

SOAN ANNUAL REPORT

Academic Year 2015-2016

I. Mission

The mission of the Department of Sociology and Anthropology is to provide high-quality programs of teaching, research, scholarship, and service within the disciplines of sociology and anthropology, thereby contributing to the advancement of the larger missions of the College of Social Science and Communication and the University of Arkansas at Little Rock. The department draws on the diverse strengths and expertise of a highly dedicated faculty with Ph.D. degrees from prestigious universities.

II. Values

Our core values include a commitment to the following:

- Multicultural diversity
- Academic freedom
- Respect for the intellectual diversity of faculty and students
- A work environment characterized by mutual respect, trust, and collegiality
- Excellence in teaching through high quality instruction
- Respect for and commitment to student needs and success
- Excellence in research and scholarship through presentations at regional, national, and international forums, publication in respected venues, and high quality primary research

III. Vision

Courses offered by the department are designed to help students acquire an analytical understanding of social processes, cultural diversity, statuses, human evolution and biology, the development of social complexity, and roles in institutions. This understanding is designed to provide liberal education as well as to prepare students for career opportunities in sociology and anthropology while establishing a sound foundation for those who plan to undertake graduate studies in these or related fields.¹

IV. Highlights

A. Teaching

¹ The mission, values, and vision statement are draft versions from the department governance document which is currently undergoing revision and updates.

The Sociology and Anthropology Department offers independent majors and minors in both of those subjects and a minor in Gender Studies, but the reach of the department and its faculty goes well beyond these programs alone. Our department provides courses for the University Core in two subject categories (Science and Social Science), our faculty are highly involved in an array of interdisciplinary programs, and we offer many high-impact opportunities for students including internships, study abroad, and research opportunities.

The Sociology and Anthropology Department is unique across the university for the role it plays in core curriculum, since we offer four courses across two different core areas. For the Social Science core we offer introductory Sociology, Gender Studies, and Cultural Anthropology. Anthropology is the only program in the university to have courses in two core areas, since we also offer Physical Anthropology for the Science Core.

Faculty in the Sociology and Anthropology department are passionate about teaching and highly dedicated to student success. Our faculty regularly innovate, update and adjust readings, assessments and activities in their classes. Many of our faculty members regularly attend and even present at events and workshops organized by the UALR Academy of Teaching and Learning Excellence and other teaching development activities. We also maintain a collegial atmosphere in the department that includes sharing teaching techniques, tips, ideas and supporting one another with innovative endeavors in the classroom.

In the past academic year, our department courses and programs continued and increased emphasis on teaching methods, particularly developing skills that are directly applicable to career success, including increased opportunities for hands-on student experiences inside and outside of the classroom. Student internships, field activities, and undergraduate research projects in the 2015-16 year ranged from experiences at the Sequoyah National Research Center, Toltec Mounds, the Little Rock Zoo, the UALR Campus Garden, local food businesses and farms, to a major community research project with the Dunbar Garden conducted by the Applied Anthropology students (with Dr. Flinn) and two groups of students who traveled to the Middle East to participate in archaeological excavations at a UNESCO World Heritage site in Oman (with Dr. Lewis). Funded by the Mark Hartmann Fieldwork in Anthropology fellowship, one of our students traveled to Malta in the summer of 2015 to for training and research in ethnography.

Faculty in our department are also involved in teaching activities that reach beyond just the programs housed in the Sociology and Anthropology Department. In addition to Gender Studies, which is currently housed in this department, Sociology and Anthropology faculty members were also very involved in the Middle Eastern Studies, Race and Ethnicity, Nonprofit Leadership Studies and the Donaghey Scholars programs. Dr. Briscoe regularly teaches First Year Experience courses for entering freshman. In the last year, faculty in the department have served on at least eight doctoral dissertation and master's thesis committees.

B. Research

Our faculty members conduct research projects nationally, internationally, and locally that address social issues, cultural diversity, and human biology. One of our greatest departmental strengths is bringing the research diversity conducted by faculty members to our students not only in the classroom but also by often giving students a chance to participate in our research projects with us.

Research topics investigated by Sociology and Anthropology faculty in 2015-16 include the health of Middle Eastern immigrants to the US, the indigenous Ainu people of Japan, post-revolution Tunisia, family dynamics in Mexico, Native American colleges, ancient Arabian urbanism and trade, pelvic morphology and maternal death, minority community engagement in central Arkansas, ancient land use patterns, and transnational communities from Micronesia. These ongoing projects were in various stages of progress last year, some in data collection stage, others, undergoing analysis and there are many manuscript drafts underway.

In 2015, as reported on faculty annual reviews, faculty members in the department attended at least 8 professional conferences, with eight scholarly papers or posters presented to regional, national and international professional audiences. Faculty had three journal articles or book chapters published and many more submitted or in progress. Two books were published and a documentary film was produced. Two major research reports were presented to outside stakeholders. One faculty member received an outside research grant, one faculty member conducted research on an AHSS summer research fellowship, and two faculty members served as Humanities Scholars for AHC funded grants projects. Two faculty members conducted research during Off Campus Duty Assignments in 2015-16.

Some highlights and resources related to faculty research in the department in the past academic year:

“Have You Heard About the Ainu? Elders of Japan’s Indigenous People Speak,” a documentary film by Dr. Kinko Ito, 2015. The film debuted at the Mid-South Sociological Association meeting in Lafayette, LA 10/22/15. See a story about Dr. Ito and the making of this film at:

<http://ualr.edu/news/2015/11/13/ualr-professor-records-a-disappearing-culture/>

Dr. Sanderson was a leader in an AHC funded grant project: “Native Americans in America’s Wars”

<http://ualr.edu/orsp/2015/10/15/sequoyah-national-research-center/>

Dr. Lewis served as a Humanities Scholar for the Plum Bayou Garden project, a living interpretive Native American garden project at the Toltec Mounds State Park. <http://archeology.uark.edu/learn-discover/current-research/plum-bayou-garden/>

In Spring 2016, Dr. Lewis was appointed a Fellow of the UALR Emerging Analytics Center

<http://ualr.edu/cssc/2016/05/31/dr-krista-lewis-appointed-emerging-analytics-fellow/>

In Fall 2015, Dr. Lewis became a member of the LandCover6K Project, a long term international research project studying the anthropogenic, natural, and climate-induced causes of land cover change from antiquity until today. <http://www.pages-igbp.org/ini/wg/landcover6k/intro>

In 2015-16, Dr. Lewis continued to lead a major archaeological project, the UALR Land of Frankincense Archaeological Excavations at Al Baleed, UNESCO World Heritage Site, Sultanate of Oman. Recent field

seasons were conducted during May-June 2015 and December 2015-January 2016. Six students participated in the 2015-16 excavations across the two seasons, five were current UALR students (Anthropology majors), and one was a recent graduate of UALR (also Anthropology).
<http://ualr.edu/anthropology/archaeology/land-of-frankincense/>

Publications

Flinn, Juliana

Oh, Those Poor Islanders and Threats to an Idyllic Life on a Beautiful Island. *Pacific Studies* 38(102):182-182-199, 2015. This was a special issue on the theme "From Romance to Reality: Representations of Pacific Islands and Islanders."

Lewis, Krista

"Trade Routes," In Beaudry & Metheny, eds. *Archaeology of Food: An Encyclopedia*, edited by Karen Bescherer Methany and Mary Beaudry, Rowman and Littlefield, 2015.

Lopez, Adriana

"Migration in the Americas", in Michael White (Ed.). *International Handbook on Migration and Population Distribution*. Vol. 6. Sage Publishers. Co-authored chapter.

Peeler, K.I. (Dr. Kinko Ito)

Kidnapped in Istanbul!? And Other Stories from Turkey (published) Amazon.com

Hello Colombia! A Short Trip to Bogota and Medellin (2015) (published) Amazon.com

C. Service

Faculty in the Sociology and Anthropology Department excel as strong leaders in both university service and community service and engagement.

In the community, most of our faculty are very actively using their professional skills for local benefit. Our faculty participate on at least 5 community boards and a number of voluntary organizations. A few highlights related to our faculty's community engagement in the past academic year include: Dr. Terry Richard is a regional leader with the League of United Latin American Citizens and does tireless work helping young Latino students have opportunities for a college education; Dr. Flinn is very active in the community with Big Brothers, Big Sisters of Central Arkansas and Just Communities of Arkansas; Dr. Briscoe is a national Boy Scouts leader; Dr. Ito is a board member for the local Raindrop Turkish Center. This year Dr. Flinn had the honor of being accepted into and participating in the Chamber of Commerce Leadership Greater Little Rock class for 2015-2016.

The faculty members of the department gave a number of public lectures last year in various venues and participated in community education events including Fossil Day at the Museum of Discovery and the ArchaeOlympics at Toltec Mounds. The Anthropology faculty regularly record the radio short series

“Being Human” which airs on KUAR, providing one-minute glimpses of anthropological research findings and perspectives.

On campus, our faculty are equally involved and active, serving collectively on dozens of university and college committee memberships, task forces or other working groups. Dr. Sanderson is the Associate Director for the Sequoyah National Research Center. Dr. Flinn directed the Nonprofit Leadership Studies program until December 2015. Faculty in the department also participated in an array of research and professional service, including manuscript reviews for publishers, textbook chapter reviews, book review articles for journals, and scholarship review committees.

D. Student Success

Faculty Commitment to Student Success

Our department faculty are well-known for their sincere attention to students. At the department level, our single most important role in the mission of the university is fostering student achievement. It's not just disciplinary knowledge, critical thinking, and problem solving skills we strive to impart, but also a wider sense of responsibility to self, family, and community and the confidence it takes to carry out those responsibilities. As social sciences, our programs value lies in their role in helping our students, city, and wider region reach greater understanding of human diversity, interdependence, and potential for cooperation.

Every member of our faculty specializes in some way in diversity and its challenges, and they all teach aspects of these very issues to their students on a daily basis. Our department faculty and staff all respect and like one another and the working environment is highly supportive and positive. Collegiality and cooperation among personnel in the department may often be taken for granted or unreported, but should be acknowledged as an essential pillar of support for student success. Our faculty consistently continue to support students outside of class and even beyond graduation. They write dozens of job and graduate school recommendations, advise students on writing application materials for jobs and graduate schools, offer general mentorship and compassion. Students regularly report that the personal attention and mentoring they receive from faculty are key to their ability to remain in school until graduation.

Student Clubs

Our department offers many types of student engagement opportunities, which are another important catalyst to student success. Our student clubs serve as one example. This past year, our highly successful Anthropology Club was joined by a newly formed Sociology Club. In Fall 2015, due to the efforts of several faculty members, the Sociology club got off to a great start with over 40 members by the end of the semester. Many of the active members of the club are not Sociology majors; minors and undeclared students are common and even some students with other declared majors have joined the club. These sorts of extracurricular activities create a sense of community and support among existing students and with faculty members in a venue outside of class. This feeling of community is an

important recruiting force as the positive reputation of programs with active clubs and community participation spreads.

The Anthropology Club has long been recognized as one of the most active student clubs on campus. Each year they organize an impressive slate of events including field trips to archaeological or cultural sites and museums, volunteer opportunities, lectures, reading groups, lab days and more. In Spring 2016, our highlight event was the ArchaeOlympics games which debuted in 2015 and was so popular we decided to make it an annual event. The ArchaeOlympics is an archaeological themed day of games and activities held at Toltec Mounds State Park in partnership with Dr. Elizabeth Horton of the Arkansas Archeological Survey. This year's games brought archaeo-lete teams from colleges and universities all across the state to compete and also drew a sizable crowd of public spectators. The ArchaeOlympics even garnered national attention in a story in the Roads and Kingdoms online magazine: <http://roadsandkingdoms.com/2016/welcome-to-the-archaeolympics/>.

Hands-On Active Learning and Student Research

In Anthropology, a major focus of the program regarding student success is opportunities for student participation in real original research projects. Students gain fieldwork, data analysis, and report writing experience in classes across the curriculum, and in extracurricular activities. A few highlights from 2016 include Dr. King's Historic Mortuary Archaeology class, Dr. Flinn's Applied Anthropology course, Dr. Lewis' Archaeological Investigations course and the UALR Land of Frankincense Archaeological Project in Oman. Students also traveled abroad for anthropological fieldwork training in Malta (summer 2015) and Romania (summer 2016) with funding from the Mark Hartmann Student Fieldwork in Anthropology Award. Below are a few examples of student fieldwork in classes and beyond that took place in 2015-16.

The Archaeological Investigations class in Fall 2015 was a hands-on real research project in which students successfully carried out a local archaeological research project from start to finish. Working in cooperation with Arkansas Archaeological Survey's Toltec Mounds Research Station Archaeologist Dr. Elizabeth Horton and Dr. Lewis, the students assessed a possible site on private property outside of Little Rock, established a site grid, mapped the site, conducted a systematic surface survey, and conducted small test excavations. They then cleaned, processed, documented and analyzed the artifacts collected. This included identifying the artifacts and establishing their age and analyzing the distribution of artifacts found across the site. They were able to identify two separate archeological components at the site, one prehistoric and the other historic. They registered the site and their findings on the official Arkansas state register and prepared a scientific report detailing their findings.

Dr. King's Historic Mortuary Archaeology class also sent students out to collect data locally, this time in historic cemeteries across central Arkansas in Spring 2016. No excavation was conducted in this class, but the students collected data from headstones including dates, epitaphs, and iconography. The Historic Mortuary Archaeology class was a Special Topics course which was taught based purely on student demand. Last year, Dr. King taught The Anthropology of Death, and the students did a mini-research project on cemeteries for their final project. The students were so engaged with the research

they wanted to expand and continue it into an additional semester. Dr. King agreed, and the Historic Mortuary Archaeology class was set up do just that. The ultimate aim of the research done in these two classes is a published journal article co-authored by Dr. King and the contributing students.

Also in spring 2016, Dr. Flinn and her students in the Applied Anthropology course worked with local non-profit Dunbar Garden to explore impressions and ideas of the garden in their local neighborhood. Their research was aimed at gathering data and analyzing data from which to generate suggestions of how the Dunbar Garden could improve their relationship to and engagement with their local community. A final report was submitted to the Dunbar Garden Board of Directors at the end of the semester. This project follows on the heels of the highly successful Applied Anthropology class of spring 2015 which worked for Big Brothers Big Sisters of Central Arkansas. The report written for Big Brothers Big Sisters was so well received that it has been forwarded to the national organization as a model for chapters in other states.

Another major student success highlight of 2015-16 was Dr. Lewis taking five UALR undergraduate Anthropology majors with her to conduct research at the UNESCO World Heritage Land of Frankincense at the site of Al Baleed during two excavations seasons, one in Summer 2015 and one over the winter holiday December 2015-January 2016. The three students who took part in the excavation during the winter season presented research posters at the college and university research events in spring 2016. Charlotte Dollar presented a poster of her analysis of musical instruments found during the winter excavations. Myriah Harrison's poster focused on understanding and mapping the complex architecture in her excavation unit. Laura Whitehead Fuentes won first and second place awards at the two expos for her poster about using air photo drone mapping to create 3D models of Al Baleed. More information about the Al Baleed Land of Frankincense Project can be found here:

<http://ualr.edu/anthropology/archaeology/land-of-frankincense/>

Anthropology Major Tiffany Gonzales also participated in the university research expo with a poster presenting some of the results of her McNair project research. Tiffany's research focuses on exotic dancing in Arkansas and the challenges and motivations exotic dancers face. She conducted extensive life history interviews with one exotic dancer as a primary line of data for her research in addition to mastering the academic literature on the topic. Dr. Hawkins, whose own research and teaching specialties include gender issues, is Tiffany's mentor on this project.

We are proud to have so many of our students conducting independent research under the mentorship and guidance of our professors. Our goal is for all of our students to have had at least one, and preferably more, substantial experiences in conducting research before they graduate, a goal which we are happy to report was achieved with all of the students who were enrolled in the Anthropology Senior Seminar in spring 2016.

Advising

A key to student success is effective advising and mentoring. In the Sociology and Anthropology Department we are committed to continued improvement in our advising process and 2015-16 was no exception and as a result we continued to see a drop in student issues related to timely graduation. We

have strengthened and unified the messages being sent to students during advising, emphasizing the basic requirements for graduation and mapping the shortest and best path to graduation for each student we see. In Fall 2015 we debuted a new strategy of meeting as a faculty team to pre-fill out the technical portions of student advising forms for Sociology majors. This workshop style tactic allowed us to troubleshoot and solve possible problems before the students arrived for their advising appointments. As a result, faculty were able to spend more time mentoring students during their advising appointments rather than calculating remaining hours, looking up requirements, addressing transfer class issues, assessing needs for degree adjustments and so on.

Scholarships and Awards

The Sociology and Anthropology department has two endowed private scholarships, one which supports Anthropology majors doing research and fieldwork on a merit basis, and another which provides general financial support to sociology and anthropology majors on a primarily merit basis with financial need as a secondary consideration. In 2015, one Anthropology major was funded to participate in an ethnographic field school in Malta. In Spring 2016, we chose the next anthropology fieldwork winner who will travel to Romania in summer 2016 for human osteology and bioarchaeology training. In spring, the department selection committee chose the recipient of the second department fund, the Richard scholarship for the academic year 2016-17. We also honor outstanding students majoring in Sociology and Anthropology each year.

The departmental student awards presented in 2015-16 were:

- Chelsea Simpkins: The Katherine J. Hardie Memorial Award in Anthropology
- Robyn Oglesby and Rihannon Evans: The Outstanding Graduate Award in Sociology
- Dea Garrison: The Mark Hartmann Anthropology Student Fellowship
- Krystopher Stephens: The Stonewall Scholarship
- Heather Hegstead - Beth and Earl Richard Endowed Scholarship

V. Assessment

All our department faculty take assessment seriously and we are dedicated to continuously improving our programs as well as individual classes. Each year we use the results of our assessment activities to critically review our curriculum. In 2015, we continued to revisit and revise our programs and classes in both disciplines, through participation in the university core assessment process for our Core courses, and via annual program assessment. Assessment activities were conducted for both majors and all four university core classes in 2015-16. During the past year, department faculty spent a lot of time discussing and critically thinking about curriculum and classes broadly in all of the programs in the department.

Program Assessment

Anthropology and Sociology major assessment reports were submitted in February and were both highly regarded by the university assessment committee. Both programs' assessment processes begin with clear goals for the major and how they articulate with courses throughout the curriculum. In both disciplines, a senior capstone course provides an opportunity to assess the success of and reinforce the aims of the majors' goals. The data which is gathered from graduating seniors in the capstone classes in both disciplines allow our faculty to identify program strengths and areas of potential improvement.

For Sociology in 2015-16, the addition of a new faculty member to our program has provided an excellent incentive to invigorate discussions about the major. As a result of assessment results, Sociology curriculum discussions focused on reworking the major to respond to contemporary concerns and needs of the students. In Fall 2015, the faculty began to work together to reconsider and rewrite the Goals for the Major. One of the most important topics of discussion has been the issue of what do we really want students to get out of a Sociology BA from UALR and how we best insure that they reach these goals. This overall issue has prompted discussion about the content of individual courses which form the core of the major the aims and role of the senior seminar course in the overall program. The senior seminar capstone course has been a particular focus of attention for the sociology faculty who have been updating the course to help better prepare Sociology graduates for their careers or graduate education.

The Anthropology faculty also had many conversations this past year about how to better prepare our students for life after graduation as well as about how to more effectively assess the success of the anthropology program as a whole. For Anthropology in 2015-16, our main focus has been to continue to increase the amount of original research done by students, and to increase the linkages between classes to reinforce the continuity of basic methodological skills across the subfields. We are happy to report that all of the students enrolled in the spring 2016 Senior Seminar in Holism class had taken at least one high impact research course as a part of their anthropology major, and many had taken two or more. The Senior Seminar in Holism is our capstone class and a main component of our program assessment strategy, and this year we developed and deployed a number of improvements to it. In the course, we have students not only reflect on the concepts and approaches they have learned throughout the major but also to prepare for life after graduation. The Anthropology senior seminar includes strategies for job searches, working on resume and job letter drafts, learning about graduate school requirements, and practicing for interviews. Students in the seminar also work on their self-presentation to non-anthropologists, including developing a clearer understanding of the skills, knowledge, and abilities they have gained that can apply in their future careers and use for improving their communities and personal lives.

No requirement changes were made for either major in 2015, but discussions about what the majors are, how they work, and if we should make changes for the future were occurring throughout the year. Our faculty are also continually tweaking individual courses based on listening to students, considering outcomes, and looking to the future.

Core Assessment

Our department was highly involved in core assessment activities during 2015-16. Our department strongly serves the university core mission; we offer three different core social science courses (Cultural Anthropology, Intro to Sociology, and Intro to Gender Studies) and one science core class (Physical Anthropology). Dr. King served as the chair of the Science Core Assessment committee for the university this year and in the spring semester Dr. Sanderson took over the role of chair for the Social Science Core Assessment committee. These are challenging and important roles as we develop brand new assessment strategies for the new core curriculum.

VI. Priorities for Next Year

In the coming year, faculty in the department look forward to continuing to provide students with classes that contribute to student understanding of the many dimensions of the human world around them. We will continue to provide stable, reliable student mentorship and advising. We will continue to provide, improve, and increase training in methods and research design through high-impact hands-on activities. We look forward to collaborating with colleagues outside of the department to consider strategic ways to provide inter- and multi-disciplinary exposure to students in ways that strengthen their skill sets and broaden their understanding of crucial world issues.

In the next academic year we also will conduct major 10 year program reviews for both Anthropology and Sociology. We look forward to taking an even deeper look at our programs, their accomplishments over the last decade, and to explore plans for the future.

VII. Appendix: Fast Facts

A. Enrollment (fall census, 1st major headcount and SSCHs)

In Fall 2015, we had 39 actively enrolled Anthropology majors and 78 enrolled Sociology majors.

Fall 2015: 2637 SSCHs: 45 courses offered, including 13 core sections. 11 students took independent studies, internships or field experience courses

Spring 2016: 2938 SSCHs: 51 courses offered, including 14 core sections. 7 students took independent studies, internships or field experience courses

B. Retention (pending available data)

C. Personnel (number per category, tenure and promotion, etc.)

We are extremely pleased that in Fall 2015 we gained a new Assistant Professor of Sociology in our department faculty. Dr. Naveen Shafeek Amin has already proved to be an invaluable asset to the Sociology program especially in the areas of research methods and social analyses of community health.

In 2015-16, the Department of Sociology and Anthropology consisted of two Assistant Professors (one in Sociology and one in Anthropology), three Associate Professors (two in Anthropology, and one in Sociology), and six full Professors (one in Anthropology and 5 in Sociology). The 2015-16 academic year was the first year as Associate Professors Lopez and Hawkins, who were successfully granted tenure and promotion last spring.

D. Grants and Contracts

Dr. Richard was a key player in the successful acquisition of a Ford Driving Dreams Grant for \$20,000 which funded a Focus Group Analysis of LRSD. Funding Period: Aug 10 2015 - June 31 2016

American Institute for Yemeni Studies Field Research Grant for 2015 Al Baleed Land of Frankincense Excavations, 2014-15 (K. Lewis). This grant was used to support both the summer 2015 and the winter 2015-16 field seasons at Al Baleed. The final funds from this grant were spent and a final report submitted to the granting agency in Fall 2015.

E. Fundraising

During the 2015-16 we began the effort to try to establish a new fund in the department to support the research activities of Sociology students. We also undertook a number of minor fundraising activities in support of the endowed Mark Hartmann Anthropology Fieldwork Fellowship which supports student training and experience in Anthropology. We always welcome donations to any of these scholarship funds.

F. Other