### 41th Annual Western Departments of Anthropology and Sociology Undergraduate Research Conference

ABSTRACT:

Research Goal: The goal of our research was to design a research program that will create career networking opportunities for students while examining the role anthropologists play in the tech world, and more broadly the evolving role of anthropology in the 21st century. We are interested in the ways that Anthropology is changing from its traditional research role and purview to integrate with design of technology products that aim to solve problems facing consumer subsets and society as a whole. In the wake of funding cuts to career services on college campuses, we hope to design a program within the anthropology department that identifies emerging career paths for Anthropology graduates, creates relationships between the department and industry professionals, and informs an evolving cultural anthropology curriculum.

Body of Literature:

Gunn, Wendy. *Design Anthropology*. N.p.: Berg, 2013. Print.

Design Anthropology, as Wendy Gunn describes, is an emerging subdiscipline of anthropology that is still being defined by both professionals and academia. Gunn offers several definitions and implications from various disciplinary viewpoints. She further explains the interconnectedness of design to solve 21st century problems.

Stickdorn, Marc, and Jakob Schneider. *This Is Service Design Thinking: Basics, Tools, Cases*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley, 2011. Print.

Service Design Thinking is a variation of the Design Thinking methodology, but with an implementation in the service industry. Service Design is an emerging field that uses anthropological tools and methods in order to understand both service provider and service user. An emphasis is made on its multidisciplinary approach yielding in the five principles of Service Design Thinking: 1) User-Centered, 2) Co-Creative, 3) Sequencing, 4) Evidencing, and 5) Holistic.

Chipchase, Jan. "Jan Chipchase: Design Anthropology." *PopTech*. Proc. of PopTech : PopCasts : Jan Chipchase: Design Anthropology. N.p., n.d. Web. 10 Feb. 2014. <<http://poptech.org/popcasts/jan_chipchase_design_anthropology>>.

Chipchase explains how anthropological tools and methods are used to solve real world problems. He provides insight into using ethnography to observe cultural and ethical aspects in order to understand how particular business processes in different parts of the world run. Chipchase points out this being a crucial first step in the design process, or before it even begins.

Waloszek, Gerd. "Introduction to Design Thinking." *SAP Design Guild --*. SAP AG, 1 Sept. 2012. Web. 10 Feb. 2014. <<http://www.sapdesignguild.org/community/design/design_thinking.asp>>.

Waloszek provides an introduction to Design Thinking as it is being implemented in one of the largest software companies in the world. It is a an insight into how the Design Thinking methodology is being implemented as a problem-solving approach. The emphasis of Design Thinking in this context is that of understanding the end-user by employing ethnographic methods.

Methodology: Our initial research design included identifying a target population, generating quantitative and qualitative survey and interview questions, and recruiting participants using networking techniques that mirrored the career exploration process. We worked in an uncharted space, which made it difficult to implement a strict research design. We struggled with how to approach top-level executives and using the norms of the business world. As we worked, a research framework developed organically.

Findings: We repeatedly ran into the question of when to stop collecting data and start synthesizing, fearing that we had not collected enough data for clear patterns to emerge. Also of concern was how to refine the scope of our questions so that we could generate meaningful data and provide relevant answers to our research questions. Our research and interviews indicated that ethnographic methods are used by applied anthropologists on collaborative teams including engineers and MBAs.

Theoretical implications: We found that our process of research and synthesis was iterative and closely resembled the design thinking model, indicating overlap between the fields of design and social research. Anthropologists concerned with the future of ethnographic methods should ask what is included in the sweet spot between anthropology and design, what is left out, and whether the values supported by the shared methods are congruent with the goals of cultural anthropology today.