Academic Assessment Council: Assessment Workshop

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Why We Do Assessment...
Western Association of Schools & Colleges

BRACE YOURSELVES

WASC IS COMING
Assessment = Program Improvement

- Define intended learning objectives
- Redesign program to improve learning
- Provide learning opportunities
- Compare outcomes with intended objectives
Anthropology Department SLOs

• 1. Document, interpret, and analyze human cultural and biological diversity. ("Diversity")

• 2. Reason intelligently about ethical issues in human societies and in the practice of anthropology. ("Ethics")

• 3. Integrate anthropological reasoning and historical perspectives into basic scholarly research. ("Research")

• 4. Demonstrate methodological skills in at least one of these subdisciplines of anthropology: archaeology; social and sociocultural anthropology; museum studies; and physical anthropology. ("Methods")

• 5. Effectively communicate anthropological issues and research. Write clear expository essays on anthropological topics. ("Communication")

Spring 2011 Assessment Report
What Are We Trying to Learn?

• Research
  • Integrate anthropological reasoning and historical perspectives into basic scholarly research.

• Communication
  • Effectively communicate anthropological issues and research. Write clear expository essays on anthropological topics.
Research: Assessment of Core Majors Courses

• Covered three subdisciplines within Anthropology
  • ANTH 301: Physical Anthropology
  • ANTH 302: Archaeology
  • ANTH 303: Cultural Anthropology
Research: Assessment of Core Majors Courses

- Covered three subdisciplines within Anthropology
  - ANTH 301: Physical Anthropology
  - ANTH 302: Archaeology
  - ANTH 303: Cultural Anthropology

Benchmarks:
- Unacceptable: <75% of students achieving (or their individual scores <75%)
- Acceptable: 75-89% of students achieving (or their individual scores 75-89%)
- Outstanding: 90-100% of students achieving (or their individual scores >90%)

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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ANTH 301</td>
<td>Physical Anthropology: The study of cultures and societies of human beings</td>
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<td>and their very recent past. Traditional cultural anthropologists study</td>
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<td>living cultures and present their observations in an ethnography.</td>
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<td>ANTH 302</td>
<td>Archaeology: The study of past societies and their cultures, especially the</td>
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<td>material remains of the past, such as tools, food remains, and places where</td>
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<td>people lived.</td>
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<td>ANTH 303</td>
<td>Cultural Anthropology: The study of language, especially how language is</td>
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<td>structured, evolution of language, and the social and cultural contexts</td>
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<td>for language.</td>
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<td>Lingustic Anthropology: Also called biological anthropology, physical</td>
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<td>anthropology is the study of human evolution and variation, both past and</td>
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<td>current.</td>
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ANTH 301: Physical Anthropology

• Introductory physical anthropology course for Anthropology majors

• Assessment strategy
  • Pre- vs. post-test (research methods)
  • $N = 27$ (completed both pre- and post-test)
ANTH 302: Archaeology

• Introductory archaeology course for Anthropology majors

• Assessment strategy
  • Pre- vs. post-test (research methods)
  • $N = 30$ (completed both pre- and post-test)
ANTH 303: Cultural Anthropology

• Introductory cultural anthropology course for Anthropology majors

• Assessment strategy
  • Pre- vs. post-test (research methods)
  • $N = 31$ (essay-based assessment using a 5 point scale)
    • 1) Documentation
    • 2) Interpretation
    • 3) Analysis
ANTH 301: Physical Anthropology—Results

67% of students performed at a 75% level or higher on post-test. (Mean post-test score = 75% vs. 53% pre-test score: 22% improvement)
ANTH 302: Archaeology—Results

86% of students performed at a 75% level or higher. (Correct response changed from 24% in pre-test to 87% in post-test: 63% improvement)
ANTH 303: Cultural Anthropology—Results

100% of students performed at an acceptable level for the post-test (scores of 3-5 for all criteria). "Documentation" (85% post-test vs. 30% pre-test: 55% improvement); "Interpretation" (91% post-test vs. 28% pre-test: 63% improvement); "Analysis" (90% post-test vs. 25% pre-test: 65% improvement).
Communication: Assessment of Capstone Seminar

- Covered capstone seminar in Anthropology
  - **ANTH 496: History of Theory & Methods in Anthropology**

**Benchmarks:**
- Unacceptable: <75% of students achieving (or their individual scores <75%)
- Acceptable: 75-89% of students achieving (or their individual scores 75-89%)
- Outstanding: 90-100% of students achieving (or their individual scores >90%)
ANTH 496: History of Theory & Methods in Anthropology

• Introductory cultural anthropology course for Anthro majors

• Assessment strategy
  • Weekly BlackBoard posting essay assignments (written communication)
  • $N = 18$ (essay-based assessment using a 3 point scale)
    • 1) Command of topic
    • 2) Development of argument
    • 3) Organization & language mechanics
ANTH 496: History of Theory & Methods in Anthropology—Results

83% of students performed at an acceptable level (score of 6 and higher)
Total mean score = 81% (Command of Topic = 81%; Development of Argument = 81%; Organization and Language Mechanics = 80%)
Closing the Loop!

How will the assessment data and their evaluation be used to improve the program? Possible actions might include revising pedagogy, courses, curricula, or other learning support mechanisms.

- Results shared with department and discussed at the next meeting. Discussed results at Spring faculty retreat, and addressed ways to improve student understanding of research methods and communication skills.

- Share writing guides among faculty. Encouraged faculty to assign partial final paper assignments earlier in the semester to provide feedback.

- Collect data for 5-year review & review all SLOs within cycle
Questions?