SAINT LOUIS UNIVERSITY.

Program-Level Assessment: Annual Report

Program: Anthropology	Department: Sociology and Anthropology
Degree or Certificate Level: BA	College/School: Arts and Sciences
Date (Month/Year): June/2021	Primary Assessment Contact: Joel Jennings
In what year was the data upon which this report is based collected? 2020-2021	
In what year was the program's assessment plan most recently reviewed/updated? 2021	

1. Student Learning Outcomes

Which of the program's student learning outcomes were assessed in this annual assessment cycle?

Goal #1: Anthropology majors will demonstrate a broad knowledge base in the subfield of biological anthropology.

Learning outcomes:

a. Understand the complexity of the hominid fossil record and be able to discuss important 'milestones' in hominid evolution, as well as understand where recent fossil finds fit into the "family tree".

b. Articulate how biological anthropology bridges and incorporates both the social sciences (e.g., Anthropology) and the life sciences (e.g., Biology), especially in terms of methodology and theory.

c. Assess the diversity of nonhuman primates by examining behavior, ecology and evolution.

d. Explain the relationship between evolutionary forces, the environment, and culture in modern human populations.

2. Assessment Methods: Student Artifacts

Which student artifacts were used to determine if students achieved this outcome? Please identify the course(s) in which these artifacts were collected. Clarify if any such courses were offered a) online, b) at the Madrid campus, or c) at any other off-campus location.

We analyzed a randomly selected sample of six final papers from ANTH 2210: Biological Anthropology. The papers were written as a partial requirement for the completion of the foundational course requirement for the Anthropology major. This course was taught in a fully online context due in part to Covid-19 protocols.

Madrid artifacts were not included.

We were once again able to undertake focus groups with graduating seniors this year to explore their experience and facility with Biological Anthropology. This mode of indirect data gathering was conducted by Dr. Richard Colignon and Dr. Joel Jennings in a Zoom focus group following the completion of the semester. It is worth noting that the students' whose artifacts are assessed in this report *were generally not* the students who participated in the focus groups.

3. Assessment Methods: Evaluation Process

What process was used to evaluate the student artifacts, and by whom? Please identify the tools(s) (e.g., a rubric) used in the process and include them in/with this report.

Direct Methods:

1) During July 2021, a committee (Dr. Katie MacKinnon and Dr. Bruce O'Neill) evaluated a randomly selected sample (using a random number generator) of Anth 2210: Biological Anthro papers (6 of 17)

using a rubric that focused on the three learning objectives. (see Appendices 1.1 and 1.2). One point of note is that most of the papers addressed only one or two of the learning objectives as these artifacts were collected in the semester before revisions to the Anthropology assessment document was made. The rubric reflects this reality. The instructor has indicated that she will adjust future assignments to incorporate the learning objectives into a single document.

Indirect Methods:

1) We were also gathered data from graduating seniors using focus groups that explored their experiences with theory in the Anthropology major. The focus group questions specifically interrogated the student's understanding of and comfort with key themes of biological anthropology.

4. Data/Results

What were the results of the assessment of the learning outcomes? Please be specific. Does achievement differ by teaching modality (e.g., online vs. face-to-face) or on-ground location (e.g., STL campus, Madrid campus, other off-campus site)?

The outcomes of the direct measures indicated that students were successfully accomplishing the learning objectives set forth by the department. On a scale of 1-5 with 5 being the most desirable score, students scored consistently well.

a) 5+5+5+5+4+4=(28/6=4.66)
b) 4+4+5+5+4=(22/5=4.4)
c) 4+5+3+4=(16/4=4.0)
d) 5+5+5=(15/3=5.0)

The quantitative results as reported from the Goal #1 rubrics indicate that overall students are acquiring the learning objectives desired by the division. Learning Objective 'C' was represented the lowest score, but also had a smaller sample which may have highlighted greater variance in the responses. Students seem quite comfortable with the hominid fossil record and the milestones in hominid evolution in Learning Objective #1. Overall, given the data limitations (see below) these outcomes suggest that students are generally acquiring the intended knowledge.

The indirect findings from the focus groups were a bit difficult to interpret. Students generally indicated that they were comfortable making intellectual connections between evolution, environment, and culture. One student actually provided an semi-extended answer as a demonstration of their command of this knowledge. Other students answered the in affirmative but did not provide statements to demonstrate their knowledge. Future focus group efforts may benefit from further interrogation of the relevant learning objectives and a bit more time for the students to respond. Overall, the indications provided suggested students were comfortable with the connections the division was seeking to make, but more detailed probing efforts are needed to affirm these claims.

5. Findings: Interpretations & Conclusions

What have you learned from these results? What does the data tell you?

We can extract two lessons from these results. First, students are broadly acquiring the intended knowledge implied by the learning objectives. Second, the instructor will need to design an assignment that integrates the four learning outcomes before the division undertakes Goal #1 again in the next cycle. There were several issues with this data. While the data that was collected (i.e. the raw scores) generally demonstrated inter-rater reliability, there were several instances of rater disagreement about *which* questions applied to the rubric. In several instances one member of the committee identified two or three learning outcomes as relevant, while the other member of the committee selected only one learning objective. Also, one student was not rated at all by one of the committee members. Overall, this suggests the need for both a comprehensive assignment prior to the next round of assessment using Goal #1, and perhaps a discussion/training among raters prior to the next round of assessment.

6. Closing the Loop: Dissemination and Use of Current Assessment Findings

A. When and how did your program faculty share and discuss these results and findings from this cycle of assessment?

Anthropology just completely rewrote the division's assessment plan in Spring 2021. This is the first year that we are implementing the new plan. The Anthropology Division faculty met virtually on 8/25/2021 in a meeting led by Dr. Joel Jennings. We reviewed Goal #1 and assessed how well the plan served to assess the department's intentions with this goal.

B. How specifically have you decided to use findings to improve teaching and learning in your program? For example, perhaps you've initiated one or more of the following:

Changes to the Curriculum or Pedagogies	• Course content • Teaching techniques • Improvements in technology • Prerequisites	• Course sequence • New courses • Deletion of courses • Changes in frequency or scheduling of course offerings
Changes to the Assessment Plan	• Student learning outcomes • Student artifacts collected • Evaluation process	• Evaluation tools (e.g., rubrics) • Data collection methods • Frequency of data collection

Please describe the actions you are taking as a result of the findings.

We used our fall division meeting to assess the quality of our assessment protocol and the evaluate the alignment of the protocol with our aims for teaching theory. Based on our findings, the faculty agreed that changes in the student artifacts collected needed to be changed before the next evaluation process. Dr. Katie MacKinnon is the primary instructor for Anth 2210 and after discussion she agreed that she would develop an assignment before the next cycle of assessment that incorporates each of the Learning Objectives into a single artifact. The weakness of our assessment efforts this year was that most of the artifacts addressed only one or two of the Learning Objectives. The faculty also discussed creating focus group questions which were perhaps slightly less formal to more readily assess student's memory of the themes in the Learning Objectives. Finally, faculty also noted that for many of the students it may have been several years since they had completed Anth 2210 and this may also influence the qualitative responses as well.

If no changes are being made, please explain why.

N/A

7. Closing the Loop: Review of Previous Assessment Findings and Changes

A. What is at least one change your program has implemented in recent years as a result of assessment data?

After reviewing the feedback on the assessment protocols from last year, the Anthropology faculty felt that the existing protocol was not specific enough to the Anthropology discipline. The faculty met throughout the spring and devised an entirely reworked assessment document that incorporates goals and learning objectives that much more closely align with the core values of the division.

B. How has this change/have these changes been assessed?

This question is not yet applicable because of the change in assessment protocol.

C. What were the findings of the assessment?

Not applicable at this time.

D. How do you plan to (continue to) use this information moving forward?

We will review the efficacy of our assessment protocol following each year of assessment. Necessary changes will be implemented by a sub-committee and reviewed by the Undergraduate Director and division faculty. These changes will be assessed during the next evaluation cycle for goodness of fit and efficacy.

IMPORTANT: Please submit any assessment tools and/or revised/updated assessment plans along with this report.

Rubric for Assessing Goal #1

Paper # _____ Last Name_____

A) Is the student able to discuss significant milestones in human evolution?

Poor		*Adequate*		*Excellent*
The student provides no examples or misunderstands the examples.		*The student provides examples, but they are somewhat brief, vague, or insufficiently supported with scholarly citations.*		*The student provides detailed and insightful examples that are supported with citations to scholarly literature.*
1	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*

Comments:

B) Can the student articulate how biological anthropology bridges and incorporates both the social sciences (e.g., Anthropology) and the life sciences (e.g., Biology), especially in terms of methodology and theory?

Poor		*Adequate*		*Excellent*
The student provides no examples or misunderstands the examples.		*The student provides examples, but they are somewhat brief, vague, or insufficiently supported with scholarly citations.*		*The student provides detailed and insightful examples that are supported with citations to scholarly literature.*
1	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*

Comments:

C) Does the student understand why the behavior, ecology, and evolution of nonhuman primates are studied in biological anthropology?

Poor		*Adequate*		*Excellent*
The student provides no examples or misunderstands the examples.		*The student provides examples, but they are somewhat brief, vague, or insufficiently supported with scholarly citations.*		*The student provides detailed and insightful examples that are supported with citations to scholarly literature.*
1	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*

Comments:

D) Can the student explain the relationship between evolutionary forces, the environment, and culture in modern human populations?

Poor		*Adequate*		*Excellent*
The student provides no examples or misunderstands the examples.		*The student provides examples, but they are somewhat brief, vague, or insufficiently supported with scholarly citations.*		*The student provides detailed and insightful examples that are supported with citations to scholarly literature.*
1	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*

Comments:

Rubric for Exit Interviews (2021)

Structured Exit Interview with Graduating Anthropology Seniors

Focus group questions.

1. What was the most interesting question on the questionnaire?

2. What was/were your favorite courses in the major?

3. What elective courses would you suggest we create?

4. Weakness in the curriculum—What required courses would you suggest we create?

5. Do you have a sense of the breadth of knowledge of this discipline?

6. Were courses with hands-on-experience helpful?

7. Do you think you received helpful guidance from you mentor?

Goal #1: Anthropology majors will (can tell us how to) demonstrate a broad knowledge base in the subfield of biological anthropology.

Learning outcomes:

8. Tell us how you understand the complexity of the hominid fossil record, and discuss important 'milestones' in hominid evolution, as well as understand where recent fossil finds fit into the "family tree".

9. Tell us how biological anthropology bridges and incorporates both the social sciences (e.g., Anthropology) and the life sciences (e.g., Biology), especially in terms of methodology and theory.

10. Assess for us the diversity of nonhuman primates by examining behavior, ecology and evolution.

11. Explain the relationship between evolutionary forces, the environment, and culture in modern human populations.

We are investigating ways to reach more students who may be interested in studying anthropology. The next three questions focus on recruiting more anthropology majors.

12. Do you personally know anyone who considered majoring in anthropology at SLU, but chose not to?

13. Do you personally know anyone who declared an anthropology major at SLU, and then dropped the major? If yes, what were the reasons for the student(s) not completing the anthropology program at SLU?

14. What would you say are the top three reasons why students might decide NOT to major in anthropology at SLU?

15. What would you say are the top three things the SLU anthropology program could do or offer to recruit more students to the program? (Wait for suggestions; Then offer the following ideas, if not yet named: What about an internship program? More fieldwork opportunities? More widespread recruiting of first-year students who don't know about anthropology? More electives? Anything else?)

16. Other Issues:

a. Facilities? Lab, lab access…?

b. Research Experience? Did you get the appropriate experience? Where did you get that research experience?

c. Security issues?

17. What additional questions should we be asking?

Notes on responses:

Anthropology Focus Group (12:00pm)
May 11th, 2021

1. Favorite courses

- MV-Archeology – wants a career there. Bring back World Archeology.
- KM - Primate Observation class (3)
- KM – Bio Anthro (2)
- Capstone – clarified trajectory for grad school
- AC – Global mental health
- MV – Theory and Archeology
- CH – Peace and Conflict
- BO – Theory wasn't favorite, but very helpful with other stuff

2. What elective courses would suggest we create?

- Careers in Sociology course (2)
- Special topics for deeper dive into specialized areas (e.g. geographies and time periods in Anthro) (2) A different student noted that this was also requested by grad schools
- One student supported a DNA and chemistry course

3. Weaknesses of the current curriculum
- Linguistic wasn't available earlier

4. Do you have a sense of the breadth of the discipline
- Professors make it known that you can go in any direction. With exception of Archeology and Linguistics a good number of courses offered.

5. Courses with hands-on experience helpful?
- Biological anthro lab- skulls, Cahokia mounds field school experience, primates, archeology
- Community Service Project – O'Neill 'Poverty in a Global Perspective'

6. Mentoring
- YH – Intro was a great course
- MV - is a good mentor. Worked to get students into a range of courses
- KM – Apes at the zoo and resources to learn more
- KM – graduate school, book recommendations, passionate about paleo
- Not all departments offer initial meetings with mentors
- Fit not always correct – not cultural so not a fit with BO
- Pandemic led to personal loss of proactivity – faculty should reach out to check on post-grad plans
- BO not the best fit – mentors should be assigned based on interest

7. Facilities
   A. Security
      - Commuter felt safe on campus, including late night tests
      - Never unsafe. Outside perception as unsafe. Other students are only concern. Sexual assault a campus-wide issue.

- Greek life an issue (reference unclear)

8. Learning Outcomes
   - Would you be comfortable discussing the hominid fossil record?
   - Integration of life
   - Assess for diversity of non-human primates by examining behavioral, ecology, and evolution
     - Student was able to give a cogent answer to connection between evolution, environment and culture

9. Did you know any students who considered becoming a major and decided not to?
   - One person minoring, but had too many other things going on
   - Switched major because it wasn't a fit. Decided that's not what they wanted to do with their lives.

10. Top three reasons not to major:
    - Anthro is never on high school lists
    - "A major that doesn't matter" narrative (e.g. business school)
    - Lack of a set career track
    - Lack of knowledge about Anthro

11. Recruiting more students
    - Use Anthro club as a recruitment tool
    - Remind students that they can work on faculty research
    - Cater to students who take as a social science class
    - Advertise flexibility – tailoring the major
    - More flexibility on capstones