

# Final Assessment Report for the 2023-2024 Cyclical Review of the Anthropology Programs

## INTRODUCTION

In accordance with Laurier's Institutional Quality Assurance Procedures ([Policy 2.1](#)), this Final Assessment Report provides a summary of the cyclical program review process for the Anthropology programs offered in the Faculty of Arts at the Waterloo campus, prepared by the Quality Assurance Office, along with an identification of strengths of the program(s) under review authored by the Vice Dean of the Faculty of Arts. All recommendations made by the external review committee in their report are listed, followed by a summary of the units' response, and the decanal response. Recommendations prioritized are listed in the Implementation Plan, with those not being prioritized for implementation noted as well.

The Final Assessment Report is reviewed and approved by the Provost and Vice-President: Academic. Following completion of the Final Assessment Report, it is approved by the Program Review Sub-Committee and Senate Academic Planning Committee. Approval dates are listed at the end of this report. Final Assessment Reports are submitted to Senate as part of an annual report on cyclical reviews, and to the Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance for information. Final Assessment Reports and Implementation Reports are posted on the public-facing page of the [Quality Assurance Office](#) website.

The Implementation Plan for the recommendations prioritized in the Final Assessment Report can be found at the end of this report. Units will submit their first Implementation Report two years following approval of the Final Assessment Report at Senate. The Implementation Report will include comments from the unit on actions taken toward the completion of recommendations, comments from the relevant Dean(s) related to the progress made, and comments from the Program Review Sub-Committee, which is responsible for approving the Implementation Report and deciding if further reports are required. The Implementation Report is submitted to the Senate Academic Planning Committee for information.

## SUMMARY OF REVIEW PROCESS

The last cyclical program review for the undergraduate programs in Anthropology took place as part of the 2015-2016 review cycle.

The Anthropology Self-Study was written primarily by Dr. Sara Matthews, the Program Coordinator until June 30, 2023, with input from Anthropology faculty and the Coordinating Committee. Dr. Andre Czegledy, who became Coordinator July 1, 2023, finalized the Self-Study prior to the external review. The Self-Study also notes the contributions of the Program's administrative staff in the Self-Study assembly process. In addition to the Self-Study (Volume I), the Program also submitted a copy of faculty curricula vita (Volume II), a volume of course syllabi, and a list of proposed external reviewers (Volume III). A draft of the Self-Study was reviewed by the Quality Assurance Office, and the Vice Dean of the Faculty of Arts prior to submission of the final version.

Following Laurier's IQAP, the external review committee for the review consisted of two external reviewers from outside the university, and one internal reviewer from Laurier but outside of the unit. The review committee was selected by the Program Review Sub-Committee on November 2, 2023, and an in-person site visit took place on the Waterloo campus on March 21-22, 2024.

The review committee consisted of **Dr. Kevin Spooner** from the Department of Political Science at Wilfrid Laurier, **Dr. Tad McIlwraith** from the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at University of Guelph, and **Dr. Fabiana Li** from the Department of Anthropology at the University of Manitoba. During the site visit, the committee had met with the following individuals and groups:

- Dr. Heidi Northwood, Provost and Vice-President: Academic
- Dr. Andre Czegledy, Anthropology Program Coordinator
- Dr. Gavin Brockett, Vice Dean of the Faculty of Arts
- Full-time Faculty in the Anthropology Program
- Mr. Matt Thomas, Head of Collections and Acquisitions, and Mr. Peter Genzinger, Liaison Librarian
- Dr. Darren Thomas, Associate Vice-President: Indigenous Initiatives
- Ms. Sandra Dalpe, Office Administration Coordinator
- Undergraduate students in the Anthropology programs
- Ms. Sally Heath, Manager: Academic Program Development and Review

The review committee submitted their completed report on April 18, 2024. The executive summary from the report, and its recommendations, are provided below.

## **EXTERNAL REVIEWERS' REPORT EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Anthropology Program at Wilfrid Laurier University is served by wonderful faculty who care deeply about the Program. The Program has a terrific set of core courses through which a major in anthropology is delivered. Fourth year is notable for its innovative capstone courses and student projects; students and faculty alike are proud of the work that is accomplished in the fourth year.

The Anthropology Program and its delivery are challenged by a small faculty complement which must teach and manage the Program administratively. The devolution from a Department of Anthropology to an Anthropology Program in 2012 came with a reduction in course stipends, leading to difficulties in finding a program coordinator. Administrative support is shared with another program. In short, the full-time faculty who deliver the Anthropology Program, supported by part-time or sessional instructors, accomplish a tremendous amount with a truly limited number of resources. Challenges also include the recruitment of majors and the maintenance of a robust cohort of Anthropology students. Despite this, student satisfaction is high for students within the program and the program serves a large number of students from outside of Anthropology and from outside of the arts.

The recommendations we make here emphasize opportunities for the Anthropology Program to build its visibility and, by extension, increase the number of majors. We recommend that the Anthropology Program move to a standalone major. This move has significant potential to increase the number of majors while also refreshing the presence of anthropology as a discipline within the university. The re-creation of a single major, and the possible addition of two additional credits that would distinguish a single major from a combined major, requires discussion by the Anthropology faculty, although we see a path forward that includes a double weighting of fourth-year courses and the opportunity for students to add electives from existing courses.

While not a formal recommendation, we encourage the faculty to meet in a retreat-style event to discuss the recommendations made in this report and to build on their own interests in making changes collaboratively and collegially. Such a retreat would include discussions about the overall vision and thematic focus of the Program and its strategic plan, the form of the single major, and the sharing of service roles related to the Program. A conversation about whether or not merging with another small program or a department would help with alleviating concerns about faculty service loads and its impact on the visibility and identity of the program. A retreat of this style would contribute to the cohesion of the faculty, which has seen recently the return of faculty from leaves and the addition of a new member.

## RECOMMENDATIONS AND RESPONSES

The External Reviewers' Report included 11 recommendations to improve the quality of the Anthropology programs. All recommendations have been listed verbatim below, followed by a summary of the program's response, and a response by the Vice Dean of the Faculty of Arts.

**Recommendation #1:** It is recommended that the Anthropology Program maintain the core framework of the Anthropology major (the flow between AN100-AN200-AN300-AN450-AN452) and its focus on student research.

**Unit Response:** The Anthropology Unit accepts this recommendation in full and continues to employ the curricular progression of the recommendation as the core pedagogical spine for the program. Ongoing feedback from both faculty and students confirms the clarity and benefit of the scaffolding approach used to develop the combination of theory, content, methods, ethics and applications which the core framework delivers. The program culmination in the AN452 *Doing Fieldwork* research course remains a key output distinguishing the pedagogical arc. Post-graduation feedback confirms that the student research projects have become a defining feature in the early lives of Anthropology graduands. However, a real concern is the sustainability of the significant amount of work which is required with respect to this course (as well as AN300 and AN450), both on the part of the student participants and that of the given instructors. The development of the single major (see below Recommendation 2) and attention to credit development/distribution may partly address this issue for Anthropology students. However, it would not respond to the instructor burden, given the significant workload involved. The Unit has expressed these concerns with the Office of the Dean, especially regarding the viability of AN450 & AN452 on a supervisory basis depending upon student numbers and the current lack of support for instructors required to supervise independent, community-based projects. It is expected that this topic will continue to be revisited (as it has virtually annually) by the Curriculum Committee and in one or more curriculum-oriented retreats that can engage with the subject of instructor rotation.

**Decanal Response:** The Dean of Arts recognizes the value attached to the current structure of the Anthropology Major and especially the opportunity for students to participate in hands-on learning at the fourth-year. We also acknowledge the amount of work that this requires of instructors in order to be successful. We will continue to work with the Program to do what we can to provide resources to alleviate the burden on faculty members, although at a time of very limited resources this is increasingly challenging.

**Recommendation #2:** It is recommended that the Anthropology Program develop a plan to reintroduce a Single Major degree option in addition to the current Combined Major.

**Unit Response:** The Anthropology Unit accepts this recommendation in full. Anthropology has repeatedly discussed the value of reintroducing a Single Major degree, ever since the end of the 2010-2011 academic year in which this programming was discontinued on the basis of external decision-making. The discussion was positively revisited in 2022-2023, and thereupon brought to the focused attention of the Program Committee in Fall Term 2023. The Program Committee supported this initiative unanimously in Winter Term 2024. The detailed reformulation of a Single Major is expected to be first addressed by the Anthropology Curriculum Committee in Fall Term 2024, after drawing insights from the Cyclical Review process. An anticipated challenge to the reintroduction of the Single Major is expected to be externally imposed budgetary restrictions that impact adding even a single facilitating course to Anthropology's annual course offering complement. It is noted that the last time (2011-2012) Anthropology offered a Single Major along with a Combined Major, it was supported by the University in offering 30 courses per annum instead of the current 15 courses.

The Anthropology Unit accepts that the reintroduction of a Single Major will require structured pedagogical differentiation from the existing Combined Major and is committed to drawing on the Reviewers' Report to aid in this application.

**Decanal Response:** The Dean of Arts supports the implementation of a single Anthropology Major, although we acknowledge it will look quite different given the limited number of courses that can be allocated to the Program. We will examine what the possibilities are for increasing the course allocation in light of the resources available to us, and work with the Program to support this step.

**Recommendation #3:** Anthropology should continue to focus on recruitment efforts to increase enrollments and grow the number of majors. Such efforts may include defining the program's unique qualities and focus, High School and community outreach, and updating the website and other recruitment materials to highlight student research and program strengths.

**Unit Response:** The Anthropology Unit accepts this recommendation. It recognizes that the historic halving of annual course offerings (noted above in response to Recommendation 2) has had a role to play in affecting major student attraction to the program. Nonetheless, Anthropology acknowledges that a re-casting of its institutional profile may be advisable in order to broaden disciplinary appeal with respect to recruitment and retention, particularly in connection to developing a stronger identity anchorage. This initiative needs to be informed by student surveys per Recommendation #11 (below).

School outreach efforts have been ongoing via annual visits to campus from the post-secondary educational sector and community outreach continues in the form of leadership of the *Transitioning to University* (T2U) talks offered to the wider community. However, some concern can be noted with respect to the sustainability of these initiatives as they are currently reliant on limited faculty resources in the person of one colleague.

**Decanal Response:** The Dean of Arts recognizes that Anthropology has a long-standing tradition of engaging with high schools and we appreciate the efforts made by faculty members to engage the local community. We now have an Associate Dean: External who will be working with individual departments and programs to further support these efforts.

**Recommendation #4:** It is recommended that the Anthropology Program consider eliminating, rebranding, or re-envisioning the Intercultural Understanding Option and Specialization.

**Unit Response:** The Anthropology Unit accepts this recommendation in full. It recognizes the variable success of the Intercultural Understanding Option and Specialization in meeting all of its established goals. While *Intercultural Understanding* does: (i) expand the Anthropology/University curriculum, (ii) provide a unique learning domain within Canadian post-secondary education, and (iii) feature ‘soft skills’ of the sort desired by students/employers in a multiethnic and plural identity society, it has not succeeded in (iv) attracting students to the major, nor (v) acting in a significant service capacity within the Faculty of Arts. Anthropology is committed to addressing this distinguishing feature of the Unit and Faculty in a separate retreat in either the 2024/2025 or 2025/2026 academic years.

**Decanal Response:** The Dean of Arts supports the Program’s decision to revise or eliminate this Option and Specialization once it has had a chance to examine the matter carefully in the next two years. We hope that a decision will be reached by summer 2025.

**Recommendation #5:** The Anthropology Program should prepare to be part of the Faculty of Arts Co-op program by identifying community work placements that provide meaningful experiences for students and meet the Program’s learning objectives.

**Unit Response:** The Anthropology Unit accepts this recommendation in full. The extension of the Faculty-wide Co-op program to Anthropology has been discussed and supported at the Program Committee level in Winter Term 2024. Anthropology is committed to working with the Office of the Dean of the Faculty of Arts in facilitating this incorporation. It is expected that such joint work will begin in Fall Term 2024 or Winter Term 2025, depending upon the curriculum priorities of the Office of the Dean.

**Decanal Response:** The Dean of Arts welcomes the opportunity to work with Anthropology in order to incorporate it into the Arts Coop program.

**Recommendation #6:** It is recommended that the program and its faculty discuss with the University Librarian the creation of an anthropology-specific resource for faculty and students regarding artificial intelligence and its

use in teaching and learning. Further, it is recommended that program AI policies align with university academic misconduct policies and are articulated clearly in syllabuses.

**Unit Response:** The Anthropology Unit accepts this recommendation. It agrees with the underlying idea that a dedicated resource facility would focus support for Anthropology students within the University, and additionally considers such provision a way in which the program might address recruitment and retention to the major by fortifying the 1<sup>st</sup> year experience as much as subsequent years for students. Working through this recommendation depends upon the availability of collegial resources both within and outside the Unit in order to develop a comprehensive resource deliverable. It is noted that the required knowledge of AI for effective incorporation lies outside the expertise of current colleagues within the Unit and that the University & Faculty is still in the process of developing reference policies that would provide the foundation for such an initiative. Accordingly, it is expected that Anthropology will not be in a position to address this until the 2025-2026 academic year. Nonetheless, it can open prefacing discussion with the Anthropology Liaison Librarian already in 2024-2025.

**Decanal Response:** The Dean of Arts will support all departments and programs to develop resources along these lines in light of work being done at the university-level to guide faculty and students in the appropriate use of AI.

**Recommendation #7:** It is recommended that program faculty discuss the pros and cons of merging with an existing department or another smaller program for the purposes of sharing the burden associated with administering the program.

**Unit Response:** The Anthropology Unit accepts this recommendation with reservations. Anthropology discussed the pros and cons of merging with an existing department or another smaller program in the 2022/2023 academic year, including the conduct of informal exploration at the Chair level in this regard. Anthropology continued this discussion at the Program Committee level in 2023-2024, and delegated the Chair to further develop exploratory contacts in such regard. It should be noted that 'unitary fit' is a critical factor in such accommodation, and any merger must work for both units in order for it to become a long-term success. Discussions about a possible administrative merger will be continued, and the Office of the Dean engaged when appropriate, should these prove fruitful beyond the exploratory stage.

**Decanal Response:** The Dean of Arts supports the recommendation that the Program consider the possibility of merging with another program *if* there is a good fit on both sides. There may be some benefits in terms of consolidating student advising and program leadership given the small faculty complement in Anthropology.

**Recommendation #8:** It is recommended that Anthropology pursue any opportunity to hire a new faculty member and, if at all possible, seek to hire an anthropologist who will contribute to the diversification of the faculty.

**Unit Response:** The Anthropology Unit strongly agrees with this recommendation. This is particularly so when considering the appointment of a colleague with expertise in the indigenous culture(s) of Canada, a pedagogical



domain which Anthropology had to relinquish with the departure of former colleagues associated with the broader subject area in the Canadian context. However, Anthropology recognizes that deepening the diversity of its faculty is not least reliant on external budgetary factors largely out of its control. Anthropology has applied for an indigenous/indigenous orientation hire in the past, and it is committing to continue to do so when new opportunities present themselves in the right circumstances.

**Decanal Response:** The Dean of Arts advocates for new faculty positions from the Provost and Vice-President Academic. We must prioritize our requests in light of program size and needs: the hiring of indigenous faculty members is an important priority and we will continue to look for ways to make this possible in the coming years.

**Recommendation #9:** It is recommended that Instructional Assistants continue to be hired, in sufficient numbers, to support students and instructors teaching large classes.

**Unit Response:** The Anthropology Unit accepts this recommendation in full. It acknowledges the value of IAs as currently supplementing and reinforcing pedagogical efforts, particularly at the 1st year level in the larger classes. However, Anthropology recognizes that maintaining – let alone expanding – the participation of IAs is not least reliant on external budgetary factors largely out of its control. It needs be noted that the Faculty of Arts flagged broader spending on IAs within the 2023/2024 academic year, and budgetary limitations are subsequently expected to directly affect this dimension. Accordingly, Anthropology expresses concern regarding the effects of a projected decline in financial support for IAs on a broader basis in and outside of the Faculty.

**Decanal Response:** The Dean of Arts recognizes the value of IAs to Anthropology as to all departments, and will do its best to ensure that we are able to protect the resources necessary to hire IAs to support the program in the coming years.

**Recommendation #10:** It is recommended that the Anthropology Program, with the support of program administration, continue to survey students about student satisfaction, and in order to continue building a library of statistics related to student needs. The generation of this information should also include attention to recruitment, numbers of students in all classes, and numbers of majors (particularly if it can be ascertained when students declare anthropology as their major and why).

**Unit Response:** The Anthropology Unit accepts this recommendation. It recognizes that the development of information in both quantity and quality can be a valuable tool in understanding and addressing issues and challenges for every program. Anthropology also accepts that the ongoing development of such information requires constant updating which is heavily reliant on variable faculty and administrative resources as well as the differing commitment of individual (generally senior) student cohorts to engage with the process. Further thought may need to be put into the structuring of data gathering on a longitudinal basis in order to shift from an immediate needs-based approach to longer-term planning input model. Accordingly, Anthropology is prepared to task its Curriculum Committee in the 2024-2025 academic year to formulate a rolling plan of action to address this recommendation.

**Decanal Response:** The Dean of Arts supports the collection of relevant data about the Anthropology program and will assist in whatever way it can.

**Recommendation #11:** We recommend that faculty take an active role in supporting the Anthropology Student Association to ensure its reactivation and continuity from year to year.

**Unit Response:** The Anthropology Unit accepts this recommendation in full. It accepts that reduced faculty resources in the preceding several years have significantly impacted the ability to address student and community dimensions which are also reinforced by budgetary restrictions outside of our control. Anthropology has asked its Chair to contact select members of the incoming senior class during the Summer Term of 2024 to begin a recruitment process to address the situation. In addition, an Anthropology Welcome Social will be arranged in September of 2024 in order to encourage participation. Anthropology will also task its incoming Anthropology Student Liaison for Fall Term 2024 to focus attention on a more strategic approach to student association transitioning with the help of the Program Committee.

**Decanal Response:** An Anthropology Student Association would be an excellent addition to the many student organizations within the Faculty of Arts and we encourage efforts to establish one, recognizing that the effectiveness of such an organization depends largely on the ability of students to provide strong leadership.

## PROGRAM STRENGTHS

**Vice Dean of the Faculty of Arts:** The Dean of Arts recognizes the importance of Anthropology as a discipline that introduces students to significant areas of knowledge. The Anthropology Program has developed very well-respected curriculum that trains students in the discipline while providing them with skills that they can apply in many future careers. A small number of full-time faculty work very hard to ensure the success of students and the quality of the academic program.

## OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT AND ENHANCEMENT

**Vice Dean of the Faculty of Arts:** Given the limited resources at this time, the Anthropology Program will continue face the great challenge of offering high quality, innovative teaching without there being an adequate number of full-time faculty members to carry all of the burden. We appreciate very much the dedication of both full-time and part-time faculty to the Anthropology Program, and the Dean of Arts will do all that it can to ensure support to them in their important work.



## SIGNATURES

Dr. Heidi Northwood

July 29, 2024



## APPROVAL DATES

Approved by Program Review Sub-Committee: October 24, 2024

Approved by Senate Academic Planning Committee: January 9, 2025

Submitted to Senate (for information): March 4, 2025

Implementation Report Due Date: March 4, 2027

## RECOMMENDATIONS PRIORITIZED FOR IMPLEMENTATION AND ACTION PLAN

The following Implementation Plan was created by the Vice Dean of the Faculty of Arts as part of the Decanal Response.

Recommendation to be Implemented	Responsibility for Implementation	Responsibility for Resourcing (if applicable)	Anticipated Completion Date
<b>Recommendation #1:</b> It is recommended that the Anthropology Program maintain the core framework of the Anthropology major (the flow between AN100-AN200-AN300-AN450-AN452) and its focus on student research.	Anthropology Program		N/A
<b>Recommendation #2:</b> It is recommended that the Anthropology Program develop a plan to reintroduce a Single Major degree option in addition to the current Combined Major.	Anthropology Program		September 2026
<b>Recommendation #3:</b> Anthropology should continue to focus on recruitment efforts to increase enrollments and grow the number of majors. Such efforts may include defining the program's unique qualities and focus, High School and community outreach, and updating the website and other recruitment materials to highlight student research and program strengths.	Anthropology Program		Ongoing
<b>Recommendation #4:</b> It is recommended that the Anthropology Program consider eliminating, rebranding, or re-envisioning the Intercultural Understanding Option and Specialization.	Anthropology Program		September 2026

<p><b>Recommendation #5:</b> The Anthropology Program should prepare to be part of the Faculty of Arts Co-op program by identifying community work placements that provide meaningful experiences for students and meet the Program’s learning objectives.</p>	<p>Anthropology Program</p>		<p>September 2025</p>
<p><b>Recommendation #6:</b> It is recommended that the program and its faculty discuss with the University Librarian the creation of an anthropology-specific resource for faculty and students regarding artificial intelligence and its use in teaching and learning. Further, it is recommended that program AI policies align with university academic misconduct policies and are articulated clearly in syllabuses.</p>	<p>Anthropology Program</p>		<p>September 2026</p>
<p><b>Recommendation #7:</b> It is recommended that program faculty discuss the pros and cons of merging with an existing department or another smaller program for the purposes of sharing the burden associated with administering the program.</p>	<p>Anthropology Program</p>		<p>September 2026</p>
<p><b>Recommendation #8:</b> It is recommended that Anthropology pursue any opportunity to hire a new faculty member and, if at all possible, seek to hire an anthropologist who will contribute to the diversification of the faculty.</p>	<p>Dean of Arts</p>		<p>Ongoing</p>
<p><b>Recommendation #9:</b> It is recommended that Instructional Assistants continue to be hired, in</p>	<p>Dean of Arts</p>		<p>Ongoing</p>

sufficient numbers, to support students and instructors teaching large classes.			
<p><b>Recommendation #10:</b> It is recommended that the Anthropology Program, with the support of program administration, continue to survey students about student satisfaction, and in order to continue building a library of statistics related to student needs. The generation of this information should also include attention to recruitment, numbers of students in all classes, and numbers of majors (particularly if it can be ascertained when students declare anthropology as their major and why).</p>	Anthropology Program		Ongoing; September 2025
<p><b>Recommendation #11:</b> We recommend that faculty take an active role in supporting the Anthropology Student Association to ensure its reactivation and continuity from year to year.</p>	Anthropology Program		September 2025