

**Program Assessment: Annual Report**

**Program(s): Anthropology**

**Department: Sociology & Anthropology**

**College/School: Arts and Sciences**

**Date: June 12, 2019**

**Primary Assessment Contact: Joel Jennings, Undergraduate Director**

1. Which program student learning outcomes were assessed in this annual assessment cycle?

This year we assessed our third goal: Anthropology majors will have the skills necessary to communicate effectively in written and oral forms. We used the following Student Learning Outcomes:

- a) write a clear and convincing sociological analysis of an event, issue, or problem
- b) make an oral presentation that is succinct, clear, convincing, and professional
- c) use computerized and online resources to find information (e.g., databases, reputable internet websites, government statistics, etc.)
- d) evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of information sources, and assess which references are appropriate for academic research

This is the third year the anthropology program has implemented an assessment under its revised plan. We used committee review of the capstone projects of graduating seniors as a direct measure of learning outcomes and complemented that with exit interviews and surveys of graduating seniors as indirect measures of our goal. The capstone papers and exit interviews were reviewed by a faculty committee and a summary report was prepared as scheduled during June. This summary report will be presented to all departmental faculty members for review and discussion at the annual faculty retreat at the end of August, 2019. Madrid is not involved in this assessment.

Capstone papers were used for this evaluation. As Capstone papers are researched for a written and oral presentation formats, they fit the assessment learning outcome goals quite well.

2. What data/artifacts of student learning were collected for each assessed outcome? Were Madrid student artifacts included?

We analyzed a randomly selected sample of 3 Capstone papers. These Capstone papers were empirical works that were guided by individual faculty members and overseen by an instructor of record in the Anthropology division.

Madrid artifacts were not included. (That campus does not have an Anthropology major at this time; we will share our findings with them and invite dialogue, however.)

We also undertook qualitative interviews that asked students about their understanding and

comfort with social science methodology. We explored which classes helped them understand the various methods used in social science, as well as what instructional techniques were helpful.

3. How did you analyze the assessment data? What was the process? Who was involved?  
*NOTE: If you used rubrics as part of your analysis, please include them in an appendix.*

Direct Methods:

1) During June 2019, a committee (Dr. Amy Cooper and Dr. Terra Edwards) evaluated a sample of Capstone papers (3 of 12) using a rubric that focused on the four learning objectives.

Indirect Methods:

A second committee (Dr. Richard Colignon and Dr. Joel Jennings) also conducted focus groups with graduating seniors to identify specific issues with the program's delivery of methods courses and techniques.

4. What did you learn from the data? Summarize the major findings of your analysis for each assessed outcome.

*NOTE: If necessary, include any tables, charts, or graphs in an appendix.*

Average scores for learning outcomes (N/A = not applicable to paper topic)

a)  $(5+5+4+5+N/A+5)=24/5=4.8$

b)  $(5+5+5+5+5+5)=30/6=5.0$

c)  $(5+5+5+5+N/A+5)=25/5=5.0$

d)  $(5+5+5+5+4+5)=29/6=4.83$

The committee broadly reported positive outcomes in terms of the four learning objectives. Reviewers noted on several occasions that it is difficult to assess learning outcome 3 as students are not required to discuss how their background data and references were obtained. Nevertheless, each of the studies used appropriate sources to build sound arguments that were clearly articulated in written and oral formats. Overall, the committee found that the student's accomplished the learning objectives of effective oral and written communication through the research, writing, and presenting of their capstone projects.

During focus groups, students indicated that coursework helped to improve their writing and their related critical thinking skills such as evaluating the quality of reference materials and recognizing the importance of cross-referencing.

\*One reviewer marked N/A when assessing two of student C's learning outcomes, stating in one instance that it is "Difficult to evaluate [the quality of sources used] as the paper contained no list of references" while listing no explanation in the other instance.

5. How did your analysis inform meaningful change? How did you *use the analyzed data to make or implement recommendations for change* in pedagogy, curriculum design, or your assessment plan?

Both the quantitative and qualitative data suggest that Anthropology program is doing a good job of meeting its learning objectives around effective communication. Our findings in this assessment suggest that Anthropology students are both competent and comfortable with their ability to express themselves clearly in written and oral formats.

6. Did you follow up (“close the loop”) on past assessment work? If so, what did you learn? *(For example, has that curriculum change you made two years ago manifested in improved student learning today, as evidenced in your recent assessment data and analysis?)*

The Anthropology program assessment protocol is a three-step process. We are currently in Year #3. As such, we have not yet completed a cycle of assessment and have not yet had the opportunity to compare data between years. Learning Outcome #1, for example, was done in 2017 and will be re-assessed one year from now. We have, however, been using feedback from focus groups with graduating seniors to make adjustments to the program as necessary. Feedback from this year’s focus groups, for example, will inform discussions around the kinds of writing and presentation requirements found in courses at the 1000, 2000, 3000, and 4,000 levels in division meetings during the fall semester.

***IMPORTANT: Please submit any revised/updated assessment plans to the University Assessment Coordinator along with this report.***

## **Rubric for Exit Interviews**

### **Structured Exit Interview with Graduating Seniors**

Focus group questions.

1. What was the most interesting question on the questionnaire?
2. What was/were you favorite courses in the major?
3. What elective courses would you suggest we create?
4. Weakness in the curriculum—What required courses would you suggest we create?
5. Do you have a sense of the breadth of knowledge of this discipline?
6. Were courses with hands-on-experience helpful?
7. Do you think you received helpful guidance from you mentor?

Anthropology majors will have the skills necessary to communicate effectively in written and oral forms.

Learning Outcomes:

8. write a clear and convincing sociological analysis of an event, issue, or problem
9. make an oral presentation that is succinct, clear, convincing, and professional
10. use computerized and online resources to find information (e.g., databases, reputable internet websites, government statistics, etc.)

11. evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of information sources, and assess which references are appropriate for academic research

12. Other Issues:

- a. Facilities?
- b. Research Experience?
- c. Security issues?

13. What additional questions should we be asking?

Notes on responses: