Anthropology in Practice

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Anthropology Career Paths and Guidance Will Provide Us Direction

Blog for Career Readiness Commission

I am a second-year college student majoring in Anthropology. Due to my class level, I have lots of progress and decisions to make before I can state with any certainty what my goals are and what my career path will look like. I still have 2-3 years left of college and need to continue to take classes in a variety of sub-disciplines to meet the requirements of the major. That leads to my near-term plan which is to graduate college with my Bachelor's degree. As for my medium-term plan at this stage, to be perfectly frank, I cannot even imagine what my goals will be. It is simply too soon for me to know.

The diverse array of classes offered here at Oregon State University on Anthropology topics, as well as in-depth courses relating to people and regions of the world, opens one's eyes to see how unique every culture is and to respect everyone as human beings. Many topics and key concepts in Anthropology have helped me see the bigger picture and understand the intercultural connections of the world. Learning about different beliefs, values, behaviors, traditions, and the like of all cultures and people creates a broader understanding and leads to less ethnocentrism. These are all topics emphasized in the Anthropology classes and the skill of putting aside subconscious biases and learning with an open mind and heart is critical to the discipline. Despite the great courses taken, I have only begun the process, as noted above, of discovering my ultimate career path, so it is just too early for me to identify things that have

helped me prepare for a yet-to-be determined career.

A resource I am using to help move me to the next phase is help and advice from my professors. My professors, in addition to being wonderful teachers, have been uniformly open, accessible, patient, and helpful. The professors here at OSU have many interesting experiences and insightful knowledge to share. Having the exposure and connection to my professors has been tremendously helpful as I try to progress.

As for advice for Anthropology departments to help students with their careers, and subject to the limitations resulting from my novice status, I do wish that there was a more formal program providing specific, individualized career guidance that was offered to students who are either considering majoring in Anthropology or those who have recently decided to do so. I remain ill-informed about the various career paths to which an undergraduate Anthropology degree could lead. Here I want to distinguish between academic advising and career guidance and planning. I realize that this is a very broad question with many possible answers, but that is precisely what makes it so hard for me to get any sense of the options before me, the practical prerequisites for each, how I can learn about and weigh the pros and cons of different careers, and so forth. In short, I think that an increased focus on Anthropology career guidance—as opposed to academic advising—is sorely needed for those, like me, who are struggling to find direction.