The University of Southern Mississippi

Detailed Assessment Report **As of: 10/04/2013 09:13 AM EST** **2012-2013 Anthropology BA**

Mission / Purpose

The undergraduate program in anthropology is committed to furthering the mission of the university, the college, and the department by applying the scientific method to the study of culture from both biological and behavioral perspectives over space and time. Through use of a number of instructional strategies, including coursework, independent research projects, and experiential learning, students will gain a holistic view of the diversity and commonality of human beings and their societies. They will also gain other skills valued by an educated populace, such as effective written and oral expression and critical thinking abilities. These skills and knowledge are essential to both personal and professional success, as students adapt to a rapidly changing global environment.

Student Learning Outcomes/Objectives, with Any Associations and Related Measures, Targets, Findings, and Action Plans

SLO 1:Ability to understand and discuss central anthropological theories/theorists

All undergraduate majors in anthropology are required to take ANT 301: History of Anthropology. In this course, they will read about, discuss, and write about central theories and theorists in the history of the discipline, and they will be required to demonstrate an accurate understanding of such theory.

Related Measures:

M 1:Ability to discuss theory in a research paper

Students in ANT 301: History of Anthropology are required to write a paper in which they discuss central theories or theorists in the discipline of anthropology. This paper is then graded using a standardized, departmentally agree-upon rubric to assess clarity of discussion, accuracy of presentation, organization of argument, and writing style.

Source of Evidence: Written assignment(s), usually scored by a rubric

Target:

A minimum of 70% of students will earn a grade of 70% or better on the paper assigned in ANT 301: History of Anthropology that requires them to discuss central anthropological theories/theorists. This paper will be graded according to the departmentally agreed-upon rubric.

Findings (2012-2013) - Target: Met

In fall 2012, 75% (18/24) of students enrolled in ANT 301 earned a grade of 70% or better on the ANT 301 papers graded using the standard rubric (2 students did not complete the assignment). This course is offered once per year, in fall semester.

M 2:Exit survey question on understanding of theory

All graduating students must take an exit survey, which includes a question on their ability to explain central theories or theorists in the discipline of anthropology. All students are expected to be able to discuss these theories.

Source of Evidence: Exit interviews with grads/program completers

Connected Document
- *ANTSOC Exit Survey 2010-2011*

Target:
At least 70% of graduating students in anthropology will "agree" or "strongly agree" that the program was effective in providing them with a basic understanding of anthropological concepts and theories.

Findings (2012-2013) - Target: Met
100% (8/8) of students graduating in fall 2012 with an Anthropology BA "agreed" or "strongly agreed" on the exit survey that the program provided them with a understanding of basic anthropological concepts and theories. 100% (7/7)of students graduating in spring 2013 with an Anthropology BA "agreed" or "strongly agreed" on the exit survey that the program provided them with a understanding of basic anthropological concepts and theories.

SLO 2:Ability to apply anthropological theories and concepts
All students in the undergraduate program in anthropology will be required to demonstrate the ability to apply the theories and perspective of anthropology to current 'real world' issues.

Related Measures:

M 3:Ability to apply theory in a research paper
Graduating seniors are required to take the Capstone Seminar, in which they write a paper applying anthropological theories to a current issue. Students must pass this assignment and class in order to graduate.

Source of Evidence: Written assignment(s), usually scored by a rubric

Connected Document
- *ANT Capstone Rubrics 2010-2011*

Target:
At least 70% of students enrolled in the Capstone Seminar will earn a grade of 70% or better (as evaluated by a departmentally agreed-upon rubric) on the research paper for the class that requires them to apply anthropological theories and concepts.

Findings (2012-2013) - Target: Met
In Spring 2013, 90% of students(9/10) of students submitting papers earned 70% or better on the research paper. Two other students did not submit papers or finish the class. One more received an Incomplete. This class is offered once per year, in spring term.

M 4:Ability to apply anthropological theory to understand human cultures
All graduating students in anthropology complete an exit survey. One of the question on the survey asks about their ability to apply anthropological theory. All students are expected to gain this skill while in the program.

Source of Evidence: Exit interviews with grads/program completers

Target:

At least 70% of graduating seniors in anthropology will "agree" or "strongly agree" (based on a five-point scale) that the program was effective in teaching them to apply anthropological theories and concepts to understand human cultures.

Findings (2012-2013) - Target: <u>Met</u>

100% (8/8) of the students graduating in anthropology in fall 2012 "agree" or "strongly agree" on the exit survey that the program effectively taught them to use anthropological theory to understand human cultures. 100% (8/8) of the students graduating in anthropology in fall 2012 "agree" or "strongly agree" on the exit survey that the program effectively taught them to use anthropological theory to understand human cultures.

SLO 3:Ability to communicate anthropological concepts and theories orally

All students in the undergraduate program in anthropology are expected to be able to demonstrate an ability to communicate anthropological concepts and perspectives orally.

Related Measures:

M 5:Research presentation in capstone seminar

Students are required to take the Capstone Seminar in their senior year, and part of that seminar is presenting their research paper to the class. All students must pass this assignment and class in order to graduate. The oral presentation is evaluated using an agreed-upon departmental rubric.

Source of Evidence: Presentation, either individual or group

Connected Document
- *ANT Capstone Rubrics 2010-2011*

Target:

At least 70% of students in the Capstone Seminar will earn a grade of 70% or better on a ten-minute oral research presentation. This presentation is graded using the departmentally developed oral presentation rubric.

Findings (2012-2013) - Target: <u>Met</u>

In Spring 2013, 11/11 students (100%) earned a grade of 70% or better on the oral presentation assignment when graded by the departmental rubric. Two additional students did not present or finish the class. This class is offered once per year, in spring semester.

M 6:Oral communication confidence

All graduating students must complete an exit survey, which includes a question that asks about their ability to communicate anthropological ideas orally.

Source of Evidence: Exit interviews with grads/program completers

Target:

A minimum of 90% of graduating seniors will "agree" or "strongly agree" (using the five-point scale on the exit survey) that the program prepared them to present anthropological concepts and theories well.

Findings (2012-2013) - Target: Met

100% (8/8) of graduating seniors in fall 2012 "agreed" or "strongly agreed" on the departmentally-administered exit survey that they were able to communicate anthropological ideas well orally. 100% (7/7) of graduating seniors in spring 2013 "agreed" or "strongly agreed" on the departmentally-administered exit survey that they were able to communicate anthropological ideas well orally.

SLO 4:Ability to carry out a research project in anthropology

All students are expected to learn to design and carry out an independent research project in the field of anthropology.

Related Measures:

M 7:Ability to design and carry out independent research project in anthropology

All students in the Capstone Seminar are required to complete an independent research project and write a research paper on their work. This paper is evaluated using a departmentally agreed-upon rubric.

Source of Evidence: Capstone course assignments measuring mastery

Target:

At least 70% of students enrolled in the Capstone Seminar will earn a grade of 70% or better on the research paper when graded by a departmentally agreed-upon rubric designed to assess appropriateness of research, clarity of writing, organization, and use of anthropological theory.

Findings (2012-2013) - Target: Met

In Spring 2013, 90% of students(9/10) of students earned 70% or better on the research paper. Two additional students did not submit a paper or complete the class (grade of F), and one student did not submit the paper and has an Incomplete. This class is offered once per year, in spring term.

M 8:Exit survey question on independent research ability

All graduating students must complete an exit survey, which includes a question on their ability to carry out independent research in anthropology.

Source of Evidence: Exit interviews with grads/program completers

Target:

At least 70% of graduating students will "agree" or "strongly agree" that the program prepared them well with the skills needed to conduct research in anthropology.

Findings (2012-2013) - Target: Met

In fall 2012, 100% of graduating students (8/8) "agreed" or "strongly agreed" on the exit survey that the program effectively provided them with the skills necessary to conduct research in anthropology. In spring 2013, 100% of graduating students (7/7) "agreed" or "strongly agreed" on the exit survey that the program effectively provided them with the skills necessary to conduct research in anthropology.

SLO 5:Professional preparedness

The program in anthropology seeks to prepare students to succeed after graduation by giving them tools and confidence needed to enter the work force or graduate school.

Related Measures:

M 9:Creation of a clear personal statement

All students in the Capstone Seminar are required to write a "personal statement" that articulates their interest in anthropology and their plans for their career. Rough drafts of these statements are peer-reviewed by other students in the seminar and then revised. By the end of the seminar students will have drafted a personal statement that can be used for job or graduate school applications. These personal statements are graded according to a rubric designed to assess appropriateness of style, clarity, and usefulness.

Source of Evidence: Written assignment(s), usually scored by a rubric

Target:
At least 80% of students will write a personal statement that earns a grade of 80% or better when graded with a standard rubric.

Findings (2012-2013) - Target: Met
In Spring 2013, 9/11 students (81.8%) submitting a personal statement earned a score of 80% or better in ANT 401 (Capstone). Two additional students did not submit a statement. This course is offered once each year, in spring.

M 10:Crafting a resume and cover letter for a job

In the Capstone Seminar, all students are required to identify a job advertisement and craft an appropriate resume and cover letter for applying for that position. The resume and cover letter are peer-reviewed and revised, then graded for appropriateness, thoroughness, and clarity according to a rubric.

Source of Evidence: Written assignment(s), usually scored by a rubric

Target:
At least 80% of students will write a resume and cover letter than earns a grade of 80% or better when graded using a standardized rubric.

Findings (2012-2013) - Target: Met
In Spring 2013, 92% of students (12/13) crafted a resume and cover letter that earned a grade of 80% or better in ANT 401 (Capstone). This class is offered once per year, each spring term.

M 11:Exit survey question on preparedness for work or grad school

All graduating students are required to complete an exit survey, which includes a question regarding how prepared they are for entering the work force or graduate school in anthropology or a related field.

Source of Evidence: Exit interviews with grads/program completers

Target:
At least 70% of graduating seniors will indicate on the exit survey that they "agree" or

"strongly agree" that the program has prepared them well to enter graduate school or obtain employment where they use the skills and knowledge gained in their major.

Findings (2012-2013) - Target: Met
100% (8/8) of students graduated in fall 2012 "agreed" or "strongly agreed" on the exit survey that the program prepared them well for graduate school or employment. 85.7% (6/7) of students graduated in spring 2013 "agreed" or "strongly agreed" on the exit survey that the program prepared them well for graduate school or employment.

Details of Action Plans for This Cycle (by Established cycle, then alpha)

Promote the minor actively on campus
We will add new promotional materials to our website and in print and circulate them on campus, as well as meet with coordinators or relevant majors to let them know of the anthropology minor.

Established in Cycle: 2009-2010
Implementation Status: In-Progress
Priority: Medium

Increase student research presentations
Some anthropology undergraduate students have presented papers at conferences on campus or at professional meetings, but more students need to do so. The experience increases their professional skill set and prepares them for graduate school.

Established in Cycle: 2011-2012
Implementation Status: In-Progress
Priority: High
Implementation Description: In 2012-2013, more anthropology undergraduate students will present papers by working with faculty to identify opportunities to do so.
Responsible Person/Group: Amy Miller and anthropology faculty

Analysis Questions and Analysis Answers

What specifically did your assessments show regarding proven strengths or progress you made on outcomes/objectives?
We are pleased with the performance of students in the undergraduate anthropology program. All of our targets were met, as we continue to work to maintain a program in which students learn theory, gain research tools, and develop professional communication skills for their future anthropology careers. We prioritize the ability for students to understand, discuss, and apply anthropological theory and conduct independent research, and we work with students to use these skills and others (e.g., resume writing) in their search for jobs or admission to graduate program. Assessment indicates that students believe themselves to be prepared to conduct research (100% agree, see above) and see themselves as ready for graduate school or work (100%, again). We continue to fine tune the Capstone seminar by focusing more on the process of completing a complex project, for example by including more mandatory incremental assignments over the course of the entire semester. Also, students in previous years often had a slow start on their projects because they began the semester with no research interests in mind. We now work with students through advisement over the course of their entire major to prepare them for independent research in the capstone. This spring, for the first time, all students began the semester with clear areas of interest for their projects and 90%-100% of students who completed the research project and the oral presentation met the targets in those areas.

What specifically did your assessments show regarding any outcomes/objectives that will require continued attention?

Although all our achievement targets were met and our students are doing well, room for improvement always exists. In particular, our students continue to struggle with writing in an academic and professional fashion, especially in ANT 301 where only 75% of the students met the target. In addition, some students are having personal and academic issues that result in them not completing the required coursework and therefore they are not included in the data. The program will continue to focus on these students to determine additional resources needed for them to successfully complete both ANT 301 and ANT 401.

Annual Report Section Responses

Program Summary

The anthropology program at USM trains students in the main sub-disciplines of anthropology: biological anthropology, archaeology, and cultural anthropology. In addition to classroom work, the program emphasizes the value of hands-on experience and community engagement for students by involving students in field and lab work both as a part of many classes and in extracurricular contexts. Faculty use these research opportunities to reinforce students' in-class methodological, theoretical, and substantive training in addition to giving students valuable professional experience. The undergraduate program is strengthened by the fact that students work alongside and with graduate students on both faculty and graduate student research projects, in addition to being able to draw on graduate student experience for their own research projects. All students complete an independent project in the capstone seminar, but each year several also complete additional research projects for honors theses. Students are also encouraged to present their research at conferences both on and off campus. This past year two students presented at the University's undergraduate research conference, where one won first place for the use of qualitative methods. Our program encourages students to become well-rounded scholars able to participate in inter-disciplinary discussions; the fact that all students complete coursework in biological anthropology, archaeology, and cultural anthropology ensures that they are comfortable with and able to integrate work in natural science, social science, and humanities. We encourage them to take classes in other departments to complement this training and when appropriate to learn specific skills. One example of the success of this holistic approach this year is that the student who won first place for her ethnographic paper at the research conference also wrote an honors thesis in archaeology.

Continuous Improvement Initiatives/Additional Action Plans

The anthropology program is a stable and academically strong program. We will continue to assess during 2012-2013 to identify areas for improvement and work to provide the best education possible for our students and their diverse goals and needs. We do have two continuous improvement initiatives in place: 1) Promote the minor actively on campus -- We will add new promotional materials to our website and in print and circulate them on campus, as well as meet with coordinators or relevant majors to let them know of the anthropology minor and 2) Increase student research presentations -- Some anthropology undergraduate students have presented papers at conferences on campus or at professional meetings, but more students need to do so. The experience increases their professional skill set and prepares them for graduate school.

Closing the Loop/Action Plan Tracking

Examination of multiple years of assessment practices in the program evidences clear and steady improvement, both in developing appropriate targets and measures and also in working with students to increase success. We have focused on the Capstone seminar and will continue to do so, but ANT 301 is also a course that needs additional attention. This class -- History of Anthropology -- is a solid

one that is doing its job in the sense of increasing student understanding of anthropological theory, but it can be improved and strengthened. It is also a writing-intensive course, so together with the Capstone it provides a good opportunity for us to work with students on their writing skills. Assessment indicates that while students are doing well at writing, they can do better. We will thus focus faculty discussions for 2012-2013 on developing ways to improve student writing and mentor them for success in their writing-intensive classes. We are, however, generally very pleased with the overall excellence of our students and their strong performance in the program.