The Way Forward: What's Next?

CAREER READINESS COMMISSION

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The Rise of Practice in Anthropology

- "Practice" is the application of anthropology to issues of societal concern, done outside the walls.
- Practice is now the norm for most of our graduates.
- Practice will be the determinant of what happens to anthropology in the future.
- But practice is still marginal in many ways to the disciplinary mainstream.

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Where We Are Today

Practitioners now outnumber university-based anthropologists.

Practitioners share a set of core values:

- They are focused on results.
- Their work is oriented toward clients, not peers.
- They co-think and co-create with others.
- They produce change and improvement.

Practice generates energy, innovation and discovery.

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What We've Learned So Far

We have no overall model of training for anthropologists.

"We are doing all this [work] in anthropology is a planless sort of way . . . with no understanding or knowledge of how we are distributing manpower in anthropology, and therefore, necessarily no understanding of how we should distribute our efforts except through rarely voiced but deep prejudices that the best schools should concern themselves with the most esoteric work in the most ivory tower manner."

Nor are we training our students to be able to actually do anything. Instead, we teach them "critical enquiry" and leave it at that.

As a result, our students are under-prepared for work outside the university.

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Where We Need To Be

We need to add a professional arm to our discipline.

We do this by bringing the experience of practice more fully into the academy.

"[The] compartmentalization [between theory and praxis] is false and has no place in the context of an unfurling new world order in whose presence anthropology has a far from public face and risks becoming divided between those in " ivory towers " and those who are exiled from academia because of the work they do.

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Moving Ahead: What's Next for the Commission?

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1. Building ***capacity*** in instructors and departments for better preparation.

2. Developing professional ***components*** for training.

3. ***Connecting*** practitioners with one another and with the academy.

4. Promoting a ***literature*** of practice.

5. Increasing and enhancing our ***public presence*** and voice.

Conclusion

Anthropology – its core values, its perspectives, and its methods – is going to be enormously valuable to humankind as we finally begin to take seriously the resolution of the global grand challenges which have now emerged. Because if one definition of intelligence is the ability to make finer and finer distinctions that really matter, then ***anthropology makes us smarter***.

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