Department of Anthropology

MA Program in Anthropology

Program/Assessment Developments 2009-2010

During the academic year, the department faculty devoted portions of three meetings to discuss elements of the graduate program. The most important topics covered included the following items:

1. Discussion of the appropriateness of the Anthropological Theory ! and !! graduate seminars, a two semester sequence course. We discussed the positioning of the course as the foundation for the graduate program and the necessity for ensuring the course’s broad coverage of theory from the mid-1800s to the beginning of the 21st century.

Most of the debate centered on the difficulty associated with bringing together or synthesizing the theoretical underpinnings of archaeology, cultural anthropology, and biological anthropology, yet it was decided that the efforts were worth the time and energy.

It was decided that Professors Clifford Brown and Max Kirsch would continue another year with the sequence, after which it would pass to Professors Susan Brown and Arlene Fradkin.

2. It was decided that some graduate students were moving away before finishing the thesis and then attempted to complete final steps from a distance. There was concern that moving away from the university was taking their attention away from finishing.

The faculty decided to institute a thesis defense as a formal, final step to the completion of the MA degree for new students. Students will have to be present for this final event.

3. Four graduate student awards for research/thesis writing were given in April, with the stipulation that the students remain in residence at the university to finish up the thesis work.

4. The online grad course “Professional Development” finished up its first year. Susan Brown is covering professional standards that the department expects from students for both their teaching assignments and research projects.

Michael Harris

Chair, Department of Anthropology