

Texas State University

Outcomes Report

General Information

Academic Year:	2022-2023
College:	Liberal Arts
Department:	Anthropology
Program:	Anthropology (MA)
Program Code:	45.02
Outcome Type:	Student Learning (GR)
Degree:	Masters
Coordinator/Contact:	James David Kilby
Status:	Data Entry Closed

Mission Statement

The Department of Anthropology's mission for students in our MA program is to provide the highest quality anthropology education to our graduate students and prepare them for PhD level studies or professional careers through student engagement in classes, externships, fieldwork, and thesis research.

Evidence of Improvement

Because the Anthropology MA program requires a research-based thesis, faculty expect students to be able to understand literature relevant to their thesis topics, design and execute their thesis methodology, analyze and interpret their data, and clearly communicate their thesis research. In 2022-2023, faculty saw an increase in the number of anthropology MA majors who met expectations for three outcomes compared to the previous year (Outcome 1-Method 2 "Synthesize Relevant Research", Outcome 2-Method 2 "Implement Thesis Research Method", Outcome 3-Method 1 "Communicate Research in Writing", Outcome 3-Method 2 "Oral Communication of Research"). These improvements are likely a result of faculty implementing last year's Action Plan and working closely with students on developing a comprehensive bibliography and appropriate research methods for proposed thesis research. This includes requiring regular meetings (e.g., weekly, bi-weekly or monthly) with their graduate students to more closely mentor the process of designing a formal research project as well as closely monitor and mentor students during data gathering and writing. The annual Anthropology Research Conference held in the spring provides an opportunity for students to present their thesis research and receive feedback from faculty and peers prior to their defense and faculty strongly encourage students to attend each other's thesis presentations. Outcome 5-Method 2 "Time to Degree" increased significantly and is greater than the university rate likely due to mentoring by faculty as students develop and implement their thesis research.

Action Plan

The department continues to encourage scholarly and professional development from students and faculty by committing to their formal lists of responsibilities. To improve student performance for Outcome 2-Method 1 "Construct Thesis Research Methods" faculty will continue to work closely with their graduate students to ensure they are able to develop appropriate research methodologies to address their thesis questions. As part of this mentoring approach, faculty will continue to require regular meetings at this stage of thesis development (e.g., weekly or bi-weekly). To improve Outcome 4-Method 1 "Student Retention" and Outcome 4-Method 2 "Graduation Success" faculty will continue the approach that has proven successful for retaining a high percentage of students including meeting with students to determine their particular needs as they progress through the program as well as increasing the level of interaction between students and professors by encouraging not only advising, but mentoring. An advisor typically guides academic progress, while a mentor advances the student's career through sharing guidance, experience and expertise. The department has also scheduled more events designed to provide students with interactions with faculty outside of class and advisor meetings including the Anthropology Research Conference, the brown bag and department lecture series during both long semesters and social gatherings by the Society for Anthropological Mischief (SAM) featuring pizza and social engagement outside the department. These enhancements to our graduate program along with faculty recruiting at local, national and international conferences should improve enrollment numbers (Outcome 5-Method 1) over time.

Outcome 1

Anthropology MA students will demonstrate an understanding of relevant literature in their area of thesis specialization.

Outcome 1 - Method 1

In the second half of MA students' second semester in the program, a panel of faculty will assess students' ability to compile a bibliography relevant to their thesis topic. Students will exceed expectations if their bibliography was complete and no key references were missing, they will meet expectations if their bibliography lacked one or two key references, and they will fail to meet expectations if their bibliography it lacked several key references or more. Our goal is for 90% of students to meet expectations.

Outcome 1 - Method 1 - Result

In fall and spring semesters, a total of 17 graduate students were assessed as to their ability to compile a bibliography relevant to their thesis via evaluation of their thesis proposals by their thesis committees. Faculty found that 8 students (47.1%) exceeded expectations, 9 students (52.9%) met expectations, and no student failed to meet expectations. Thus, 100% of anthropology MA students met or exceeded expectations by

demonstrating their ability to compile a bibliography relevant to their area of thesis specialization and met our goal of at least 90% of students meeting expectations. This is the same as last year's result of 100% of students meeting expectations. This suggests that the implementation of the previous Action Plan is working. To maintain student performance, faculty will continue to provide examples of bibliographies and literature syntheses for students to review, discuss, and strive to emulate.

Outcome 1 - Method 2

In the second half of MA students' last semester in the program, a panel of faculty will assess students' ability to synthesize literature relevant to their thesis topic in an oral examination. Students will exceed expectations if their literature synthesis was well-synthesized and needs no revision, they will meet expectations if their literature synthesis was very good and needs almost no revision, and they will fail to meet expectations if their literature synthesis needs at least some revision. Our goal is for 90% of students to meet expectations.

Outcome 1 - Method 2 - Result

In fall and spring semesters, a total of 13 graduate students were assessed by a panel of graduate faculty for their ability to orally communicate their research in a written thesis. Faculty found that 6 students (46.1%) exceeded expectations, 5 students (38.5%) met expectations, and 2 students (15.4%) failed to meet expectations. Thus, 84.6% of anthropology MA students met or exceeded expectations by demonstrating their ability to orally synthesize literature relevant to their area of thesis specialization. Although this is an increase compared to last year's result of 66.6% of students meeting expectations, we did not meet our goal of at least 90% of students meeting expectations. To sustain this trend in increased student performance, faculty will continue to strongly encourage students to present their thesis research in the Anthropology Student Research Conference held each spring and provide other opportunities for feedback from faculty and their student peers before their exams.

Outcome 2

Anthropology MA students will demonstrate their ability to construct appropriate thesis research methods to answer their thesis questions.

Outcome 2 - Method 1

In the second half of MA students' second semester in the program, a panel of faculty will assess students' ability to construct appropriate research methods. Students will exceed expectations if their methods fully addressed the thesis questions and no change was needed, they will meet expectations if their methods were satisfactory but some change was needed, and they will fail to meet expectations if their design only partially or tangentially addressed the thesis questions and change was needed. Our goal is for 90% of students to meet expectations.

Outcome 2 - Method 1 - Result

In fall and spring semesters, a total of 17 graduate students were assessed for their abilities to design their thesis research. Faculty found that 7 students (41.2%) exceeded expectations, 7 students (41.2%) met expectations, and 3 students (17.6%) failed to meet expectations. Thus, 82.4% of anthropology MA students met or exceeded expectations by demonstrating their ability to construct appropriate research methods needed for their thesis research, and we did not meet our goal of at least 90% of students meeting expectations. This was a decrease compared to last year's result of 100% of students meeting expectations. To improve student performance, faculty will continue to work closely with their graduate students to ensure the students are able to develop appropriate research methodologies to address their thesis questions. Faculty will continue to require regular meetings at this stage of thesis development (e.g., weekly or bi-weekly).

Outcome 2 - Method 2

In the second half of MA students' last semester in the program, a panel of faculty will assess students' ability to implement their research methods. Students will exceed expectations if their methods implementation was completely successful, they will meet expectations if their methods implementation had only one or two minor errors, and they will fail to meet expectations if their methods implementation contained multiple errors or was inadequate. Our goal is for 90% of students to meet expectations.

Outcome 2 - Method 2 - Result

In fall and spring semesters, a total of 13 graduate students were assessed for their ability to implement their thesis research design. Faculty found that 9 students (69.2%) exceeded expectations, 3 students (23.1%) met expectations, and 1 student (7.7%) failed to meet expectations. Thus, 92.3% of anthropology MA students met or exceeded expectations by demonstrating their ability to implement their research methods in their thesis research and we met our goal of at least 90% of students meeting expectations. Additionally, these results are an increase in student performance compared to last year's result of 83.3% of students meeting expectations. To sustain this trend in student performance, faculty will continue to require regular meetings (e.g., weekly, bi-weekly or monthly) to ensure that students are correctly implementing their research design as they gather data for the thesis.

Outcome 3

Anthropology MA students will demonstrate their ability to communicate their thesis research.

Outcome 3 - Method 1

In the second half of MA students' last semester in the program, a panel of faculty will assess students' ability to communicate their research in a written thesis. Students will exceed expectations if their entire thesis was well-organized and completely understandable, they will meet expectations if their thesis had only very minor issues with organization and readability, and they will fail to meet expectations if their thesis was

sometimes or often difficult to read and understand and needed better organization. Our goal is for 90% of students to meet expectations.

Outcome 3 - Method 1 - Result

In fall and spring semesters, a total of 13 graduate students were assessed by a panel of graduate faculty for their ability to communicate their research in a written thesis. The faculty panel found that 8 students (61.5%) exceeded expectations, 4 students (30.8%) met expectations, and 1 student (7.7%) failed to meet expectations. Thus, 92.3% of the students met expectations and we met our goal of 90.0% of anthropology MA students meeting or exceeded expectations by demonstrating their ability to communicate their research in a written thesis. These results are a significant increase in student performance compared to last year's result of 66.7% of students meeting expectations. This improvement in performance is likely the result of faculty implementing the previous Action Plan including requiring students to meet with faculty on a regular basis (e.g., weekly or bi-weekly) as well as providing targeted feedback to students and facilitate opportunities for graduate students to learn from each other during the writing stages of their theses.

Outcome 3 - Method 2

In the second half of MA students' last semester in the program, a panel of faculty will assess students' ability to orally communicate their research in a formal thesis defense. Students will exceed expectations if the oral communication of their thesis was clear and the student convincingly defended their thesis, they will meet expectations if the oral communication of their thesis was mainly clear and the student capably defended their thesis, and they will fail to meet expectations if the oral communication of their thesis was mediocre or poor and the student adequately defended, or was unable to defend, their thesis. Our goal is for 90% of students to meet expectations.

Outcome 3 - Method 2 - Result

In fall and spring semesters, a total of 13 graduate students in their final semester of the MA program were assessed as to their ability to orally communicate their research in a formal thesis defense. The faculty panel found that 10 students (76.9%) exceeded expectations, 2 students (15.4%) met expectations, and 1 student (7.7%) failed to meet expectations. Thus, 92.3% of anthropology MA students met or exceeded expectations by demonstrating their ability to implement their research methods in their thesis research and we met our goal of at least 90% of students meeting expectations. This was an increase in student success when compared to last year's results (83.3%). This improvement in student performance is likely the result of faculty strongly encouraging students to present their thesis presentations in the Anthropology Student Research Conference held each spring and to attend thesis defenses presented by other students in their subfields prior to defending their own research.

Outcome 4

The academic program will promote and realize gains in student success.

Outcome 4 - Method 1

Student retention success will be measured by observing one year retention rates of students enrolled in the academic program from their first to second year. Data will be obtained from the university's certified enrollment records at the end of the fall semester. Rates of retention success will be expected to be at or above the university average for this level of program.

Outcome 4 - Method 1 - Result

A total of 71.4% (N=15/21) of anthropology MA majors were retained in the program from fall 2021 to fall 2022. This is lower than the university average of 83.5% (N=824/987) for all master's students. To improve retention rates, faculty mentors will continue to meet with students on a regular basis in fall and spring semesters to discuss progress in the program and provide support specific to a student's needs. Additionally the department will continue to host social events for student and faculty that are designed to provide students with interactions with Anthropology faculty outside of class and advisor meetings.

Outcome 4 - Method 2

Student graduation success will be measured by observing the number of graduates from the academic program in during the fall, spring, and summer semesters and comparing the number of graduates to the number of students enrolled in the program. Data will be obtained from the university's certified enrollment records for the fall, spring, and summer semesters. The number of graduates is expected to be at or above the university rate of graduation for this level of program.

Outcome 4 - Method 2 - Result

The number of anthropology MA majors who graduated in academic year 2022* compared to the number of students enrolled in the program was 12 out of 47 students, or 25.5%. This percentage is less than that of all master's students in the university (N=1,391/3,339 or 41.7%). To improve the graduation rate, thesis mentors will work more intensively with their advisees to structure a feasible work plan for their thesis project that can be completed in a timely manner. (*A complete data set is not yet available for academic year 2022-2023.)

Outcome 5

The academic program will promote and realize efficiency in the delivery and completion of the program.

Outcome 5 - Method 1

Delivery efficiency will be measured by reviewing the total number students enrolled in the academic program during the fall semester. Data will be

obtained from the university's certified enrollment records at the end of the fall semester. Delivery efficiency will be expected to increase from year to year.

Outcome 5 - Method 1 - Result

There was a 9.6% decrease in the number of anthropology MA majors enrolled in the program from fall 2022 (N=47) compared to fall 2021 (N=52). The faculty position is that approximately 54 students is the optimum number to have enrolled in the program each year and will work to increase enrollment in future years. To work towards this goal, faculty will continue to actively engage in student recruitment at regional, national, and international conferences.

Outcome 5 - Method 2

Completion efficiency will be measured by observing the average time-to-completion for students in the academic program. Data will be obtained from the university's certified enrollment records for the fall semester. The time-to-completion of graduates is expected to be at or below the university average for this level of program.

Outcome 5 - Method 2 - Result

For anthropology MA majors who graduated in 2021-2022*, 83.3% completed the program in two years (i.e., on-time), compared to the university rate of 65.4%. Thus we exceed the university rate and increased the percentage of students who finish in 2 years by 50% which is likely a reflection of the larger cohort that started the program in 2000. Faculty will continue the effort to improve completion rates by time-to-degree by maintaining a shift from advising to mentoring and through the institution of formal lists of responsibilities on the part of graduate students and responsibilities on the part of thesis mentors. It is essential to keep in mind that a graduate program is the beginning rather than the sum of the student's career. The mentor's "end game" requires assisting the student in successfully launching that career. To do so, students must complete their degrees in a timely manner. Faculty mentors will work more regularly (e.g., weekly or bi-weekly) with their advisees to plan and execute thesis projects to improve rates of two-year degree completion. (*A complete data set is not yet available for academic year 2022-2023.)

Approval History

Approval History Event

Outcomes Approved Level 1
Outcomes Approved Level 2
Outcomes Audit Report Submitted
Results Approved Level 1
Results Approved Level 2
Results Audit Report Submitted

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