3/25/21 DRAFT Career Readiness Commission:
A Straw Man Proposal on a
U.S.-based, Anthropology-Wide Effort to Prepare Students for Any Workplace

Purpose: Tackle the employment crisis facing anthropology graduates (BA, MA, PhD) interested in pursuing multiple career paths
- Develop the framework and guidelines for career readiness into anthropology programs
- Identify ways of incorporating professionalization skills and applications of anthropology's value into curricula and co-curricular activities so that students are able to navigate the job market with assurance

Rationale: Faculty and instructors in academic anthropology departments need guidance on the best ways of confronting these crises. Anthropology professional associations are positioned to respond through the enormous potential of their members' expertise, networking capabilities, and pioneering initiatives.

An appropriate format for responding to these interlocking crises is a *time-limited Commission* composed of members from anthropology associations. A Commission can serve as a respected body that reflects a disciplinary-wide perspective and speaks with a single voice.

One Commission strength lies in its linkages to an array of Anthropology Associations which hold influence and authority as professional societies. The Commission can draw on the status of Associations to encourage the needed changes in student training. (A subsequent body can be formed to recognize and reward anthropology programs that successfully integrate changes into their curricular and co-curricular activities.)

Another strength of a Commission is its occupationally-diverse membership which crosses all four subfields, along with its inclusion of anthropology faculty and students as participants. These different perspectives and experiences can contribute to a robust package of deliverables.

Background: Graduating students must be equipped with the knowledge, tools, experiences, and skills so that they can participate confidently in internship and job searches, educate potential employers about their competencies, secure employment, and apply their expertise effectively in *any* workplace.

Students face a dual problem. First, too many anthropology programs still train students only for academic jobs, in part because their faculty/lecturers do not have practice experience, strongly value practice, or have other priorities. Moreover, the academic anthropology job market is saturated with 400 applicants per position. Second, many employers are unfamiliar with the knowledge, approach, and capabilities that anthropology graduates might bring to their organizations. Many entry-level job descriptions do not include anthropology as prospective applicants. Thus, the problem of career readiness in anthropology has direct implications for employability.

Some Associations have worked together effectively on initiatives (e.g., WAPA and SfAA on the Praxis Award, NAPA/AAA and SAA on the Careers Expo). But there has not been a disciplinary-wide collaboration involving

- Anthropology associations from all four subfields
- Occupationally-diverse anthropologists, and
- Anthropology students.

An anthropology-wide commission can build on and learn from past efforts to achieve successful outcomes.

Timeframe: One year.

Member Associations: AAA, NAPA, SfAA, COPAA, AAPA, SAA, RPA, LSA, WAPA, High Plains, ….

Commission Structure: Three types of committees involving association representatives are planned:

- **Executive Committee** – Small group, chaired by Elizabeth K. Briody, and responsible for overseeing the Commission's work; develops and disseminates quarterly updates on progress to Association leaders; each Committee member serves as a liaison to one Working Group
- **Working Groups** – Units of varying sizes designed to identify, create, compile, validate, and revise draft versions of deliverables; members are expected to provide informal updates to their Associations
- **Association Review Teams** – Each Association assembles small group of its members to review and approve draft versions of deliverables

Deliverables:* 1) **Framework and guidelines** for incorporating career development into academic anthropology programs
2) **Compilation of resources** (e.g., tools, exercises, syllabi, training materials) for developing and enhancing student professionalization skills and career readiness.
3) **Practical suggestions** for integrating compiled resources into curricula and co-curricular activities.

Success Metrics:* Attainment of metrics serves as indicators of process completion as well as receptivity and use by the anthropology community
Short-term metrics as Commission's work concludes:

- Association agreement to identify two anthropologists and one student interested in devoting time and energy to the Commission's work
- Association willingness to convene internal Review Team to assess the Commission's deliverables and decide to approve their implementation
- Association promotion of the Commission's deliverables through its membership and professional networks

Long-term metrics involve creation of disciplinary-wide evaluation team

- Anthropology Dept. stated intention to adopt deliverables
- Anthropology Dept. adoption and integration of Commission's deliverables into curriculum (bronze, silver, gold levels)

*Additional deliverables and metrics may be identified through the Commission's work