Anthropology in Practice

Oregon State

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I Love Anthropology but

More Advocacy Needed to Highlight Its Value

Hello! I am thrilled to be able to write for your website. Thank you for the opportunity. My long-term career goal is to become a librarian. Over the following three years, I will be working to complete a Master in Library and Information Science (MLIS). Anthropology has equipped me with the necessary skills to be an information professional in a culturally diverse community; a library. Receiving an undergraduate anthropology degree at Oregon State University was a calculated decision. At that time, I had been actively involved in my community and understood the importance of diversity, cultural recognition, and inclusion within it. Anthropology would ultimately equip me with the necessary framework to serve my community. Going forward at that time, my projected trajectory involved a foundation in anthropology. This was, arguably, one of the best academic decisions I have made. Children's librarians and similarly teachers are given the task of enriching and affecting young, impressionable minds through rich printed and digital media formats. The years of childhood development are crucial as they come to play a significant role in a child's social and identity development in addition to their construction of meaning. Spaces of learning, like a library, should include cultural diversity. With inclusion and representation in mind, culture-rich learning materials in the classroom, library and other areas of engagement are imperative. Diversity is a key element in any public system and when lacking can be detrimental to community experience.

Inclusion and representation lead to a broader prospective, social cohesion, equity, and self-growth. As someone with a background in cultural and linguistic anthropology, I understand the importance of representation in every sphere of learning and disputably the most

imperative—in childhood development—as this time forms the building blocks to a strong moral foundation.

As a prospective youth librarian, I want children and teenagers to read books/interact with materials that leave impressions, ones they can look back on fondly. What is needed is a long overdue paradigm shift in our society and our open accessibility to literature and information as a whole. With the tools I have acquired at Oregon State University's School of Language, Culture and Society, I hope to be an active member as a librarian in shifting that paradigm to one that is accepting of all differences and variations. I would like to do so through diverse literature that represents all demographics in a cross-cultural setting. Children from minority groups are positively impacted upon seeing and hearing stories they can identify with and relate to. Additionally, children benefit from exposure to groups they aren't familiar with. A fundamental aspect of growing up is being able to relate to, value, and find meaning in the information around us. Anthropology provides a framework to do just this. Providing critique for Oregon State University's Anthropology Department and programs alike, there can be more advocacy for the study. Anthropology is a robust study in the humanities that is holistic but can also be an excellent complementary edge to any field of study or career. As I mentioned, trends are always changing and one of anthropology's overarching goals is to understand these changes.

If I had to provide criticism on Oregon State University's Anthropology Department in the School of Language, Culture, and Society (and more loosely anthropology as a study used around the world), I wish there was more knowledge on the benefits of studying it. Anthropology is special in that it is very interdisciplinary and applicable to an innumerable facet of our lives. More students would choose to study anthropology if they knew what it was and how it would benefit them—not just in higher education but also in life. I challenge anthropology departments to advocate for the study more. As many of my peers have emphasized in anthropology

courses, our school feels disconnected, even segregated, from other areas of study at Oregon State University. I feel we have great potential if we chose to advocate for anthropology more often.

If you are on the fence about studying anthropology, I can't emphasize to you enough the critical perspective it has implicitly engrained into me. I can confidently say I feel prepared to engage in any domain one might find themselves interacting with people in the past, present or future. Don't underestimate anthropology and its interdisciplinary nature. I wish any prospective anthropologists (or librarians!) the best of luck and reassurance as you continue to define your chosen path.