



THE HEAT IS GETTING TURNED UP!

With so much turmoil, frustration, anger, and sadness swirling around universities due to recent mandates, it is difficult to remain positive. However, we urge all academic anthropology programs and departments to focus on those aspects of academic life over which they have control.

ENROLLMENT ISSUES

One concern has been declining student enrollments—at all levels, but especially among anthropology majors. ACRN has produced an Instructor Tool called [Boosting Anthropology Enrollments](#). The ideas in it were generated largely by ACRN interns Jon Geyer, Irene Greene, Zahra Malik and JJ Wu. This tool offers numerous strategies that anthropology programs and departments can implement to improve their numbers.

We grouped the strategies into three categories:

1) Curriculum Changes

You will see some that entail modifying existing courses by adding class projects or being explicit with students about the skills they are learning, while others involve developing new courses aimed at other majors.

2) Relationship Building

The relationship strategies range inviting alumni to Zoom into your courses to coordinating visits of small groups of anthropology majors to speak to student groups at area community colleges and high schools, and more! Another useful connection is the Career Services Center on your campus.

3) Marketing and Public Outreach

Your website is the first stop that prospective students and their parents make to learn about your program. Strategies are included to keep its content updated and fresh. You will also want to promote your department or program through marketing materials, frequent events, outreach to your press officer, and your local news outlets.

OUR NEWS

Save the Date

Next Network-wide Meeting
Thurs., March 20 at
4:00 p.m. EST
Zoom link: <https://zoom.us/j/97485978446>

NEW NEWSLETTER FORMAT

ACRN has a new format for the bi-monthly newsletter. We are grateful for the design skills of Emma Pramuk, one of our interns this semester. Thank you, Emma!



Emma Pramuk

**This formatting change is
the first of several that you
will see over the next
couple of months!**



CAREER READINESS ISSUES

Of course, boosting enrollments will not address all the pressures with which universities are dealing. However, the pressure to build career readiness into the curriculum can be managed. Several new Instructor tools, now posted on ACRN's website, can help!

If you take the suggestions found in [A Better ANTH 101](#), your introductory anthropology course is sure to be the talk of your campus.

This Instructor tool recommends three integrated areas of focus of the content you teach:

- “Big Ideas”
- “Creative Projects” and
- “Meaningful Careers.”

Mike Wesch (Kansas State) is well known for his introductory course which has its own free textbook, *The Art of Being Human*. Mike was one of the authors of this new tool in which he suggests moving away from the traditional topics (e.g., social organization, language, economy) and toward “big ideas” or issues of the day. He also includes “challenges” (e.g., meeting a stranger to capture that person’s story).

Aimee Huard (Great Bay Community College), another author of this tool, recommends incorporating projects into the course. — whether they are “challenges,” methods-oriented, or skill-based. For example, students will complete an “un-essay” (e.g., video, podcast) connected to a domain of anthropology.

The third component of the revitalized course involves introducing students to meaningful careers. Assigning students to view career videos or read career profiles related to the “big issues” is one way. Another possibility is zooming in practitioners with expertise in those areas.



Boosting Anthropology Enrollments

Student enrollments are an important metric for measuring the health of a department. Anthropology enrollments and number of declared majors are decreasing, putting a number of anthropology departments at risk of shrinking, shuttering, or being combined with other departments. A variety of strategies are outlined in this tool to boost the number of students in your programs. Successful implementation requires planning, consensus, and collaboration over a period of several years as well as the institutionalization of arrangements so that gains do not disappear.

Why are anthropology enrollments falling?

- Negative press about anthropology and outdated public perception
- Pressure from legislators, administrators and parents for employability and greater attention to career readiness
- Growing emphasis on career readiness works against those anthropology departments that cannot clearly demonstrate their workforce relevance
- Overall reduction in General Education requirements
- Opportunities to take introductory college courses through less expensive community colleges, online, or in high school
- Competition from diversity-oriented courses (e.g., gender studies, African American studies)
- Demographic shift leading to fewer people enrolling in college overall

Why boost anthropology enrollments?

- Higher enrollments in introductory classes will eventually mean more majors, thereby increasing:
 - demand for courses and instructors
 - increased student exposure to anthropological thinking
 - opportunities for students to learn from each other
- More majors mean more anthropology graduates whose departments have adapted, reducing the possibility of cuts, downsizing, or closure
- More graduates from career ready programs mean more and better jobs and greater awareness of anthropology's relevance and value across workplaces

Starting a Departmental Enrollment Initiative

Do we really need to take on this enrollment initiative?

- Anthropology BA's have dropped 23% between 2011-23 (U.S. Dept. of Education, IPEDS, <https://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/>)
- This decline has reduced the pool of graduate students and the number of new professors and staff hired

What does a departmental enrollment initiative entail?

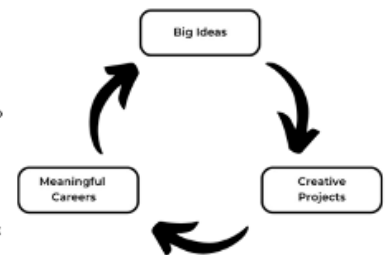
It is a comprehensive, department-wide approach involving instructors, staff, and students with the goal of being student focused.



A Better ANTH 101

Students' first exposure to anthropology typically occurs in an introductory college course on the subject. A key goal for instructors is to engage students and help them see the potential of anthropology in their lives and work. For a variety of reasons (e.g., pressure from legislators and administrators, reduction in General Education requirements), anthropology is struggling to remain a vibrant and viable discipline. This tool outlines three integrated areas of focus with which you can rethink and rebuild your Anthropology 101 course whether you are teaching in person or online:

1. **Inspire students to contemplate big ideas about what it means to be human:** Urge students to explore new viewpoints, interpretations, and questions as they attempt to make sense of the world. Help them learn to open up their minds in new ways.
2. **Create projects to put these big ideas into action:** Encourage students to think creatively and apply these concepts through specific projects “out in the world.”
3. **Make these big ideas meaningful to their career aspirations:** Help students see the many ways in which anthropology applies to the diversity of work experiences, including their own. Offer examples of anthropology's usefulness and relevance in solving problems in organizations and communities.



Focus 1: Find the Big Ideas

1. Emphasize the Why.

Jessica Ables studied the best storytellers of our time and came up with a simple and memorable “XY” formula. X is what your story is about whereas Y is why it is interesting. When teaching, anthropologists often focus on a topic (where X = subsistence, language, culture, and political systems, among other domains).

Yet, every X has a Y (a Why)—a reason why it is important to teach. Review the X's (topics) on your syllabus. In every lecture, identify the Y for each topic and make it explicit. The Y's represent your big ideas.



Another Instructor tool, [Bringing Anthropological Practice into the Classroom](#), offers numerous reasons for incorporating practitioner work into courses. **Andrew Walsh** (Western U), author of this tool, notes the importance of anthropology in practical problem solving.

Exposure to the careers and typical issues anthropology degree holders face at work will help strengthen student understanding of the value of their major. Students will come to recognize that they too will use the concepts, theories, and methods from anthropology to address problems in their careers as well as lives.



PRACTITIONER EMPLOYMENT ISSUES

Recently, practice took a hit for many anthropologists working in tech. Now, those working in the federal government are losing their jobs, with far-reaching consequences for other sectors where anthropologists work.

Fortunately, many are trying to help by posting job boards and/or opportunities. For example, here are a few senior opportunities on [LinkedIn](#).

The *Chronicle of Higher Education* is holding a **free Virtual Career Fair on March 19, 12:00-4:00 p.m. Eastern**. Here are some details of the event:

- Engage with recruiters from renowned colleges and universities
- Learn about open positions in teaching, research, administration, and more
- Connect directly with hiring managers through live audio and video chat
- Apply confidently to job opportunities that fit your experience
- Take part in virtual sessions that offer expert job-search advice and provide insights about our professional development programs.



Bringing Anthropological Practice into the Classroom

Students are often drawn to anthropology by discovering its intriguing potential, even if they do not see an obvious connection to a job upon graduation. Yet, as graduation approaches, the question inevitably arises: [What can you do with a degree in anthropology?](#) Anthropology instructors can do better than answering this question with vaguely encouraging platitudes such as, "Whatever you like!"

One approach that has shown great promise is to assign practitioner work in every course, not just courses entitled "applied" or "practicing" anthropology. Starting with first-year students, emphasize that much of "anthropology" occurs in workplaces where the majority of students will be employed after securing their degrees: industry, nonprofits, and government. Those workplaces represent a fieldwork frontier, an exploration into the distinctive worlds of organizations, employers, and clients. And, students will appreciate that practitioners use various formats (e.g., publications, videos, presentations, podcasts) to describe their career paths, experiences, and projects.

Why assign or encourage students to learn about the work of practicing anthropologists?

Exposing students to work which involves practical problem solving:

- Allows them to imagine a variety of projects, jobs, or careers they might pursue
- Helps students recognize that organizational leaders seek insights into how their workplaces can become more effective, how they can address user/consumer/patient concerns as well as supplier issues, and how they can contribute to society generally
- Provides students with knowledge of specific cases when presenting the value of anthropological perspectives to others (e.g., hiring managers, colleagues)
- Enables individual study and class discussion on how anthropological perspectives, approaches, methods, and insights are applied in a variety of problem-solving contexts beyond the classroom
- Encourages students to think critically by considering the many factors that enable and/or limit the effectiveness of anthropological approaches to the issues they care about
- Demonstrates to institutions, funders and, most importantly, themselves that anthropology's value includes research but goes beyond it to problem solving and implementation of change
- Helps instructors to consider and keep up to date with practitioner work and trends that they might otherwise miss

Should the research, evaluation, and work experiences of practitioners be confined to courses in "applied" or "practicing anthropology?"

The answer is "No!"

Our Newest Intern Megan O'Brien-Rene



Megan is a recent graduate of California State University Northridge with a major in anthropology. She has a strong interest in cultural and applied anthropology, particularly focused on research and advocacy. She will be conducting focus groups with undergraduates to learn the best ways of promoting anthropology on campus and out in the community.



GREAT CAREER RESOURCES

Courtesy of Suanna Selby Crowley

Anthropology Jobs

- AAA: <https://careercenter.americananthro.org/jobs>
- NAPA's Job Search Resource List of Lists: <https://practicinganthropology.org/mentoring-career/position-listings/>
- UN Cultural Heritage jobs listings: <https://unjobs.org/themes/cultural-heritage>
- EPIC: <https://www.epicpeople.org/jobs/>

Museum Jobs

- American Alliance of Museums (job board): <https://aam-us-jobs.careerwebsite.com>
- New England Museum Association: <https://nemanet.org>

NGOs and Nonprofits

- Philanthropy News Digest: <https://philanthropynewsdigest.org/jobs>
- Work for Good: <https://www.workforgood.org>

Private High School Teaching Positions

- NAIS: <https://careers.nais.org/jobs/>

Archaeology and Heritage Jobs

- PreservationDirectory.com: <https://www.preservationdirectory.com/PreservationBlogs/ArticleListings.aspx?catid=3>
- American Association of State and Local History: <https://jobs.aaslh.org/>
- American Cultural Resources Association: <https://acra-crm.org/jobs/>
- Society for American Archaeology: <https://careers.saa.org/>

UNDERGRAD MENTORSHIP AWARD

Spread the word *quickly* to **Juniors** you know. This award pairs anthropology majors that are Juniors with two mentors—one from practice and one from academia.

Offered by the American Anthropological Association, mentees receive a \$500 award and complimentary AAA membership along with membership in either NAPA or NASA. Read more about it and apply [here](#).

“... What I was hoping for from this program, and fortunately got, was seeing what cultural anthropologists could do apart from becoming a professor.”
—Awardee

Deadline: March 1, 2025.



Archaeology and Heritage Jobs continued

- **Society for Historical Archaeology Career Guide:** https://sha.org/documents/corrected_sha_careers.pdf
- **Society for Historical Archaeology (job board):** <https://sha.org/job-board/>
- **Society of Black Archaeologists:** <https://www.societyofblackarchaeologists.com/jobs-board/>
- **Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (UK):** <https://www.archaeologists.net/jis/jobs>
- **British Columbia Association of Professional Archaeologists:** <https://www.bcapa.ca/careers/jobs/>
- **Cornell Institute of Archaeology & Material Studies (academic and post doc positions mostly in Classics):** <https://archaeology.cornell.edu/job-listings>
- **Conservation (job board):** <https://www.conservationjobboard.com/tag/archaeology-jobs>

DAI IS HELPING PROGRAMS TO ADAPT

As part of its Departmental Advisory Initiative (DAI), ACRN leaders consulted with two anthropology programs during a three-day period from February 10-12.

The bulk of these engagements involves moderating discussions about how the program could improve student career readiness. ACRN leaders lean heavily on analyses of SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) responses offered by six to eight members of a small working group. They also take into account the local ecosystem in which students might be placed for internships and projects.

IS DAI FOR YOU?

Career readiness consulting could be helpful in your program's future. That is what the Anthropology program at the University of Michigan-Dearborn thinks. They are the newest Departmental Advisory Initiative (DAI) entrant.



Learn more about what ACRN offers [here](#).

ACRN works with your department (or program) for one year to make sure your implementation plan is as successful as possible!



WHAT DID WE LEARN AT OSU?

A key lesson ACRN leaders Elizabeth Briody and Susan Squires was that planning for change is contingent upon the anthropology program's mission and vision statements. A basic structure emerges for identifying and implementing changes when the mission statement describes a clear and concise purpose, and the vision statement represents an aspirational perspective of the program's future.

WHAT DID WE LEARN AT ECU?

ACRN leaders Jennifer Studebaker and Riall Nolan found that the distinctions between practice, applied, and academic are still debated, but framing anthropologists as problem solvers allows everyone to see themselves in the picture, including students. All four subfields have something to teach students when it comes demonstrating the power of an anthropological perspective and methods in addressing big questions and finding solutions that have an impact.

THE PRACTICE ACADEMY INITIATED

The Practice Academy is ACRN's online training program. Its goal is to provide a basic understanding of what practice is and what practitioners do. The first two modules--"What is Practice?" and "The History of Practice?" have been drafted and reviewed thanks to Riall Nolan, Ken Erickson, JJ Wu, and Angela Ramer.

The initial "curriculum" focuses on the topics along the outer spokes of the Career Ready Curriculum. Each topic (or module) is intended to last one hour, much like a webinar, and contain a packet of materials:

- an outline for instruction
- basic content to be introduced (in PowerPoint format)
- readings and other background materials
- some discussion questions
- relevant tools and exercises to provide students a chance to practice what they are learning
- other suggestions.



**Oregon State
University**



ECU



**See you on
Thurs., March 20
at 4:00 p.m. Eastern!**