Graduate Program Review
Texas Tech University

Program Reviewed: Sociology, Anthropology, and Social Work

Onsite Review Dates: March 11-12, 2014

Name of Reviewers

Internal:
Please include name, title, and Department
Claudia Cogliser, Ph.D.
Associate Professor of Management
Rawls College of Business

Amy Heuman, Ph.D.
Director of Graduate Programs
Associate Professor
Department of Communication Studies

Miriam Mulsow, Ph.D.
Director of Graduate Programs
Associate Professor
Department of Human Development and Family Studies

External:
Please include name, title, and Department
László Kulcsár, Ph.D.
Associate Professor
Department of Sociology, Anthropology, and Social Work
Kansas State University

Heather McKillop, Ph.D.
Doris Z. Stone Professor of Latin American Studies
Department of Geology and Anthropology
Louisiana State University
I. Academic Unit Description and Strategic Plan

Please evaluate the following:

**Vision, Mission and Goals**

__ Excellent   _X_ Very Good __Appropriate __Needs Improvement

**Strategic Plan**

__ Excellent   _X_ Very Good __Appropriate __Needs Improvement

*Please elaborate if you have identified any items in this section as Excellent.*

*Please elaborate if you identified any items in this section as Needs Improvement. Provide recommendations in the area of Strategic Planning.*

Click here to enter text.

**Other comments (optional)**

In terms of strategic planning, we recommend the use of short- mid- and long-term objectives with specific metrics for assessment of outcomes achieved.

Because three different programs are housed under one department, the mission and vision statements of SASW are less powerful in communicating and directing the programs’ specific purposes and primary objectives than if each program were to provide their own discipline-oriented specific mission and vision statements.

II. Program Curriculum

Please evaluate the following:

**Alignment of program with stated program and institutional goals and purposes**

__ Excellent   _X_ Very Good __Appropriate __Needs Improvement __N/A
Curriculum development coordination and delivery
__ Excellent  _X_ Very Good  __Appropriate  __Needs Improvement  __N/A

Program learning outcomes assessment
__ Excellent  _X_ Very Good  __Appropriate  __Needs Improvement  __N/A

Program curriculum compared to peer programs
__ Excellent  _X_ Very Good  __Appropriate  __Needs Improvement  __N/A

Please elaborate if you have identified any items in this section as Excellent.
Click here to enter text.

Please elaborate if you identified any items in this section as Needs Improvement. Provide recommendations in the area of Program Curriculum.
Click here to enter text.

Other comments (optional)
Sociology:
The sociology MA curriculum appears to prepare students well for movement into Ph.D. programs in other institutions. Students remarked that they felt well-versed in substantive and research methods content domains when interviewing for Ph.D. programs across the country. Over the six year period of this review, we noted a trend for MA Sociology graduates to place in Instructor positions or positions in industry rather than move into Ph.D. programs. The addition of a Ph.D. program in Sociology here at TTU would provide an opportunity to cherry pick from the TTU Sociology MA students in addition to recruiting from the West Texas, Eastern New Mexico Region, as no other Ph.D. in Sociology is offered within 300 miles (the University of New Mexico is the closest). TTU is the only university in the Big 12 without a Ph.D. in Sociology.

A 150-hour program (30-hour requirement for MA compared with the current 36-hour requirement) may be beneficial for students financially, on time-to-complete-degree outcomes, and job/graduate school placement (more opportunities for research and time for writing).
Anthropology:

In the early years of the review period (2007 through 2010) the majority of Anthropology MA graduates placed in Cultural Resources Management (CRM), although the numbers declined in the latter years (only one during 2011 through 2013). Discussion with Anthropology masters students revealed that all but one of the students interviewed (about 10 students) planned to pursue a Ph.D., but were mixed on whether this would directly follow MA degree completion or at a later time (financial constraints were the major factor affecting this decision). This anecdotal evidence was held up by the report on initial placement after graduation, where only two students entered into a Ph.D. program as their initial placement. Two students placed as instructors at TTU (Anthropology) and four students placed as primary or secondary teachers.

The curriculum in the MA Anthropology program offers courses across the four subdisciplines of Anthropology (Physical/Biological Anthropology, Cultural Anthropology, Linguistics, and Archeology). Faculty and students both reported that an option of selecting only three of the four subdisciplines would assist in a time-to-graduate goal of two years. Reducing the required credit hours from 36 to 30 would also be related to beneficial student outcomes (as stated above: financially, time-to-graduate, and job/graduate school placement with more time for research).

Anthropology masters students reported that jobs in CRM were attractive as their first placement following graduation, although they did not engage with the CRM curriculum. This may be an opportunity for a graduate certificate in CRM.

Faculty and students in the Anthropology program reported that a course on up-to-date surveying of archeological sites (with the relevant equipment provided for hands-on-training) would be very useful.

III. Faculty Productivity

Sociology:

Qualifications
___Excellent  _X_ Very Good   __Appropriate   __Needs Improvement   __N/A

Publications
___Excellent  _X_ Very Good   __Appropriate   __Needs Improvement   __N/A

Teaching Load
___Excellent   _X_ Very Good   __Appropriate   _X_Needs Improvement   __N/A
External Grants
__ Excellent __ Very Good _X_Appropriate __Needs Improvement __N/A

Teaching Evaluations*
__ Excellent _X_Very Good __Appropriate __Needs Improvement __N/A
*Teaching evaluations were not included in the self-study report. A sample of approximately 33% of graduate course teaching evaluations were reviewed from the TTU data warehouse.

Professional Service
__ Excellent __ Very Good _X_Appropriate __Needs Improvement __N/A

Community Service
__ Excellent _X_Very Good __Appropriate __Needs Improvement __N/A

Please elaborate if you have identified any items in this section as Excellent.
Click here to enter text.

Please elaborate if you identified any items in this section as Needs Improvement. Provide recommendations in the area of Faculty Productivity.
Graduate faculty have the opportunity to teach only one graduate course per year. A Ph.D. program would yield TAs for lower level undergraduate classes, freeing tenure-track faculty to offer more graduate courses. Teaching substantive masters and doctoral-level seminars would likely boost faculty creative output in terms of publications and a reduction in teaching load would likely increase external funding opportunities.

Other comments (optional)
Variability exists in service loads in advising across tenured faculty. Over the six-year period, faculty served on a range of 2 to 13 thesis and doctoral committees; two of seven faculty were substantially lower than the others).
Anthropology:

**Qualifications**

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**Professional Service**

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Please elaborate if you have identified any items in this section as Excellent.

Teaching evaluations reveal a high level of student satisfaction with graduate teaching in the Anthropology program. Further, students commented often during our meeting about the vibrant nature of the Anthropology graduate program and high level of satisfaction with their faculty.
Please elaborate if you identified any items in this section as Needs Improvement. Provide recommendations in the area of Faculty Productivity.

Data provided in the self-study along with comments made by Anthropology graduate students reveal that four faculty provide the majority of graduate student mentoring and socialization. In particular, three faculty served on 19, 27, and 32 masters and doctoral committees over the six-year review period.

Because of the shortage of qualified tenure-track faculty to advise students, we rated the teaching load as one that needs improvement. Because of the large number of students that a small number of faculty serve at the graduate level, the teaching load appears to have an adverse effect on publication and external funding success.

Other comments (optional)
There is only one female tenure-track faculty member in the Anthropology program. We would encourage a new hire of another female faculty member.

Currently, the Graduate Program Director for the Anthropology program is an untenured Assistant Professor. This should be reevaluated.

IV. Students and Graduates
Please evaluate the following

Sociology:

Time to degree
__ Excellent  __ Very Good  __Appropriate  _X_ Needs Improvement  __N/A

Retention
__ Excellent  _X_ Very Good  __Appropriate  __Needs Improvement  __N/A

Graduate rates
__ Excellent  _X_ Very Good  __Appropriate  __Needs Improvement  __N/A

Enrollment
__ Excellent  _X_ Very Good  __Appropriate  __Needs Improvement  __N/A
Demographics
__ Excellent _ Very Good _X_ Appropriate _ Needs Improvement _ N/A

Number of degrees conferred annually
__ Excellent _X_ Very Good _ Appropriate _ Needs Improvement _ N/A

Support Services
__ Excellent _ Very Good _X_ Appropriate _ Needs Improvement _ N/A

Job Placement
__ Excellent _X_ Very Good _ Appropriate _ Needs Improvement _ N/A

Student/ Faculty Ratio
__ Excellent _X_ Very Good _ Appropriate _ Needs Improvement _ N/A

Please elaborate if you have identified any items in this section as Excellent.

Please elaborate if you identified any items in this section as Needs Improvement. Provide recommendations in the area of Students and Graduates.

Time to degree in the MA Sociology program was decreasing in the early part of the review period and has been increasing for the last three years (last reported figure was 3.24 years to graduate). If more assistantships were provided, the trend might move in a more positive direction. Graduate students reported that funding was inadequate compared with other programs (referencing both stipends, tuition awards, and travel funding). Funding decisions were also made during April or May (too late in the recruiting cycle), causing loss of excellent candidates to other institutions. Decreasing required credit hours from 36 to 30 should work quickly to decrease time-to-graduate and bring it more in line with two-year program expectations.

Other comments (optional)

Racial and ethnic demographics demonstrate little diversity in graduate students. We encourage diversity initiatives in recruiting students.

A graduate student handbook should be created and updated regularly.
Anthropology:

Time to degree
__ Excellent __ Very Good __ Appropriate _X_ Needs Improvement __ N/A

Retention
__ Excellent _X_ Very Good __ Appropriate __ Needs Improvement __ N/A

Graduate rates
__ Excellent _X_ Very Good __ Appropriate __ Needs Improvement __ N/A

Enrollment
__ Excellent _X_ Very Good __ Appropriate __ Needs Improvement __ N/A

Demographics
__ Excellent __ Very Good _X_ Appropriate __ Needs Improvement __ N/A

Number of degrees conferred annually
__ Excellent _X_ Very Good __ Appropriate __ Needs Improvement __ N/A

Support Services
__ Excellent __ Very Good __ Appropriate _X_ Needs Improvement __ N/A

Job Placement
__ Excellent _X_ Very Good __ Appropriate __ Needs Improvement __ N/A

Student/ Faculty Ratio
__ Excellent _X_ Very Good __ Appropriate __ Needs Improvement __ N/A

Please elaborate if you have identified any items in this section as Excellent.
Please elaborate if you identified any items in this section as Needs Improvement. Provide recommendations in the area of Students and Graduates.

Time to degree decreased during the last two years of the review period, but still was averaging above three years. If more assistantships were provided, the trend might move in a more positive direction. Graduate students reported that funding was inadequate compared with other programs (referencing both stipends, tuition awards, and travel funding). Funding decisions were also made during April or May (too late in the recruiting cycle), causing loss of excellent candidates to other institutions. Decreasing required credit hours from 36 to 30 should work quickly to decrease time-to-graduate and bring it more in line with two-year program expectations.

Other comments (optional)

Racial and ethnic demographics demonstrate little diversity in graduate students recruited and enrolled. We encourage diversity initiatives in recruiting students.

A graduate student handbook should be created and kept updated.

V. Facilities and Resources

Please evaluate the following:

Facilities

__ Excellent __ Very Good __ Appropriate __ Needs Improvement __ N/A

Facility Support Resources

__ Excellent __ Very Good __ Appropriate __ Needs Improvement __ N/A

Financial Resources

__ Excellent __ Very Good __ Appropriate __ Needs Improvement __ N/A

Staff Resources

__ Excellent __ Very Good __ Appropriate __ Needs Improvement __ N/A

Please elaborate if you have identified any items in this section as Excellent.
Please elaborate if you identified any items in this section as Needs Improvement. Provide recommendations in the area of Facilities and Resources.

We recommend that the number and amount of assistantships be increased. This would help in recruiting more students and reducing time to graduate. We also recommend an increase in travel support since many students choose a “thesis and go to two conferences” rather than a comp option.

Other comments (optional)

Faculty and graduate students in the Anthropology program reported that some of the equipment used by the program is outdated (transits) and should be updated with total stations and GPS survey systems.

VI. Overall Ranking

Overall Ranking

___ Excellent ___ Very Good ___Appropriate ___Needs Improvement

Please provide summative conclusions based on the overall review.

We believe the graduate programs in SASW to be vibrant, challenging, and overall quite successful (particularly given resource constraints). Uniformly students reported that faculty mentoring was excellent and that faculty were highly accessible to them, despite heavy advising loads several faculty maintain.

We believe the current Department Chair is committed to support and development of faculty and students in the Department. Because of the lack of overlap across the three disciplines in the Department, students and faculty report little synergy across programs, and we expect there is little the Department Chair could do to increase cross-disciplinary productivity. The multiple transitions in leadership of the Department over the review period may have caused a degree of “silence mentality” or dissatisfaction to develop, but we believe continued support from the College of A&S toward leadership development of the Department Chair will result in increased morale and productivity of the faculty.

With regard to the Sociology program, we believe the initiative for a doctoral program in Sociology is relevant, timely, competitive, and in-line with the movement of TTU toward a top-tier research institution. However, additional resources would clearly need to accompany a movement toward growth in this direction. As the MA programs and Ph.D. program in Sociology mature, the need to reduce teaching load from a 3-3 faculty workload would increase but would also benefit not only research productivity but also external funding productivity of the program.
The Anthropology program is highly successful in student development and placement, despite the shortage of graduate faculty to supervise MA theses and other directed research. We do not believe the Anthropology program could be self-sufficient at the current time, but students and faculty of both the Sociology program and the Anthropology program do not report the lack of synergy between the two to be problematic.

*Please provide summative recommendations based on the overall review.*

We believe the Department should set short-, mid-, and long-term strategic objectives as part of a comprehensive strategic planning process along with metrics for evaluation.

Consistent with the strengths we observed and potential opportunities, we recommend the following:

**Cross-Department Recommendations**

- Increase the number and amount of TA stipends available for recruiting and time-to-graduate purposes.
- Reduce the number of required credit hours for both MA programs from 36 to 30 hours.
- Develop a graduate student handbook.
- Provide faculty support for grant writing.

**Sociology**

- Continue to hire faculty along the recognized domains of excellence the program currently possesses.
- Develop a Ph.D. program in Sociology.
- As the MA and Ph.D. program (if added) grow, work to reduce faculty teaching load.

**Anthropology**

- Increase the number of Anthropology faculty by at least one tenure-track position (preferably a female archeologist to ensure gender equity in the program and meet student needs).
- Retire out-of-date field equipment and replace with modern technology in a lab for student training and research.
- Consider changing the graduate curriculum from a broad four-subspecialty program to a more narrowly-focused three-subspecialty program.