Date: September 1, 2017

To: Daniel Howard, Executive Vice President and Provost

Through: Enrico Pontelli, Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences

David Smith, Director of Assessment

From: Rani Alexander, Department Head and Professor of Anthropology

Subject: Department of Anthropology Progress Report, Academic Program Review Year 1: 2016-2017

Academic Program Review for the Department of Anthropology, conducted in 2015-16 was a positive and valuable process for faculty and students. The 2016 Spring site visit by the external Academic Review Team highlighted many strengths that faculty and students are also excited about and pointed to a number of key challenges, which if they can be remedied will strengthen our programs.

The review team report has helped us to focus on key goals – the ones that will have the most beneficial impact for our programs - though many depend on support and resources that are external and not under the Department’s control. The central recommendation of the Academic Program Review team was to develop arguments within a strategic plan to demonstrate need for support. While the Anthropology faculty believe that solidifying a Departmental Strategic Plan around a few achievable key goals is a worthy effort, our progress is tempered by significant ongoing change at NMSU and an austere fiscal climate that began to impact the Department of Anthropology before the ink was dry on our action plan. As a result, the Anthropology Department is working to position itself and configure its strategic goals for resilience, realigning articulations among our available resources to build potential and connectedness to better weather the storm, so that when conditions improve we will be on the road to growth.

To date we have completed or made substantial progress on the following:

- Undergraduate recruitment plan – we have a cohesive approach that dovetails electronic communication with a face to face advising approach, but implementation is under modification to dovetail with changes to Centralized Advising, Recruitment, and Retention.
- We have a draft strategic plan in hand.
• We have examined and discussed course rotations and teaching loads, but implementation is not possible under current fiscal conditions. Research productive faculty need to move from a 3/3 teaching load to a 3/2 teaching load. We need guidance from our Dean for how best to implement it or phase it in.
• We have discussed support for Graduate Assistantships, as below. We need more resources in this area, but additional funding is not under the Department’s control.
• We have made progress on developing MOUs with federal land management agencies.
• A faculty hiring plan and request for new lines is under discussion for this year in the wake of planned retirements in biological anthropology.
• A space plan is underway and the situation at the University Museum is becoming critical. Yet, additional resources in this area are not under the Department’s control.

The Department of Anthropology remains strong and productive thanks to the efforts of our dedicated faculty and our students. We are about to undergo a major faculty transition in the wake of retirements this year. The bullet points below constitute the agreed upon action plan goals for 2016-2018.

**Department of Anthropology Action Plan 1-Year Goals, 2016-2017**

• Develop and implement an undergraduate recruitment plan
• Further develop the department’s Strategic Plan and Vision and Mission statements (this is planned for Fall, 2016). The Strategic Plan can have three components: 1) what is possible with current resources; 2) what is possible with a moderate increase in resources and over 2-5 years; and 3) what is possible (potential Ph.D. program) with more resources or longer-term.
• Improve course rotations/offerings and number of students in courses in order to work toward a better faculty load (3/2), particularly for faculty active in research and with graduate student research
• Discuss Grad student loads/FTE with regard to reviewer feedback on .25 vs .5 FTE for GA students.

**Department of Anthropology Action Plan 2-Year Goals, 2017-2018**

• Develop a space plan. In particular, what space is needed for program and how can existing space be improved? What new space is needed? Space plan should be connected to the new Strategic Plan
• Create a faculty hiring plan, also tied to Strategic Plan
• Further develop MOU’s with Federal Agencies

**Accomplishments and Discussion**

The Anthropology faculty believe our greatest strengths, as highlighted by the Academic Review Team report, center on collaborative and experiential learning and face to face engagement of our graduate and undergraduate students in investigative discovery and applied anthropological research. We are dedicated to maintaining a holistic approach to anthropology in all four
traditional subfields. In fall of 2016 we discussed several examples of strategic plans from Anthropology Departments in other states, had a close look at the College’s strategic plan, and came up with a comprehensive outline of our own drawn from information in our Functions and Criteria document and our outcomes assessment reports. We scrutinized the articulation of our program goals to the list of student learning outcomes for our BA and MA programs. We agreed that we needed a strategic plan that was short and targeted to the key resources that will enhance this vision, but came up with seven points for strategic action (which is too many). Details are available upon request.

Chief among the seven points were activities related to the goal “Recruit and Retain a diverse faculty and student body.” In 2016-17 one faculty member was tenured and promoted to associate professor and another was promoted to associate professor. Two faculty members were awarded their first whole academic year sabbaticals for 2017-2018.

We coordinated a slate of activities to promote undergraduate and graduate recruitment—advising, a proposal for renaming and updating the description of a lower division course to make it more attractive, development and distribution of marketing materials for our graduate and undergraduate programs using Mailchimp, and curriculum offerings that would ease a transition between the branch campuses and main campuses. We worked carefully with the College of Arts and Sciences Advising Center as it underwent centralization and continue to do so. We discussed how to improve the diversity of our upper division offerings to attract more majors given that we are teaching 3-4 fewer courses per year after budget cuts. Several faculty members stepped up by increasing caps in their VWW courses, but they find the extra work is significant. Our efforts to reintroduce Anth 202G retitled as World Archaeology into our course rotation – probably the most effective recruitment tactic in our arsenal – was rejected because of the ongoing NM HED Common Course Numbering.

In fall of 2016 I developed a proposal to the Western Regional Graduate Consortium which placed the Graduate Certificate in Cultural Resource Management on the list. We added student professional engagement to our list of graduate student learning outcomes for outcomes assessment, and we were successful in gaining support for students presenting research at regional and national conferences. We also discussed the Masters Accelerated Program (MAP) and working to align our curriculum so that students can move seamlessly into the graduate MA program. In December of 2016 I had a discussion with Loui Reyes about whether our two graduate certificate programs in CRM and Museum Studies could be included as an accelerated program.

I examined enrollment data, course rotations and teaching loads, with an eye to gaining a 3/2 teaching load either across the board or for research productive faculty. Workload equity and salary structure for newly promoted associate professors remains a severe concern, one which may affect faculty retention again this year. Details available upon request.

As requested by the Dean, we discussed placing graduate students on 20-hour (.5) GA support vs. maintaining our graduate assistantships at 10 hours (.25). The faculty overwhelmingly agree that if we converted our available graduate assistantships to 20 hours, graduate program recruitment would suffer and make the program unsustainable. To convert our scarce graduate
assistantships to 20 hours would mean that we would only be able to provide support for five to six students every two years. It would also derail our successful strategy of going after all sources of additional graduate support in the form of graduate school fellowships that require a match, as well as placing our grad students in assistantships available in other allied-field departments and units.

The Anthropology Faculty have been successful in advancing activities related to the Year 2 goal to develop MOUs with Federal Agencies, particularly with the Bureau of Land Management/Organ Mountains Desert Peaks. Faculty have had some significant successes in developing grants and contracts and more are planned. Details are available upon request.

**Moving Forward**

To continue to refine the departmental strategic plan, it would be useful to have a discussion with our College Deans about “what is possible in the current situation and with a modest increase in resources.” What particular actions would constitute the best use of our energies in the current hiring freeze and fiscal crisis? The Anthropology Faculty believe that a PHD program would require long term planning, probably at least 10 years out, and a major investment by NMSU and the State. We estimate that we would need a minimum of 15 tenured/tenure track faculty to make it work, with probably two College faculty to handle undergraduate lower division.

We hope to pursue the MAP program and the idea of accelerated graduate certificates to improve undergraduate recruitment and employment opportunities. We will have to find a way around some thorny administrative barriers for the certificates. I will also follow up with the requirements for Western Regional with respect to the Graduate Certificate in CRM.

Two issues listed on the Department’s action plan as Year 2 goals are now looming. Two staggered faculty retirements make a hiring plan imperative so as to maintain curriculum, instruction, and research in the key subfield of biological anthropology. Line/thaw requests are forthcoming and in line with our developing strategic plan.

The other issue is the space plan. Our faculty have excellent ideas for fostering collaborative research, experiential learning, and student and public engagement using archaeological collections. Yet, we anticipate that the University Museum will need major infrastructural improvements in 1-3 years to avoid roof and wall leakage and security lapses that could severely damage an estimated 3-5 million dollars of Native American Art. The situation is critical, and again this month with the roof leaking like a sieve after the summer rains, NMSU Facilities and Services has told us they can’t fix it. Another space issue concerns the archaeological collections and human remains subject to NAGPRA improperly housed in six storage sheds that do not meet the guidelines and procedures outlined in the Federal Curation Regulations, 36 CFR 79. We consistently ‘patch up’ our space problems to the best of our abilities, but we need the NMSU administration’s help.
Goals for 2017-2018

Hire at least one line in biological anthropology at the assistant professor level. A successful hire will supercharge research productivity in this STEM-oriented subfield and attract new graduate and undergraduate students. Approvals of line requests are not under the Department’s or the College’s control at the present time. All lines are currently frozen.

Secure Building Renovation and Repair Monies for the University Museum and plan for major infrastructure improvements in the next 2-5 years. Upon Dr. Arakawa’s return from sabbatical, he will work on revising Museum mission statements and goals and to achieve better integration with Anthropology’s strategic plan. Two faculty members anticipate launching a new course in Archaeological collections research, management, and curation. This should dovetail well with the Museum Studies Graduate Certificate and attract more graduate and undergraduates to our programs.

Recruitment: Implement the MAP program and resolve the issue of accelerated graduate certificates for our undergraduate students. This will create clear pathways to professional careers for our Anthropology majors and those in allied fields.