

Submission date: February 11, 2020

Program/s in this review: ANTHROPOLOGY MA

Specialized accrediting agency (if applicable): _____

Campuses where the program is delivered: ANCHORAGE

Members of the program review committee:

- Diane Hanson, Associate Professor of Anthropology, UAA
- Sally Carraher, Assistant Professor of Anthropology, UAA

1. Centrality of Program Mission and Supporting Role (700 words or less)

UAA Anthropology MA program provides students with a rigorous background in contemporary theory and practice in applied anthropology through advanced coursework, internships, independent research, and a research-based thesis. Students learn to apply anthropological concepts, methods, ethics, and perspectives to the specific subfield of anthropology in which they practice.

The graduate program was developed in response to growing needs for archaeological and cultural anthropological expertise in Alaska and the strong interest of UAA Anthropology undergraduate students at that time in having a Master's program locally available to expand their training and obtain the credentials needed for employment in local agencies (which often require an MA). The primary emphasis of the MA program from the beginning was in Applied Anthropology. Our program also emphasizes education in and service to Alaska and other communities in the circumpolar North, and prioritizes community-engaged scholarship. The MA program matriculated its first class of students in the Fall Semester of 1999.

Our MA program has broad impact and consistently feeds Federal, State, Tribal, Non-profit, and Private (For-profit) Agencies and Institutions. The National Park Service, Smithsonian Institution, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities, Alaska Office of History and Archaeology, Anchorage Museum, Alaska Native Heritage Center, Alaska Native Tribal Consortium, First Alaskans Institute, Arctic Slope Regional Corporation, Southcentral Foundation, Steve Braund Associates, and Cultural Resource Consultants are a few of the agencies and institutions that seek out and hire our graduates. Anthropology's faculty work closely with our community agencies to ensure that we are continuing to foster the skills that best advance the agencies' missions and goals. Anthropology is also nationally recognized as founding member institution of the Consortium of Practicing and Applied Anthropology. Moreover, our Graduate Advisory Board, established in the early 2000s, consists of volunteer representatives of various local agencies and private sector firms who give advice and guidance on the Anthropology MA program policies at UAA, as well as provide several internship/practicum, employment, and thesis research opportunities for students enrolled in our program.

Since 1999, the UAA Anthropology Department has graduated 62 MA students in anthropology. Over 80% of our MA students find work in their field during and after completion of the degree, and many find work in Alaska, while others have found work Outside or gone onto PhD programs nationally and internationally. Several of our MA alumni continue to have strong relationships with our Department, often serving on our Graduate Advisory Board or sometimes coming back to teach and do research with us. The fact that our Department has fostered deep, meaningful ties to agencies across Alaska and maintained positive working relationships with alumni means that our faculty are able to keep a pulse on the evolving job and research needs of Alaska, which purposefully feeds back into how we implement our curriculum.

Our program maintains connections with the UAA Institute of Social and Economic Research (ISER): one faculty member shared an appointment between ISER and the Anthropology department from 2013-2018, and another

currently serves as an affiliate. Anthropology has additionally shared two other appointments with English and Alaska Native Studies. Seven anthropology graduate students worked on ISER projects, providing services in the collection and processing of ethnographic data and oral testimony. Several of our students additionally have worked with the Biology department conducting ethnographic and isotopic research. Our students have collaborated with the departments of Chemistry and Engineering for their graduate research. Others have also conducted ethnographic work with both Alaska Native Studies and Dance and worked in collaboration with Natural Heritage. Seven graduate students have been listed also under the Environmental and Natural Resources Institute (ENRI), with one faculty member having served as a Faculty Fellow.

Programmatically, our department shares a computer laboratory with the Environmental Studies & Geography department, which is used for projects and teaching in both departments. Faculty members have collaborated on research with the Department of Geology, served on faculty search committees for the Departments of Geology, Geography and Environmental Studies, and the Alaska Native Studies program, served on the peer review committee for Psychology and Biology.

2. Program Demand (including service to other programs), Efficiency, and Productivity (7 year trend; 1400 words or less)

- **Seven year degree and/or certificate awards trend**

Anthropology's award trend has remained consistent since 2013, despite the loss of 2 faculty lines and a freeze on any adjunct or term hires to cover the courses taught for those 2 lines, which ultimately resulted in the need to put the program on hiatus for one academic year. Additionally, Anthropology's numbers are on par with CAS larger sister programs, English and Biological Sciences. Between 2002-2018, Anthropology graduated 62 students with MA degrees in Anthropology. Of those 62 graduates, 32 have graduated since 2013.

- **Credits per Degree (Average Credits Earned)**

The decline in overall credit hours to the award of the degree since 2013 is indicative of Anthropology's attention to student success, UA funding deficit, and the loss of faculty lines, through addressing program changes through comprehensive evaluation of the MA program during the program's year-long hiatus. This evaluation suggested three areas for revision:

1. A focused emphasis on applied anthropology and ethical practice of applied anthropology would better complement faculty expertise, direction of the discipline generally, and current faculty and student interest.
2. Required subfield proseminars and comprehensive exams delay progress in program and do not reflect specialization needed for applied Master's program.
3. Fluctuations in student support and consequent reduction in admissions as well as in faculty numbers necessitate a more flexible graduate curriculum.

The curriculum is now streamlined with credit numbers consistent with national Applied Anthropology Master's programs.

- **Seven year majors or program enrollment trend**

Despite our AY 2018-2019 hiatus on admitting new students to the program as well as the lack of financial support for our graduate students, Anthropology's enrollment numbers have stayed very consistent from 2013-2019 and demonstrate parity with other CAS, MA programs.

- **Course pass rates**

Anthropology's DFW rates in the 600-level courses are consistently low. Our program is highly selective and at the same time, the majority of our students maintain part or full-time employment. As a result, Anthropology MA students may withdraw from classes based on unanticipated conflicts.

- **Internal Demand**

As would be expected in any MA that is content specific, most of the demand for the 600-699 courses are internal to the major. Anthropology's numbers are consistent with the majority of other MA programs in CAS.

- **Seven year Student Credit Hour (SCH) production trend**

As expected, the drop in SCH in 2018 (and also by association, 2019) follows Anthropology's one-year halt in program admission due to the nonrenewal of two senior faculty lines and the inability to hire terms or adjuncts to cover the required courses.

- **SCH/FTEF**

Anthropology's SCH/FTEF clusters with other UAA graduate programs, such as Biology and Applied Engineering, where class size has historically remained low enrolled in proportion to faculty.

- **Enrollment/Full Time Equivalent Faculty (FTEF)**

The number of enrolled students per FTEF has increased slightly since 2013, as Anthropology had 2.5 faculty lines removed from the department with no one hired as a replacement to teach those classes.

- **FTES/FTEF**

Full time students are rare in Anthropology, particularly with little to no support from CAS for TA or RA funding since 2015. Adding the loss of faculty lines into the equation, the FTES/FTEF is low but in line with other CAS MA programs.

- **Class Size (Average Class Size)**

Class size in any MA program will likely be low in comparison to its undergraduate enrollment. Anthropology's enrollment is low, specifically due to the AY2018-2019 admission hiatus; however, in AY2019-2020, Anthropology's new and more flexible program took effect. The new program provides stacked undergraduate and graduate courses, which keeps the rigor of the program high and its overall cost, down.

- **Cost/SCH**

The cost per SCH in 2019 demonstrates a trend of cost reduction. Anthropology overall has a lower cost per SCH than any other graduate program, with the exception of Psychology, within CAS.

- **Tuition Revenue/SCH**

The Tuition per SCH for the Anthropology MA is again unsurprising, given the low enrollment in per FTEF overall. With the new program implementation, the cost of the program will effectively lower due to stacked courses.

- **External Demand**

Although there are no formal data for post UAA MA awards, our program has been regularly tracking our graduates' progress. Since 2002, 75% of students who have graduated with an Applied MA in Anthropology remain in Alaska and work within the field of Anthropology for Federal, State, Tribal, Non-profit, and private agencies and institutions.

3. Program Quality, Improvement and Student Success (1500 words or less)

The MA program in Anthropology was developed in 1999 as an in-residence program in response to student needs and external demand among professionals in the Anchorage area. Between 2002-2018, we have graduated 62 students with MA degrees in Anthropology. Of those 62 graduates, 32 earned their MA degree within the last 5 years. Many of these graduates went on to work in the field of anthropology, both in and outside of Alaska. Several have gone on to pursue PhDs.

The major events that have affected the MA program in Anthropology at UAA since its inception are:

Early 2000s: Establishment of the voluntary Graduate Advisory Board

The Graduate Advisory Board provides advice to the Department of Anthropology on curriculum and training needs for entering the Alaska workforce in anthropology; provide public/private/tribal/non-profit job, internship, and mentorship opportunities for graduate students; occasionally individuals serve as fourth members on graduate student thesis committees.

Fall 2012: MA Program Revisions

Graduate program restructured to decrease the average time to completion of the MA degree and implement a research design course.

Fall 2013-Fall 2014: Five new faculty hired to replace retirements

The new faculty specialized in biological anthropology, ecological/environmental anthropology, linguistic anthropology, medical anthropology, and Alaska Native anthropology. Goals of the new faculty hires included diversifying expertise in the department; developing courses and research projects appropriate for the 21st century needs of the discipline and of the Alaska workforce; and attracting graduate students with diverse research interests to UAA.

2017-18: Revamping the UAA Anthropology undergraduate curriculum

The restructuring the undergraduate curriculum and courses offered by current faculty affected the stacked courses that are available for graduate students to take as a part of their required tracks in the MA degree. This increased the availability of both required and elective courses for graduate students.

2018-19: Revamping the UAA Anthropology graduate curriculum

In 2018, we initiated changes to the MA program to improve student success and address faculty reductions.

Supporting Student Success

The original UAA anthropology graduate program, created in 1999, did not meet the current needs of students. The original curriculum required students to gain general knowledge across three subfields in anthropology (archaeology, biological, and cultural) and choose a general or applied emphasis. Each subfield had a proseminar followed by an intensive comprehensive exam. This requirement no longer serves students well in the diverse field of anthropology or

within our program's current parameters. Most students who graduate from our program remain in their chosen subfield of anthropology (archaeology, biological, or cultural) working in applied settings, and anthropology is specialized in its current practice. An additional concern for students was that they could not advance to candidacy until they had completed all three proseminars, which delayed their progress in the program. There are also problems teaching these seminar-based courses with few participants, which has been a concern over the last two years as our program supports fewer students than in the past. In addition to concerns about the proseminars, the faculty have reconsidered having a general emphasis in favor of focusing on applied anthropology exclusively. Only about 20% of our Master's graduates since the program's inception have completed the degree with a general rather than an applied emphasis. This figure reflects the specialization of the faculty mentors in applied research but also the value of an applied degree for students as they enter the professional sphere.

Addressing Faculty Reductions

In addition to changes in faculty expertise that resulted from numerous retirements and new hires as mentioned above from 2013-14, budgetary, professional, and personal circumstances have reduced our faculty over this same period. In AY 2017-18, two faculty members left without replacement, one faculty member was on personal leave, and another took sabbatical. In Spring 2018, we deferred admission to the graduate program for AY2018-19 due to this temporary shortage of available faculty to support the graduate program. In the long-term, the college is unlikely to reinstate the 2.5 empty faculty lines, and the program redesign in part compensates for the anticipated long-term faculty reductions.

2018-19 Program Revisions

Synthesis of these circumstances related to student success and faculty reductions suggested three areas to address in program revisions:

- 1) A focused emphasis on applied anthropology and ethical practice of applied anthropology would better complement faculty expertise, direction of the discipline generally, and current faculty and student interest.
- 2) Required subfield proseminars and comprehensive exams delay progress in program and do not reflect specialization needed for applied Master's program.
- 3) Fluctuations in student support and consequent reduction in admissions as well as in faculty numbers necessitate a more flexible graduate curriculum.

As a result, we streamlined the graduate curriculum to respond to these issues. First, we dropped the "general anthropology" emphasis, and our program now specializes entirely in applied anthropology. The three "tracks" under the previous applied anthropology emphasis have now been designated as "applied program concentrations." Parallel to the previous tracks or foci, they consist of Applied Cultural Anthropology, Applied Biocultural Anthropology, and Cultural Resource Management. Secondly, graduate students are no longer required to take courses across the subfields of anthropology, allowing them to specialize and complete their degrees more quickly. Finally, we now require an anthropological ethics course across all applied program concentrations. As a result of these revisions, we adjusted the program outcomes, removing specifically the outcome associated with the multiple subfield knowledge and adding one associated with ethical practice.

4. Program Duplication / Distinctiveness (300 words or less)

The MA program in Anthropology is distinctive both nationally and locally. UAA Anthropology is one of 16 universities nationally with a cultural resource management emphasis, and one of 29 universities with an applied anthropology emphasis. Moreover, UAA is the only university in the state with these emphases, and its location in Anchorage, a hub of state and federal agencies (and the contractors that serve these agencies), make the faculty and the students valuable resources to the community. Our MA program was designed in consultation with UAF faculty so as to be complementary to the theoretical and global concentrations in the MA and Ph.D. at UAF.

5. Summary Analysis (500 words or less)

The MA Program in Anthropology advances UAA's endeavors to serve the Anchorage community and Alaska more generally. Our program caters to employment opportunities in the state, and meets considerable success in placing students. Alaska residents (including Alaska Native students) comprise half of the student body. Our MA program also strengthens instructional programs through workforce development and the active participation of students in professional practice and academic research. These goals are closely aligned with the program's student learning outcomes to

1. Demonstrate graduate-level knowledge of core concepts and research methods in the selected applied program concentration.
2. Articulate key ethical considerations and responsibilities in applied anthropological research.
3. Design, conduct, analyze, and present applied anthropological research within the conventions of the selected program concentration and acceptable to the faculty of the anthropology department.

Our resources like the GIS lab (shared with Environmental Science), and archaeological and cultural anthropology laboratories enable students to develop skills and become familiar with technologies increasingly essential in the profession.

The MA program additionally fosters participation through internships and the applied anthropology track. Our students find related employment during the course of their degree. The Applied Anthropology track has direct applicability here--students on the archaeology track, for example, learn contemporary theory and substantive findings, professional ethics, and the legal framework within which archaeology operates. Our emphasis on development of a thesis for all MA students develops skills in academic research and writing. Long-term evidence of our impact are seen in graduated students with full-time employment in the State at the Alaska Native Heritage Center, National Park Service, Office of History and Archaeology, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Alaska Dept. Fish and Game Subsistence Division, Alaska Native Regional Corporations, Institute for Social and Economic Research, and private consultancy firms.