

Practitioner Experiences Across Work Sectors: Insights for Students and their Educators



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Executive Summary

Group 3 conducted a rapid assessment of hiring practices and work experiences as a part of the Career Readiness Commission's overall goal of improving career training for anthropology graduates. This approach enabled us to scope the work landscape of anthropology practitioners quickly and productively and provide salient insights and recommendations.

We analyzed practitioner narratives from a small, purposeful sample of anthropology-trained professionals in varied career settings. Semi-structured interviews with 17 professionally active practitioners were conducted between September and November 2021. Interview questions focused on the job search and hiring process, job description and work experiences, and required knowledge and skills. Participants emphasized the value of mastering multiple methods related to qualitative and quantitative research. Participants stated that their knowledge of anthropological theories formed a foundation for their work, and that anthropological perspectives guided professional directions and inquiry. Close to half of the participants were employed by for-profit organizations in the fields of user experience, design, and consulting, and one participant working in UX and design was currently employed by a university. The remaining participants were employed in the nonprofit and government sectors within the areas of civic and community services, health, philanthropy, and the military.

We end this report with salient insights and recommendations for academic programs—and for the wider anthropological field—to prepare graduates for their future careers more effectively. These recommendations include a) providing more courses on diverse anthropological methods and cross-disciplinary topics, b) improving communication, collaboration, and networking within and outside anthropology, and c) developing continuing education materials and resources to meet the changing career landscape. Lastly, we provide recommendations for future research that builds upon this work.

Purpose & Goals

The focus of this Career Readiness Commission report is practitioner work experiences across work sectors (e.g., government, private industry, nonprofit). As members of Group 3, we accepted the challenge of investigating the salient characteristics of these experiences. We employed rapid assessment techniques and a purposeful sample, given that we were engaged in exploratory work. Our report presents the insights of anthropologists in the public, private, and nonprofit sectors who are actively using their anthropological training in their work. The goals for this report include the following:

- Describe practitioner views of their careers in relation to their training
- Identify similarities and differences in practice careers across work sectors
- Inform resources for students' career development
- Specify areas of opportunity for continued investigation.

Methodology

Led by Jennifer Studebaker, and previously by Robert McCallum, Group 3 interviewed 17 practitioners about their careers between September and November 2021. The interviews were semi-structured and targeted information pertaining to the interviewee's work history and roles. This focus included the hiring process, skills and competencies required, professional networks, and advice for training future practitioners (See Appendix A for the interview guide).

Five interviewers conducted the interviews, selecting interviewees from their own personal networks; they also had the option of capturing their own experience. This sampling method was chosen for its speed and efficiency as this research was being conducted on a volunteer basis with a short time window. The interviews averaged approximately 45 minutes and were conducted via Zoom or other video conferencing software. Interviewers had the option of taking notes manually or using transcription software. We included interviewee statements by Group 3 members.

To supplement the interview data, we gathered job descriptions from online job sites. These sites included LinkedIn, USAJobs, and specific company sites as well as the American Anthropological Association (AAA) and EPIC job pages.

Analysis was conducted collaboratively. Two-member teams analyzed sets of responses (e.g., pertaining to skills). Given that we were unable to cover all the subfields and the domains within them, we encourage building on this research in the future by using a larger, more diverse sample.

Results

Job Search and Placement

Hiring Process

The practitioners were asked about the hiring process that led to their current roles. A personal contact played a key role in over a third (6 out of 17) of the participants being recruited or hired for their current role. These personal contacts often helped practitioners circumvent the formal application process by connecting them directly with the hiring manager for the role. One participant never saw the formal job posting for their role, and instead, communicated directly with the hiring manager, sending their curriculum vitae (CV) and a writing sample via email, which led to an interview. Another had a recruiter they had previously worked with reach out with an opportunity; it was the recruiter that passed along their resume to the hiring manager leading to an interview. Other jobs, such as those for members of the US military, required a formal application through a centralized system. Nevertheless, directly reaching out to the hiring manager did provide a competitive edge. Existing networks, informational interviews, and an updated LinkedIn profile are some of the pathways by which personal contacts were made.

Anthropology experience explicitly helped some (3 out of 17) of the participants get hired into their current roles, while others were hired for their other work experience or skill sets. When asked whether they were hired for their degree, one participant replied, “One hundred percent...I think that was part of why they wanted me...out of the now like 150 of us...I’m the

only one, with an Anthro degree.” Others may have mentioned their anthropological expertise as part of their job interview, although it was secondary to their other knowledge and skills.

When it comes to websites used in their job searches, eight of the participants named specific websites they visited. LinkedIn was the most popular followed by Glassdoor and Indeed. Others mentioned once were ZipRecruiter, Hitmarker (specific to the video game industry), and Twitter. For association websites, the American Anthropological Association (AAA) and EPIC were each mentioned once.

Self-Employed Business Owners

For three participants, the hiring process was not relevant, since they were currently self-employed with their own companies, while a fourth had previously founded a nonprofit but later left it in favor of pursuing another degree. For those with their own organizations, networking played a key role in establishing their companies and building their client base. For one interviewee, their Spanish-language anthropology blog was the impetus for launching their company as potential clients reached out after reading it.

Job Titles and Work Sectors

We asked our participants to share their current title and any past titles, which is visualized in the word cloud (Figure 1). The most prominent positions from the list of job titles are researcher, anthropologist, and analyst.

Figure 1. Job Title Word Cloud



Drawing on the interviewees' current and past titles and other listings from our job postings research, Table 1 lists job titles that anthropology graduates can and do go on to hold; these key words can be helpful to students and graduates during their job search. The Job Titles column is organized by the base title (e.g., Analyst, Director), while the second column lists variations in that title. The third column provides some insights regarding the sectors or areas in which these job titles may be found, although many titles are so general that they are found in all sectors (e.g., Manager). The key words in front of the title help distinguish the specific characteristics of that role. For example, one would expect to see a Consumer Insights Analyst role in a for-profit organization, such as a market research firm.

Table 1. Prospective Job Titles for Anthropology Graduates

Job Titles	Title Variations	Found in: (But Not Limited To)
Analyst	Account Analyst Consumer Insights Analyst Data Analyst Data Systems Analyst Election Research Analyst Information Operations Analyst Leadership Analyst Sr Insights Analyst, Branch Experience Measures Qualitative Analyst	Government, For-profit and nonprofit organizations focused on research and/or technology
Anthropologist	Business Anthropologist Cultural Anthropologist Design Anthropologist Chief Digital Anthropologist Digital Anthropologist	All sectors - sometimes chosen title
Associate	Postdoctoral Research Associate	Universities, but may include other research focused institutions
Consultant	Associate Consultant Senior Consultant	Consulting firms
Coordinator	Coordinator of Administration & Consulting Public Affairs Coordinator Office Coordinator	All sectors, but frequently seen in nonprofit contexts
Director	Assistant Director of Undergraduate Studies Director of Cultural Mindsets Research Director, Evaluation, Learning, and Impact Stories Director of Research	All sectors
Doula	Abortion Doula Birth/Pregnancy Doula Death Doula	Healthcare
Ethnographer	Gaming Ethnographer Lead Ethnographer	For-profit organizations focused on research and/or technology
Expert	Subject Matter Expert	Federal Government
Fellow	Presidential Management Fellow	Government, Foundations, Universities
Intern		All sectors

Manager	Account Manager Data, Research and Insights Manager Marketing and Operations Manager Product Manager Project Manager User Research Manager Supervisory Resource Manager	All sectors
Nurse	Public Health Nurse	Healthcare
Officer	Information Operations Officer Officer in Charge, MISO Senior Program Officer	Military, Philanthropic Foundations
Professor	Faculty Lecturer Visiting Assistant Professor Visiting Professor	Universities
Researcher	Associate Researcher Consultant Researcher Data Researcher Sr Design Researcher Market Researcher Senior UX Researcher UX Researcher	All sectors, but most likely in for-profit organizations focused on research and/or technology
Specialist	Cultural Resources Program Specialist Human Factors Engineering Specialist Project and Business Integration Specialist Program Specialist Research Health Science Specialist	All sectors
Strategist	Content Strategist Senior Principal Industry Strategist	All sectors, but most likely found in for-profit organizations
Writer	Content Writer, Grant Writer	All sectors

Interviewees mentioned a few additional roles which were excluded from the above table. Two roles, Quality Assurance (UX) and communications/marketing, lacked a base title.

Required Methods and Skills

We wanted to understand which skills practitioners used from their education, skills they wished they had learned, and what training or resources would help them succeed in their careers. We present the highlights here (Refer to Appendix C for full details).

Methods were the most frequently mentioned topic across all our questions. There was also an interest in continuing education around methods. We discovered an interest in new techniques, particularly those used in collaborative research, such as rapid qualitative analysis and multi-coder processes.

Flexibility is vital when building a practicing anthropology career. Many of our practitioners followed non-linear paths to their current roles. They had to learn how to relate their experience and skills to what their employer sought. Several practitioners indicated that tools and resources for translating the skills they learned during their education into the vernacular used by employers and clients would have been valuable. This type of resource could help students, their advisors, those moving into practice, and current practitioners.

The practitioners often benefited from skills and experiences outside of their anthropological education. Some actively recommended that students diversify their education and exposure to other disciplines. Students could acquire skills such as programming languages, web design, and statistics during their degree. However, there is also an abundance of freely-available resources for learning on one's own. Other skills were developed based on experience; for example, being on stage in the theater prepared them for public speaking and improvisation. As one practitioner emphasized, "Anthropology is only one part of a student's life; students should be encouraged to see the values in their passions, experiences, and backgrounds outside of the field as well when considering their career path."

Anthropology Skills Currently Used

Participants were asked about the anthropology-based skills that they employ in their work. Anthropological methods were the most frequently mentioned, with 16 out of 17 stating that they use anthropological methods in their current work. Regarding specific methods, interviewing skills were mentioned the most often, followed by general fieldwork and observation skills. Analyzing and managing "big data" was mentioned twice. Big data is a common buzzword in research and technology industries, referring to the quantitative analysis of large datasets for insights and decision-making. Statistics was also named as a skill needed. Other methods included assemblage studies, network analysis, and workflow diagrams.

The second most common type of knowledge and skill used was theory (11 out of 17), though the theory or framework used is often not named and instead provides a foundation for their work. A little over half said they employed an anthropological perspective in their work, while a little less than half used anthropological knowledge. An anthropological perspective is differentiated from theory in that it describes how the practitioner understands the world as a result of their anthropological education, rather than the direct application of a theory or theoretical framework. Knowledge represents the specialized information that was learned as a part of their anthropology education and training, often focused on a specific population or discipline.

Sector-Specific Skills and Training

When it comes to tools, Microsoft Excel was mentioned twice along with the broader suite of tools in Microsoft 365 and Google Drive. The design tools, Figma and Miro, were mentioned more than once. Tools named as useful in User Experience (UX) research were Sketch, Mural, and Optimal/Sort. For those working in web design, WordPress and the programming language HTML were recommended or required skills. For data collection, form builders and survey platforms (e.g., SurveyMonkey or Qualtrics) were used.

Other mentions included SQL, Salesforce, and Slack. SQL is a programming language used in querying and analyzing data. Salesforce is an enterprise database tool used for tracking clients, customers, and other constituents; it has reporting capabilities as well as additional services that can be purchased. Slack is a messaging tool used by many companies for internal communications and collaboration.

Analyst briefings, behavioral design, usability, and wireframing are all skills used in the UX and design areas, while cybersecurity training, Military Information Support Operations (MISO), policy, and the security clearance process were specific to those working with the military. Other skills mentioned included emotional intelligence, improvisation, and managing multiple projects.

Skills They Wish They'd Learned in School

Next, we asked what skills participants wished they had learned in school but did not. Methods rose to the top, with quantitative methods being the most missed. There were some challenges

distinguishing between “coding” in the computer language sense and “coding” as in the discourse analysis technique, but both were mentioned more than once.

The relational skills of teamwork, supervising, and collaborating, especially across disciplines, were mentioned as important skills that were not developed in school. Communication skills were seen as useful; Public Speaking was the most frequently mentioned type.

Excel was the only specific tool mentioned more than once. Understanding how to budget and manage finances was also mentioned more than once along with the specific business skills related to starting an LLC, writing an SOW (statement of work), calculating participant compensation scales, and doing taxes.

Building on what the practitioners wished they had learned in school, we asked what types of training and resources would be helpful to them in their work. Some listed resources they were currently using, but the results below are based on what they would prefer. Of the resources currently being used, EPIC’s resources and workshops were the most frequently mentioned. Methods were numerous, with rapid qualitative analysis as the most frequently requested. Networking or community spaces were also mentioned more than once.

Training/Resource Topics Requested

- **Methods training**
 - Coding
 - Meshing the qualitative & quantitative
 - Participatory techniques
 - Pile sorting
 - Quantitative methods
 - Big data
 - Qualitative Methods
 - Rapid qualitative analysis
 - User/product research
 - Visual techniques
 - Communicating succinctly to various audiences
- **Community**

- Networking
- **Topical training**
 - Policy training
 - Articulating structural racism across disciplines
- **Assemblage studies**

The list below shows the formats and features requested of the above-mentioned training and resources. Short video content, conferences, refresher materials, and content written for non-anthropologists were each mentioned more than once. While bootcamps are listed, one participant explicitly stated that bootcamps were not useful resources.

Training/Resource Formats Requested

- **Accessible Content**
 - Not behind paywall
 - Written for general/non-anthropology audiences
- **Networks**
 - Conferences
 - Online
 - Listservs
- **Continuing education & trainings**
 - Bootcamps
 - Courses
 - Executive education courses
 - Refresher materials
 - Short videos
 - Workshops/Seminars
- **Newsletters**
- **Podcasts**
- **Website(s)**

Networking and Collaboration

Networking is very important for practitioners, with many participants indicating that they would like more networking opportunities. Informational interviews are one way those networks can be expanded; participants noted that this strategy requires individual initiative to make the contact. One participant said that they drew on their anthropological training and experience doing interviews in the field to learn more about the policy world, which led to an eventual job. An interviewee suggested a directory of practitioners, organized by sector or area. Those who agree to be listed should be open to doing informational interviews and networking. LinkedIn was the most popular networking resource currently in use.

Mentors and advisors that had worked in or at least supported applied anthropology and practice had major impacts on the way graduates viewed themselves, their anthropological training, and career potential. In addition to providing much needed emotional support, mentors play a key role in exposing students to experiences where they could learn new skills; they also introduce them to larger networks. Personal contacts played a role in the most recent hiring of 6 out of 17 practitioners interviewed, though three were employed by their own companies and one was in the process of pursuing another degree.

Because networks provide community, connections, resources, and opportunities to their members, we sought to capture those in which our practitioners regularly engaged. Only 14 of the 17 interviewed were specifically asked about their networks; three others were connected through The Institute for Community Research (ICR) based in Connecticut and founded by Group 3 team member Dr. Jean J. Schensul. The network based in the Society for Applied Anthropology was the most frequently mentioned (5 out of 14), followed by EPIC (4 out of 14) and the AAA (3 out of 14). Other anthropology networks mentioned included the following:

Digital Anthropology programme at University College London

Digital Equality Networking Group

European Association of Social Anthropologists (EASA)

Global Business Anthropology Network

Monday Mafia UNT grad meeting
Oxford Digital Ethnography seminars
Veteran Affairs Anthropology Google Group
Washington Association of Professional Anthropologists

For non-anthropology networks, the most frequently mentioned was LinkedIn (4 out of 14). The list of other networks mentioned included:

Abortion Rights for Western Massachusetts
United States Air Force
Data + Society
Doula Association Group
ESOMAR (European Society for Opinion and Marketing Research)
International Coaching Federation
QRCA (Qualitative Research Consultants Association)
Research programmes of large technology companies such as Microsoft, Intel, and IBM
Response-ability Summit
The Ada Lovelace Institute
The Open Data Institute
The Turing Institute
TwitchCon
Washington Evaluation Association
Women's Foreign Policy Network

Final Recommendations from Participants

At the end of the interview, participants were invited to provide any final thoughts or feedback. We asked if they would like to share anything with their past departments or with the field of anthropology in general. Their feedback fell into the following categories:

- Building Connections with Industry and Other Disciplines
- Cultural Shifts
- Methods and Skills

- Resources
- Gratitude

Building Connections with Industry and Other Disciplines

Interviewees advised anthropology departments to gain greater familiarity with the opportunities available to their students. These opportunities include those within industry (in this context, referring to any employment opportunities in the private sector, government, and nonprofits.) A change in recruitment practices including how career experiences are evaluated would facilitate exchange between industry and academia, allowing more cross-employment and exchange of ideas. Stronger connections should be cultivated between current students and alumni practitioners as well as other departments on campus. Practitioners should be invited to serve on committees and advise departments on curriculum, hands-on work experience, and skill preparation.

There needs to be more communication with researchers and practitioners from disciplines other than anthropology as well. Conferences and career fairs play an important role as graduates are entering the job market; students should explore conferences within and beyond anthropology. Cross functional and interdisciplinary project-based courses would allow students to gain needed experience working with team members from different disciplines, since this is often the experience in the workplace.

Cultural Shifts

There are cultural shifts needed within anthropology departments and the academy in general. One participant saw a need for healing within academia to produce confident students. Healing would be the recognizing and interrupting of harmful patterns of behavior such as the deprioritizing mental health and bullying. Other issues included toxicity within departments (e.g. internal conflicts), a lack of mentorship, and the pressure to follow an academic career path despite student goals of working in business, non-profits, and government.

For PhD students, the focus on tenure-track roles as the ultimate measure of success leaves many feeling ostracized and undervalued. One participant said, “Even if they didn’t have the capacity to really help us, if they knew that that was a legitimate career path, that would have made the process so much easier.”

Sometimes a graduate anthropology degree is not necessary for a successful career using anthropology. There are many career paths that students may pursue. Honest discussions need to occur between instructors and students regarding career prospects and earning potential based on degree. One participant elaborated on this point:

“If I had the immense student debt that most people with a PhD walk out with, this (federal) job would not be financially worth that degree at all...we're so used to incredibly low paying jobs that we don't understand that, every year, that you spend in education that's supposed to be on an investment on against your future earnings...because every year...is another year that you're 1) not earning an income. And 2) not consistently increasing that income.”

Other graduates faced additional negative feedback for their career choice, since they were affiliated with the military or defense contractors. A participant addressed this issue directly:

“I know that anthropology as a whole can often be very anti-military, but I think that there's value in people who can work with the military, because I think that doing so can help fewer people be killed...One thing I like about my job is basically, our whole purpose is, how can you change a decision maker's mind without resorting to bombs and killing. To me, that's completely in line with my own personal morality. So, I think people should just be aware that there are opportunities like that out there, instead of just saying 'I'm not going to work with the military.’”

This participant saw value in their military career because of the potential impact in preventing harm to others.

Methods and Skills

Methods were frequently mentioned in participant advice to departments, students, and the field. Specific methods and skills included quantitative methods, how to communicate results quantitatively, remote ethnography methods, rapid assessment methods, and introducing processes associated with planned implementation. One participant noted, “Your next step does not need to be the obvious one,” and encouraged students to connect their interests with

anthropology and even pursue a master's degree in another field. Another recommended the use and teaching of action-focused, iterative research methods.

Resources

For students and those entering the job market, mock interviews, exposure to more practitioner guest lecturers, and a list of transferable skills would be helpful. For those currently practicing, more case studies, alternatives to peer reviewed publications, and content translated for other types of learning and audiences were seen as useful.

One participant envisioned building out an anthropology toolkit. Similar to Stanford's design thinking toolkit, it could bring anthropology to broader audiences and increase the visibility and impact of an anthropological approach. Another said, "we are not effective in creating change;" more space should be devoted in anthropological journals to discussions of change. Another suggested area of expansion pertained to the history of anthropology in relation to sociology. With a stronger historical foundation, anthropologists would learn about the work of diverse researchers that led to the creation of anthropology, individuals such as W.E.B. Du Bois.

Gratitude

When giving feedback, it is always important to celebrate what is going well. Participants expressed their appreciation for anthropology and for those that helped them develop their careers. One even went so far as to say anthropology transformed their life. Here are some responses:

"I'm so, such a believer in anthropology and its value. I think you can really change the world. Like, I honestly think that we can make the world a better place with that kind of thinking."

"I'd like to, I guess, honor...some of the mentors that I've got...that have helped me along...I wouldn't be who I am without my mentors. So, I'd just like to say that."

"I'd just like to say the work that we're doing is very rewarding and very much in line with a lot of the skills that we learned in our undergrad program."

These responses highlight the passion that many practitioners hold for anthropology and the vital importance of mentorship in career development.

Discussion

Anthropology in the Workplace

As illustrated in this report, graduates of anthropology degree programs can and do go on to have fulfilling, successful careers. The methods, theories, perspectives, and knowledge anthropology students learn as part of their education play key roles in their professional development and success in life. However, many participants stated that a major barrier to pursuing career opportunities outside of academia was the lack of acknowledgement and support from many of their professors, especially those seeking an advanced degree at research universities.

With the exception of applied anthropology departments (e.g., University of North Texas), participants stated that undergraduate and graduate students were often left to find their way into practice on their own. Some participants were criticized and pressured to change their career goals to pursue positions within academia. Others were intent on pursuing tenure-track roles at universities but landed in practice; competition on the academic job market and the low pay offered by universities were deterrents. While some felt confident in their abilities and how to employ them in the workplace, they often saw fellow graduates struggle to find their way post-graduation. Here are some participant quotes reflecting these challenges:

“I wish I had (had) better mentorship. It's like be your own mentor, but no, I would like another mentor.”

“I didn't envision having a practicing job...my graduate education did not include explicit education of methods that are sort of essential...I was never formally taught how to code data or how to analyze data...I had to learn that on my own.”

“I was very fortunate coming from my master's program, where we had a semester of qualitative and we had a semester of quantitative. I've also gone on to a PhD program where they didn't have quantitative at all...that was such a disservice to folks in my cohort, because surveys, unfortunately, again, if you're going into industry, surveys are such a big deal.”

As a consequence, many participants stated that they felt unprepared for the range of professional opportunities available to them as new anthropology graduates. Although their anthropological education served as a solid foundation, many participants suffered from detrimental gaps in knowledge—particularly in which careers were available to them, training in methods and skills that were applicable to these careers, and access to continuing education resources that empowered career advancement. These interviewees also expressed their dismay in how they were treated by some of their professors and peers in research universities.

Insights for Educators

One way to address the knowledge gaps is to build a community of practitioners that connects through networking and collaboration. Networks allow practitioners to see the possibilities for their own career and the space to explore whether a certain type of job would be right for them. While traditionally done via conferences, the recent pandemic-driven shifts into the virtual provides a wealth of opportunities for community building. For example, participants indicated that LinkedIn was the most popular networking resource currently in use. Students interested in practice should be encouraged to create a LinkedIn profile that they maintain. More attention should be given to creating spaces for connection and sharing. Whether built into virtual trainings or as monthly meetups, anthropology has the capability of bringing practitioners together with students and those working in academia.

Another strategy is to address the knowledge gap in anthropological methods. Practitioners often employ anthropological methods, although many of the methods they use were learned post-graduation. By developing and offering more methods courses on survey design and implementation, quantitative methods, and research translation, educators can prepare students more effectively for their future careers, as well as empower current practitioners in their career

advancement. After all, beyond the anthropological perspective, it is the anthropological toolkit—our methods—that help differentiate us from other researchers.

In many ways, anthropologists are uniquely situated to excel in multiple career paths. An anthropological education allows students to see the world and humankind in a new light. The anthropological approach is consistent with the worldview of many practitioners who seek to make the world a better place and improve the lives and work experiences of those around them. By acknowledging and supporting the diversity of work experiences across work sectors, educators can ensure that anthropology graduates thrive and excel in their chosen fields.

Sector-Specific Differences

Our practitioners shared a lot of similar experiences and skills sets, although there were some sector-specific differences. The largest group working in the same sector included four people in the for-profit UX and design industry. (To get a deeper, richer understanding of the requirements and skills needed for each sector, we would likely need to conduct further research within specific subfields or domains.) For these individuals, specific methods, tools, terminology, and software were expected, such as wireframing and Figma. While some benefitted from mentorship, others were self-taught. For those working with the military, expertise in certain topics (e.g., policy, MISO) were important in their hiring, and they often had highly specialized security training. Being able to get through security clearance is a requirement that might present challenges for some, including international students hoping to work in the US government.

Group 3's Next Steps

This report provides a fraction of the wealth of wisdom and insight that our practitioners shared during their interviews, but it represents the first step in the Commission's discovery process. Our group will be finding more effective and efficient ways to communicate the results of this project to Commission members and the Commission's audience, including the development of resources targeted for specific job titles and skills translation.

Jennifer Studebaker will be presenting on this assessment's findings at the 2022 Society for Applied Anthropology meeting. Two handouts based on insights from this report will be available at the Commission's booth: one focused on job titles and another on skills translation. We will use the conference as an opportunity to gather further feedback from practitioners and students.

Recommendations

Here are the Group 3's summarized recommendations based on the practitioner interviews:

- **To the Career Readiness Commission:**
 - Create a directory of practitioners
 - Organize it by Sector or Area
 - Note who is open to doing informational interviews and general networking
 - Explore how we can create spaces for connection and sharing for practitioners
 - Focus on virtual spaces to increase accessibility
 - Create a resource for translating skills learned into language meaningful to employers
 - Future areas of investigation:
 - Anthropology graduates that establish their own business or nonprofit organization
 - More focused sector-specific research, such as interviews with cultural resource managers or UX researchers

- **To Departments:**
 - Offer more and deeper methods courses
 - for undergraduates and graduate students
 - on survey design and implementation
 - on research translation
 - on quantitative methods
 - For skills training not offered in your department, encourage students to seek courses in other departments or using free resources
 - Examples include programming languages, web design, and statistics

- Offer cross-functional courses
 - Collaborate with other departments to have students work across disciplines
 - Have project-based courses with outputs that students can show employers, (e.g., website redesign)
- Build relationships with practitioners and alumni
 - Invite practitioners as guest lecturers
 - Include practitioners as committee members
- Be supportive
 - Recognize not all PhD students will be tenure-track or want tenure-track positions
 - Be a mentor or help your student find one
 - Learn more about practice and the networks available to practitioners
 - Encourage students to attend conferences in line with their career goals
 - Encourage students to make a LinkedIn profile that they maintain
 - Offer mock interviews
 - Celebrate the successes of your practitioner alumni
- **To the Field of Anthropology:**
 - Communicate more with researchers and practitioners outside of anthropology
 - Create content that can be understood by non-anthropologists
 - Publish in different formats and venues in addition to peer-reviewed journal articles
 - Create content that is accessible for general audiences
 - Talk about money
 - Openly discuss pay and the compensation expectations associated with certain fields and careers
 - Share rates for freelance work, as well as scales for compensating participants
 - Have honest discussions about student loan debt and the tradeoff in earning potential if pursuing a PhD full time
 - Create opportunities to network

- Online conferences allow for more accessible networking opportunities
- Offer continuing education opportunities for practitioners
 - Methods training
 - Formats for quick learning (e.g., short videos instead of a 90-minute workshops)

Appendix A: Practitioner Interview Guide

Block 1 - Role/Sector

1. Give a brief overview of your career path since leaving school.
 - a. What is your current job title and what sector or industry do you work in?
 - b. What have been your past job titles/roles at your current company/organization or other companies/organizations?
 - c. To what extent, if at all, do you identify as an anthropologist?
2. Are there networks of anthropologists within your organization or industry?
 - a. Do you network with anthropologists elsewhere?
 - b. Are you connected with any anthropology or other discipline or professional organizations?

Block 2 - Skills

3. Which anthropology skills, perspectives, theory, methods, and knowledge do you use in your job and in what ways?
4. What skills/professional competencies do you wish you had learned beforehand?
 - a. What skills do you wish you had learned in school that would be useful for job(s) you apply to?
 - b. Which skills did you learn in school prior to your job that were useful to you on the job?
 - c. Are there specific types of training your job/sector expects/requires (e.g., software packages)?
5. What additional anthropology skills or resources would be useful to you in your current position and in what form (workshops, youtube instructional videos, continuing education, course refreshers, methods training?)

Block 3 - Hiring Experience

6. How did you find your current position?
 - a. E.g., where do you look, who did you speak to, etc.?
 - b. Was the employer looking for an anthropologist or a skill set? (or, what was the employer looking for?)
 - c. Did you first talk with a recruiter in an HR dept or a hiring manager who you would be working with?
 - d. Did you start your own company?
 - e. Describe your application process and the materials/interactions you had to support your case for hiring (e.g., CV, resume, portfolio, recorded interview, in-person interview, etc.)
7. For your current employment, to what extent did you communicate the value of anthropology during the hiring process?
 - a. How did you name/frame/translate your skills to align with the skills required in the job posting/expected by the recruiter or hiring manager (terminology)?

8. Would an anthropology career focused website have been useful in your job search?
 - a. What sites did they visit to find opportunities, connections, and job-seeking advice?
 - b. If so, what elements of a website would you have liked to see?
 - i. Internship listing, jobs, resources, etc.

9. **Final reflection question:** What additional thoughts and feedback would you want to give to the field or your previous department regarding your training and career preparation?

Demographic Questions (Ask if not covered in main discussion)

How do you identify in regards to race and ethnicity?

How do you identify in regards to gender?

Level of anthropology degree (Undergrad, MA, PhD)? Other degrees?

Length of time out of school

What other sectors have you worked in?

Appendix B. Participant Demographics

Table B-1. Demographics (n=17)		
	%	n
How do you identify in regards to race and ethnicity?		
White/European	53%	9
Biracial/Multiracial	24%	4
Asian	6%	1
Other	6%	1
Not Collected	12%	2
Biracial/Multiracial Detail: Middle Eastern & White/European, Asian & White/European, Latino & Black/African, Pacific Islander & White/European		
How do you identify in regards to gender?		
Woman/Female	65%	11
Man/Male	24%	4
Not Collected	12%	2
Highest level of Anthropology Degree Completed		
Undergraduate (BA/BS)	29%	5
Master's (MA/MS)	12%	2
Doctorate (PhD)	41%	7
Degree not in Anthropology	6%	1
Not Collected	12%	2
Other Degrees: MSW in Policy and Practice, MFA in Writing, PhD in Nursing, BA in Economics, MA in Anthropology & Development, Masters of Online Communities, Masters of Rational Use of Legal Drugs		
Years out of School		
1 or Under	24%	4
2-4	24%	4
5-7	6%	1

8-10	24%	4
11-12	12%	2
Not Collected	12%	2

There were 17 participants. The majority identified as White/European (9 out of 17). The next largest group identified as biracial, multiracial, or multiethnic. Women or those that identified as female were the largest group when it came to gender (11 out of 17). Participants were able to list any gender identity; while some did distinguish themselves as cisgendered, we did not have any individuals that identified as non-binary, transgender, or genderfluid.

Those with PhDs in Anthropology were the largest group (7 out of 17) when it came to the highest level of anthropology degree completed. The second largest group included those with Bachelor's degrees in the field. Two participants did not have a degree in anthropology, although one held a master's degree in Online Communities and the other held a PhD in Islamic Studies—both area studies which included ethnographic methods. Other degrees completed by interviewees include a Master's in Social Work, a Master's of Fine Arts in Writing, a Bachelor's in Economics, a Master's in Rational Use of Legal Drugs, and a Master's in Psychology. One interviewee was in the process of completing a PhD in Nursing. The number of years out of school for interviewees varied from 1 year and under, 2-4 years, and 8-10 years being the largest groups (4 out of 17). We did not have anyone that exceeded 12 years out of school.

Figure B-1. Race/Ethnicity

How do you identify in regards to race and ethnicity? (n=17)

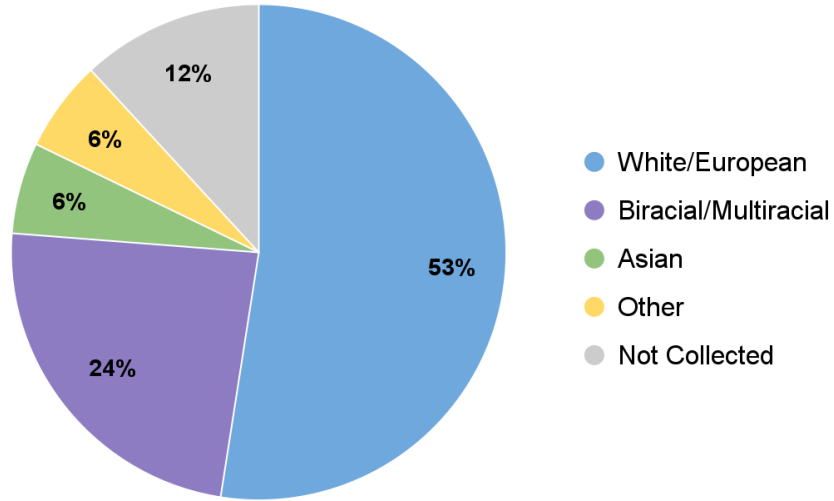


Figure B-2. Gender

How do you identify in regards to gender? (n=17)

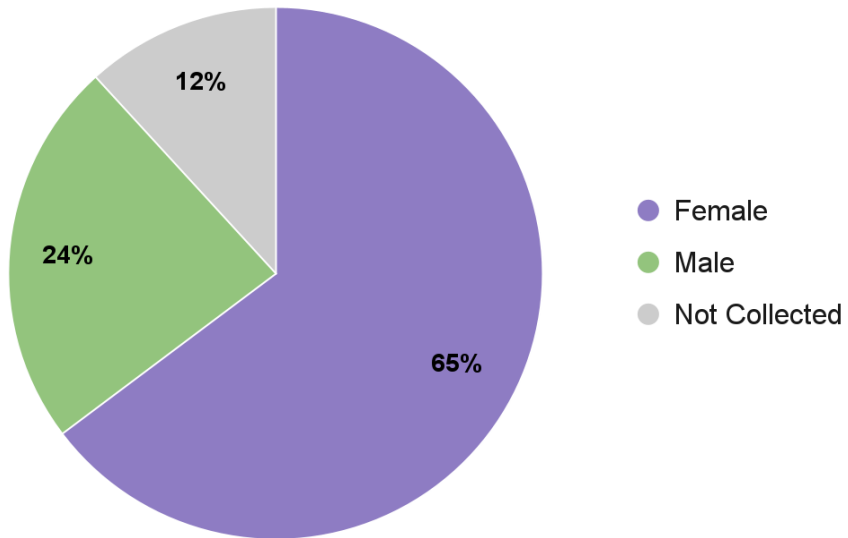


Figure B-3. Highest Anthropology Degree Completed

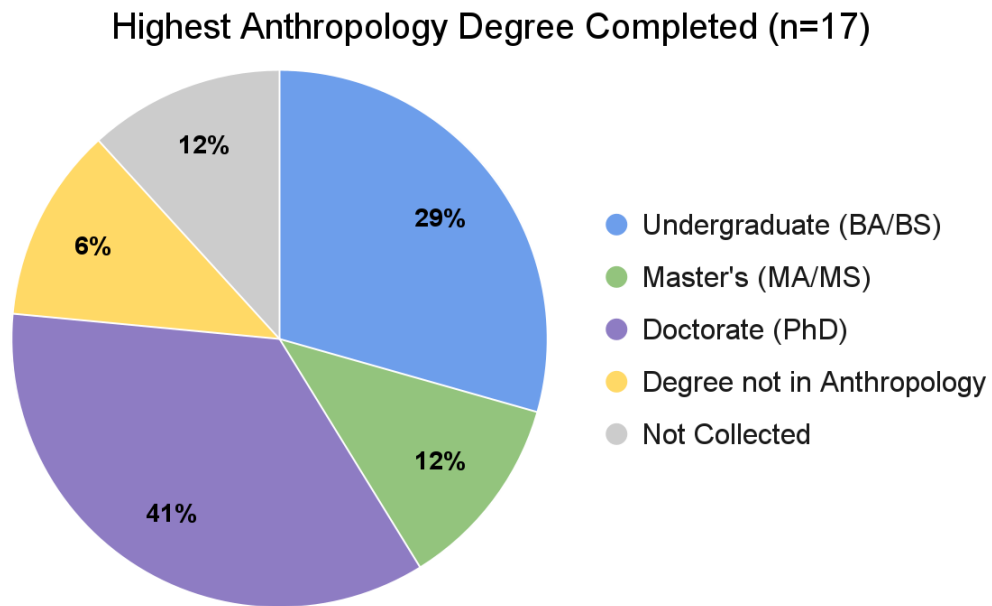
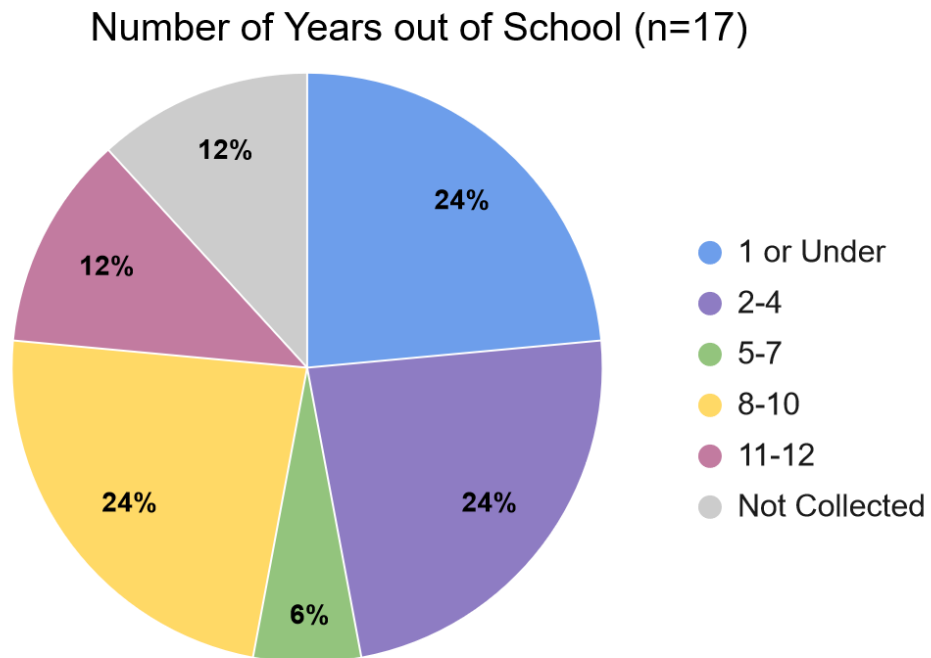


Figure B-4. Number of Years Out of School



Roles and Employment Sectors

As part of providing their career histories, participants were asked about their current role and the sector in which they worked. Within the sectors are specific areas of engagement, but areas of engagement are not exclusive to a particular sector. For example, someone working in the area of health could be employed by a number of sectors, such as the government or a nonprofit organization. Table B-2 below shows the distribution of sectors and areas of engagement in which the interviewees are currently employed.

Table B-2. Current Employment - Sector by Area of Engagement (n=17)								
Sector x Area of Engagement	Advertising & Marketing	Civic & Community Services	Consulting (Varied areas)	Health	Military	Philanthropy	UX & Design	% per Sector
For-profit/Corporate	6%	-	18%	-	-	-	24%	47%
Government	-	6%	-	12%	12%	-	-	29%
Nonprofit	-	6%	-	-	-	12%	-	18%
University	-	-	-	-	-	-	6%	6%

The largest cross-section included those working in the UX and the Design field who were employed by for-profit organizations. This group was followed by those working in for-profit consulting. Consulting firms work with companies and organizations of all types, hence we have listed it as a separate category, while recognizing that consultants may work in any of the above sectors or areas depending on their clients.

Of the 17 interviewed, 14 participants were asked whether they identified as anthropologists. The majority did so (8 out of 14), while two did not. One of the participants that said “No” to identifying as an anthropologist stated, “(I am) a general social scientist who's skilled in ethnography and community-led participatory research.” The other participant that said “No” was currently working in nursing, though anthropology and its history played a key part in their research foci. The remaining participants said that it depended contextually whether they identified as an anthropologist or not. As one respondent noted, “It depends...I've never been called an anthropologist, never had that job title” while another said, “I have a mercenary

attitude about all of this,” and indicated they would identify as anthropologist and academic to differentiate themselves from a market researcher.

Figure B-5. Anthropologist Identification

Do you identify as an anthropologist? (n=14)

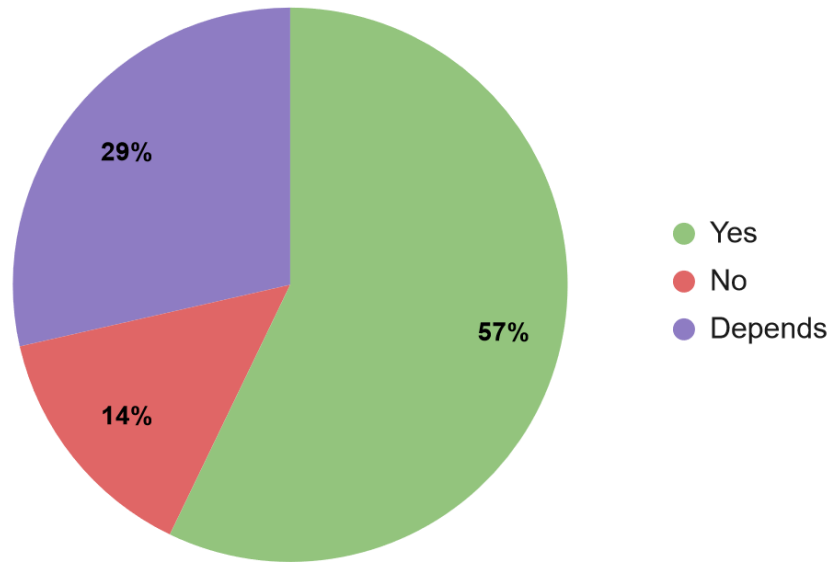
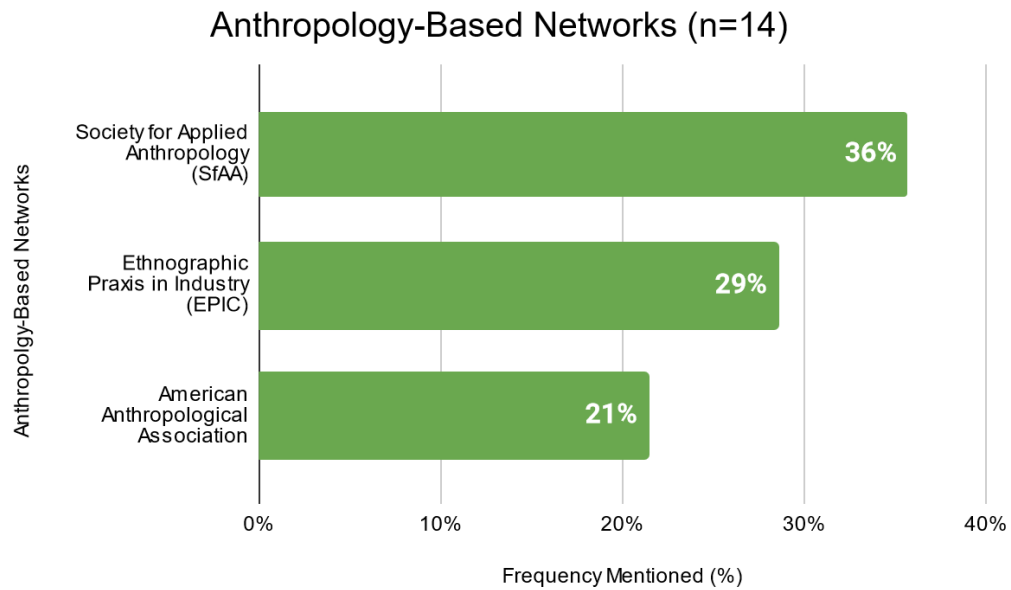


Figure B-6. Anthropology-Based Networks



Appendix C. Skills

Figure C-1. Anthropology Skills Currently Used

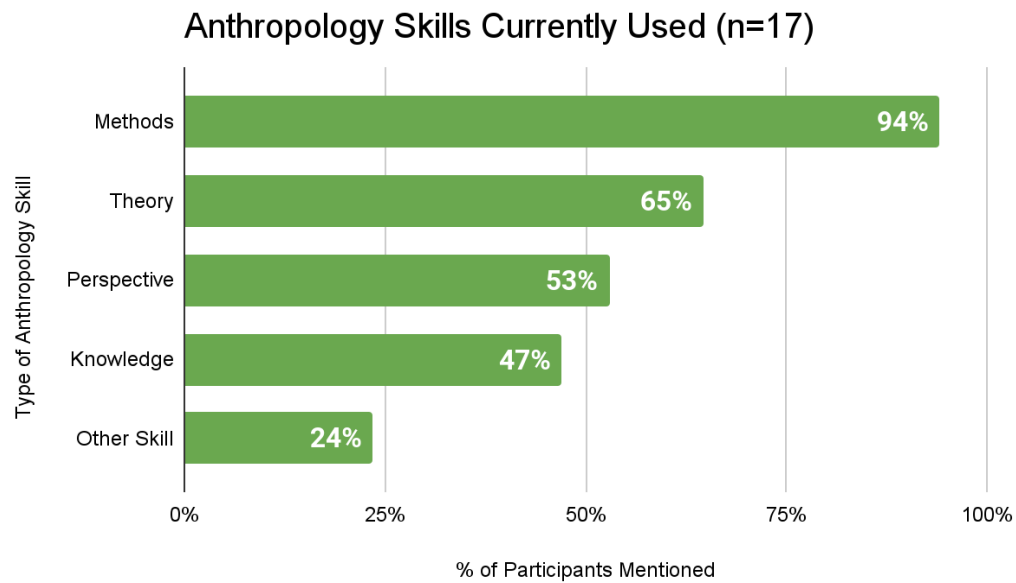


Table C-1. Anthropology Skills Currently Used - Specifics by Type (n=17)

Type	Skill	% Mentioned
Methods	Interviewing Skills	47%
	Fieldwork (general)	29%
	Observation Skills	24%
	Surveys	18%
	Qualitative	18%
	Ethnography (general)	18%
	Methods (general)	18%
	Diary Studies/Journaling	12%
	Digital ethnography	12%
	Interpersonal/social skills	12%

	Organizational Skills/Prioritizing	12%
	Thesis	12%
	Writing	12%
	Mentioned Once: Analysis (general), Applied research, Coding, Communication skills, Content analysis, Curricula, Design, Ethical research, Evaluation, Interdisciplinary, Logic/Critical Reading, Narrative approach, Open-ended questions, Primary research, Quantitative, Structured Reflective Sessions	
Theory	Theory/framework used, but not defined for others	18%
	Mentioned Once: Business/economic anthropology, Emic vs. Etic, Feminist Theory, Grounded Theory, Knowledge ecology, Product research, Social theory, Theory of Bureaucracy (Graeber), Thick Description	
Perspective	General Outlook/Perspective	18%
	Mentioned Once: Combine scientific rigor with humanistic approach, Emic vs. etic perspective, Knowledge in general, Way of contextualizing the world,	
Knowledge	Mentioned Once: Health, Development studies, Design anthropology, Digital anthropology, Caregiving and aging and nursing home ethnography, Medical corps, Business anthropology, Consumer anthropology, Women, Middle East	
Other Skills	Mentioned Once: Organization Skills, Mentoring, Writing	

Table C-2. Sector Specific Skills & Training (n=11)		
Type of Skill	Skill	% Mentioned
Methods	Big data	12%
	Mentioned Once: Assemblage Studies, Network Analysis, Statistics, Workflow Diagrams	
Tools	Figma	18%
	Excel	12%
	Miro	12%
	Mentioned Once: Form builders, Google Suite, Microsoft 365, Google Suite, HTML, Mural, Optimal/Sort, Salesforce, Sketch, Slack, SQL, Survey platforms, Wordpress	
Sector/Industry Specific	Mentioned Once: Analyst Briefings, Behavioral Design, Cybersecurity trainings, Military Information Support Operations (MISO), Policy, Security clearance process,	

	Usability, Website Design, Wireframing
Other Skills	Mentioned Once: Emotional Intelligence, Improvisation, Managing multiple projects

Table C-3. Skills Wished Learned In School (n=17)	
Skill	% Mentioned
Methods (general)	41%
Quantitative Methods	29%
Coding (data)	18%
Teamwork	18%
Public Speaking	18%
Programming Languages	12%
Budgets & Finance	12%
Excel	12%
Supervising	12%
Collaboration	12%
Design	12%
Communication Skills	12%
Specific Skill Sets - Each Mentioned Once	
Areas of Knowledge: Actionable learning, Business anthropology, Cultural anthropology, Implementation Science, Policy development, Research translation, Skills outside anthropology (general)	
Business: Calculating Participant Compensation Scales, How to Start an LLC, Taxes, Writing an SOW	
Job Search Related: Job Application Process, Job Interviewing, Networking, Mentoring	
Methods: Card Sorting, Critical User Journey Mapping, Delphi Method, Digital Diaries, Interviewing, New techniques, Rapid qualitative collection and analysis, Survey writing, Team coding, Template Analysis, Thick data	
Tools: Access, Atlas TI, GIS, HTML/CSS, SPSS, Tableau	

Appendix D. Anthropology Career Website

Feedback

Only seven of the participants were directly asked about an anthropology career website and its potential usefulness. Of those asked, the majority (6 out of 7) agreed that it would be a helpful resource, while one was skeptical about its usefulness. “(An) anthro-focused website is most likely going to be academics funneling students to other academic, government or alumni-specific opportunities.” This individual suggested replacing internships with short-term employment opportunities for recent graduates. Website features and content that others would find helpful included job postings, internship opportunities, information on pay expectations, resources to help translate skills from anthropology to the language employers or clients understand, and contact information for practitioners open to informational interviews or interested in networking.