2015-2016
Cyclical Program Review of the Anthropology Program

PROGRAMS:
Honours Bachelor of Arts (Combined) in Anthropology

Final Assessment Report

Submitted by: Dr. Richard Nemesvari, Dean, Faculty of Arts; Dr. Kathryn Carter, Associate Vice-President: Teaching & Learning; Dr. Deborah MacLatchy, Provost & Vice-President: Academic
Date: August 22, 2016
PART ONE: EXECUTIVE RESPONSE

A) EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF REVIEW DOCUMENTS
(SELF-STUDY, REVIEWERS' REPORT, UNIT RESPONSE)

Self-Study

- During the period under review, Anthropology was transformed from a department offering a single major into a program offering a combined major. The program has undergone a curricular review and introduced new courses, rotating electives, and strengthened interdisciplinary connections to ensure that students are provided a diverse suite of courses. Program requirements have been streamlined and aligned with other programs in the Faculty of Arts, as well as in response to recommendations from their previous cyclical review. The self-study was written with the input of department members and led by the coordinator, Dr. Natasha Pravaz.

- There is strong alignment between the program and Laurier’s Strategic Academic Plan and mission. Learning outcomes aligned with the Undergraduate Degree Level Expectations are clearly articulated and were developed after the previous cyclical review in 2007. Program learning outcomes have been designed to introduce, reinforce, and master skills sequentially over the length of the program. Curriculum reorganization has put a new emphasis on ethnographic research methodological skills, intercultural understanding, and encourages students to “experience ethnography.”

- Anthropology exhibits strong non-major demand and offers a significant amount of service teaching to the university. After broad curricular revision, the program is eager to assess its impact, and has recently introduced an Option in Intercultural Understanding.

- The program utilizes various High Impact Practices such as experiential learning, intercultural skills, and writing-intensive courses. Courses are offered face-to-face and the first year introductory course is offered online. Students are rigorously assessed and the program as developed a logical assessment flow-through in the program.

- Anthropology is maximizing the resources that they have, and after significant transformation of the department, its faculty, and support staff, the program is looking forward to assessing their changes and having consistent support staff. The faculty involved in the program have strong research records and contribute to academic service, as well as teach for other programs, increasing the interdisciplinarity in the Faculty of Arts.

- Anthropology teaching evaluations are in line with University and Faculty means, indicating strong satisfaction with the instruction in the program. Student and Alumni feedback focused on close relationships with faculty and peers, lively and engaging pedagogy and critical thinking skills. Many of the alumni suggestions for improvement had already been a part of the curricular revisions that began in September 2015. Alumni are highly successful in finding employment after graduation, with graduates of the program achieving more than a 92% job placement rate.
With major transitions over the review period, the Anthropology program has refined itself and placed new emphasis on the program's practical and social engagement components, particularly ethnography in Anthropology. While there have been challenges, the program is excited to assess the impact of their curricular revisions.

External Reviewers’ Report

The external reviewers for the program were Jonathan Finn from the Communication Studies program at Laurier and Michael Lambek from the Department of Anthropology at the University of Toronto. The site visit took place on February 24-25, 2016. Included below is the reviewers’ executive summary and their list of recommendations.

Executive Summary

Anthropology at WLU has produced a strong and serious self-study in which the program has been carefully thought through and considerably redesigned. The faculty members, including full and part-time, are well trained, active in research and teaching, highly dedicated, and expressing great enthusiasm. The courses are popular and the undergraduate majors are deeply involved in the program. All this is remarkable given the difficulties experienced over the last few years, including the downgrading from a Department to a Program, a sharp decline in faculty and course offerings, a lack of resources, and a rumour that the program could be closed. Our recommendations provide means to support the program and redress the problems.

List of Recommendations

1. The University should ensure that course conflicts (timetabling) within Anthropology and between Anthropology and other Departments and programs are minimized. Priority should be placed on ensuring that no two Anthropology courses are taught in overlapping time-slots.

2. We recommend a slightly more ambitious outlook for the program, achievable by following the further recommendations that follow.

3. The program should be given at least one additional full-time faculty member to provide for a more equitable and tenable administrative structure.

4. The standard introductory course (AN 100) should be offered in fewer but larger sections. It should be rescheduled such that it meets in a weekly two-hour block for lectures followed by a one-hour period for more informal activities. The inter-cultural lecture that is part of AN 100 should be taken over by the faculty member teaching the course, drawing on the facilitator from the Inter-cultural Development Office only for the one-hour more informal session.

5. The program should seek to offer a few additional courses at the upper levels and deepen offerings in historical and contemporary, theoretical perspectives in the discipline.

6. In order to make these recommendations practical there is quite a simple solution, namely to draw more extensively and more explicitly on the anthropologists housed in other programs and departments at WLU and at Waterloo. As a first step, some of their courses should be cross-listed and hence made an integral part of the Anthropology program.
7. We recommend that the Dean encourage anthropology faculty in other Arts programs to participate in the Anthropology program. It should be made clear there would be no repercussions for tenure. With cross-listing no resources are withdrawn from home programs. Attention must be paid to the size of these courses and their equal availability to students registered in Anthropology, as well, of course, to students doing double majors in the respective programs.

8. We recommend that the tenure stream position vacated by Dr. Kazubowski be advertised and filled in 2016-2017.

9. We recommend further that the person who has worked de facto full time and over many years be appointed within the next academic year to a regular full position to last until retirement. Given the exceptional nature of the situation we suggest that the financial support be channelled directly from the Vice-President’s office to the Dean to ensure this takes place and that it should not be prejudicial to the rest of the department’s funding.

10. We recommend that the Administrative Assistant be supported by a floater for one day per week until she has managed to assemble and systematize the program’s files.

11. Provide a space in which Anthropologists can meet, perhaps a combination common room, seminar room, and lounge, adjacent to the office of the administrator or program coordinator.

12. Provide a private office for any CAS members who regularly teach more than one course per term.

13. If necessary, find spaces in adjacent building to make this work, but in such a manner that Anthropology facilities are not too dispersed.

14. The two FT members of the program should be given substantial institutional support to re-energize their research profiles. This could come in the form of reduced administrative and teaching demands and could be solved by replacing the resignation of Dr. Kazubowski and regularizing the anomalous position.

15. CAS faculty teaching regularly in the program should receive greater acknowledgment and compensation. Tutorial and grading support for their work, especially at the 100-level, should be provided.

16. The program, Dean, and senior administration should work to dispel the rumour that Anthropology is a dying program and should instead point to the vibrancy of the revamped program and the significant potential for future development. Following through on our previous recommendations would achieve this end.

17. The quality of the program can be enhanced in numerous ways. As previously noted what is most critical is hiring more full-time faculty and finding adequate remuneration, security, and support to the current CAS. The quality of the program can also be enhanced by drawing further upon the anthropologists located in other programs and departments at Laurier and perhaps the University of Waterloo. If not all of these recommendations can be met in the short-term, we encourage the university to address them over the seven-years of the review cycle.

18. We recommend that any recommendations of this report be tailored to match the existing faculty complement of the program with the goal that the administrative burden on the two FT members (which has been disproportionately large over this review period) be minimized over the new review period.
Unit Response

The unit response was authored by the Anthropology Program Coordinator and responds to all of the recommendations made by the external reviewers. There were no clarifications or corrections to the External Reviewers’ Report noted.

The program responded thoughtfully to each recommendation and identified which ones they agreed with, what steps had already been taken toward their implementation, and what further action would be taken in the future. Recommendations that the unit agreed with are noted, as well as recommendations which are outside the scope of the Department (e.g. additional funding).

The program reiterates the importance of the discipline to the university and to society. Anthropology acknowledges that they have just completed several years of curricular revisions and administrative changes, and that they are looking forward to assessing the success of these efforts.

B) IDENTIFICATION OF PROGRAM STRENGTHS

1. The Program’s learning outcomes and academic goals align with the 2015-2020 Strategic Academic Plan.

2. The Program has revised its structure and offerings to meet the current availability of resources.

3. The Program offers its students significant opportunities for experiential learning.

C) OPPORTUNITIES FOR PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT AND ENHANCEMENT

1. The Program should find ways to integrate other anthropologists in the Faculty of Arts into its structures so that they can contribute to its offerings.

2. Cross-listing with appropriate courses in other Faculty of Arts departments and programs should be pursued in order to increase the options available to the Program’s students.

D) PRIORITIZATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS APPROVED FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Unfortunately, a significant number of the External Reviewers’ recommendations (Recommendations #3, #8, #9, #10, #11, #12, #13, #14, and a portion of #17) entail financial and space resource allocations that cannot be addressed outside of the context of budgetary constraints in the Faculty of Arts, and in the university as a whole. They are therefore not included in the prioritization list, since they may not be implemented in isolation from wider budget processes.

In regard to Recommendation #15: CAS faculty teaching regularly in the program should receive greater acknowledgement and compensation. Tutorial and grading support for their work, especially at the 100-level, should be provided, it should be noted (as the Unit response also acknowledges) that compensation
decisions do not take place on the departmental level, and therefore this recommendation is not prioritized. As also noted by the Unit, Instructional Assistants are available to instructors of 100-level courses in Anthropology.

Of the 18 recommendations listed in the Reviewers’ Report, the following should be prioritized:

Recommendation #1: The University should ensure that course conflicts (timetabling) within Anthropology and between Anthropology and other Departments and programs are minimized. Priority should be placed on ensuring that no two Anthropology courses are taught in overlapping time-slots. The Unit agrees that it will avoid scheduling conflicts between Anthropology classes in the timetable, which should be possible through a considered use of the “25% flexibility option” available to departments/programs, in order to establish coordinated teaching assignments for both full-time and CAS instructors. If conflicts still cannot be avoided, the Dean of Arts would be pleased to facilitate discussions between the Unit and the Registrar’s Office.

Arranging a similar avoidance of conflicts with cognate or parallel courses in other units may be challenging, and will, as the Unit response indicates, need to be negotiated with other Chairs and Coordinators. A first step would be to establish how many such conflicts have been generated in the 2016-2017 academic year.

Recommendation #4: The standard introductory course (AN 100) should be offered in fewer but larger sections. It should be rescheduled such that it meets in a weekly two-hour block for lectures followed by a one-hour period for more informal activities. The inter-cultural lecture that is part of AN 100 should be taken over by the faculty member teaching the course, drawing on the facilitator from the Intercultural Office only for the one-hour more informal session. The Unit states that it finds attractive the idea of teaching larger sections of AN 100 with attached tutorials, but that the lack of a graduate program and the scarcity of stipends make such an arrangement untenable. The Dean of Arts would be pleased to discuss the provision of additional stipends to facilitate implementing this recommendation, although this would require a re-evaluation of the established use of Instructional Assistants for this course.

The Unit agrees that the intercultural competency component of AN 100 should be the responsibility of the instructor, and that it will move to reduce the involvement of the facilitator from the Intercultural Development Office.

Recommendation #5: The program should seek to offer a few additional courses at the upper levels and deepen offerings in historical and contemporary, theoretical perspectives in the discipline. The unit agrees that offerings in in historical and contemporary, theoretical perspectives should be increased. Since such courses are still on the books, reintroducing them into the rotation of classes available to students should achieve a re-balancing of offerings without the need for significantly more resources.

Recommendation #6 and #7: In order to make these recommendations practical, there is quite a simple solution, namely to draw more extensively and more explicitly on the anthropologists housed in other programs and departments at WLU and at Waterloo. As a first step, some of their courses should be cross-listed and hence made an integral part of the Anthropology program. We recommend that the Dean encourage anthropology faculty in other Arts programs to participate in the Anthropology program. It should be made clear there would be no repercussions for tenure. With cross-listing no resources are withdrawn from home programs. Attention must be paid to the size of these courses and their equal availability to students registered in Anthropology, as well, of course, to students doing double majors in the respective programs. Both of these recommendations entail interdepartmental cooperation to expand the Unit’s course offerings for its students. The Unit accepts this strategy, and is willing to pursue the increase of
cross-listed courses. The Dean of Arts would be pleased to facilitate this recommendation, but first steps would need to be taken by the Unit in approaching other units to discuss potential course linkages. The Unit’s Coordinator could begin by approaching the Chairs of relevant Departments and initiating discussion along these lines.

It is unclear what “repercussions for tenure” might arise out of such discussions, but it is agreed that concerns about class size and access will need to be considered.

SIGNATURES

Dr. Richard Nemesvari  August 15, 2016

Dr. Kathryn Carter  (Insert Date)

Dr. Deborah MacLatchy  21 August 2016
## PART TWO: IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

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<tr>
<th>Recommendation to be Implemented</th>
<th>Responsibility for Implementation</th>
<th>Anticipated Completion Date</th>
<th>Additional Notes</th>
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<td>Recommendations #6 and #7: Recommendation #6: In order to make these recommendations practical there is quite a simple solution,</td>
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