ANTHROPOLOGY DEPARTMENT ASSESSMENT PROGRAM
Seventh Annual Portfolio Review
2:00-3:15 p.m. Cramer Hall 141
3 June 2009
K.M. Ames

PRESENT

Kenneth Ames (Anthropology Department Chairperson and Anthropol ogical Archaeologist)
Sharon Carstens (Sociocultural Anthropologist)
Michele Gamburd (Sociocultural Anthropologist)
Natalie Vasey (Biological Anthropologist)
Doug Wilson (Historic Archaeologist)

ABSENT:

Virginia Butler (Archaeologist). On sabbatical
Tom Thornton (Sociocultural Anthropologist) On leave

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

I. Assessment of Course Portfolios using ‘Applications of Anthropology’ Rubric

The group reviewed course portfolios from ANTH 414 (Cultural Ecology) and ANTH 478 (Human Osteology) focusing on sub-goals II.1 & 2, which state

II. Applications of Anthropology. Students will understand how to apply anthropological methods in an ethical and effective fashion to research questions, issues, and debates.

1. Students will understand and apply the research methods appropriate to at least one subfield of anthropology.
2. Students will demonstrate an understanding of how the interplay among theory, research questions, methods, and data shapes our knowledge and/or interpretations of the human past and present.

Outcomes:

- Materials from ANTH 478 included the course syllabus, examples of portfolio assignments, and the portfolio assignments (notebooks, lab journals including assigned osteological drawings). The instructor proved examples of an “A,” “A-” a “B+” and a “C-/D+” paper and the grade distributions on the final assignment.
  - The faculty discussed the specific course as well as broader issues related to the goal and teaching. The discussion focused on how this class is unusual among our courses because it teaches a single highly technical analytical skill required in a variety of research settings.
  - Review of the course materials showed students had generally mastered the demanding skill of identifying fragmentary human osteological
materials. Differences in grades reflected different skill levels and quality of execution of the assignment.

- Both the Instructor Materials and Work Samples were rated “3.” Faculty commented on the rigor of the assignments.
- Materials from ANTH 414 included the course syllabus, the portfolio assignment, and copies of 4 student essays (highest A, lowest A, lowest B, lowest C and lowest grade) for the assignment targeted to address this goal.
  - The group reviewed these materials. The point of the assessment assignment was to ask students to develop a research design based on theoretical and methodological materials presented in class and in the readings.
  - All of the assignments displayed a strong understanding of the interplay theory, research questions, methods and data. However, all failed to develop their own research design. In the discussions it was decided that a small training was necessary prior to the exam.
  - The Instructor Materials were rated 3; the work samples 3. The lowest grade seemed to reflect student effort.

II. Scoring Rubrics and Learning Goals

The group discussed the original plans to review the overall scoring rubrics and to develop rubrics for goals in Sections I and II.

Outcomes:

- The group felt the discussions last year and this year confirmed the value of the goals and they did not require revision at this time.
- The group postponed a decision on what goals/classes to assess next year until the Fall Retreat when absent faculty would be present.