TO: Mike Mahon   **DATE:**   January 30, 2018
           President and Vice Chancellor

FROM: Alan Siaroff
            Chair, Academic Quality Assurance Committee

RE: Department of Anthropology Academic Quality Assurance Review

In accordance with the U of L *Academic Quality Assurance Policy and Process*, the Academic Quality Assurance Committee approved the review of the Department of Anthropology at its January 26, 2018 meeting.

The Self Study Committee for this review comprised Patrick Wilson (Program Review Coordinator), Andrea Cuellar, and Jamie MacKenzie.

The review produced four documents:[1]

1. *Department of Anthropology: Self Study Report* (received February 7, 2017) – Self Study Report, developed by the Department of Anthropology Self Study Committee.

2. *External Reviewers' Report on the Department of Anthropology at the University of Lethbridge* (received April 17, 2017) – by Carlos Londono Sulkin (University of Regina) and Robert Park (University of Waterloo) based on their site visit of March 20-21, 2017.

3. *Department of Anthropology, Academic Quality Assurance: Program Response to External Reviewers* (received October 24, 2017) – response of the Self Study Committee to the external review.

4. *Dean's Response: Anthropology Quality Assurance Review* (received January 5, 2018) – response to the review, written by Craig Cooper, Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Science.

5. Self Study Committee response to the Dean's Response (received January 18, 2018).

---

[1] All documents are available upon request.

Self Study

Strengths of the department mentioned in the report were:

- Alumni satisfaction with teaching in the department is very high (65% "Very Satisfied" and 35% "Satisfied").

- Teaching and research areas have breadth.

- There is a commitment to a theoretically rigorous undergraduate program.

- Many students participate in Independent Studies, co-op opportunities, and Applied Studies.

- Many students have secured funding for fieldwork from grants.

- The M.A. Anthropology has grown, currently with five graduate students.

- The department serves the General Liberal Education Requirement and the First Nations Transition Program.

- The courses engage students in studies of non-Western peoples and perspectives, as a balance to Faculty-wide focus on Canadian, North American, and European perspectives.

- The central goal of teaching in the department is developing critical thinking skills.

- The department contributes to several research nodes on campus, including the Centre for Oral History and Tradition, the Centre for Culture and Community, and the Institute for Child and Youth Studies.

- department members engage with the external community.

- The department aligns closely with principles and goals in key U of L planning documents.

- Student retention rates are about 60%.

- 65% of student survey respondents were very satisfied with the quality of teaching in the program.

- Post-graduate surveys reveal that 94% of respondents had secured paid employment, with 63% having employment somewhat related or very related to the degree.

- Faculty members in the department have ongoing research programs and disseminate their research through publication and conference presentations.

The report contained several perceived weaknesses and challenges for the Department of Anthropology:

- The program may be onerous for students to complete, as data suggests students take an average of 4.9 years to complete the major.

- Over the past decade there has been a slight downward trend in credit hours offered. There was also a downturn in the number of students taking the major, but this number has rebounded.

- Large enrolments in lower-level courses make it difficult to use long-form essays and research papers as assignments.

- Some students are frustrated with the prerequisite structure, which makes it difficult to access a wider range of courses.

- With the current program structure, students can complete the major without taking a single course in anthropological archaeology.

- Consecutive years of cuts to post-secondary education in Alberta has had negative impacts on faculty and students.

The report had three main issues on which feedback was requested from External Reviewers:

- Is the program as currently designed too onerous for students to complete in a reasonable time?
- Should anthropological archaeology and sociocultural anthropology be better integrated into the undergraduate program? And if so, how?
- What minors and concentrations could the department develop?

External Review

Overall, the External Reviewers concluded that Anthropology is a robust department. Strengths of the Department of Anthropology mentioned in the body of the report included:

- The department serves undergraduate students very well.
- The department is in alignment with the strategic goals of the university.
- Anthropology students appear enthusiastic about their department, program, and teachers.
- Faculty are generally satisfied with the department, the faculty, and the university as work environments where they can pursue teaching and research.
- Faculty in the department do well in research and publication and engage with the work of other anthropologists.
- Anthropology programs contribute to liberal education and encourage student participation in research.

Weaknesses mentioned in the report included:

- There are minor issues with undergraduate completion rates.
- There is tension in the department about the role and integration of anthropological archaeology in the curriculum.
- For the graduate program the department has to address issues related to time to completion and student support. For the Master's program, it is impossible for students to complete fieldwork and program requirements within a standard two-year timeframe.
- Anthropology students take slightly longer to complete undergraduate degrees than students in comparable disciplines like sociology.
- The lack of a second-language requirement for a degree may disadvantage students.

The report contained the following recommendations for improvement:

Programs and curriculum:	1. Consider including a one-week Archaeology unit in the ANTH 1000 course.
	2. Consider making both ANTH 2410 and ANTH 2510 requirements for the Anthropology major. But do not make ANTH 2410 required at the expense of ANTH 2510.
	3. Continue to schedule advanced theory courses for students who need or want deeper knowledge of theory. Abandon the chronological approach to theory in the basic theory course.
	4. Explore the development of concentrations. Limit concentrations initially to one or two, and consider the impact of concentrations on teaching resources and on faculty time for research and service.
	5. Create a concentration in Environmental Anthropology.
	6. Evaluate the timetables and requirements for the M.A. program with the goal of making timely completion of the degree more likely.
	7. Develop policies or principles on how reading and writing will be addressed in the department programs and courses.
	8. Consider expanding the languages the Faculty offers courses in. For the department, consider making one or two second-language courses a requirement for a degree.
	9. Develop a policy for setting up independent studies courses. In part the purpose of this policy will be to decrease dependence on these courses for completing the undergraduate program.
	10. The School of Graduate Studies should strengthen offerings on the professionalization of graduate students.
	11. The Faculty should consider creating modules for first year students on Library use.
Policies:	12. The department should continue to advise its students, and should consider making this advising compulsory for Anthropology majors. If this is not possible, then the department and Faculty should develop a process to keep advisers informed about changes to the Anthropology program, special interest areas, and course content.
	13. Develop a formal mechanism to ensure supervisors are better informed and are prepared to deal with practical aspects of graduate supervision.
	14. Develop a departmental policy on grading standards.
	15. The Faculty should offer training for new faculty on dealing with student crises, procedures for security emergencies, etc.
Future hirings:	16. The next faculty hire should be a scholar with research expertise in language or communication.

Program Response

In their Program Response, the Self Study Committee responded to the 16 recommendations from the External Review Report:

	Recommendation:	Self Study Committee Response:
1.	Consider including a one-week Archaeology unit in the ANTH 1000 course.	This option was suggested if the department did not adopt ANTH 2410 as a requirement. ANTH 2410 will be adopted and so the department will consider this suggestion in the future.
2.	Consider making both ANTH 2410 and ANTH 2510 requirements for the Anthropology major. But do not make ANTH 2410 required at the expense of ANTH 2510.	Disagree. This would add complexity to the major. The department will add ANTH 2410 as a requirement for all majors and will test this approach for a few years.
3.	Continue to schedule advanced theory courses for students who need or want deeper knowledge of theory. Abandon the chronological approach to theory in the basic theory course.	Agreed. This change has been made to the structure of the major.
4.	Explore the development of concentrations. Limit concentrations initially to one or two, and consider the impact of concentrations on teaching resources and on faculty time for research and service.	Agreed. The department will pilot the first concentration for 2018. (see response to recommendation 5)
5.	Create a concentration in Environmental Anthropology.	Agreed. The department will develop a concentration in Environmental Anthropology.
6.	Evaluate the timetables and requirements for the M.A. program with the goal of making timely completion of the degree more likely.	Agreed. The Anthropology Graduate Education Committee will develop policies to address this recommendation.
7.	Develop policies or principles on how reading and writing will be addressed in the department programs and courses.	Disagree. Anthropology courses have diverse learning goals and assessment methods.
8.	Consider expanding the languages the Faculty offers courses in. For the department, consider making one or two second-language courses a requirement for a degree.	Agreed.
9.	Develop a policy for setting up independent studies courses. In part the purpose of this policy will be to decrease dependence on these courses for completing the undergraduate program.	Agreed. It is standard for students to provide Independent Studies proposals and for faculty to develop course outlines.

Recommendation:	Self Study Committee Response:
10. The School of Graduate Studies should strengthen offerings on the professionalization of graduate students.	Agreed.
11. The Faculty should consider creating modules for first year students on Library use.	This would depend on the learning goals of individual courses.
12. The department should continue to advise its students, and should consider making this advising compulsory for Anthropology majors. If this is not possible, then the department and Faculty should develop a process to keep advisers informed about changes to the Anthropology program, special interest areas, and course content.	Agreed. The department continues its pilot advising program.
13. Develop a formal mechanism to ensure supervisors are better informed and are prepared to deal with practical aspects of graduate supervision.	Agreed. The department supports the School of Graduate Studies offering workshops to help in supervisor training.
14. Develop a departmental policy on grading standards.	Disagree. The department respects intellectual freedom, including diverse grading methods and standards.
15. The Faculty should offer training for new faculty on dealing with student crises, procedures for security emergencies, etc.	Agreed.
16. The next faculty hire should be a scholar with research expertise in language or communication.	Decisions on future hiring will depend on the needs of the department. If the department were offered a new hire, linguistic anthropology will be considered along with other departmental needs.

The Program Response identified four major actions arising from the External Review:

1. The department will complete its evaluation of the undergraduate program, and will submit a revised major for approval to the Faculty of Arts and Science Curriculum Committee.

2. The department will continue its experiment with internal advising to complement the Advising Office.

3. The department will discuss if and how to incorporate guidelines for introducing writing in Anthropology courses.

4. The department will discuss how to address the needs of graduate students in the present structure of graduate studies, and will begin to draft internal guidelines for graduate education.

Deans' Response

The Dean's Response addressed the four main curricular issues identified in the Self Study Report:

1. *The program may be too onerous for students to complete in a reasonable time* -- Sequencing of some courses can be problematic due to prerequisites. The Dean supported the department's decision to reduce the number of required Theory courses to one, but asked them to consider the Reviewers' suggestion to redesign the one Theory course to abandon the chronological approach.

2. *Integrating anthropological archaeology and sociocultural anthropology* -- The Reviewers support the department looking into changing ANTH 2410 (Anthropological Archaeology) into a required course, and/or making at least one Archaeology course a requirement in any concentration. The Reviewers caution against making an Archaeology course required in every concentration, but recommend requiring an Archaeology course for the proposed Concentration in Environmental Anthropology. The Dean supported the Reviewers' recommendations, and noted that if ANTH 2410 becomes a required course then so should ANTH 2510 (Language, Culture, and Communication). Another possibility is to introduce a module on archaeology into ANTH 1000 in addition to making ANTH 2410 a required course.

3. *Broadening the curriculum to include linguistic anthropology* -- The Reviewers recommend a future hire be a linguistic anthropologist or a socio-anthropologist with expertise in language and/or communication.

4. *Concentrations and minors* -- The Dean supports initially limiting concentrations to one or two and having Environmental Anthropology as one of the concentrations.

The Dean went on to make further comments related to the recommendations:

Undergraduate Advising -- The department should continue having the department chair provide informal advising. Departmental advising must communicate with Arts and Science advising to have a consistent approach.

Master's Program -- The department should consult with the School of Graduate Studies to examine if the standard M.A. timetables work for Anthropology and to look at revising the thesis format, along similar lines as the format adopted by Anthropology at the University of Waterloo.

Reading and Writing Competency -- The department should develop policies for how reading and writing will be addressed in the department's programs and courses. The Reviewers suggest funneling students into Academic Writing through a test or based on entrance grades in English.

Language Requirement -- The department should explore making one or two second language courses a requirement for the Anthropology major.

The Dean's Response concluded with several thoughts:

Archaeology -- The department is proceeding with making ANTH 2410 a required course (but not ANTH 2510), and will consider introducing an archaeology module into ANTH 1000.

Single Theory Course -- The department has already reduced the number of required Theory courses to one. In addition, the department should consider whether to adopt a thematic approach in that Theory course.

Concentrations -- The department will pilot a Concentration in Environmental Anthropology, which will include one sociocultural course and one archaeology course.

M.A. Requirements -- The department's Graduate Education Committee will develop policies to address completion rates. As part of this, the department will consider revising the format of the thesis.

Reading and Writing -- The department has decided against imposing reading and writing requirements. The Dean encourages the department to revisit and reconsider introducing general guiding principles for introducing writing requirements into courses.

Language Offerings -- The department should consider adding a language requirement to the undergraduate program.

Independent Studies -- The department should explore the development of an Independent Studies Committee that reviews student's Independent Studies proposals and course outlines for Independent Studies developed by faculty members.

Graduate Students Professional Seminars -- The department should make all graduate students aware of the THRIVE professional skills development program that is run by the School of Graduate Studies.

Library Modules -- Individual faculty members should have the option to include modules on Library use into their courses, depending on their specific learning goals.

Department Advising -- The Dean supports the department piloting in-house advising. The department should also meet with Arts and Science Advising and the Associate Dean who oversees advising to develop a consistent advising approach.

Graduate Supervision -- The Dean's office will work with the School of Graduate Studies to create workshops to assist in supervisor training.

Grading Standards -- The department has decided against developing a policy regarding grading standards. The Dean does not agree with this position and noted that this may deserve Faculty-wide discussion.

New Faculty Orientation -- Currently, the Associate Deans meet informally with each new faculty member to discuss research and teaching. The Faculty is looking into ways to improve mentoring and to formalize new faculty orientation.

Linguistics Anthropology -- The department should examine the overall hiring priorities and needs at the time of any vacancy.

Self Study Committee Response

In their response to the Dean's Response, the Self Study Committee made four comments:

1. The department's focus on making ANTH 2410 (Anthropological Archeology) a requirement for the major is to ensure that all undergraduate students are exposed to anthropological archaeology and sociocultural anthropology, regardless of their future interest in graduate studies.

2. The department shares the Dean's concern about completion times of graduate students. The Anthropology Graduate Education Committee will develop departmental guidelines for the graduate program, in consultation with the School of Graduate Studies. The department will also consider the University of Waterloo's experiences regarding the thesis format.

3. The department has postponed launching the proposed Concentration in Environmental Anthropology. This is because each required course for the concentration has to be offered annually, which will place excessive strain on the instructors of the courses in this concentration. The Dean understands that this is problematic given the current requirements for a concentration.

4. The department will discuss the suggestion to establish an Independent Studies Committee to evaluate Independent Studies proposals and course outlines.

The Academic Quality Assurance Committee is satisfied that the Department of Anthropology academic quality assurance review has followed the U of L's academic quality assurance process appropriately, and acknowledges the successful completion of the review.

Sincerely,

Alan Siaroff

Alan Siaroff

Chair, Academic Quality Assurance Committee

Cc: Andrew Hakin, Provost and Vice President (Academic)