# University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign

# Academic Program Review
# External Reviewer Report

## Department of Anthropology

### November 15, 2024

# Academic Program Review External Report

## 1. Summary

The Department of Anthropology stands out among its peers in many ways. It is one of the few anthropology departments in the nation that is not only committed to the traditional four-field approach but that has also ensured that all four fields are well represented and intellectually robust. It has led high-profile initiatives to use anthropological insights to serve the public good for local stakeholders and beyond. It has created an inclusive climate and an unusually supportive and collegial community, and it has established highly effective mentoring structures for its graduate and undergraduate students. After a period of remarkable growth and change, the Department is poised to gain national recognition as a hub of cutting-edge research, graduate training, and undergraduate education. That said, the Department's aging labs and offices in sore need of repair contribute to concern about its ability to retain and grow its vibrant faculty. Similarly, palpable anxiety about the budget and possible forthcoming austerity across campus raises concerns about the program's ability to recruit top graduate students. Additionally, there is a need for the Department to fully integrate the four fields as well as to review and update its bylaws and policies to clarify expectations regarding teaching, service, and promotion and to increase transparency and equity in decision making. College and university commitment to maintaining the Department's achievements while helping it to pursue promising and creative new directions is recommended.

## 2. Strategic Direction of the Department

**2.1. Goals and measures.** The Department's self-study identifies four primary goals: (1) to improve its ranking, (2) to promote ethical research, (3) to foster publicly engaged anthropology, and (4) to embody its values of respect and accountability. We see these goals as appropriate, and our subjective impression, based on discussions with a range of faculty and students, is that much progress already has been made to achieve them. We leave it to the departmental leadership in consultation with the College to determine how best to assess its progress in each of these areas.

**2.2. Strengths and weaknesses.** We concur with the Department's assessment of its strengths, including its commitment to ethical and decolonial research (especially notable vis-à-vis peer departments), its interdisciplinarity, its energetic public-facing initiatives, and its mentoring of undergraduate and graduate students. We highlight in particular the role of (junior BIPOC) Anthropology faculty in addressing campus violations of the federal Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act. We would add to this list the Department's critical mass of excellent faculty across subfields, including its recent hiring of stellar early-career scholars thanks to strategic leveraging of campus hiring initiatives and priorities. Other strengths include the undergraduate capstone experience, the LEAD program, the balance across subfields, and departmental climate, especially the support that early-career faculty feel from senior colleagues.

    The Department highlights weaknesses in the areas of budget, physical facilities, loss of faculty to campus administrative positions, and competitive funding of graduate students. We discuss these significant challenges below. We also note additional challenges in the areas of program structure; governance and transparency in policy and procedures; and workload equity. These should be addressed in order to solidify the Department's already impressive achievements. Many issues fall under the general category of communication, as we discuss throughout this report. Most concerns will require multiple years to fully address (see summary table). Shorter-term issues are also noted, with recommendations that are relatively quick and easy to implement.

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**2.3. Opportunities.** The Department's greatest opportunity is presented by its outstanding tenure-track and specialized faculty, who collectively constitute its most important resource for elevating its standing within the discipline. In order to take advantage of this opportunity, however, faculty retention is crucial. Illinois's spousal hire policy plays a key role in this effort, placing it at an advantage compared to many top universities. Retention also requires ensuring that faculty feel valued, included, and equitably evaluated and compensated. We therefore recommend more transparent governance structures and processes; clearer communication of departmental expectations for merit review, tenure, and promotion, including clear policies and practices for fair and equitable compensation and evaluation of various kinds of research across subfields and individual faculty; greater equity and parity in teaching, mentoring, and service workload for both tenure-track and specialized faculty, including clearer articulation of expectations associated with administrative and service roles; and compensation structures for currently invisible or undervalued labor that falls disproportionately on women and faculty of color (see §6.2.3).

Relatedly, the quality and stature of the faculty can help attract top graduate students, including those from underrepresented groups. For example, the linguistic anthropology group's impressive size, intellectual cohesiveness, and strengths in areas of interest to students are selling points that should be highlighted in recruitment materials and outreach efforts. We recommend some restructuring of the graduate program for sustainability, due to reduced teaching power related to faculty commitments to other campus units; this restructuring will also bolster the Department's four-field approach (see §3.2). Faculty expertise in areas of expanding career opportunities, such as applied archaeology and cultural resource management, can be used to develop a tuition-based professional master's program to train students while generating revenue (see §5.1).

## 3. Academic/Student Experience Offered by the Department

We have limited information about students' experiences, as we met with only a handful of students with incomplete representation across subfields. (Although all students, staff, and faculty were encouraged to reach out to our review team to call additional issues to our attention, very few did so.) We therefore strongly encourage the Department to conduct regular anonymous satisfaction and climate surveys of both graduate and undergraduate students (as well as faculty and staff). Given recent revisions to the graduate and undergraduate programs, the Department should also assess over the next few years whether these changes are sustainable with its current teaching power as well as whether they effectively support students' timely progress through the program and preparation to pursue their career goals. In addition, graduate and undergraduate students alike expressed a desire for more departmental intellectual events, such as research colloquia. A brown-bag lunch series of local presenters could help meet this need while providing a new space for community building in this post-Covid period.

Another issue that cuts across both the graduate and undergraduate programs is the need for a multiyear curriculum planning process and accompanying spreadsheet (subject to changes each year) that is accessible to students, so they can develop a multiyear coursework plan in consultation with a staff or faculty advisor; such practices are common in other campus departments.

**3.1. Undergraduate experience.** Overall, undergraduate enrollments are solid and currently seem to be limited only by the number of graduate students that the Department can admit and fund; the administration indicated that increased enrollments and majors would be welcome, but this would require either reducing the role of teaching assistants in some courses (e.g., online asynchronous instruction) or increasing the size and funding of the graduate program. Students receive individualized and small-group mentoring thanks to the LEAD program and the capstone/senior

thesis, which—impressively—is required of all majors, although scheduling a time to meet with the overworked undergraduate advisor can be difficult; however, all students agree that the advisor is extremely helpful. Transfer students seem to have a very smooth transition thanks to supportive staff and faculty. We have relatively minor recommendations for further strengthening the undergraduate program. First, lab-based and other research assistant opportunities should be better advertised, and every student should experience at least some aspects of the LEAD program (e.g., in classes). Second, more discussion of career options should be provided in classes, especially for students not aiming for graduate school. Third, in the absence of dedicated courses for the popular CS + ANTH major, existing courses should include computer science-relevant content.

**3.2. Graduate experience.** The Department has taken a number of steps to improve graduate mentoring and advising, including reimagining the Illinois Anthropology class with a focus on the "hidden curriculum" of academia (i.e., the taken-for-granted aspects of becoming a scholar that are unfamiliar to students, especially those from underrepresented groups). Other effective strategies are co-advising and co-teaching, which benefit students and faculty alike. Nevertheless, more advanced students have benefited less from these changes and may struggle as a result, while some faculty wishing to work with graduate students currently lack the opportunity to do so.

Although some students have faced problematic mentoring relationships, in recent years the Department has taken an active role to resolve these problems. Systematized departmental check-ins with graduate students about their mentoring relationships could help prevent such situations, and advisor changes should be carefully monitored to ensure that ineffective advisors are not recruiting students who may then switch to already overburdened faculty. The Department has apparently developed mentoring guidelines; formal training may also help some faculty members improve the quality of their mentoring. In order to foster a stronger sense of community and connection between newer and more advanced graduate students, the Department might consider creating a peer mentoring program. Additionally, the student review process should be redesigned to be more useful to students. We particularly encourage the department to develop and share with students an expected timeline for the completion of standard degree milestones as well as to formalize annual meetings between students and committee members to jointly discuss progress and schedule upcoming exams and defenses. We did not receive data about attrition rates, but we were told that attrition of domestic underrepresented students is a particular problem, as it is in many programs. The Department should examine this issue and develop robust retention strategies.

The Department should assess whether the planned addition of a separate linguistic anthropology specialization is the best way to incorporate the recent faculty growth in this area. A more flexible and individualized pathway through the graduate program could better take advantage of the Department's four-field approach as well as its interdisciplinarity, while creating the opportunity for students to explore a range of perspectives and career options, all without overstretching faculty or delaying students waiting for needed classes. In particular, the Department should provide a flexible experience for students in which the four fields work together as an integrated whole in dialogue with one another (e.g., through co-teaching across subfields) rather than the current model of four separate mini-programs. Replacing subfield-based admissions with an approach that involves faculty from each subfield would also acknowledge the reality that mentors often come from multiple subfields.

Graduate student funding is largely based on teaching assistantships. Pedagogical training is handled at the campus level, but some faculty as well as students feel strongly that graduate students need departmental-level training and teaching support. The Department should create a mentoring program and archive of syllabi and course materials for graduate students teaching their

own classes; it should also consider developing a pedagogy class for new teaching assistants. Graduate instructors should not be expected to develop their own materials or recruit students.

Faculty expressed concerns about graduate student funding packages that are not competitive enough with peer institutions. We recommend that the Department and College work together to determine what a competitive recruitment package would be and how to develop such packages for top candidates with competing offers; given that Research Board awards prioritize the funding of graduate student research assistants, these funds could be used as part of such packages. In addition, conference travel support for graduate students appears to be woefully inadequate. This should be a priority as soon as funds become available, not only because of the importance of conference presentations in students' professional development and career opportunities, but also because of the role that graduate students play in recruiting new students to the program.

A final issue is the tuition and funding inequities that international students face. Some faculty and students believe that the federal "proof of funding" requirement for incoming international students limits the Department's ability to recruit such students. However, based on our reading of the policy as well as practices on our own campuses, we believe it is allowable for proof of funding to include a documented departmental or university financial commitment. Nevertheless, international students do face additional obstacles due to federal employment restrictions. As part of the Department's commitment to equity, it should prioritize international students for employment during the summer and outside of the academic term, when additional employment is not prohibited (e.g., online TAships or instructor positions; full-time research assistantships over semester breaks). The Department should also work with International Student Services to inform students of the full costs of graduate study before their arrival on campus and to share other information, such as the availability of free or low-cost resources to assist them in filing tax returns.

## 4. Research Expertise in the Department

What distinguishes the Department's research profile is its impressive lineup of prominent senior scholars and highly promising early-career scholars doing cutting-edge, often field-defining research; this work is being done in all subfields as well as across subfields and disciplines, further amplifying its significance. The faculty, notably including specialized faculty, also lead a large number of high-impact publicly engaged initiatives. The Department's success in recruiting and retaining faculty of this caliber demonstrates that it is already moving in the right direction and is ahead of the game vis-à-vis other programs with which we are familiar. As noted above, however, continued faculty retention is crucial for the Department, the College, and the campus as a whole.

Another important step is for the Department to raise its profile on campus and within the discipline through low-resource, high-visibility activities. For example, the communications committee should work with the College's Office of Communications and Marketing to report departmental and faculty activities and achievements; the Dean expressed willingness to cost-share a dedicated communications specialist to assist with this and similar activities. This opportunity should not be squandered, as both the Department and College will benefit from highlighting faculty work. Further, the departmental profile can be raised through web-based and social media strategies highlighting distinctive activities and contributions (e.g., the LEAD program, public-facing scholarship) and providing "swag" (e.g., T-shirts or tote bags) to departmental members, visiting departmental speakers, and prospective graduate students. In addition, organizing and widely advertising an annual online speaker series featuring Anthropology faculty (and potentially faculty at nearby institutions) would showcase departmental expertise while fostering further engagement and collaboration between faculty and attracting top graduate students to the program.

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Finally, the Department deserves to be as well known for its leadership in creating a collegial and inclusive community as for its outstanding research. The results of this work and guidance for other departments both on campus and elsewhere could be shared via workshops and webinars; in doing so, the Department should highlight the key role played by faculty of color.

## 5. Human, Physical and Financial Resources

Many of our recommendations concern the financial and physical resources of the Department as well as issues related to staff. We discuss other aspects of structure and governance in §6.2 below.

**5.1. Financial resources.** The Department's self-study states that it is "without an operating budget" and that it has an annual deficit, which it attributes to a new campus funding model. This situation is the source of a great deal of anxiety among the faculty. From what we were able to learn, the causes of the deficit are in fact quite a bit more complex, and there is considerable miscommunication related to this issue. We recommend that the departmental leadership consult with longtime faculty, especially former leaders, for their perspective and then meet with the College to discuss the origins of the deficit and the current status of the Department's finances. Crucially, this information should also be shared with the full faculty. However, the most important goal is for the Department to become financially stable without hindering its ability to carry out its activities; the College has emphasized to us that it shares this goal. Relatedly, there is considerable miscommunication regarding whether, how, and how much of the faculty's Indirect Cost Returns comes back to the Department and to PIs. This should be clarified with the College and then reported to the faculty, since ICR is a key source of departmental income. Even if some ICR is put toward the deficit, the standard amount (3%) should be returned to the PI.

In order to increase revenue, we recommend that the Department consider developing one or more additional large-enrollment online courses, ideally to be offered in winter and summer. We also support the Department's plan to develop a fee-based master's program in cultural resource management; the next step toward this goal should be a feasibility study to confirm that such a program would be sustainable with current resources. (Although a Forensics master's program has also been discussed, there appears to be less faculty interest in this direction at this time.)

We recommend that the College clarify to the Department how the funding it provides annually is determined and how it can be used. Our sense from conversations with College leadership is that the Department has more flexibility than it recognizes regarding how the annual allocation for instructional support can be used (e.g., for TA lines versus other forms of instructional support). There is also confusion about whether and how this allocation relates to the number of semester credit hours taught. Finally, we recommend that the Department develop a plan for fiscal stability in consultation with the College. This plan should include an arrangement allowing for the forgiveness of the remainder of the Department's debt if it pays off an agreed-upon amount.

**5.2. Physical resources.** Aside from the student-facing spaces, which have been beautifully renovated, the physical facilities in Davenport Hall are in shockingly poor condition, particularly the research labs. We were astonished to see that world-class research is being conducted under, frankly, horrifying conditions; the situation is unsustainable. Significant health and safety issues were reported to us (some of which we witnessed firsthand), including mold, cockroaches, poor ventilation and heating/cooling, lead paint, asbestos, leaks, and flooding even in the "better" lab spaces, as well as lack of ADA compliance, which could have legal ramifications. We were also troubled to learn that the campus has charged the Department for costs associated with flooding/weather damage to faculty labs; instead, the administration should pay for these repairs

using the ICR allocated for precisely such expenses. In addition, we note that Illinois departs from many other research universities in not charging student fees for lab courses to cover basic lab maintenance and supplies; given this restriction, the administration should work closely with faculty whose labs are central to their teaching role to provide a replacement source for this essential instructional funding, rather than relying (as currently) on departmental funds or faculty grants. This gap also prevents faculty from teaching lab methods classes crucial to student training.

Moreover, current lab space is insufficient for faculty needs, an issue that has become even more pressing with the hire of new faculty (in one case, a faculty member conducting high-profile research does not even have their own lab, which they urgently need in order to develop their research record for tenure). Some space is shared or on loan from other departments; much of it is too cramped for teaching or even for storage. The inadequate archaeology and biological anthropology facilities are a major obstacle to the Department's goal of improving its ranking, since the labs fall far short of those at other research universities. In a department committed to a four-field approach and one that also houses one of the country's largest biological anthropology programs, this weakness harms (at least) two key subfields, undermines the goal of improving its ranking and reputation, and prevents it from recruiting graduate students of the highest quality.

Further, the lack of a departmentally controlled commons or other gathering space that can accommodate the Department's size limits community building (notwithstanding the Head's efforts to create such spaces). This is not a luxury but a necessity for a well-functioning unit.

We recognize that remedying these problems will not be quick or straightforward, but we also note that similar problems were raised ten years ago in the last external review and that the situation seems only to have deteriorated since then. We urge the university to do all it can to expedite the full renovation of Davenport Hall, with priority given to lab spaces. We are glad to know that some efforts are already under way to address some of these issues.

As a less pressing but still important point, we were surprised to learn that faculty do not receive new computers after the one issued to them at the time of their hire; this is far out of step with most research universities, which provide faculty with new computers every few years.

**5.3. Staff.** The Department staff are knowledgeable and dedicated but also overstretched; clearer delineation of job responsibilities and more training are necessary given that several staff members are relatively new. We support the departmental leadership's plans to increase the number of staff meetings, and we recommend improvements in communication between individual staff and faculty leaders; for example, the Director of Graduate Studies should have regular meetings with the Graduate Advisor rather than relying on email consultation. Additionally, staff assistance is needed with administrative tasks associated with the undergraduate program, and additional support for undergraduate advising may be needed. More staff time also appears to be necessary both to coordinate the faculty review process and to administer graduate funding, given the complex requirements associated with available funding (e.g., gifts and donations). We also recommend that individual faculty members who habitually miss deadlines or fail to follow procedures be proactively managed by the Department Head or Associate Head to avoid placing staff members in difficult situations in which they have little authority to enforce policy.

There is insufficient departmental staff support for grants and contracts, which may lead to problems with the management of these awards as well as lack of basic support such as monthly statements for PIs. It is encouraging that the College is now pivoting to providing some in-house administrative support both pre-award and post-award; however, it will be important for this office to avoid the mistakes made by the previous university-level office, which negatively affected some faculty members' ability to apply for funding opportunities. Providing more than a single point of contact for faculty may prevent problems of this kind.

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Finally, the lack of a staff lab manager within the Department creates difficulties, especially with the timely ordering of supplies needed for grant activities. Although at its root this seems to be a problem of onerous procurement policies, having a dedicated, specially trained staff member who is able to navigate the university's procurement process without undue delays is likely the best remedy for the current situation. In addition, these ongoing problems should be addressed by campus administrators, with clear and proactive communication with current and especially prospective PIs about the nature of the problems, typical timelines, and planned solutions.

## 6. Guiding Principles: Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Shared Governance

**6.1. Diversity, equity, and inclusion.** The Department's efforts to create a more diverse, inclusive, equitable, and just community are remarkable. Recent hires continue the Department's tradition of hiring outstanding women faculty of color (now distinguished senior faculty) who have played leading roles within the discipline in moving the field beyond its colonial roots. The vast majority of faculty we spoke with highlighted the Department's welcoming and supportive climate as one of its most positive aspects. This strong sense of community is as refreshing as it is rare, and the Department leads the field in demonstrating a genuine commitment to meaningful change. Many departmental members credit the Head's tireless leadership in this achievement, and we also recognize that much of this work has been accomplished through the often overlooked and unrewarded labor of faculty of color, an inequity which needs to be addressed (see §6.2.3).

We note that a small number of faculty may perceive themselves as marginalized or excluded by the current departmental orientation. We encourage the leadership to help all faculty who want to make positive contributions to the life of the Department to find an appropriate role for them to do so. We understand, however, that this may not be possible in every case.

**6.2. Shared governance.** While the overwhelming majority of faculty articulated appreciation for the Department's commitment to equity and its sense of common purpose, there is also confusion and frustration due to the lack of full transparency around decision making. Departmental communication overall, a crucial element of governance, requires improvement. Faculty, both tenure-track and specialized, need to be more involved in decision-making processes and better informed and educated about basic departmental and campus procedures, including often confusing financial processes and decisions. An important aspect of this process will be to revisit and revise the current bylaws with full participation by all faculty in order to ensure that departmental practices are in line with the bylaws as well as university policy. In addition, a number of faculty expressed uncertainty about current departmental goals and direction; a faculty retreat would be useful in order to develop a clear set of shared priorities.

*6.2.1. Governance structures and processes.* Our sense (and the perception of many faculty) is that, currently, the Head makes most departmental decisions, often without clear communication, transparency, and full consultation with the faculty as a whole, even regarding major issues that impact all faculty. While most faculty seemed generally to agree with these decisions, centralized and less-than-fully consultative governance is not in keeping with the Department's commitment to equity and inclusion and has led to discomfort and frustration for some faculty. For this reason, faculty meetings need to include sufficient time for deliberative decision making, not just reporting on decisions previously made by departmental leadership. In addition, subcommittee minutes should be distributed in advance to save faculty meeting time for discussion. We further recommend that departmental meetings follow parliamentary procedure in order to ensure a transparent, democratic, and efficient decision-making process. The Department should also collectively consider whether more frequent faculty meetings would be advisable.

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The Department's governance structure includes an advisory committee comprising the leadership team plus several elected faculty members, but its role is not clearly defined. Because this committee has subfield and career-stage representation, it could function more effectively in a mediating role by channeling communication directly between faculty and the leadership team; this arrangement would also allow for more regular communication than that provided currently.

We applaud the creation of the Associate Head role, which is valuable in sharing leadership responsibilities, expediting the implementation of departmental decisions, adding new initiatives (such as systematic oversight of faculty mentoring), and providing training for future Heads. However, the lack of faculty willingness to take on this role suggests that some restructuring is needed to make it more manageable. We also note that the Department does not appear to have a Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. It may be advisable to create such a position to provide oversight of DEI issues across different constituencies (faculty, staff, graduate students, undergraduates), to recognize DEI leadership that may now be undertaken by individual faculty without reward, and to ensure that DEI is prioritized regardless of changes in leadership.

We recommend that the Department pay special attention to the composition and remit of standing committees. The curriculum committee, for example, should take a more active role in curricular planning, coordination, and scheduling over a multiyear period, given some of the curriculum-related problems that students and faculty face (as discussed in §3 and §6.2.3). Additionally, we note that multiple current committee assignments have 1-year terms, which does not allow for continuity of expertise and effective "institutional memory." Terms should be longer (2-3 years) and staggered to provide continuity across terms and to mitigate the impact of sabbaticals. An online spreadsheet for committee assignments covering a five-year period and accessible to all faculty would help with these issues as well as equity across service assignments. This approach will also help minimize the problem of offering too many courses without coordination across subfields and thus creating competition for a limited pool of students, especially at the graduate level, which can result in course cancellations and workload deficits or unplanned use of previously committed course releases for affected faculty. Finally, some committees may be redundant or perhaps unnecessary, while others could be added to distribute workload and involve more faculty in departmental governance (e.g., there appears to be no separate graduate studies or undergraduate studies committee). All faculty service assignments should be active and necessary for departmental functioning.

*6.2.2. Tenure, promotion, and merit review.* A key area in which greater transparency and equity is needed is the process of tenure, promotion, reappointment, and annual review, given the recent growth of the faculty and the wide range of forms that research takes across subfields. We were glad to see in the self-study that the Department plans to revisit its tenure and promotion guidelines, and we recommend that this step be undertaken with the goal of developing clearer and more explicit policies and procedures with the involvement of the faculty as a whole. The addition of language to departmental bylaws or other internal documents about expectations for tenure and promotion for faculty in different subfields would help reduce uncertainty and concern about "shifting goalposts." A mentoring process is also needed to help move associate professors toward promotion, including a reasonable timeline (e.g., six years post-tenure) for such promotions.

We further recommend that a new process for promotion case review be implemented. As we understand it, currently a single committee evaluates all candidates for promotion. Instead, ad hoc committees should be organized as needed in any given year for each candidate who is being considered for promotion. This approach will ensure that each faculty member has a committee with the required subfield expertise for the evaluation.

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Finally, we encourage the Department to develop guidelines for equitable evaluation across subfields and faculty, including consideration of subfield-specific publication outlets, co-authoring norms, and types of scholarship and creative activity, as well as individual faculty members' goals regarding the nature and intended impact of their work. In regard to this latter issue, we encourage the Department and the College to consult the [American Anthropological Association's guidelines](#) on how to evaluate publicly engaged research and other innovative forms of scholarship.

Finally, the current practice of awarding merit raises based solely on the Head's discretion should be changed to a committee-based system, in the interests of greater equity and democracy.

*6.2.3. Teaching, mentoring, and service workload.* Another area that requires improvement in equity and transparency is workload with respect to teaching, mentoring, and service. We see this as an issue not only within the Department, but also in the College and most likely across the university. Addressing this concern is crucial for faculty retention; some of the faculty members who contribute the most to the Department are dangerously close to (or past) the point of burnout.

We were surprised to learn that faculty course loads do not consistently take class size into account and that course releases other than those associated with leadership roles (e.g., for applying for or receiving large grants) are based on individual negotiation rather than departmental policy; this situation creates inherent inequities and should be corrected. One course where faculty workload is not fully credited is the 400-student four-field Introduction to Anthropology, which is crucial to the undergraduate program. In addition, coordinating the LEAD program is a time-consuming role that merits a course release or appropriate service credit. The Department should also consider offering course credit for lab supervision (which should be an option for faculty regardless of subfield or access to a physical lab, if they are advising a given number of students).

Service workload is likewise inconsistent across faculty, with some people called upon to serve more frequently than they would like and others wishing to do more service than they currently are asked to do. Inequity and a lack of transparency in this area has resulted in entirely understandable frustration on the part of some faculty. Developing a formal service workload system (as described by the [American Council on Education](#)) with input from all faculty will help distribute the workload more fairly. This system should build in the expectation of greater service responsibilities from more senior faculty and much lighter responsibilities for early-career faculty and should also recognize and compensate currently invisible forms of faculty labor (e.g., formal and informal mentorship of students of color, international students, or students from other underrepresented or marginalized groups), which falls disproportionately on a few people, especially faculty of color. We also suggest that the departmental leadership find a less time-consuming alternative to annual charge letters that nonetheless ensures that committee members understand their responsibilities as well as current campus policies. Responsibilities and expectations should be clearly laid out, as well as ramifications of not meeting those expectations. Conversely, assistant professors and specialized faculty, who are not protected by tenure, may feel pressure to acquiesce to informal and one-off service requests from departmental leadership; such exceptional assignments should be given to senior faculty.

*6.2.4. Specialized faculty.* Transparency and equity are particular concerns for specialized faculty, whose positions differ from those of tenure-track faculty in important ways and often vary widely even within the specialized faculty category. The Department should provide clearer information regarding departmental, college, and/or university policies specific to these roles, in consultation with the College, Human Resources, and possibly also the Provost's Office; it appears that the current practice is to have these faculty follow the same evaluation procedures as tenure-track faculty, despite major differences in role and expectations. As an expansion of the Department's

highly effective mentoring program for tenure-track assistant professors, we recommend a more comprehensive mentoring experience for specialized faculty (regardless of rank/title) within the Department. We also recommend that the Department work with the administration to create campus-wide initiatives to bring together specialized faculty from different units, in order to reduce isolation, create community, and foster peer mentoring. In addition, the apparent lack of consistent policy motivating service assignments for specialized faculty leads to heavy departmental service for some teaching professors even early in their career, as well as service expectations that do not conform to the contracts of some clinical professors. We encourage the Department to work with the College and campus to clarify and formalize these expectations.

## 7. Overall recommendations

A summary of our main recommendations is provided in the following table, in order of urgency.

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| Recommendations for Action | Departmental Response |
|---|---|
| 1. **Physical facilities:** Work with the administration to find ways to renovate and expand space for research, particularly labs, as well as departmental meetings and social events; in the short term, urgent issues should be addressed with stop-gap measures to ensure safety and ADA compliance, as well as basic departmental functioning | |
| 2. **Budget:** Work with the administration to develop a plan for financial sustainability, including potential new revenue sources, clear communication to faculty regarding how ICR is distributed, and strategies for more competitive graduate funding | |
| 3. **Governance:** Clarify departmental policies and procedures through updating of bylaws; create more inclusive and transparent governance structures and processes; work toward greater continuity of leadership and sharing of decision making; improve communication; provide more support for staff | |
| 4. **Degree programs:** Assess the sustainability and effectiveness of the revised graduate and undergraduate programs and consider a more integrated four-field approach; conduct survey of student satisfaction | |
| 5. **Equity and climate:** Clarify expectations for tenure, promotion, and annual review; address workload inequities in teaching, mentoring, and service; ensure that all faculty feel valued, supported, and included and are fairly compensated, especially those most likely to be exploited (non-tenured, BIPOC, & women faculty) | |