



CENTRAL OREGON
community college

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Department and Program Review Response Letter Anthropology

June 6, 2025

Dear Amy and Michel,

Thank you for taking part in Department & Program Review (DPR) this year. The DPR process reveals critical connections that link your strengths, needs, values, priorities, and plans to those of the College. Further, it supports our commitment to innovation through continual improvement. We commend your dedication to empowering our students, engaging our communities, and supporting our values. This response to your report is based on what we see as your successes, what you and we identified as challenges, and guidance on how to proceed with the goals and needs you have described.

Successes and Kudos

Your program has several areas of strength that we'd like to highlight here. First, you demonstrate a strong commitment to student access, offering courses at all campuses and online, and also across time blocks. This is especially impressive given your limited staffing of two full-time faculty and one or two part-time faculty teaching a course or two annually.

On a related note, we'd like to highlight the steadiness of Anthropology as a discipline in several facets. Both your two full-time faculty and one of your part-timers are longtime members of the College community. In addition, you offer a stable core of courses with occasional focused topics to inspire student interest and take advantage of faculty areas of expertise. You've noted that students often take multiple Anthropology courses even if not pursuing a degree in the discipline – this speaks highly to your thoughtful curriculum planning as well as the quality of your teaching.

Not only does your curriculum build effectively upon the complementary focuses of your two full-time faculty, but your approach to service and engagement similarly plays to both faculty's strengths and interests – with Michel being highly involved in the community and Amy deeply engaged at the College and in shared governance.

Challenges

You've noted a couple of challenges that are symptomatic of larger issues in higher education throughout the country. One is a political climate hostile to your subject matter. We were pleased to hear that this has not come through in your interactions with students – rather, that you've found recent students especially versed in systems of power and interested in discussing issues related to equity and the diversity of the human experience. Instructional administration is supportive of the work you do and the material you teach, and we are prepared to make arguments on behalf of Anthropology's value to students as needed.

Another issue you have noted is pervasive student misuse of generative artificial intelligence. We applaud the efforts you've made to curb this thus far, including projects and oral presentations. We recognize that these kinds

of changes to your courses take time and effort, and the College is continuing to explore ways to support faculty in combating AI misuse.

Finally, you've noted that the technologies utilized in your lab space for your courses related to biological anthropology no longer match what is used in the field and need updating. We encourage you to work with your dean on capital requests to obtain modernized technology for your labs.

Goals and needs

Modernize the anthropology lab (laptops and software)

You indicate that many of the tools used in contemporary anthropological studies are digital and that our program is still using non-digital tools. We agree that an update to the tools on which we are training students is important. It is good to have this as a five-year goal so we can do advance planning. Given increasing needs for laptops across disciplines, we will need to work with the College as a whole to serve the technology needs of departments (especially as relates to increase in requests for laptops). Please work with your dean on the timing of a capital request, and offer additional suggestions to instructional administration for what is needed now that geography is not meeting in the lab, too.

Continue to develop research partnerships with local organizations to provide more student opportunities.

We appreciate and support this goal, too. We understand that Michel Waller is looking for student research opportunities with local organizations (work with tribes, e.g.). Please let us know how we can be helpful. When working with the tribes, stay in touch with your dean on other programs and connections we have there so that we can have a consistent approach to partnership.

Develop teaching strategies and assessment of learning in the face of AI use.

We enjoyed the conversation around this in our DPR response meeting in May. As you continue to navigate this challenge, keep in touch with us about what support from administration looks like. The Center for Advancing Faculty Excellence may have some workshops on this topic in the coming year, and we encourage you to contribute to those.

Maintain commitment highlighting diversity of human experience and systems of inequity.

Again, this is an area in which we give you unequivocal support. Please keep in touch with your dean with suggestions about how we can be helpful. You mentioned the value of administrative statements of support for academic freedom and for our mission, vision, goals as well as a re-centering of the Principles of Community. We agree that this is an important time to assert our allegiance to our values and principles.

Conclusion

Thank you for your ongoing dedication to student readiness. Together, we can build on our achievements, address the challenges ahead, and meet the evolving needs of our students. If you have any questions or need further clarification, please reach out. We look forward to working collaboratively to enhance the quality and impact of the Anthropology program.

Sincerely yours,



Annemarie E. Hamlin
Vice President of Academic Affairs



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Instructional Dean



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