

Memorandum

TO: Dr. Tracy Pellett, Associate Vice President for Undergraduate Studies

CC: Kathleen Barlow, Chair, Anthropology

FROM: Robert T. Trotter, II Ph.D.

RE: Review of Anthropology Program

Date: June 12, 2012

The strengths of the CWU Anthropology Department are very well documented in the self-study report. For this program review summary, it seems useful to briefly highlight those strengths, and then to focus on the opportunity structure and some potential forward looking decisions that face the department for the future.

Strengths:

1. The Central Washington University Anthropology Department is a strong four field (archaeology, biological anthropology, cultural anthropology, and anthropological linguistics) undergraduate major with a number of unique and highly desirable undergraduate and graduate study opportunities for students. Most anthropology departments, at this time, include 2 out of the 4 primary subfields, or 3 out of the 4. CWU has excellent representation and curricula for all four. One of the results of the four field strength of the department is that the CWU anthropology graduates have an advantage for graduate admissions in many anthropology graduate programs, since many require at least one core level course in each of the four subfields.
2. The Anthropology Department has an excellent configuration of undergraduate program opportunities. The BSc and BA majors are solid, traditional majors that provide graduates with opportunities for multiple career trajectories, including graduate education. The Museum Studies Minor is a highly desirable program that is currently a rare opportunity, especially in the Western States region, and should act as an important draw for CWU undergraduates and graduate students. The Primate Behavior and Ecology program is unique, nationally visible, and a very significant draw for students interested in primatology and bio-anthropology. It should probably be aggressively marketed internationally.
3. The department has a clearly articulated set of goals (past and future) that are directly tied to the department, college, and university mission statements and action plans. One result is that the department, as a unit, is engaged in activities and processes that significantly enhance the university's mission, rather than working against it.
4. The faculty individually and collectively are highly productive (compared with peer institutions and compared internally) in the critical academic areas of teaching, research, and service. While individual faculty tend to more strongly emphasize one of the areas (normally either teaching or research), none appear to be below expectations in any of the three areas and collectively they appear (based on CVs and conversations) to excel in all three as a composite department.
5. In addition to the traditional academic productivity, the department appears to have significant levels of both individual and department community engagement activities that are an important strength for any anthropology department (and university). The department is providing "service learning" opportunities for majors, as well as interesting "active learning"

opportunities that make it a highly desirable undergraduate program that meets current pedagogical standards for student engagement and engaged learning standards.

6. The undergraduate major curriculum has a solid balance of core anthropology courses plus a variety of interesting elective courses. The curriculum appears balanced, rather than either “over-specialized based on faculty interest” or “over-generic based on general education requirements.” The department provides solid courses for general education audiences (which is one of the primary recruitment strengths of any department), and a full curriculum for majors.
7. The department is actively participating in two multi-disciplinary graduate programs. One is the Resource Management program, and one is the Primate Behavior MS. Both programs contribute to both the undergraduate educational experience and to the opportunity for development of anthropology specific graduate programs.
8. The department has sufficient numbers and quality of faculty to develop an high quality anthropology Master’s program, with a focus in one or more areas including museum studies, archaeology and cultural resource management, bio-anthropology, and sociocultural (potentially medical) anthropology. It would be more difficult (but not impossible) to develop a graduate program in linguistic anthropology, with the current staffing pattern.
9. The department, and in particular about 30 percent or more of the individual faculty, are providing major time and resource commitments to other departments and programs in the university. This “willingness to pitch in” and “willingness to go the extra mile” pervades the department. The overall collaborative efforts (especially to graduate programs and other degree programs) are strength of the department. They are also a potential drain on departmental resources that needs to be planned and monitored going forward.

Opportunities/Decisions

1. The department has the opportunity and resources to consolidate, expand, or modify its participation in its own and/or interdisciplinary Master’s (graduate) programs, or in high quality graduate certificate programs. The decision to move forward in any or all of those directions is a key opportunity and a significant decision point for the near future.
2. The department has the opportunity to expand its student base from one that is predominantly regional to one that is potentially more national and even international, especially in terms of the museum studies program, primate behavior program, and the cross-cultural educational opportunities available through the department (including strong field schools and international opportunities).
3. The department has the opportunity to become a very strong “pipeline” partner for its excellent undergraduate majors. There are a growing number of partnerships that are emerging in the WICHE region that are potentially highly advantageous to CWU programs, where they might have virtually guaranteed admissions (at an instate tuition level) for the Western Governors graduate programs. The department can also take advantage of the fact that the Resource Management MS is a (wiche) WRGP graduate program that attracts students from the 13 western states.

4. Morale remains relatively high in the department in spite of recent fiscal constraints. Faculty have been proactively doing more with less for some time. However there is also a longer term cost to that condition in terms of fragmentation of faculty time and effort. Many individual faculty in the department are teaching, conducting research, engaging communities and supporting the anthropology program while also contributing to other high impact university programs (resource management, primate behavior and ecology, etc. etc.) as well as faculty governance support and administrative support. The current (post review) time period may provide an important opportunity for the department as a whole, as well as individual faculty, to take advantage of their own strategic plan (program review) and to prioritize both individual and departmental activities to meet sustainable goals.

Faculty

The department provided CV's for 14 faculty. This includes 4 archaeologists, 4 bio-anthropologists and primatologists, 5 cultural anthropologists, 1 linguistic anthropologist. Some individuals obviously cross subfields both substantively and successfully. The teaching and research experience of the faculty provides substantial coverage (both for curriculum and for research coverage) for a successful four field department and for a predominantly undergraduate anthropology program. While there is variability in terms of research output and in terms of teaching experience, the overall productivity of the faculty is excellent in terms of teaching (number of majors, number of graduates, graduates going on to both careers and graduate school, etc.); in terms of research (publications, external funding opportunities, reports, and applied accomplishments); and in terms of service, especially university service in support of academic programs and governance. The overall balanced configuration of the faculty would make the exploration of an MA program with a focus in either applied anthropology, or more traditional general anthropology highly feasible, depending on departmental strategic planning and goals. Given the existing resources and faculty, the department has a number of highly attractive options in bio-anthropology/primatology; cultural resource management/archaeology; and potentially in ethnography and medical anthropology. This issue of non-tenure eligible full time faculty (backfill for sabbaticals, additional general studies teaching needs) is an issue that needs to be discussed and built into the overall departmental action plan for the near future.

Students

The overall enrollment, student satisfaction, and graduation rates for the department (self-study report) would place the department in the top 20 percent for anthropology programs in peer institutions, and possibly in the top 10 percent. This is an excellent undergraduate program with some very strong multi-disciplinary graduate opportunities, with very solid student productivity, based on all of the metrics presented. Additionally, I had the opportunity to talk with approximately 30 of the undergraduate majors in an open forum in which the majority of the students stayed and participated for approximately 90 minutes. The students are strongly committed to the program. They feel like they are active participants in their own education, they receive thoughtful advice and mentoring on both a general academic level and a career/programmatic level. They feel the faculty as a whole is highly available (rare in most departments), strongly responsive to individual questions and needs, very

knowledgeable and willing to share that knowledge, and proactive in terms of student support and direction. The general feeling that they were treated as valuable individuals rather than numbers or generic students came through at a very high level, with numerous concrete examples. Many of the students expressed a strong desire (and faculty support) to go on to graduate school (and a large number lamented the lack of opportunity to continue in graduate school as CWU). Having done a number of these types of evaluations previously, I felt that the level of individual faculty support expressed by the students was exemplary.

Departmental Resource Infrastructure and Opportunities for sustainability and growth

Space/Laboratory resources

The general space for the department is outstanding and enviable on a large number of levels. Each of the faculty has access to office and to laboratory space that has been or could be specifically designed for their specific research and advising needs. The faculty office space appears to be very well suited to both student interactions and to “heads down” creative productivity. The archaeology, physical anthropology, and linguistic laboratory space is being heavily utilized and appears highly productive. The department has a very valuable audio/video production laboratory that clearly supports both the teaching mission and the research mission of the department. One of the unusual (and very positive) features of the department space resources is the availability of individual lab/data storage/data analytics space for the sociocultural faculty. That is a relatively rare and highly desirable resource to support both the teaching and research activities of the sociocultural faculty, but is often overlooked when lab space is being assigned. I was able to get a quick snapshot of the laboratory equipment resources and needs, and in general it appeared that the bio-anthropology, NAGPRA, archaeology, and linguistics labs were fully functional and very well resourced. The sociocultural labs would typically be equipped for data collection (audio and video recording of interviews and focus groups, photographic equipment, and computers), data storage and management (computers, external hard drives and ethnographic data management and processing software), and data analysis (Ethnographic data analysis software, statistical software, GIS software, photo and video processing software, etc.). It would be useful for the department to develop a laboratory resource maintenance, replacement, and expansion plan for the future.

Teaching resources

The face to face teaching resources for the department are outstanding in terms of classroom environment, technology and overall faculty teaching needs. Classrooms are modern, comfortable, and well equipped. Student evaluations are positive. The student interviews indicated that the faculty are readily available to students, very supportive both in and outside the classroom, and are directly engaged in both academic and career counseling for anthropology majors.

Opportunity Issue: Nationally, there is a significant trend in anthropology to engage in “on-line” teaching at the undergraduate level. The CWU Anthropology department is somewhat minimally engaged in on-line teaching, in part due to a strong focus on excellence in face to face teaching, and in part due to a general lack of web based teaching incentives and infrastructure at the university level.

This is a potential growth area for future exploration. There is a national trend in anthropology to provide high quality web enhanced courses in three different configurations. Face to Face (web enhanced) courses that take advantage of growing infrastructure technologies (electronic access to library resources, text books, science learning apps, and on-line audio video libraries that can be assigned); hybrid classes, in which part of the class is face to face and interactive, and part of the class is asynchronous and on line; fully web based classes are being developed and actually nationally disseminated, as well. The department might want to cautiously explore these three options, not as a replacement for their existing excellence in undergraduate education, but as a possible enhancement for it since the university as a whole appears to be moving in the direction of technologically enhanced educational opportunities.

Programmatic Resources:

The Department has a significant number of high quality/high visibility programmatic resources that are available to 1) support the goal of student engagement in faculty research, as well as enhanced educational opportunities; 2) attract students to CWU both nationally and internationally; 3) provide an expanded opportunity for successfully seeking external funding opportunities for both faculty and students; 3) and providing faculty opportunities for research.

Field schools and Field Studies: Most anthropology departments have had to reduce or eliminate their field schools and field training programs over the past 5 years. The fact that CWU has 1) the biodiversity and conservation field school in Huangshan China; the forensic anthropology field school (another high desirability field for graduate certificate programs); and the Archaeological Field Schools is an unusually strong resource that should be capitalized on as the department moves forward. It was unclear how much recruitment is taking place for these field schools, but there is a very solid market available if they are advertised.

Museum Studies: There are only a small handful of formal museum studies programs available throughout the US, even though it is one of the areas of interest for a large number of students who are seeking employment in public programming and public education, curation and collection management, etc. Opportunity: This is a high potential recruitment opportunity for the anthropology department. It is also a potential source for external funding, and also a potential revenue source as a graduate certificate program for professionals who are already working in the field.

The Chimpanzee and Human Communication Institute: The department's participation in the CHCI program is a unique strength of the department, and the university. This resource, plus the genetics lab and the forensics lab provide the department with outstanding resources for bio-anthropology at a very competitive level. There is an opportunity in this situation to further develop the primate and bio-anthropology program in innovative directions. Most anthropology programs are strong in archaeology, strong in sociocultural anthropology, and have a minimal program in bio-anthropology. CWU has the opportunity to take advantage of that situation.

MS in Resource Management: The program is very actively participating in the MS in resource management. This could easily be an area of expansion of the departmental curricula into either

graduate certificate (baby steps) programs, or a full Cultural Resource Management program. National statistics indicate that CRM is a growth field for the foreseeable future, and consequently this could be a fruitful area for exploration for an anthropology graduate program since most of the resources for it are already in place.

NAGPRA Program: The department has one of the most effective and well-designed NAGPRA programs that I am aware of (including our own). Based on my conversations with Lourdes Henebry-Deleon, and my observations of her on-going operations, I would like to strongly recommend that the university and the department put some resources into three things. 1) time and incentives for Lourdes to take the incredible amount of information she has on tap on how to design, maintain, and successfully perform the extremely complex types of tribal and governmental negotiations and liaison work that she is accomplishing on a daily basis and put it into a published format (book, manual, etc. etc.) – this has very positive national level interest and application. 2) Set up a graduate level certificate or training program in NAGPRA resource management so the rest of us can send faculty to it – summer institute, or whatever; 3) integrate the program more fully into the departmental curricula.

American Indian Studies: Anthropology has a number of opportunities for both undergraduate and graduate student recruitment (nationally and internationally) based on its participation in the American Indian Studies program. This is a particularly interesting opportunity to recruit Native American students into the fields of cultural resource management and resource management in general. To my knowledge, there are only one or two other similar programs available that focus on applied indigenous studies for Native American groups.

Central Washington Anthropological Survey: CWU has a successful cultural resource management program that is managing various compliance issues (archaeological, cultural resource management, historical preservation, etc.) for the university. The program is based on a standard commercial CRM management program model. It was unclear from my brief visit how the current structure has recently evolved, especially its current relationship to the anthropology department. However, after reviewing the CWAS operating manuals and discussing the program with its current managers and with faculty, it appears that the program either is, or could be a very significant resource for the department, especially in terms of student and graduate certificate training programs focused on the applied/commercial aspects of CRM, in conjunction with the methods and theory training available in the departmental curricula. There are a very limited number of CRM programs available that actually teach the pragmatics along with the academics. A joint program would be attractive to both students and to professionals seeking additional training and/or certification.

Summary:

Taken all together, the department has an outstanding resource base and opportunity profile to either maintain existing success and high quality programmatic performance, or to move into additional success and prominence in the near future. Faculty are committed to a high quality undergraduate education, are productive in terms of research and publication, and are willing to commit to the effort it takes to grow or maintain high quality programs. The students are very positive about the current

program and are positive that they are receiving an excellent education and preparation for either future employment or for graduate education. There are significant opportunities within the department to significantly expand the recruitment process for undergraduate majors (both domestically and internationally). There are significant opportunities available to the department in terms of the creation of graduate certificates and/or MA programs. There are significant opportunities for the development of on-line programs that take advantage of CWU's distance learning infrastructure, given the excellent base provided by the undergraduate curriculum. The primary threats to the program are the combined results of institutional demands (increased teaching and service loads, expanded requirements for external funding) and individual faculty (or departmental) decisions that can cause individual (and collective) fragmentation of effort, rather than concentrated synergy for the program. The department can successfully address those threats by providing clear priorities for individual faculty and the department as a whole as the basis for the decisions made going forward.