

Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Summary

Anthropology, Bachelor of Science

College of Liberal Arts

AY 16-17 and AY 17-18

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1. Assessment information collected

Per our 2012 SLOA plan:

- All students enrolled in the capstone course (ANTH F411: Senior Seminar) are given a standardized, summative exercise designed to assess facility in four areas:
 1. A basic understanding of the history of the discipline, including sub-disciplinary perspectives and approaches
 2. An understanding of methods in archaeology and biological anthropological research
 3. Understanding of human evolution, the development of human cultures, and the development of human settlements and culture especially in the circumpolar North
 4. Exhibit effective skills in written and oral communication
- All students enrolled in ANTH 411 will be given an exit survey with emphasis on student's overall assessment of the content and quality of education received in anthropology.
- ~~Alumni survey will be sent to graduates the year after they complete the program with emphasis on success in continuing education and/or employment in a related field***~~

As indicated in our 2016 SLOA summary, the alumni survey was not being administered and we removed it from our SLOA plan at the same time that we incorporated the Communication Plan; however, due to a series of delays in getting comments back on our Communication Plan, these revisions did not go into effect until January 2018.

2. Conclusions drawn from the information summarized above

- **Summative exercise:**

The standardized, summative exercise was administered to a total of 9 students enrolled in ANTH 411 in 2017 and 2018. The exam consists of ten questions; given that it is offered in-class (and thus time is limited), students are only required to answer five questions each, although we ask that they answer more if they have time. The resulting essays were scored by the BS Coordinator and another BS faculty member (Ben Potter) on the following scale: W= substantial wrong information; U= unsatisfactory; UP= unsatisfactory but partial; SP= satisfactory but partial (missing some pertinent information); S= satisfactory; VS= very satisfactory. Below, we summarize student performance on questions relating to each student learning outcome.

1. A basic understanding of the history of the discipline, including sub-disciplinary perspectives and approaches

Four questions on the exercise addressed this learning objective; of these, only one was answered by all nine students. That question was also the most broad and related to the most important idea that the student had learned as an anthropology major. The average score for this essay was a 4.6, which falls between "Satisfactory but partial (4)" and "Satisfactory (5)". Performance not as strong on the remaining three questions; six students answered a question about who they saw as the most important researcher in the history of archaeological research, with an average score of 3.1, which aligns with "Unsatisfactory but partial (3)"; this reflects the fact that several students simply wrote a sentence indicating that naming one scholar would be difficult. A similar question about biological anthropology was only answered by two students, who gave "Satisfactory but partial (4)" answers, while the last question, relating to archaeological theory, was also only answered by two students; the average score was 3.5 (between "Unsatisfactory but partial (3)" and "Satisfactory but partial (4)").

2. An understanding of methods in archaeology and biological anthropological research

Three questions on the exercise addressed this learning objective; two relating to archaeological research methods and one relating to biological anthropology. As in the previous review period, students answered the two questions relating to archaeology at a higher rate (8/9 and 7/9 students,

respectively) than they answered the biological anthropology question (5/9 students. While students did well on one of the archaeology questions, with an average of 5.1 (between “Satisfactory (5)” and “Very satisfactory (6)”, they scored slightly lower on the other question, with an average score of 4.2. Results for the biological anthropology question in this category were similar, with an average score of 4.3 (i.e., between “Satisfactory but partial (4)” and “Satisfactory (5)”.

3. Understanding of human evolution, the development of human cultures, and the development of human settlements and culture especially in the circumpolar North
- Three questions on the exercise addressed this learning objective; two relating to biological anthropology and one relating to archaeology. Of these, one (regarding the concept of race in biological anthropology) was only answered 4/9 students, with an average score of 4 (Satisfactory but partial). The other two questions were answered by 5/9 students; they did better on an archaeologically based question about the peopling of the New World, scoring an average of 4.25 (between “Satisfactory but partial” and “Satisfactory”, while performance was worse on a question about major adaptations that distinguish the human lineage from the apes, with an average score of 3.5 (between “Unsatisfactory but partial (3)” and “Satisfactory but partial (4)”.

4. Exhibit effective skills in written and oral communication

As discussed in our two previous assessment reports, given the format of the summative exercise, it does not seem the best way to judge communication skills; we have developed a new series of criteria for evaluating communication skills, based on our Communication Plan. However, because the Communication Plan + revised SLOA did not go into effect until Spring 2018, curricular changes have not fully been put into place and we do not have sufficient data to address this aspect of student performance.

Summary re: the Summative Exercise:

Given that students are not required to answer all of the questions on the summative exercise—and because BS students who completed degrees during this window were primarily archaeology-focused—students answered

the archaeology related questions more frequently than they did the biological anthropology questions. They also scored higher on the archaeology questions. This likely reflects the fact that our biological anthropology course offerings have been limited, in part because one of our two biological anthropologists was on sabbatical in AY 17-18. Some biological anthropology courses have also been canceled due to low enrollment.

As a whole, students performed less well than in the previous assessment period (although results are comparable to those for the 2014 assessment period). It is not immediately obvious why this would be the case; however, some students did indicate that they did not feel they were given sufficient time in class to answer the questions on the assessment exercise. We have also discussed the need to revise some of the questions; this will take place before the exam is offered next year.

- **The Exit Survey**

The exit survey comprises eight questions that ask student to reflect upon their experiences in the program.

Completion of the survey is optional, and we received surveys from six BS students during the current assessment period. Responses are summarized below:

- Re: their overall experiences in the program: Students generally expressed satisfaction with their overall experience in the program, noting specifically the openness of the faculty and their willingness to help students succeed.
- Re: department strengths/weaknesses: students expressed appreciation about the variety of classes offered, particularly in archaeology, while others mentioned the strength of the advising they received and the fact that they enjoyed the small size of the upper division courses and the opportunities to talk with faculty one on one. Most students did not answer the question about what aspects of the program they enjoyed the least, although one mentioned that they wished they had pursued a BA instead of a BS because the BA has more flexible course requirements.
- Re: curriculum: Multiple students indicated that they would like to see more biological anthropology offerings, and two specifically noted

frustration about biological anthropology courses being canceled during their tenure as a student (the classes mentioned are Human Osteology and Bioarchaeology). In terms of specific course offerings, three students indicated a desire for more hands-on/applied courses. Finally, students indicated that they felt challenged by our curriculum; however, two students mentioned that the level of difficulty varied somewhat from instructor to instructor (regardless of course level), and two indicated that they felt that the expectations for senior seminar (our capstone course) were too high.

- Re: preparation for the job market: Students indicated that they felt the program well prepared them for graduate school and/or the job market. However, one student mentioned that teaching a class on Cultural Resource Management for undergraduates (our current course is grad only) would have helped them feel more prepared for the job market, and one student mentioned that while they felt prepared for a job in archaeology, they did not feel the same re: biological anthropology.

We are encouraged by the fact that students expressed satisfaction with the quality of education and felt that the degree helped prepare them for future work/study in the field. As regards biological anthropology course offerings, although students indicated wanting more classes, the reason that some classes have been cancelled is because they had insufficient enrollment. One possible solution to increasing enrollment in upper division courses is by offering more lower-level courses to draw interest in the field.

3. Curricular changes resulting from conclusions drawn above

The number of BS students has declined in the last several years, in large part due to revisions to the BA degree. Prior to AY 15-16, students interested in archaeology and biological anthropology were required to get a BS, while the BA was dedicated to the study of cultural anthropology or linguistic anthropology. The BA has been expanded to incorporate all four subfields, and, as a result, many archaeology and biological anthropology students are now in the BA program. Given the shift, the department should evaluate the larger role of the BS degree. This is particularly the case given that multiple students mentioned that they would like to see more flexibility in the BS degree and

expressed frustration that multiple classes that met requirements for the BS major had been cancelled due to low enrollment.

Given the interest in more applied offerings/opportunities for hands on learning, adding a 400-level section of the CRM course would seem to be appropriate. Adding specific labs for biological anthropology courses could also be helpful; this was recently done for ANTH 423: Human Origins. This could potentially also be done for the 200-level fundamentals of biological anthropology course (the archaeology counterpart does have a lab section).

4. Identify the faculty members involved in reaching the conclusions drawn above and agreeing upon the curricular changes resulting

Jamie Clark, BS Coordinator

Brian Hemphill, Senior Seminar instructor

Patrick Plattet, BA Coordinator

Ben Potter, Department Chair

5. Has your SLOA plan been updated to include assessment of the program's Communication Plan, as required by Faculty Senate motion? (required for baccalaureate programs only)

Yes. We updated our SLOA once we obtained approval for our Communication Plan; the revised SLOA was approved by Departmental Faculty in Fall 2017 and submitted to the Provost's Office in January 2018. Because the new SLOA involved changes to classes being offered during Spring 2018, not all of them could be implemented this year. This is why the current report still relies upon the 2012 SLOA plan.

