1. Which program student learning outcomes were assessed in this annual assessment cycle?

This year we assessed our second goal: Anthropology majors will understand the role of qualitative and quantitative research methods in the social sciences. We used the following Student Learning Outcomes:

a) compare and contrast methodological approaches for gathering data
b) design a small study
c) critically assess a published research report

This is the second year the anthropology program has implemented an assessment under its revised plan. We used committee review of the capstone projects of graduating seniors as a direct measure of learning outcomes and complemented that with exit interviews and surveys of graduating seniors as indirect measures of our goal. The capstone papers and exit interviews were reviewed by a faculty committee and a summary report was prepared as scheduled during June. This summary report will be presented to all departmental faculty members for review and discussion at the annual faculty retreat at the end of August, 2018. Madrid is not involved in this assessment.

The Anthropology protocol called for papers from non-capstone courses to be used for this step, but due to confusion with the protocol, the undergraduate director collected and distributed Capstone materials to the committee. However, because the Capstone papers were empirical in nature, they fit the assessment learning outcome goals quite well. In the future, the anthropology division may revisit the decision to use non-Capstone sources for assessment.

2. What data/artifacts of student learning were collected for each assessed outcome? Were Madrid student artifacts included?

We analyzed a randomly selected sample of 3 Capstone papers. These Capstone papers were empirical works that were guided by individual faculty members and overseen by an instructor of record in the Anthropology division.

Madrid artifacts were not included. (That campus does not have an Anthropology major at this time; we will share our findings with them and invite dialogue, however.)

We also undertook qualitative interviews that asked students about their understanding and comfort with social science methodology. We explored which classes helped them understand the various methods used in social science, as well as what instructional techniques were helpful.
3. How did you analyze the assessment data? What was the process? Who was involved?

**NOTE:** If you used rubrics as part of your analysis, please include them in an appendix.

Direct Methods:

1) During June 2018, a committee (Dr. Katie MacKinnon, Dr. Bruce O’Neill, Dr. Terra Edwards) evaluated a sample of Capstone papers (3 of 6) using a rubric that focused on the three learning objectives.

Indirect Methods:

A second committee (Dr. Richard Colignon and Dr. Joel Jennings) also conducted focus groups with graduating seniors to identify specific issues with the program’s delivery of methods courses and techniques.

4. What did you learn from the data? Summarize the major findings of your analysis for each assessed outcome.

**NOTE:** If necessary, include any tables, charts, or graphs in an appendix.

Average scores for learning outcomes (N/A = not applicable to paper topic)

a) \( \frac{5+3+5+5+5+5+5+5+5}{9} = \frac{43}{9} = 4.77 \)

b) \( \frac{5+3+5+5+5+5+4+5+5}{9} = \frac{42}{9} = 4.66 \)

c) \( \frac{5+3+5+5+4+4+5+4}{9} = \frac{40}{9} = 4.44 \)

The committee broadly reported positive outcomes in terms of the three learning objectives. Reviewers noted on several occasions that students may not have explicitly compared and contrasted methodological approaches, but each of the studies used appropriate methods for the study at hand, thus implicitly demonstrating a command of relevant approaches. Overall, the committee found that the student’s accomplished the learning objectives of understanding methods, designing a small study, and critically assessing a published research report.

During focus groups, students stated that methods instruction was well integrated into a number of classes and were appropriate for the discipline. Students mentioned using various methods in cultural anthropology-related courses (e.g. ANTH 2200 and ANTH 4530), ANTH 2210: Biological Anthropology, ANTH 2240: Archaeology, and the field schools.

5. How did your analysis inform meaningful change? How did you use the analyzed data to make or implement recommendations for change in pedagogy, curriculum design, or your assessment plan?

Both the quantitative and qualitative data suggest that Anthropology program is doing a good job of meeting its learning objectives around methods. The Anthropology program actually made a change to the delivery of methods during the past academic year when they shifted SOC 2000 from being a mandatory course to an optional course as part of restructuring the major. A second aspect of the same change required students to take one of five upper division courses that incorporate discipline-specific methods elements. This change to the major was just implemented this year, so the long-term implications of the new methods requirements will probably not be visible in the assessment data until the next cycle. However, what the current data does offer is support for the new system of teaching methods in Anthropology. Our findings in this assessment suggest students are both competent and comfortable with their exposure to and ability to deploy methods that are appropriate to the four fields of Anthropology.

One challenge that may bear specific consideration by the Anthropology division moving forward, however, is student’s engagement with critical thinking. While this falls outside of the immediate operative questions for the assessment this year, it was a notable point in the focus groups. When
queried about their understanding of and ability to use critical thinking in their course, the students acknowledged that critical thinking was an important aspect of an anthropology major, but had great difficulty articulating meaningful insights into the ways that Anthropology courses demand that they think critically. This may be a difficulty in articulating how critical thinking occurs in the context of Anthropology, but it was a notable finding during the interview and is a point that bears further discussion by the division faculty during fall division meetings.

6. Did you follow up (“close the loop”) on past assessment work? If so, what did you learn? (For example, has that curriculum change you made two years ago manifested in improved student learning today, as evidenced in your recent assessment data and analysis?)

The Anthropology program assessment protocol is a four-step process. We are currently in Year #2. As such, we have not yet completed a cycle of assessment and have not yet had the opportunity to compare data between years. Learning Outcome #1, for example, was done last year and will be re-assessed two years from now. We have, however, been using feedback from focus groups with graduating seniors to make adjustments to the program as necessary. Feedback from this year’s focus groups, for example, will inform discussions around teaching critical thinking in division meetings during the fall semester.

IMPORTANT: Please submit any revised/updated assessment plans to the University Assessment Coordinator along with this report.
1. Does the student demonstrate the ability to distinguish the role of qualitative and quantitative research methods in the social sciences:

   Learning Outcomes:
   a) compare and contrast methodological approaches for gathering data
   b) design a small study
   c) critically assess a published research report

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2) Does the student demonstrate the ability to identify appropriate methodologies for examining their research question?

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3) Does the student demonstrate the ability to separate facts from inference and correct interpretation of appropriate evidence?

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