New Mexico State University

Detailed Assessment Report
2015 - 2016 Anthropology Graduate
As of: 12/07/2016 10:07 AM MDT
(Includes those Action Plans with Budget Amounts marked *One-Time, Recurring, No Request*.)

Mission / Purpose

The Department of Anthropology's mission derives from and is consistent with New Mexico State University's land-grant mission. The Department of Anthropology's mission is to produce and communicate knowledge for a better understanding of the human condition. Our department places special emphasis on education, research, and service/outreach that conserves and maintains the state's multicultural heritage, internationalizes the capabilities of our institution and our students, and assists the citizens of our state to be global citizens of the 21st century. Our program and faculty broadly cover the different sub-disciplines of anthropology, including cultural anthropology, biological anthropology, archaeology, and linguistics. In teaching, our program strives to provide our undergraduate and graduate students with a quality education in anthropological knowledge, theory, and methods. In research, our goal is to contribute to disciplinary knowledge about human culture, society, biology, prehistory, history, and language through basic and applied research, disseminating this knowledge in appropriate ways. In service and outreach, our faculty engage in activities and collaborative efforts that support professional, university, and community well-being, supporting our commitment to the culturally diverse communities of New Mexico and others around the globe.

Goals/Objectives

G 1: The MA program prepares students to pursue professional careers in Anthropology or to pursue doctoral programs in anthropology

Anthropology is the study of humans, past and present, and builds on knowledge from both the social and biological sciences and from the humanities. Traditionally, anthropologists were trained broadly in the one of the four sub-disciplines: sociocultural anthropology, biological anthropology, archaeology, and linguistics. At the graduate level, students move from a holistic view of the discipline towards a more specialized and problem-solving focus in archaeology, biological anthropology, or cultural anthropology. Our program prepares anthropology graduate students to pursue a professional career in a range of applied social science fields or to pursue academic doctoral research in anthropology and allied fields. Objective 1.1: Anthropology MA students will develop breadth and depth of their anthropological knowledge, extend their problem-solving abilities, become proficient in field- and laboratory-based data collection skills, and develop quantitative and qualitative analytical skills in their graduate studies. Objective 1.2: Anthropology MA students will prepare themselves to gain entry into PhD programs in anthropology or professional schools in the US or abroad and to compete effectively for professional employment with private, state, federal, and/or non-profit agencies.

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

S 1: Design and Execute a Problem-Oriented Anthropological Study

1. Students will design and execute a problem-oriented anthropological study, whether in the vein of applied/practicing work or standard academic research, and will report the results of their study in the form of a Master's thesis, Professional Internship Report, or Special Research Project report. The final thesis or report must show substantive data analysis by the student, directed toward an explicit anthropological research problem.

Strategic Plan Associations

Arts and Sciences College

1 Arts and Sciences College Strategic Goals
1.1 Goal 1: Provide students with a high quality education in the arts, humanities, social sciences and sciences, at the Bachelor's, Master's and Doctoral levels.
1.2 Goal 2: Promote discovery through scholarship and creative activity, encourage innovation and dissemination, spark economic advancement, and inspire a culture of excellence.
1.3 Goal 3: Foster, encourage and support outreach and engagement.
1.4 Goal 4: Promote and support diversity of thought, diverse ways of knowing, and diverse representation of students, staff, and faculty.

Related Measures

M 1: M.1. Anth 599/597/598 Thesis, Internship Report, or Special Research Problems Report

This assessment is summative, since these final products are the subject of the Final Oral Examination required by the NMSU Graduate School as part of the requirements for the M.A in Anthropology. SLO 1. Design and execute a problem-oriented anthropological study. The final thesis or report must be focused around a central question, problem, or hypothesis and show substantive data analysis by the student, directed toward an explicit anthropological research problem. SLO 2. The final thesis or report must demonstrate professional skills in written communication. For AcYr 2015-16, the outcomes assessment committee measured successful outcomes for SO.1 and SO.2. by collecting all theses, internship reports, and special project reports that have undergone the final oral examination since May of 2015. The committee members will score each document using the PRIOS rubric to evaluate the degree to which the student can design and execute a problem-oriented anthropological study and demonstrates professional skills in written communication.

Source of Evidence: Senior thesis or culminating major project

Target:
60% of Anthropology M.A. Thesis or Internship Reports will achieve a score of 'present or higher' on the PRIOS rubric. Dr. Bill Walker scored the M.A. Thesis and Internship reports.

Finding (2015 - 2016) - Target: Met
The outcomes assessment committee reports the following scores using the PRIOS rubric (n=14). A student whose writing is rated 'present' or above on the PRIOS rubric will have a score of 13 or greater. A student

whose writing is rated as 'excellent' on the PRIOS rubric will score between 18 and 20. A student whose writing is rated as 'present' on the PRIOS rubric will have a score between 13 and 17. A student whose writing is rated as 'emerging' on the PRIOS rubric will have a score between 8 and 12. A student whose writing is rated as 'deficient' will have a score of 5-7 points. 15.64 Average 2.20 St. Dev. 14.09 Coeff.Var 16 Median Ten students or 62.54% scored above the median score of 16, and 12 students or 86% scored as 'present or higher' on the PRIOS rubric. Three students scored as 'excellent' on the PRIOS rubric. Two students were rated as 'emerging', and no students scored as 'deficient. The assessor noted that the range of PRIOS scores is fairly wide for a capstone example of written work for graduate students. For these reasons we conclude that the target was met. Dr. Bill Walker, the assessor for thesis and internship reports, noted variation across anthropological subfields in writing styles and in the way that the problem-orientation of the research was developed. Cultural anthropologists tend to focus problem statements broadly and less explicitly than students in other subfields, but the quality of writing is generally high. The problem-orientation of research for the biological anthropologists is narrowly and explicitly focused, such that the audience for the research product is a small subset of academic scholars. Archaeologists' quality of writing varies widely, and the precision of their research questions and audience is quite wide-ranging as well.

Related Action Plans (by Established cycle, then alpha):
For full information, see the *Details of Action Plans* section of this report.

Student Professional Engagement
Established in Cycle: 2015 - 2016
The Anthropology Faculty and the Outcomes Assessment Committee will consider adding a third program outcome for the Anthropology...

M 2: M.2. Anth 505 Research Proposal
This assessment is formative, since Anth 505 Issues in Anthropological Practice is a required core course usually taken in the student's second semester in the program. SLO 1. Design and execute a problem-oriented anthropological study SLO 2. Develop professional skills in written and verbal communication The Anth 505 Research Proposal is the final and cumulative assignment in the core course. The other assignments in the class provide examples and models of anthropological research design and carefully ladder the skills needed to write a proposal. All students enter the class having had a consultation with their graduate committee members about a research project or problem on which they would like to work. Committee members assign them two questions and corresponding reading lists that target the background literature relevant to the student's chosen project or problem. Synthesis of this material becomes part of the research proposal. The skills ladder for the course also includes library literature search skills, annotated bibliographies, instruction on ethics and human subjects research, group discussion of the two papers synthesizing the material assigned from the student's committee, review of grant proposals, development of CVs, and a verbal research presentation to the class. Students are encouraged to share the research proposal produced for Anth 505 with their committee chair. Although many students refocus or switch topics and sometimes reconsider thesis or non-thesis options within the program, the committee feedback of the Anth 505 proposal ultimately leads to the student's proposal hearing for the M.A. program. For AcYr 2015-16, the outcomes assessment committee collected the final research proposals from Anth 505 Issues in Anthropological Practice held in Spring of 2016. For SLO.1. the professor for Anth 505 field tested a new rubric that scored the development of problem-orientated research as deficient, emerging, present, or accomplished for six criteria (see Document upload). The outcomes assessment committee wished to examine the appropriateness of these rubrics for assessing the two student learning outcomes and compare the differences between them. The results of the comparison are presented in the Achievement Summary section, Question #2.

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

Target:
40% of students will demonstrate evidence of developing a problem or question suitable for anthropological study, identifying sources of data and information with which to resolve or answer the problem or question (what and how), developing sufficient background about the context of the investigation (when and where), and indicating why the problem or question is significant (why). 40% of students should achieve a rating of 'Present' or higher on the new rubric. Dr. Rani Alexander scored the Anth 505 Research Proposals to field test the new rubric.

Finding (2015 - 2016) - Target: Not Met
The outcomes assessment committee reports the following scores using the Anth GRAD Development of Problem-Oriented Research rubric. A student whose proposal development is rated Accomplished should score between 20 and 24. A student whose development is rated as Present should score between 15 and 19. A student whose development is rated as Emerging will have a score between 10 and 14. A student whose proposal development is rated as deficient will have a score of 6-9 points. 12 Average 2.66927 St Dev 22.24 Coeff.Var Only four research proposals (24%) were rated as Present on the new rubric, and none were rated as Accomplished. Ten proposals (59%) were scored as Emerging, and three research proposals (17%) were rated as deficient. The target was not met. It is clear from the pilot run of the Anth GRAD Development of Problem-oriented Research rubric that students do not enter our program with a strong foundational knowledge of how to write a research proposal. The most consistent difficulties that students demonstrated were 1). Lack of clarity in posing a problem or question that is sufficiently focused so that it can be answered by collecting and analyzing data, 2). Insufficient depth of knowledge of the anthropological background literature, which sometimes led to false claims that 'no research has been conducted on this topic,' 3). Summarizing information that was not relevant to the problem or topic, 4). Difficulty with the organization and flow of argument for the research proposal genre, 5). Inappropriate methods, and 6). Incomplete understanding of the significance of the anthropological problem or topic. Nevertheless, many students showed well developed skills in locating and understanding the professional literature and synthesizing the information in a well-reasoned manner. All students demonstrated due diligence and progress in scholarly research on their chosen topics. Several students were able to revise their Anth 505 research proposals with the direction of their committee members and hold a proposal hearing by June of 2016. As a first try in marshalling information as a research proposal, a critically important genre of writing in the discipline of anthropology, the assignment sets them on the path of proposal development. Discussion among members of the Outcomes Assessment Committee regarding the merits of this new rubric compared to the PRIOS rubric indicate that they are measuring the same thing (development of problem-oriented research topic, SLO.1), just on a slightly different scale. Distribution of scores for the Anth 505 proposal using each rubric were nearly identical and did not offer any new information. All rubrics provide ordinal scale data. Continued attempts to refine rubrics and adjust targets to a new scoring system are not a wise use of Outcomes Assessment Committee members' time.

S 2: Students will demonstrate professional skills in written and verbal communication

Our students will demonstrate professional skills in written and verbal communication.

Strategic Plan Associations

Arts and Sciences College
1 Arts and Sciences College Strategic Goals
1.1 Goal 1: Provide students with a high quality education in the arts, humanities, social sciences and sciences, at the Bachelor's, Master's and Doctoral levels.
1.2 Goal 2: Promote discovery through scholarship and creative activity, encourage innovation and dissemination, spark economic advancement, and inspire a culture of excellence.
1.3 Goal 3: Foster, encourage and support outreach and engagement.
1.4 Goal 4: Promote and support diversity of thought, diverse ways of knowing, and diverse representation of students, staff, and faculty.

Related Measures

M 1: M.1. Anth 599/597/598 Thesis, Internship Report, or Special Research Problems Report

This assessment is summative, since these final products are the subject of the Final Oral Examination required by the NMSU Graduate School as part of the requirements for the M.A. in Anthropology. SLO 1. Design and execute a problem-oriented anthropological study. The final thesis or report must be focused around a central question, problem, or hypothesis and show substantive data analysis by the student, directed toward an explicit anthropological research problem. SLO 2. The final thesis or report must demonstrate professional skills in written communication. For AcYr 2015-16, the outcomes assessment committee measured successful outcomes for SO.1 and SO.2. by collecting all theses, internship reports, and special project reports that have undergone the final oral examination since May of 2015. The committee members will score each document using the PRIOS rubric to evaluate the degree to which the student can design and execute a problem-oriented anthropological study and demonstrates professional skills in written communication.

Source of Evidence: Senior thesis or culminating major project

Target:
60% of Anthropology M.A. Thesis or Internship Reports will achieve a score of 'present or higher' on the PRIOS rubric. Dr. Bill Walker scored the M.A. Thesis and Internship reports.

Finding (2015 - 2016) - Target: Met
The outcomes assessment committee reports the following scores using the PRIOS rubric (n=14). A student whose writing is rated 'present' or above on the PRIOS rubric will have a score of 13 or greater. A student whose writing is rated as 'excellent' on the PRIOS rubric will score between 18 and 20. A student whose writing is rated as 'present' on the PRIOS rubric will have a score between 13 and 17. A student whose writing is rated as 'emerging' on the PRIOS rubric will have a score between 8 and 12. A student whose writing is rated as 'deficient' will have a score of 5-7 points. 15.64 Average 2.20 St. Dev. 14.09 Coeff.Var 16 Median Ten students or 62.54% scored above the median score of 16, and 12 students or 86% scored as 'present or higher' on the PRIOS rubric. Three students scored as 'excellent' on the PRIOS rubric. Two students were rated as 'emerging', and no students scored as 'deficient'. The assessor noted that the range of PRIOS scores is fairly wide for a capstone example of written work for graduate students. For these reasons we conclude that the target was met. Dr. Bill Walker, the assessor for thesis and internship reports, noted variation across anthropological subfields in writing styles and in the way that the problem-orientation of the research was developed. Cultural anthropologists tend to focus problem statements broadly and less explicitly than students in other subfields, but the quality of writing is generally high. The problem-orientation of research for the biological anthropologists is narrowly and explicitly focused, such that the audience for the research product is a small subset of academic scholars. Archaeologists' quality of writing varies widely, and the precision of their research questions and audience is quite wide-ranging as well.

Related Action Plans (by Established cycle, then alpha):
For full information, see the *Details of Action Plans* section of this report.

Assessment of S.2. Students will demonstrate professional skills in written communication
Established in Cycle: 2014 - 2015
Only a small sample of M.1. Thesis or Internship Reports was evaluated for 'writing in the discipline' for the College of Arts a...

Student Professional Engagement
Established in Cycle: 2015 - 2016
The Anthropology Faculty and the Outcomes Assessment Committee will consider adding a third program outcome for the Anthropology...

M 2: M.2. Anth 505 Research Proposal
This assessment is formative, since Anth 505 Issues in Anthropological Practice is a required core course usually taken in the student's second semester in the program. SLO 1. Design and execute a problem-oriented anthropological study SLO 2. Develop professional skills in written and verbal communication The Anth 505 Research Proposal is the final and cumulative assignment in the core course. The other assignments in the class provide examples and models of anthropological research design and carefully ladder the skills needed to write a proposal. All students enter the class having had a consultation with their graduate committee members about a research project or problem on which they would like to work. Committee members assign them two questions and corresponding reading lists that target the background literature relevant to the student's chosen project or problem. Synthesis of this material becomes part of the research proposal. The skills ladder for the course also includes library literature search skills, annotated bibliographies, instruction on ethics and human subjects research, group discussion of the two papers synthesizing the material assigned from the student's committee, review of grant proposals, development of CVs, and a verbal research presentation to the class. Students are encouraged to share the research proposal produced for Anth 505 with their committee chair. Although many students refocus or switch topics and sometimes reconsider thesis or non-thesis options within the program, the committee feedback of the Anth 505 proposal ultimately leads to the student's proposal hearing for the M.A. program. For AcYr 2015-16, the outcomes assessment committee collected the final research proposals from Anth 505 Issues in Anthropological Practice held in Spring of 2016. For SLO.1. the professor for Anth 505 field tested a new rubric that scored the development of problem-orientated research as deficient, emerging, present, or accomplished for six criteria (see Document upload). The outcomes assessment committee wished to examine the appropriateness of these rubrics for assessing the two student learning outcomes and compare the differences between them. The results of the comparison are presented in the Achievement Summary section, Question #2.

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

Target:
40% of students should achieve a rating of 'Present' or higher on the PRIOS rubric. Dr. Brenda Benefit scored the Anth 505 Research Proposals.

Finding (2015 - 2016) - Target: Partially Met
The outcomes assessment committee reports the following scores using the PRIOS rubric (n=17). A student whose writing is rated 'present' or above on the PRIOS rubric will have a score of 13 or greater. A student whose writing is rated as 'excellent' on the PRIOS rubric will score between 18 and 20. A student whose writing is rated as 'present' on the PRIOS rubric will have a score between 13 and 17. A student whose writing is rated as 'emerging' on the PRIOS rubric will have a score between 8 and 12. A student whose writing is rated as 'deficient' will have a score of 5-7 points. 13.97 Average 2.01 St Dev 14.39 Coeff. Var. Nine of the Anth 505 proposals (53%) achieved a rating of Present or higher on the PRIOS rubric, but none achieved a rating of Excellent. Eight proposals (47%) achieved a rating of Emerging, and none were rated as Deficient. The distribution of scores reflects the assessor's evaluation that the Anth 505 Research Proposals were 'middling' with a fairly narrow range of student performance, as reflected in the coefficient of variation. Yet, the assessor noted some obvious problems and errors. These included only superficial knowledge of their chosen topic and lack of understanding of its context within the field. These problems are reflected in the purpose, rhetorical situation, information, and organization of their writing (see broader discussion in Findings for SLO 1). For these reasons we conclude that the target was partially met.

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

Assessment of S.2. Students will demonstrate professional skills in written communication
Only a small sample of M.1. Thesis or Internship Reports was evaluated for 'writing in the discipline' for the College of Arts and Sciences Quality Initiative. We need a larger sample to determine if students are meeting or not meeting the target, and the sample needs to be more balanced in terms of whether the student is pursuing a thesis or a non-thesis option. We will continue to assess M.1. Thesis or Internship Reports and M.2. Anth 505 Proposals and score them using the PRIOS rubric to determine whether students demonstrate professional skills in written communication. We will set new targets: M.1. 60% of students should receive a rating of 'Present' or higher on the PRIOS rubric. M.2. 40% of students should receive a rating of 'Present' or higher on the PRIOS rubric.

Established in Cycle: 2014 - 2015
Implementation Status: Finished
Priority: High

Relationships (Measure | Outcome):
> **Measure:** M.1. Anth 599/597/598 Thesis, Internship Report, or Special Research Problems Report |
> **Outcome:** Students will demonstrate professional skills in written and verbal communication

Implementation Description: Sample all thesis and internship reports completed between May 30-2015 and May 13, 2016.
Projected Completion Date: 05/2016
Responsible Person/Group: Outcomes assessment committee.

Assessment of S1: Design and Execute a Problem-Oriented Anthropological Study
The Anthropology Faculty believe outcomes assessment efforts should focus on this primary objective (S.1). The outcomes were not rigorously evaluated in 2014-15 in accordance with the College's Quality Initiative focus on 'writing in the discipline'. The outcomes assessment committee will create a rubric for examining the development of problem-orientation for an anthropological study. Measures will remain as stated in the 2014-15 report. We will set the following targets: 40% of M.2. Anth 505 proposals will show evidence that the development of a problem orientation for their anthropological study is 'present' on the new rubric to be designed for AcYear 2015-16. 60% of M.1. Thesis or Internship reports will show evidence that the development of a problem orientation for their anthropological study is 'present' on the new rubric to be designed for AcYear 2015-16.

Established in Cycle: 2014 - 2015
Implementation Status: Finished
Priority: High
Implementation Description: Score the sample of Anth 505 proposals and all theses and internship reports for the 2015-2016 year using the new rubric.
Projected Completion Date: 05/2016
Responsible Person/Group: Outcomes assessment committee.

Student Professional Engagement
The Anthropology Faculty and the Outcomes Assessment Committee will consider adding a third program outcome for the Anthropology Graduate Program: Students will develop meaningful and professional engagement with a community of peers, faculty, staff, researchers, and other professionals in Anthropology. We propose to assess this outcome by asking graduate faculty to discuss the student's list of presentations and other synergistic activities listed on the curriculum vitae at the student's Final Oral Examination. We will develop a rubric for scoring.

Established in Cycle: 2015 - 2016
Implementation Status: Planned
Priority: High

Relationships (Measure | Outcome):
> **Measure:** M.1. Anth 599/597/598 Thesis, Internship Report, or Special Research Problems Report |
> **Outcome:** Design and Execute a Problem-Oriented Anthropological Study
> | Students will demonstrate professional skills in written and verbal communication

Implementation Description: The OA committee will request that the committee for the Final Oral Examination examine the student's curriculum vitae and provide a count of presentations and posters presented at NMSU. local, regional, national, and international professional conferences over the course of the student's graduate career.
Projected Completion Date: 09/2017
Responsible Person/Group: Outcomes Assessment Committee, Anthropology Graduate Faculty

Analysis Questions and Analysis Answers

1. Engagement: How did you engage faculty, administrators, staff, students and/or other stakeholders in

In AcYr 2015-16 outcomes assessment results were reviewed at multiple levels by a wide range of stakeholders. The Anthropology Department was in the middle of Academic Program Review, and preparations required integration of outcomes assessment results from the previous five years. Consequently, stakeholder groups included faculty of the outcomes assessment committee, the departmental faculty, the faculty member who prepared the self-study for Academic Program Review, the Department Head, Associate Dean Anne Hubbell, former Dean Christa Slaton, the four members of Anthropology's Academic Program external review team, and students enrolled in Anth 505, and all graduate students who held the final oral examination after May of 2014, and students who participated in the site visit for Academic Program Review. At the beginning of the fall 2015 semester, the Department Head worked intensively with Anne Hubbell to address her feedback on specific sections of the report as presented in WEAVE and establish a reasonable timeline for deliverables that would not interfere with the Department's major tasks for the year. Outcomes assessment results and the plan moving forward were discussed at the August faculty meeting, and considered both the 2014-15 report and the information contained in the Academic Program Review self-study. We broadened and named the faculty members on the outcomes assessment committee for 2015-16: William Walker (chair), Kelly Jenks, Mary Alice Scott, and Brenda Benefit. We agreed that the Department Head and/or the OA chair would attend outcomes assessment workshops and convey information to the committee. We agreed that the Department Head would continue to deal with the dysfunctional WEAVE software. The Outcomes Assessment committee and Department Head met in September, reviewed the outcomes assessment data, finalized the report for AcYr 2014-15, and created the assessment plan for AcYr 2015-16. We elected to continue with the College's Quality Initiative for writing in the discipline, decided to continue to use the PRIOS rubric. We chose the Anth 505 Research Proposal for formative assessment and the final Thesis, Internship and Special Research Problem reports for summative assessment in the Graduate M.A. Program. We considered whether we needed a more specific rubric to evaluate SLO.1. Design and Execute a Problem-Oriented Anthropological Study. These are the same assignments used as measures for the 2014-15 assessment cycle, and they permit comparison. We partitioned the work of collecting and scoring the papers among members of the outcomes assessment committee. The Graduate Outcomes assessment report was finalized by the Department Head based on this discussion and feedback on the draft reports received 9/18/15 from Anne Hubbell. The final report was delivered to Associate Dean Anne Hubbell in October. The OA committee created a folder on One Drive to hold and share the assignments, data, rubrics, feedback, and reports for outcomes assessment. The outcomes assessment committee's deliberations and plans, as well as information presented in the OA workshops offered by David Smith were conveyed to the authors of the Academic Program Review self-study and the faculty in subsequent faculty meetings. Results of the OA Assessment for 2014-15 were incorporated in the self-study for Academic Program review and the reports themselves were included as an appendix. The OA assessment plan through 'measures' was input into WEAVE by the Department Head; the verbiage for the Goals, Objectives, and student learning outcomes were fine-tuned based on information presented in the Fall outcomes assessment workshops and the information presented in the self-study for academic program review. In January 2016 the Department Head received feedback from Anne Hubbell on the Goals and Objectives sections of the 2015-16 report, and in February she attended another Outcomes Assessment workshop. The information was conveyed to the Outcomes Assessment Committee and the faculty, as relevant. The January faculty meeting laid out the outcomes assessment activities for the spring semester, and the OA committee approved the goals, objectives and student learning outcomes for the graduate program. Student learning outcomes were shared with the graduate students in Anth 505 as part of the purpose of writing the Research proposal and in the context of planning the next steps of their academic and professional development. In February, undergraduate and graduate students participated in roundtable discussions with the external review team for Academic Program Review. Program goals, objectives and outcomes was also a topic for discussion among the members of the external review team, the faculty, and the Deans during the Academic Program Review site visit. Also in February, Dean Christa Slaton and Associate Dean Anne Hubbell reviewed the annual performance evaluations of the faculty and for the Department with the Department Head; the review touched on outcomes assessment and workload distribution related to it. The Department Head reviewed the results of the annual evaluation with individual faculty as required by College and University policy. In mid-March and early April, the Department received feedback on the 2014-15 Outcomes Assessment reports from Associate Dean Anne Hubbell and Interim Dean Enrico Pontelli. Also by late April, the Department received the report of the Academic Program Review external review team. These were only briefly discussed at our final faculty meeting of the academic year. Discussion touched on a couple of things that the Department is doing really well – namely, student professional engagement. We talked about how many students made professional presentations at local, regional, and national professional conferences, and how many had applied for and received professional scholarships over the last two years. We also talked about the successes we have had in connecting both undergraduates and graduate students to opportunities for research both with faculty and with external agencies. The Outcomes Assessment Committee will consider whether student engagement might be included as a student learning outcome for next year, and how we might measure it. In early May, the Outcomes Assessment Committee and the Department Head collected electronic copies of the remaining assignments for assessment from Anth 505, and compiled electronic copies of all Graduate thesis and internship reports for students who held a final oral examination since May 2014. Rani Alexander drafted a new pilot rubric for SLO.1. and tried it out on the Anth 505 Research Proposals as she was calculating final grades at the end of the semester. All assignments were made available to the outcomes assessment committee in the One Drive Folder. A meeting to discuss the Academic Program Review report and action plan was held June 1st among Enrico Pontelli, Anne Hubbell, and the Department Head. The findings and recommendations of the Academic Program Review team, coupled with the lack of available resources to implement the recommendations (particularly with regard to adequate classroom and laboratory space), will factor into our outcomes assessment plan for the 2016-17 Ac Yr. On May 20th the Department Head received feedback from the NMSU Assessment office on the 2014-15 OA reports, and in June she attended a presentation on outcomes assessment as part of mandated administrator training. As recommended, notions about a culture of improvement, closing the loop, and the growth mindset are currently being incorporated into the 2015-16 reports. Assessment scores for the selected assignments were received from the members of the outcomes assessment committee in late June, and the Department Head analyzed them and wrote the relevant draft sections for Measures and Findings and Achievement Summary/Analysis. A legible Microsoft Word version of the report was distributed to the members of the outcomes assessment committee. Draft outcomes assessment reports for 2015-16 were provided to all faculty and discussed at the first faculty meeting of the 2016-17 AcYr. The outcomes assessment committee reviewed the complete draft of the 2015-16 Outcomes Assessment reports in August and made recommendations for revision before the reports were sent to Associate Dean Anne Hubbell for review.

2. Impact: Discuss the impact of your assessment. Does the data collected answer the question you had about the intended outcome? If not, why? Did you learn anything about the intended outcome you did not anticipate? If so, what? Did the assessment provide sufficient information about the outcome that you can now make informed decisions about programs/practices or specific, directed improvements to programs/practices?

The 2014-15 Outcomes Assessment report for the Anthropology Graduate Program highlighted strengths, weaknesses, and some specific questions about student writing in the discipline. One of the strengths of the program, reiterated in this report, is that students develop a problem-oriented research product along with skills in professional written communication. In AcYr 2014-15, we sampled relatively few Thesis and Internship reports. PRIOS scores were lower than

expected, and Internship and Special Research Project Reports outnumbered the Theses. We wanted to know if the pattern was the result of sampling error. Our plan for the 2015-16 Outcomes Assessment Cycle sought to gather additional data to answer this question. We selected the same two assignments: 1). the Anth 505 Draft Research Proposal, and 2). Anth 597/598/599 Thesis, Internship, or Special Research Project reports that were subject to the Final Oral Examination in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the M.A. degree in Anthropology. We elected to use the PRIOS rubric again, so that we could compare results over two years. In the 2014-15 Outcomes Assessment Cycle, we initially thought we might need to design specific rubrics for specific SLOs. Rani Alexander drafted a new rubric (A505NR) for assessing the development of problem-oriented research and tested it on the Anth 505 Draft Proposals, a course that she taught. As we have gained additional experience with the PRIOS rubric, however, we found that the criteria for the Purpose, Rhetorical Situation, and Organization of the written assignment was sufficiently flexible for assessing a broad range of SLOs. Targets remained the same, again to permit comparison. The OA committee will continue to discuss and refine our assessment instruments, sampling methodologies, and targets and adjust them as necessary for specific questions. For the present assessment cycle, however, our analysis requires consistency in rubrics and targets. The table reveals that the mean score of the sample of all theses/internship/and special research project reports for 2015-16 (n=14) is higher than for the 2014-15 (n=8) sample. Further, the coefficient of variation is smaller for the current cycle. The results suggest that the lower levels of performance for 2014-15 graduates were indeed the result of sampling error. The PRIOS scores for the 2015-16 Anth 505 Research Proposals are lower than those scored in 2014-15, and the coefficient of variation is also lower. The instructor noted that all students enrolled in the Anth 505 class for 2015-2016 were second or third semester graduate students, whereas the class for the 2014-15 cycle was composed of second semester, third semester, and even fourth and fifth semester students, who showed much greater variation in graduate school preparation and subfield specializations. Discussion among members of the Outcomes Assessment Committee regarding the merits of the new pilot rubric compared to the PRIOS rubric indicate that they are measuring the same thing on a different scale. Distribution of scores for the Anth 505 proposal using each rubric were not appreciably different and did not offer any new information. All rubrics provide ordinal scale data. Continued attempts to refine rubrics and adjust targets to a new scoring system are not a wise use of Outcomes Assessment Committee members' time. Discussion also revealed that a more appropriate target for the Anth 505 Proposal would be that 60% of students score as 'emerging' or higher on the PRIOS rubric. This would be a more realistic expectation for students in their second semester of a graduate program. I have wonderful box plots that illustrate these patterns, but WEAVE software will not permit insertion. Analysis Variable : PRIOS

GRAD Class	Year	Mean	Std Dev	Range	N	Coeff of Variation
A50515	2015	14.62	3.05	11.00	21	20.88
A50516	2016	13.97	2.01	6.00	17	14.39
A505NR	2016	12.00	2.67	9.00	17	22.24
A59915	2015	14.25	2.25	7.00	8	15.80
A59916	2016	15.64	2.20	7.00	14	14.09

3. What specifically did your assessment show regarding proven strengths or progress you made on outcomes/objectives? (Strengths)

The 2015-16 assessment shows that graduate students do demonstrate progress in developing problem-oriented anthropological research and improving skills in written communication over the course of the M.A. program. They do not enter the program already knowing how to write a proposal, but by the time that they exit the program, they have completed a problem-oriented anthropological investigation, clearly connecting questions to data and information. This is reflected in the mean PRIOS rubric score for Anth 505 Research Proposal of 13.97 compared to the mean PRIOS rubric score for Anth 599/597/598 of 15.64. Discussion among the faculty as part of Academic Program Review reveals that students are actively engaged in the profession of anthropology as measured by their participation and presentation of their research in local, regional, national, and international professional conference venues. In 2015-16 graduate students made 20 presentations at professional meetings, and made an additional six poster or podium presentations at NMSU's Graduate Research and Arts Symposium. The outcomes assessment committee will consider how to measure graduate student professional engagement at the Final Oral Examination, and we will implement this measure in the 2016-17 cycle. We will consider adding student professional engagement as a program learning outcome in the next cycle.

4. What specifically did your assessment show regarding opportunities for improvement. Describe how you intend to address those issues over the next year. If you met all targets, what specifically do you intend to do in the next assessment cycle to promote continuous improvement in your area?

These results provide information to the faculty and the members of the Outcomes Assessment Committee that will help us improve the program. They suggest that students more quickly develop a problem-oriented research question if they choose the most likely members of their graduate committee by the end of their first semester. These faculty can assign relevant questions and reading lists tailored to the student's chosen project or problem for Anth 505 leading to the development of the first draft of the research proposal. Students in cultural anthropology especially need to develop a draft proposal as early as possible, with the help of their graduate committee, because they must clear their protocols for investigation with NMSU's IRB for human subjects research. Although students may later change or refocus their research questions with the advice of their committee members, depending on available data, the Anth 505 Research Proposal assignment helps them align program expectations with their goals for academic and professional development. One recommendation to smooth the transition into Anth 505 is to ask all new graduate students to declare a preliminary graduate committee of two faculty members in November of their first semester, who will recommend what literature they should read to develop the Anth 505 Research Proposal and direct subsequent work. The Outcomes Assessment committee plans to continue to use the PRIOS rubric to assess the Anth 505 Research Proposal and compare it to the Anth 599/597/598 Thesis, Internship, or Research Reports for 2016-2017.

5. Specifically, what have you learned about your program, and/or your students' learning?

Our students learn how to perform problem-oriented anthropological research in archaeology, biological anthropology, or cultural anthropology and are able to produce professional presentations and publications of their results, demonstrating proficiency in effective written and verbal communication and contributing to the growth of academic and applied knowledge in our discipline. These achievements prepare our students to enter graduate programs in anthropology, professional schools, and programs in allied fields in the US and abroad and to enter the work force at a professional level. The program focus on a substantive research product provides students with distinct advantages for entering the workforce compared to graduate programs that are coursework based.

6. Provide a brief summary of your program, department, or unit's activities in the current assessment cycle. You might want to describe a major accomplishment or explain how your area contributed to Baccalaureate Experience learning, or to Vision 2020. Alternatively you may want to discuss how your program is using this assessment to inform decisions and actions for improvement. This summary should be appropriate for broad audiences.

The Department of Anthropology at New Mexico State University (NMSU) offers an integrative approach to the study of humankind as a multidisciplinary endeavor involving the social sciences, the humanities, and the natural sciences. Anthropologists study the human species and the human condition in all its diversity in the past and in the present. Anthropologists ask and answer questions such as: Who are we? Where did we come from? How did we get here? Why are we different from one another? What do all humans share in common? And, how can we better understand each other? Our students learn to design and execute a problem-oriented anthropological study, whether in the vein of

applied/practicing work or standard academic research, and report the results of their study in the form of a Master's thesis, Professional Internship Report, or Special Research Project report. They share their results widely in academic, professional, and public contexts. The curriculum stresses the development of critical thinking, versatility, and professional skills in written and oral communication. Opportunities to engage in problem-oriented and applied research abound in southern New Mexico. The Department emphasizes field-based, laboratory-based, and service learning in anthropology that fosters the cognitive and methodological skills necessary for real world problem solving. The 2015-16 Outcomes assessment report has helped us to recognize the multidimensionality of student writing in our program and will inform decisions, actions, and plans for improvement.