The Anthropology PhD Curriculum Mapping & Dissertation Defense Rubric: Clarifying Faculty Expectations to Promote Student Success

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**Introduction**

From Fall 2016 to Spring 2017 the Anthropology FACULTY ACTIVELY ENGAGED in the following program assessment activities:
1. Clarified course activities to align with program learning outcomes.
2. Revised the PhD curriculum map.
3. Identified collection point for program assessment data.
4. Collaboratively developed the PhD Dissertation and Defense Rubric (Student and Faculty versions).

The process helped faculty to reflect on the PhD curriculum and clarify their expectations of students.

**Department Facts**

- The Anthropology Department offers BA, MA (Plan A & B) and PhD degree programs.
- PhD program—full subfield offerings in Archaeology, Cultural Anthropology, and Biological Anthropology.
- Faculty N=13.5 FTE; PhD students N=26.
- Established in 1934 and is the leading Anthropology Program in Hawai‘i, Pacific, and Asia.

**Project Goals**

- Investigate learning opportunities in the curriculum.
- Establish assessment process—data collection & development of evaluation rubric.

**PhD Program SLOs**

1. Gain in-depth knowledge of anthropological theory in major areas of literature pertinent to research interests. (Knowledge)
2. Acquire competence in advanced methods in a selected subfield of anthropological research. (Methods)
3. Gain an understanding of the ethical dimensions of community-based research. (Ethics)
4. Acquire knowledge of research through the design and conduct of an ongoing research project. (Research)
5. Develop the skills to present and publish original research. (Present & Publish)

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**Step 1: REVIEWED Existing Curriculum Map**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PhD Requirements</th>
<th>SLO 1, Knowledge</th>
<th>SLO 2, Methods</th>
<th>SLO 3, Ethics</th>
<th>SLO 4, Research</th>
<th>SLO 5, Present &amp; Publish</th>
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Where are the learning opportunities to help students present & publish?

**Step 2: SHARED Results & SURVEYED Faculty**

Dear Faculty Colleagues teaching ANTH XYZ,

How is SLO #5 currently addressed as part of the PhD program?

Please indicate which of the SLOs your course explicitly and substantially addresses. Describe course activities that you have used to address the PhD program SLOs.

**Step 3: COMPILED Responses Into New Curriculum Map**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CN</th>
<th>Course Type</th>
<th>SLO 1, Knowledge</th>
<th>SLO 2, Methods</th>
<th>SLO 3, Ethics</th>
<th>SLO 4, Research</th>
<th>SLO 5, Present &amp; Publish</th>
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**Step 4: DEVELOPED Dissertation & Defense Rubric**

Invited Mānoa Assessment Office to facilitate revision of rubric template in faculty meeting

**Use of Results**

1. Clarified standards of performance (e.g. poor, good, very good, outstanding). Faculty expectations better understood by students = increased STUDENT SUCCESS!
2. Took advantage of curricular changes underway within the department to share ideas and rethink courses and alignments = FACULTY ENGAGEMENT!
3. Revised assessment program better articulates skills/knowledge to be acquired = IMPROVED PREPARATION FOR PROFESSIONAL CAREERS!

**Next Steps**

To complete the assessment cycle, closing loop strategies will be used. Student perspectives will be cross-checked with departmental assessments to determine if they coincide using electronic surveys distributed to PhD students annually.

Questions to be asked of students:
(1) At what stage are they in the program? (2) Has the department provided learning opportunities to help achieve its SLOs? (3) Do they feel they have achieved these SLOs? And (4) what kinds of faculty support/ coursework are or would be most helpful in doing so?

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