropology with instruction in sociocultural anthropology, biological anthropology, archaeology, and linguistics, albeit linguistics receives less emphasis in the curriculum as it is usually embedded in cultural anthropology courses. This is a common practice in small departments like FAU and reflects the greater prominence of the other subfields in the discipline relative to linguistics. Representation of the four subfields is evident in the number of classes listed in the website, including 7 introductory courses in archaeological, biological, and cultural anthropology, including a study abroad course. Numerous upper division courses are also listed, including 13 biological anthropology courses, 11 archaeology courses, and 26 sociocultural courses. Six research methods courses are also taught. The great number of courses listed would certainly be a strength if taught on a rotation basis. However, given the small number of faculty, it is not feasible to offer all of those courses regularly. The self-study also reported the development of eight on-line courses including the availability of an on-line minor.

The MA curriculum is standard, in that students take core courses in the three subfields in their first year while specializing in one subfield in the second year. Methods and theory courses are a central part of the curriculum. The essence of the MA program, however, is a thesis that provides graduate students with experience in original research. (A Master of Arts in Teaching degree is also available, but according to the self-study few students pursue this track. In fact, we did not encounter any such students in our visit). Thesis research is a departmental strength as commented on by both faculty and students. However, faculty reported a concern with respect to graduate students’ timely progress towards graduation within the two-year official length of the MA degree. In addition, graduate students expressed a wish for more professional development in the curriculum, also discussed below.

Teaching: The department has a standard 3/2 teaching load for all tenured/tenure-track faculty. The instructor has a 4/4 load which is standard. Teaching is also supplemented by an adjunct professor.

Some faculty also teach both undergraduate and graduate courses which is necessary given the small number of faculty. The department chair reportedly teaches additional classes when needed to bolster department productivity. These metrics do not include the additional ad hoc mentoring necessary for graduate students, including thesis advising and committee membership. To their credit, several faculty reported their dedication to mentoring students; however, allocation of recognition and credit for this instructional work is not clear to us. (see below).

As documented in the self-study, the department contributes significantly to the university's Intellectual Foundations Program. Moreover, the self-study documents efficiency in both SCH and FTE production. Indeed, the self-study noted a 32% increase in SCHs since the last self-study in 2013. Much of this growth is apparently due to two non-tenure track faculty who have high teaching loads mostly in the large undergraduate IFP courses.

Florida Public Archaeology Network (FPAN): This unique statewide archaeology program is a definite strength of the program for several reasons. First, it provides support for at least two graduate students and ad hoc internships for undergraduate students. Second, it is a form of community outreach that provides public recognition for FAU. Third, it provides a significant source of external funding (approximately \$3 million dollars to date) that supports several staff and graduate students (as documented in the department self-study) that represents the lion's share of the College of Arts and Letters new awards during the review period. Finally, this program provides a critical path to a career trajectory for students who plan to work as professional archaeologists upon graduation with their MA degree. Clearly, this program is a source of pride for the department and raises the visibility of the university.

International Opportunities: Some faculty have fieldwork abroad, including Mexico, Nicaragua, Congo/Tanzania, and the field school in Ecuador. Moreover, this fieldwork provides opportunities for students to actively participate in research associated with sociocultural anthropology, biological anthropology, and archaeology. Several students (discussed below) noted these study-abroad opportunities as signature experiences in their education.

Students: We were very impressed with the students we met as a group (including about eight undergraduates and 15 graduate students). Diversity appeared to be well represented in the group as well. Our discussions indicated that students were very engaged with the department, which is a testament to the quality of teaching they receive. For the most part, students were quite happy with the instruction they received and the professors they interacted with in their respective programs. Some students expressed concern that faculty are differentially engaged with students' educational needs, even as they also reported that faculty are quite accessible and attentive. In general students' favorable experience within the department testifies to the dedication that the majority of faculty have to teaching and mentoring their students, particularly given the time demands on faculty in general.

The students demonstrated a critical awareness of the value of anthropology as a discipline and a genuine commitment to deepening their training in the three subdisciplines that the current curriculum represents. To that end, graduate students in particular reported an interest in more topical courses to complement the foundation in anthropological theory and methods that they receive.

We noted that a couple of graduate students expressed confusion regarding the way theory is taught. Specifically, the collective concern is that students are taught the history of anthropological thought, or

ethnological theory, 'up to the 1980s.' Through the voice of a couple of students, the group expressed a strong interest in current theoretical frameworks in sociocultural theory that they feel would inform their own research projects.

The graduate and the undergraduate students also expressed a strong interest in applied anthropology—curriculum that would train them in the various applications within each subfield, and expose them to various domains of professional practice through service learning placements in local organizations and industries. The students were generally uninformed about the relevance, broader impact, and applications of anthropology in various career trajectories outside of the academy. Students who reported a focus in cultural anthropology were particularly eager to learn more about and receive training in professional skills that would lead to gainful employment—domains of practice in which they would bring and use anthropology.

Weaknesses/Challenges:

Curriculum: We noted above that the number of undergraduate courses listed in the catalog as a strength of the department. At the same time, based upon the materials we received and the discussion with faculty and students, we question the regularity with which all these classes are taught given the small number of faculty. For example, at least 56 upper level classes are listed in the catalog, not including general education and graduate level courses. Moreover, this relatively high number of courses is hard to reconcile with the self-study statement (p. 25) regarding “the need for more topical courses at both the graduate and undergraduate levels that focus on faculty expertise.” That said, there does appear to be a need for a professional development course. Graduate students expressed a desire for knowing about career options beyond that of pursuing PhD studies.

With respect to the graduate program, the thesis driven aspect of the MA curriculum represents a strength, but it also represents the program’s greatest challenge in that it is intended to be completed in a two-year period. Both faculty and students described the rarity of students who actually graduate in two years. This reality is not unexpected given the time investment needed of students to collect and analyze primary data and write a finished product. Not to be overlooked too, is the time investment needed of faculty to mentor students throughout the process. It was unclear from the data provided exactly what the time-to-graduation rates are for the program. Some students apparently may finish in a semester or so beyond the two-year mark while others may take much longer if they are attending part-time. To the department’s credit, the faculty and the students acknowledge this constraint and have recently redesigned the curriculum focusing on efforts to improve timely graduation. The specific steps of this redesign are in the self-study, and implementation will begin with the 2020-2021 academic year. Therefore, the results of these efforts await further consideration in the mid-term update to this self-study report.

Graduate Recruitment. The graduate funding stipends are low (\$8,500/year), and apparently have not increased since the last Academic Program Review. On the other hand, the number of graduate teaching assistantships has increased due to the department’s partnerships with both the Department of Philosophy and the FPAN. Nevertheless, stipends remain low but are somewhat offset by the recent provision of a majority of student health insurance costs. The graduate dean noted a recent effort to cover

75% of the cost of health insurance for graduate students. This change in health insurance policy can only help recruitment.

Facilities. We know that based on the self-study report and our discussions with the chair and some faculty that curation is a concern, and there is a need for extra laboratory and graduate student space. One solution proposed is to create additional graduate student space by converting the current woodshop. Unfortunately, our schedule did not permit us time to get a tour of the department's facilities. Thus, we are hard pressed to accurately comment on this need.

Graduate mentoring. The majority of the faculty expressed a strong commitment to mentoring their graduate students, which as we note above, is a departmental strength. However, this work demands a considerable investment of time and effort that is not distributed equitably among the faculty, and may be disproportionate to the credit that faculty receive. To be sure, faculty note that this work is acknowledged in their annual evaluations, but we wonder if the college could incentivize this work in more tangible ways with rewards such as course releases or sabbaticals. One faculty member mentioned having received a sabbatical, but it is unclear to what degree this is a common practice in the college, or if it is linked with mentoring graduate students and other workload demands and accomplishments.

Much of the SCH production mentioned above appears to be the result of the teaching load by two non-tenure track instructors. Retention and recognition of these two faculty members is critical to the future success of teaching within the department, and the sustainability of its programs.

Enrollment. Anthropology suffers from the same problems that many liberal arts degrees do with respect to recruiting majors: the discipline is relatively unknown to students because of its absence in high school curriculums, coupled with its perceived lack of vocational opportunities, contrary to evidence of market demand for well-trained anthropologists. While the number of majors is relatively high considering the small faculty size, we share the faculty's concern about the decline in majors as reported in the self-study. From AYs 2015/2016 to 2017/2018 major numbers fell from 158 to 120 students (Self-study Table B3). (A similar decline is seen in the number of BA degrees awarded for the same period). Only three years of data are reported, so it is hard to know whether this represents a real trend. However, this phenomenon is consistent with a nationwide pattern that shows 2016 having the fewest anthropology degrees granted nationally since 2009, a pattern common to all social science disciplines without a clear post-graduation path ("*Trends in Anthropology Bachelor's Degrees,*" *American Anthropological Association, 2016*).

Departmental factions. The presence of a faculty schism is arguably the most pressing problem that faculty and students brought to our attention. The faculty is currently divided in two factions—a majority that reportedly is integrated and happy with the department's leadership, and a minority who are displeased with the leadership, disparaging of the overall culture of the department, and who are marginalized and unhappy. Our discussions with faculty in each group revealed diametrically opposed perspectives regarding the department, its programs, and its future. As best we can determine, the differences are irreconcilable, so much so that even the graduate students are well aware of the problems and demand a solution.

Recommendations

1. *MA program progress towards graduation.* A comment from the prior self-study is relevant here. “While a three-year MA is not unusual and likely partly responsible for the success of graduates, a two-year MA is possible and successfully carried off at other institutions where there is more faculty support.” In the absence of more faculty support, consideration might be given to articulating a non-thesis option, for example, a Capstone Project, for the MA degree. Instead of thesis hours, students could take two additional classes, or participate in a credit-bearing internship program that would include a written report of the student’s work. For archaeology graduate students in particular, the FPAN program would seem to present opportunities along this line that would be relatively easy to implement.

2. *MA curriculum.* Students (particularly graduate students) expressed a need for more training in professionalization. Currently, such mentoring appears to be informal between professor and student and is variable in nature. Consideration should be given to creating a required, 1-hour credit seminar available to both undergraduate and graduate students. This was also a recommendation from the previous self-study.

The curriculum may be updated by editing out courses that are no longer taught, and especially those courses that have not been taught in five years or more. An updated curriculum could reflect only those courses that are taught annually or regularly. In place of outdated and eliminated courses, new courses may be added and/or updated content to topics that reflect the strength of the current faculty and the research foci that the university platforms and pillars represent. An updated curriculum would also reflect the current direction of anthropology, within and across subfields, including medical anthropology, human-environment interactions, and health and aging.

Replacement courses may also include a required and formalized Graduate Professionalization Seminar, in which students would learn skills that would facilitate their admission to competitive PhD Programs in anthropology, professional graduate schools, e.g., public health, education, and law school, as well as preparation for gainful employment as practicing anthropologists in the private and public sectors. Related to this Seminar, and in conjunction with strategic courses, the Department may establish a Graduate Certificate in Ethnography, CRM, or another skillset that would distinguish and better position anthropology graduates as potential employees and employers.

3. *BA curriculum.* Consideration might be given to incorporating certificates organized around departmental curriculum strengths. For example, a Certificate in Cultural Resource Management is a practical option given the FPAN program. A Certificate in Forensic Anthropology may be another option for College-to-Career preparation. These certificates need not involve creating new classes but incorporate relevant, existing courses from across the campus and an increase in inter-disciplinary collaboration with faculty in other relevant academic units and with community partners. Each Certificate Program would require monitoring of student progress, but this recommendation would be a relatively minor undertaking to expand the reach of the Department. Certificates are popular options among students and could increase enrollments with little cost to the department.

Students’ demand for more diverse topical courses may be met most readily by the gradual, incremental, and selective incorporation of stacked courses. This part of the curriculum would combine upper-division and graduate courses that would serve undergraduate majors and MA students across the subdisciplines. Each stacked course would consist of a Syllabus for the majors and a Syllabus for the graduate students, the latter of whom would be required to complete more and/or different assignments. Stacked courses would provide faculty with the privilege to teach topics in which they specialize or have an interest in

designing. Students at both levels would benefit from the variety of content that they seek to enhance their learning experience. This strategy also maximizes the value of the existing faculty at least until resources to fund new hires become available.

4. *Advising/Recruitment.* The self-study acknowledged that advising is an area on which the department can improve. One challenge in advising appears to be something of a disconnect between college-level versus department-level advising. Moreover, we discovered that not all students take advantage of early advising. We note that the informal advisement at the department level, while well-meaning, likely results in inconsistent and inadequate advising of students. Other departments take a more proactive approach by having an undergraduate director with specific advising duties. This recommendation, of course, adds to the workload of a faculty member but that may be offset with a course release.

It is unclear to what degree the department monitors the career tracks of its graduates. At some universities there are alumni records that can be useful in that regard. While such data are available at FAU, better tracking of and outreach to alumni is advised. Moving forward, some strategy should be implemented to follow up with recent graduates via monitoring social media to enquire of their status. Of course, this would require some additional work on the department's part to which we are sensitive, but the results should pay off in terms of providing potential majors with data on job opportunities, placement in PhD programs, professional development, possible speakers to highlight non-academic career paths of anthropology graduates, and help in the recruiting process.

5. *Graduate stipends and assistantships.* With respect to graduate recruitment, while all graduate students are apparently funded at some level, the stipends are low (\$8,500/year) and apparently have not increased since the last program review. Low stipends, however, are somewhat offset by provision of some health insurance as noted above. Obviously, this provision should be promoted by the department when recruiting potential graduate students.

The fact that all graduate students are funded is based on the TA arrangement with the Department of Philosophy in that several graduate students provide discussion sections for large intro philosophy sections. One concern expressed by a member of the upper administration is that anthropology students evaluate and grade the work of philosophy students. The degree that this is a real or perceived problem is difficult for us to determine, particularly as this structure potentially benefits the department's graduate students financially, intellectually, and pedagogically. One solution might be to assign the GTAs more discipline-appropriate classes such as Gender Studies or Cultural Studies. Moreover, conversion of TAs to RAs would provide some faculty research support while providing graduate students research experience. However, we realize there are systemic reasons for why this latter option is not possible. University policy does not allow for the conversion of TAs to RAs due to the funding source.

6. *Department factions.* Given our limited time and interaction with the faculty, and a lack of a thorough knowledge and understanding of the department's history and development, we are unable to recommend a specific course of action to resolve internal personnel conflicts. Based on our observations, we are concerned that the apparent schism negatively affects students' optimum learning outcomes. For example, one graduate student said they asked one faculty member from the "disgruntled" faction to serve on an MA committee, but the faculty member declined, professing their inability to work with

another prospective committee member. We find this response to a student's request for advisement and thesis direction inappropriate and is unreasonable. We do not suggest that all faculty members in a department must like each other, but recommend that faculty must put aside personal feelings for the greater good of serving and working with students.

7. Faculty research productivity. Research productivity among the faculty varies in volume, rigor, and publication outlets. Consistent with patterns of productivity in professional development in anthropology, the biological, archaeological, and bioarchaeological faculty demonstrate high rates of research productivity. Moreover, two of the archaeologists are full professors and research active, and the biological anthropologist and associate professor, as well as the assistant professor of bioarchaeology, maintain an outstanding record of research and publication. All four of these faculty members are fully invested in the department, its programs, and the success of their students.

The sociocultural component consists of six faculty members, only four of whom are fully integrated in the department's culture. The following three factors challenge the research productivity of the sociocultural faculty:

1. The leadership of the Department consists of two senior faculty members. One cultural anthropologist and associate professor is also the chair (2003-present), who has also been chair of philosophy (2012-2017), and who maintains a heavy teaching load given his inordinate administrative workload. Another cultural anthropologist and full professor is an active scholar while she has served as Director of Graduate Studies since the inception of the MA Program.
2. Two other full professors maintain independent research and scholarly workloads through external collaborations with colleagues in other departments and institutions. Their relatively compromised participation in the sociocultural component of the Department comes at the cost of their own fulfillment as faculty, at the cost of the Department's integrity and, ultimately, at the cost of students' learning and success who would benefit enormously from two critical, productive, and sophisticated professors of cultural anthropology.
3. Two non-tenure track faculty, a Senior Instructor and Director of the Field School, and a part-time Adjunct Instructor contribute significantly to the instructional quantity and quality of the undergraduate and graduate programs. Their respective roles do not require research productivity, but their contribution to the instructional and cultural component of the department is invaluable.

Our assessment reveals that given the current teaching load of 3/2, and the existing composition and structure of the faculty, the department's research productivity is exceptional among the two recent hires in biological and bioarchaeological anthropology respectively and the senior archaeologists.

Summary Statement

The Department of Anthropology is well poised to participate in the STEM initiative through its strengths in biological, bio-archaeological, and archaeological areas of focus. Human biology and the science of the human past through the study of skeletal remains are integral research foci in STEM. As a humanistic social science, and through the efforts by cultural anthropologists, the Department may expand, or add new

linkages with the humanities through cross-listed courses, particularly those that highlight ethnographic methods and texts, cross-cultural analyses, and global-local articulations of sociocultural transformations that the humanities value most.

Increasing teaching and scholarly productivity requires (1) rotating teaching releases for research active faculty and (2) new hires with externally funded research agendas. The College may invest in the Department's productivity by funding a Research-Intensive Semester on a rotating basis for faculty who can demonstrate that a semester's time dedicated exclusively to research and writing will result in a major scholarly product, including completion or publication of a book, submission of a major research grant to a Federal agency, or publication of peer-reviewed articles in academic journals.

Given the current budgetary constraints, research productivity through three new and funded hires may coincide with replacing faculty based on anticipated retirements in the next few years. One such hire may be a biological anthropologist who would collaborate with researchers in the university pillar on Healthy Aging. An archaeologist who specializes in the southeastern United States and/or Florida would build a robust program in Cultural Resource Management and facilitate other community-based archaeological projects that would be of value to this region. A hire in applied cultural anthropology in a cutting-edge area of expertise with a funded research agenda would strengthen the sociocultural component of the graduate and undergraduate programs. This cutting-edge applied cultural anthropology hire may also be a joint-hire based on another pillar depending on the hire's area of expertise. All three hires would raise the visibility of the Department, the College, and the University through research productivity, innovative and relevant curriculum, and required training of students as research and practicing anthropologists.

The Department of Anthropology consists of a small but productive faculty across the dimensions of scholarship, teaching, mentoring, and service. Even with a small faculty, the department succeeds in representing the four subfields of anthropology. With additional support from the College, and some editing of the existing curriculum—removal of courses that are not taught, and incorporation of content and marketable skills, the department will achieve representation of applied anthropology, a fifth field and one that is of interest to students who will benefit through explicit preparation for professional careers as anthropologists. Through maximizing the contributions of all the existing faculty in building a healthy and sustainable department, and through the prospect of new strategic hires, in coordination with the Platforms and Pillars initiatives, the Department of Anthropology will emerge as a key player in establishing an R1 status of Florida Atlantic University.