

UNIVERSITY ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE
Feedback to Academic Departments on Assessment Activities Reported in FY13 Annual Reports
UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMS

DEPARTMENT Anthropology **DATE** March 31, 2014

PROGRAM(S) COVERED IN REVIEW Bachelor of Arts (BA)

COMMITTEE MEMBER(S) CONDUCTING REVIEW Deborah Worley, Bradley Myers, Kyle Thorson

1. STUDENT LEARNING GOALS

- | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|-------------------------|
| • Were any goals referenced? | YES <u>X</u> | NO <u> </u> | QUALIFIED Y/N <u> </u> |
| • If so, were goals well articulated? | YES <u>X</u> | NO <u> </u> | QUALIFIED Y/N <u> </u> |
| • Do goals address student learning? | YES <u>X</u> | NO <u> </u> | QUALIFIED Y/N <u> </u> |

Comments:

The 2012 Assessment Plan includes three primary program goals that are student learning goals. More specifically, the assessment plan text includes the following:

"Upon completion of the Anthropology Major, students should be able to:

- 1. demonstrate knowledge of the holistic, integrative, and comparative nature of anthropology across its core subfields,*
- 2. articulate and apply key anthropological perspectives using critical thinking and comparative analysis, and*
- 3. demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the patterns and sources of biological and cultural variation."*

The first set of goals was used from 2002 through 2012, although it was referred to in the 2012 Assessment Plan as well as the FY13 Annual Report. The 2012 Assessment Plan included a second set of specific learning goals, articulating that students should be able to demonstrate competency and apply the knowledge that they learned in seven specific areas:

- The holistic nature of Anthropology.*
- The key anthropological theoretical perspectives.*
- Critical thinking about local and global problems.*
- Comparative analysis in an anthropological context.*
- Knowledge of the patterns and sources of biological and/or cultural variation.*
- Ethics in the subfields of Anthropology.*
- Anthropological research design and application.*

In addition to the program goals, please also consider UND's institutional and Essential Studies goals for student learning (shown in alignment within parentheses) and identify which goals are similar to program goals.

- | | | |
|---------------|---|--|
| <u> </u> | 1 | Communication – written or oral ("able to write and speak in various settings with a sense of purpose/audience") |
| <u> X </u> | 2 | Thinking and reasoning – critical thinking (or "be intellectually curious"; analyze, synthesize, evaluate) |
| <u> </u> | 3 | Thinking and reasoning – creative thinking (or "be intellectually creative"; explore, discover, engage) |
| <u> </u> | 4 | Thinking and reasoning – quantitative reasoning ("apply empirical data...analyze graphical information") |
| <u> X </u> | 5 | Information literacy ("be able to access and evaluate...for effective, efficient, and ethical use") |
| <u> X </u> | 6 | Diversity ("demonstrate understanding of diversity and use that understanding...") |
| <u> </u> | 7 | Lifelong learning ("commit themselves to lifelong learning") |
| <u> </u> | 8 | Service/citizenship ("share responsibility both for their communities and for the world") |

Comments regarding program goals and alignment with institutional and Essential Studies goals:

Critical thinking is aligned with the program goals (primary goal #2), as is diversity (primary goal #3) and information literacy (primary goal #3). The Department notes in the 2012 Assessment Plan that their capstone course was granted Essential Studies status under "Goal #1: Thinking and Reasoning. In addition, although Communication is not explicitly stated as a program goal, the Department's capstone course was also granted Essential Studies status under Goal #2: Communication, with an (A)dvanced Communication overlay."

2. ASSESSMENT METHODS

- | | | | |
|--|--------------|--------------|-------------------------|
| Were any specific assessment methods referenced? | YES <u>X</u> | NO <u> </u> | QUALIFIED Y/N <u> </u> |
| • If so, were specifically chosen assessment | | | |

methods appropriately aligned with individual goals?

YES____ NO____ QUALIFIED Y/N __X__

- Were both direct and indirect assessment methods used as components of a “multiple measures” approach?

YES__X__ NO____ QUALIFIED Y/N ____

Comments:

According to the 2012 Assessment Plan, the Department collects data from students who are enrolled in the senior capstone seminar. They gather data from senior portfolios, resumes, senior anthropology mini-statements, reflective essays, oral presentations, applied anthropology performance tasks (new in 2012), and self-reflections. Student work products are then reviewed by faculty and scored using rubrics. It was noted that all assessment data are discussed in relation to each learning goal, but specific alignment between assessment methods and student learning goals was not provided. The majority of the Department’s assessment efforts take place in relation to the senior capstone seminar. Other assessment methods do take place in non-capstone Anthropology courses, but no specific methods were listed. The Department indicated that they distribute an alumni survey to solicit information about program effectiveness.

The FY 2013 Annual Report provided additional information about assessment methods. In the Annual Report, direct and indirect methods were specifically mentioned. In addition to faculty review and scoring of the course products mentioned in the Assessment Plan (direct assessment), the Department also completed program course mapping activities with students (indirect assessment) and student exit surveys (indirect assessment).

3. ASSESSMENT RESULTS

Were any assessment results reported?

YES__X__ NO____ QUALIFIED Y/N ____

- If so, were the results clear in terms of how they specifically affirm achievement of goals?
- If so, were the results clear in terms of how they indicate need for improvement?
- Were the results tied to goals for student learning?

YES__X__ NO____ QUALIFIED Y/N ____

YES____ NO__X__ QUALIFIED Y/N ____

YES__X__ NO____ QUALIFIED Y/N ____

Comments:

The Department indicated that assessment of the seven “new” program goals began in 2013, with an annual rotation of two to three target goals for consideration in any given year. Most recently, student learning in two program areas was assessed: Critical Thinking about Global and Local Problems and Application of Ethics in the Subfields of Anthropology. Student learning in two specific areas of essential studies was also assessed: Critical thinking and reasoning and advanced oral and written communication skills. The most recent results were reported from spring 2013 (n=7).

Assessment of student learning results were reported in general terms. For example, to measure student learning in terms of critical thinking, faculty evaluation and scoring (on a 5 point Likert-type scale) of student work products indicated that students perform moderately (3.7/5; 84%) in understanding and analyzing issues related to global and local problems. The application of ethics was weaker (2.6/52%).

General results of three indirect assessments were provided. In the first indirect assessment, the course mapping activity, the department learned that students have little familiarity with the learning goals of the program. In the second indirect assessment, the student exit survey, students reported that the senior capstone seminar was helpful in preparing them for life after college. In the third indirect assessment, the alumni survey, the department received valuable feedback on curriculum (i.e., which courses should be required, and which courses should be added to the curriculum).

In addition to program goals, some assessment results may be applicable to institutional and Essential Studies goals. Indicate any goals for which the program presents findings, and, for indicated items, describe findings below.

- ☒ 1 Communication – written or oral (“able to write and speak in various settings with a sense of purpose/audience”)
- ☒ 2 Thinking and reasoning – critical thinking (or “be intellectually curious”; analyze, synthesize, evaluate)
- ☐ 3 Thinking and reasoning – creative thinking (or “be intellectually creative”; explore, discover, engage)
- ☐ 4 Thinking and reasoning – quantitative reasoning (“apply empirical data...analyze graphical information”)
- ☐ 5 Information literacy (“be able to access and evaluate...for effective, efficient, and ethical use”)
- ☒ 6 Diversity (“demonstrate understanding of diversity and use that understanding...”)
- ☐ 7 Lifelong learning (“commit themselves to lifelong learning”)

_____ 8 Service/citizenship (“share responsibility both for their communities and for the world”)

Comments regarding results and the application of results to program, institutional, and Essential Studies goals:

Assessment of student performance in the two areas of essential studies was also completed via faculty evaluation and scoring (on a 3 point Likert-type scale). As stated in the Annual Report, “results revealed that students were moderately able to identify and explain the key issues (2.2/3, 73%), and were better able to synthesize and format sources in a professional manner (2.5/3, 84%). However, their abilities to draw significant conclusions and make recommendations for problem solution from a clear anthropological perspective was poor (1.9/3, 63%).”

4. CLOSING THE LOOP

Were any actions taken on the basis of assessment results reported?

YES___X___ NO___ QUALIFIED Y/N ___

- If so, do curricular or other improvements/ changes arising from assessment results directly address goals for student learning?

YES___X___ NO___ QUALIFIED Y/N ___

Comments:

The FY2013 Annual Report included seven recommendations to faculty on changes they might make to courses and/or assignments based on results of completed assessments. The Department included several, specific examples of “closing the loop” in the 2012 Assessment Plan. For example, faculty members now incorporate more problem-based learning and “mock grant proposal assignments” into their classes in order to facilitate complex critical thinking and application of knowledge into the capstone senior seminar.

SUMMARY

Strengths

Areas for Improvement

- ☒ A specific plan for assessment is in place.
- ☒ Student learning goals are well-articulated.
- _____ Assessment methods are clearly described.
- _____ Assessment methods are appropriately selected.
- _____ Assessment methods are well-implemented.
- _____ Direct and indirect methods are implemented.
- _____ Results are reported.
- ☒ Results are tied to closing the loop.
(Decision-making is tied to evidence.)

- _____ No specific plan for assessment is in place.
- _____ Student learning goals are not well-articulated.
- _____ Assessment methods are not clearly described.
- _____ Assessment methods are not appropriately selected.
- _____ Assessment methods are not well-implemented.
- _____ A single type of assessment methods predominates.
- _____ No results are reported.
- _____ Results are not clearly tied to closing the loop.
(Decision-making is not directly tied to evidence.)

OVERALL SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Department has effectively responded to and incorporated recommendations provided by the University Assessment Committee in 2010. Goals for student learning are clear, and there are multiple means of assessment mentioned in the Assessment Plan as well as in the Annual Report. In addition, the Annual Report provides a summary of results; both documents mention effort to use assessment data to make programmatic and curricular changes. The Committee has two recommendations for further improving assessment efforts for the Department of Anthropology:

1. While the overall content and direction of the Department’s Assessment Plan is good, the Committee found some discord between the Department Assessment Plan (2012 – as posted) and the discussion of assessment in the FY13 Annual Report. We encourage the Department to better align the assessment related portions of these two documents.
2. As indicated in the 2012 Assessment Plan, the Department’s assessment efforts are centered around the senior capstone seminar course, which takes place towards the end of a student’s time in the program. The Committee encourages the Department to provide more information in future Assessment Plans about formative methods that are implemented in non-capstone Anthropology courses in order to assess student learning at various stages of their academic careers.

MATERIALS REVIEWED

- ☒ Annual report
- _____ Appendices (cited in annual report)

- ☒ Assessment plan (as posted)
- ☒ Previous assessment review

_____ Other (please describe)

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Section 1: __Y__ Section 2: __Y__ Section 3: __Y__ Section 4: __Y__

Coding Key:

- Y = yes, this is done appropriately and well (bearing in mind the kind of program(s) reviewed and recognizing that assessment is a cyclical process, i.e., with additional kinds of data to be collected and analyzed in other years)
- Q = qualified yes as action or progress is apparent; however, evidence is lacking that this is completely and appropriately done
- N = no, this is not done at all, or it is not done in relationship to student learning
- NA = no information reported and it's unclear whether it was done

Revision 9/25/13