Anthropology in Practice

Oregon State

March 2022

Hands On Learning Is Essential

I am a junior in standing at Oregon State University majoring in anthropology with a bio-cultural focus. I've been attending higher education since I graduated high school. I always thought I knew what I wanted to do in my life, but over time, after taking a lot of courses, I changed my mind. Within these next few years, I hope to be on track to achieve my dream job as a forensic anthropologist. Despite how minute that field is, I want to work towards it even if it requires internships, work studies, or other programs. I also know that this field being as small as it is requires having backup plans. Evolutionary and biological anthropology are subfields I am interested in and willing to pursue a career through.

It was easy trying to narrow down the path I wanted to take. Speaking with my advisors and professors helped significantly. However, having a career guidance class or support system when you first began could have helped me more. When I was struggling, I debated what major I should take, what path I wanted to take, what my degree should be in, and many other stressors. As I required assistance but didn't have the adequate resources available, I lost out on a year of courses I should have been taking. When I first stepped into this field, I wasn't presented with what an anthropology degree can accomplish.

As an anthropologist major, I have learned a lot, not just about me but about others as a whole. Reviewing this passage of my life, I have realized there is a lot I have yet to learn or experience. Lessons that are required for my degree have yet to instruct me on how to conduct qualitative and quantitative research. Having such a necessary tool be only discussed, rather than demonstrated through assignments, will be hard to learn as I graduate and enter the workforce.

Since the pandemic, the access to necessary classes has diminished. Lab classes being almost exclusively online, along with the majority of anthropology courses makes it hard to complete my education on campus—let alone being an involved student on campus. Online learning isn't for everyone; having the choice for both options would be pleasant rather than having no choice. Moving forward having the options between online and in-person courses would be beneficial to those who have a preference—specifically, lab classes where the tools and artifacts can be tangible rather than digital.

To conclude: being an anthropology major has required a lot from me. As graduation is approaching for many of us, I will remember how much I learned and the valuable lessons many of my professors have taught me. As I progress, I hope to be that resource for aspiring students in this course of their lives.