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To: Lee L. Huntsman
Provost

From: Marsha L. Landolt *M. L. Landolt*
Dean and Vice Provost

Re: Department of Anthropology 10-year Review

Summary and recommended action

At its meetings of December 14, 2000 and January 25, 2001, the Graduate School Council met with the members of the Department of Anthropology review team and Departmental and College representatives, respectively. The Graduate School Council recommended continuation of all degree programs offered by the Department. The Council took particular note of the rapid and substantial response of the Department to many of the review committee's suggestions, particularly with regard to the Archaeology program. The Chair of the Department and the Council agreed that the Department and its graduate programs would benefit from limiting graduate enrollment to no more than 16 new students per year. This limit would allow faculty to devote more time to mentoring individual students and would better link the size of the graduate program with the availability of financial resources.

The self-study, the report of the review committee, the Department's response and correspondence to the Department prior to the second meeting of the Council are attached.

Background

The Department of Anthropology offers BA, MA and PhD degrees as well as an undergraduate minor. Since the last review, the Department has added an evening BA program. The Department consists of approximately 20 FTE tenure-track faculty (28 people), 10 temporary lecturers, four full-time and two half-time staff, approximately 420 undergraduate majors, and 90 graduate students. Approximately 120 undergraduate majors, 10 MAs and 11 PhDs are graduated annually. Approximately 130 students complete the undergraduate minor each year.

Undergraduates complete their degrees in a timely manner; about five years for transfer students and four years for students who begin as freshmen at UW (the overall graduation efficiency index is 85%). The undergraduate curriculum is not differentiated among sub-disciplines; BA recipients graduate with a high quality liberal arts education.

The graduate program is divided into four separate programs: Environmental Anthropology, Sociocultural Anthropology, Biocultural Anthropology and Archaeology. Graduates from these programs are well placed in relevant careers or subsequent study. One area of concern is the mean time to degree, which is among the longest in the University—9 years overall, 11 years in Archaeology. While such figures are not unusual among departments of Anthropology, they are still a source of concern. The Archaeology program recently changed one of its requirements—students who receive a sufficiently high "pass" on the comprehensive exam no longer need to complete a Master's thesis before continuing to the PhD. This change should diminish time to degree and was viewed favorably by the Council.

The last review was conducted in 1988, at which time the Department faced considerable challenges. As recently as two years ago, the Department was viewed as having low morale and to be suffering from the loss of key faculty. At the time of the current review, spring of 2000, the review committee found a very different picture – a department “on the verge of becoming a national leader, far surpassing its previous rankings.” The Department was particularly praised for maintaining considerable intellectual breadth while simultaneously maintaining intellectual integration through overlapping membership in its component programs. The review team also praised the current Chair, Dr. Miriam Kahn, for the leadership she is providing.

The new (1997) interdisciplinary program in **Environmental Anthropology** has rapidly gained national recognition. This program is an important organizing influence in the Department as its faculty are drawn from the other subdisciplines. External participants come from the College of Forest Resources, the School of Marine Affairs, the School of Law, the School of Public Health and Community Medicine, as well as several departments within the College of Arts and Sciences. Environmental Anthropology faculty are also active participants in the Program on the Environment. The focus of activity is at the graduate level, but a 200-level introductory course is offered. Doctoral recipients from the program are expected to pursue careers outside academia that require expertise in social aspects of the human-environment interaction.

The **Sociocultural Anthropology** program has made several strong hires in recent years, turning loss of faculty into an opportunity to broaden and strengthen the program. This is the largest program in the Department, with 15 faculty. It supports an impressive theoretical, topical and regional breadth of intellectual activity. The review committee was particularly impressed with the high level of mutual respect among the faculty. A redesign of the graduate curriculum was recently undertaken.

In the past 10 years, the **Biocultural Anthropology** program has been almost entirely restructured from the former Physical Anthropology Program. It now ranks among the top tier of its kind in the country. Its new focus is a much better compliment to the other programs in the Department than was the Physical Anthropology Program. It has established collaborations with other units such as the Center for Studies in Demography and Ecology and the Center for Quaternary Research. External grant funding is increasing. Its faculty are viewed as having an excellent balance of laboratory and field expertise.

The **Archaeology Program** was seen as the program most in need of attention. Over the past few years, it has suffered from the loss of key faculty, reducing by half the size of a program that had been ranked as one of the top 10 by the Society for American Anthropology. Two additional senior professors are expected to retire soon, leaving behind a faculty that is disproportionately junior. At the suggestion of the review committee, the faculty in Archaeology conducted a retreat in which senior advisors from the national community of archaeologists (including one member of the review committee) were invited to participate. The faculty forged a cohesive and promising vision of the group they hope to build and the program that would emerge. Although fulfillment of this vision cannot be taken for granted, this is a very promising development. It has begun with the search for an established dynamic senior scholar/teacher; if successful, a second search is anticipated.

The review committee noted several important efforts underway within the Department, including review and improvement of the undergraduate curriculum and renewed attention to the honors program. They complimented the Department on the 10-year placement record of its doctoral recipients and its attention to the balance of academic and nonacademic careers pursued by them. Graduate student morale was judged to be high, however some problems were noted, namely, inadequate funding, uneven mentoring of individual students, and the lack of a sense of community (due in part to the division of the graduate population along programmatic lines). In view of these issues, the Council recommended limiting enrollment in the graduate program to no more than 16 new students annually, with the goal of better linking the number of students with the amount of available financial support and enhancing mentoring.

The Department has rapidly and constructively responded to the suggestions of the review committee. The responses, in addition to those mentioned above, include:

Undergraduate program.

1. A director of Undergraduate Studies has been named. This individual will coordinate biennial teaching plans to provide focus and integration of the undergraduate curriculum for the Department and individual sub-disciplines. A modest upgrade of an existing position is sought (and endorsed by the Council).
2. Performance expectations for junior faculty across subdisciplines have been clarified.
3. Faculty of all ranks will teach lower division undergraduate courses.
4. The list of undergraduate course offerings has been updated.
5. Advising of undergraduates has been improved.
6. The faculty have embraced the suggestion that a Departmental award for undergraduate teaching and for undergraduate student performance be instituted.
7. The Department has asked CIDR to survey majors in junior and senior Anthropology courses to see where additional structure (course sequencing) would be beneficial.
8. The Department has taken steps to improve the undergraduate honors program.

Graduate program.

1. A fundraising effort to expand graduate student funding has been initiated. The effort includes solicitation from private donors, encouragement of graduate students to seek individual extramural support and improved communication of funding opportunities to graduate students.
2. The Department will focus on recruiting top students, somewhat limiting enrollment.
3. The Department will continue successful efforts to secure NSF funds for pre-dissertation research.
4. A credit-bearing course on dissertation writing will be offered.
5. A course on careers in Anthropology will be introduced.

This Department, in the view of the distinguished external members of the review committee, is poised to join the top 10 Anthropology programs nationally. The Department has made significant strides in the past several years and has shown that it will continue to do so. The University is urged to invest in the Department, particularly in the rejuvenation of the Archaeology program. Specific suggestions include providing assistance in faculty recruitment, ensuring that the Instructional Responsibility Policy (IRP) does not unduly impede faculty at all ranks from conducting field-based research (a very important issue for this faculty), and ensuring that the support being offered to junior faculty early in their careers does not vanish upon promotion to Associate Professor, making them attractive targets for raiding by other universities.

Enclosures

c: Richard McCormick, President
Miriam Kahn, Professor and Chair, Department of Anthropology
Debra Friedman, Associate Provost for Academic Planning
John Slattery, Associate Dean for Academic Programs
David Hodge, Dean, College of Arts and Sciences
Susan Jeffords, Divisional Dean, Social Sciences, College of Arts and Sciences
Frederick Campbell, Dean and Vice Provost, Undergraduate Education
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(Harvard university), Alma Gottlieb (University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign), Patty Jo
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