To: Sara Rosen, Dean, College of Arts and Sciences
Donald Reitzes, Associate Dean, Social and Behavioral Sciences
From: Kathryn A. Kozaitis, Chair
Department of Anthropology
Re: Academic Program Review
Date: December 1, 2016

The Department of Anthropology completed its Self-Study for an Academic Program Review (APR) of the period AY 2013-AY 2016. The APR Committee, Drs. Emanuela Guano (Chair), Jeffrey Glover, Bethany Turner-Livermore, and Steven Black composed the Self-Study Report in consultation with the Chair of the Department, and with feedback from the entire faculty. The faculty approved the Self-Study Report on November 28, 2016. An executive summary of this Report follows.

The Department of Anthropology is one of nine units in the Social and Behavioral Sciences. It consists of 11 regular faculty members—two Professors, six Associate Professors, two Assistant Professors, and one Senior Lecturer. External research grants and course buy-outs require the employment of two rotating Visiting Lecturers (VLs) and Part-time Instructors (PTIs) to help meet the instructional needs of our Programs. The faculty shares a collective research mission in the archaeological, biological, cultural, and linguistic study of humans across time and space; each member specializes in particular topical, theoretical, methodological, and regional content and supports applications of anthropological knowledge and skills to public concerns.

The Department continues to meet its targets for external research grants and prestigious Fellowships. Of the 11 TT faculty members, four are presently conducting NSF-funded research. Another TT faculty member received a Fulbright Research Award in spring 2016. The Senior Lecturer also conducts research funded by a three-year grant by the SARE division of the USDA, and another TT faculty member was awarded the prestigious Provost’s Faculty Fellowship in 2016. Grant support from the Visiting Lecturer also strengthens the research mission of our Programs. The Department’s momentum in securing external research funding continues. One Assistant Professor has a National Science Foundation CAREER grant application under review; three senior faculty members have grant applications under review with the American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS) Fellowship Program, one of whom also has an application under review by the John Simon Guggenheim Foundation and one by Princeton’s Institute for Advanced Studies, and another with the Leaky Foundation. We are internationally recognized authors of peer-reviewed books, scholarly articles, and research reports, and we are active members of professional societies.
The Department offers a Bachelor of Arts degree in Anthropology and a Master of Arts degree in Anthropology as well as a minor in Anthropology. The curriculum consists of archaeological, biological, cultural, linguistic, and applied anthropology. For the period under review, the Department conferred 99 B.A. degrees and 38 M.A. degrees. All students have the opportunity to benefit from our Field Schools in Brazil, Greece, Italy, Mexico, and the United States. The Department also offers field-based and study-abroad Signature Experiences; thirty-four students participated in faculty-led Study Abroad Programs in AY 2013-2015. Our B.A. and M.A. graduates pursue doctoral studies in anthropology and other fields, and others secure gainful employment as professional anthropologists in the private and public sectors of society.

Anthropology majors engage in the holistic, cross-cultural, and interdisciplinary study of humans through courses and research projects on topics that range from human origins and human evolution to human variation and human adaptation and from language to society and culture. A course in applied anthropology linked with community-based participatory action research and social justice assignments exposes students to applications of anthropology in domains of professional practice. The Department’s four-year rates of retention, progression, and graduation (RPG) of students who entered in fall 2009, 2010, and fall 2011 are higher than the average RPG rates for the College of Arts and Sciences.

Graduate students learn how to conduct primary basic and applied research on human life—past and present, through the study of fossils in a lab and artifacts in excavation sites, or through ethnographic studies of communication within speech communities. Others conduct ethnographic research on social problems, behavioral practices, ideologies, and symbolic expressions in urban settings, neighborhoods, and organizations. The M.A. in Anthropology has met and exceeded its enrollment targets, with a 500 percent increase in the number of active students since 2006. During the period of this Review, the number of graduate students enrolled in the program has been stable with minimal fluctuations.

Anthropology has enjoyed steady growth by any and all relevant metrics. In the current review cycle, the seniority of the Department has increased: from no full professors to two, and from five associate professors to seven. We advanced from one external research grant and one Fulbright Senior Scholar Award to seven more external research grants and a second Fulbright Senior Scholar Award; in three years, the faculty generated nearly one million dollars in external funding, a notable and an unprecedented achievement in Anthropology at GSU. Such progress is most likely to continue with more recognition from the College and the University. Surveyed peer institutions (California State University Long Beach, Florida State University, Portland State University, and Wayne State University), with a similar or larger number of students have a considerably larger faculty, suggesting the necessity for faculty hires to sustain and advance our current trajectory of progress. Analysis of the Self-Study survey data indicates that faculty, and students, express universal enthusiasm and appreciation for their departmental culture; however, they concur that sustainable productivity, feasibility, and quality require more institutional support.

The Department of Anthropology in 2016 is bursting at the seams. The ratio of faculty to students has reached a critical point: during this review period one faculty member directed nine M.A. theses, while others served as primary advisors to eight, six, or five M.A. students at a time, and now serve as members on at least as many Graduate Committees. This mentoring load has been an ongoing trend for years, requiring the Department to rely on our Senior Lecturer to teach upper-division and graduate courses, and to direct M.A. theses. The full-time and half-
time Visiting Lecturers also teach upper-division and graduate courses, and the former serves on M.A. Committees. This practice contradicts our Department’s core value of equity; it also compromises both the stability of the undergraduate major and the research mission of the Graduate Program. We find it difficult to staff courses essential to our core curricular and research foci; the success of several faculty members in receiving NSF grants has exacerbated this trend given the course releases associated with such awards. While enrollment in our M.A. Program has grown by 500 percent since 2006, the number of graduate funding packages that the College provides remains unchanged; consequently, recruitment is increasingly difficult, and lack of sufficient funding forces some students to delay graduation. Moreover, in order to sustain its research momentum, the Department of Anthropology requires replacement of the research laboratories currently in Kell Hall. Finally, the Department lacks sufficient office space to accommodate its current faculty and to house prospective new hires.

Consistent with the self-study data analysis, the Department intends to pursue three innovations:

1. Increase undergraduate enrollment through the establishment of a Bachelor of Science degree in Anthropology;
2. Establish a Professional Concentration in Museum Anthropology within the M.A. Program;
3. Create a Graduate Certificate in Ethnography to meet the growing demand for these research skills in other academic disciplines, professional schools, and careers.

These innovations will require the following resources:

1. Two new tenure track lines: One in Human Biology and one in Digital Humanities
2. Additional graduate student funding packages to attract more and higher quality applicants;
3. Additional staff support to help manage complex federal grants;
4. Replacement of laboratories to support faculty members’ federally-funded research;
5. Additional office space on the third floor of Sparks Hall;
6. Conversion of the current rotating Visiting Lecturer line to a Lectureship;
7. Conversion of the current rotating half-time VL and various PTIs to a Lectureship;

We are conscientious about the fiscal constraints under which the College operates; accordingly, we propose an Implementation Plan of five primary goals that are budget-neutral: (1) Two TT hires to help build a B.S. in anthropology and a professional Concentration in Museum Anthropology, both to be sought through our participation in the Next Generation Initiative; (2) Additional Graduate Funding Packages, to be sought through department-community partnerships; (3) Establishment of a professional Certificate in Ethnography, to be accomplished with current resources; (4) Additional staff grant support to be secured from the Research Office; and (5) Replacement of science laboratories and allocation of office space are already factored in the calculations by the Dean’s Office following the demolition of Kell Hall. Only two goals require minimum support from the College: (1) The conversion of the full-time VL into a Lectureship, and (2) The conversion of the half-time VL and PTIs into a Lectureship. These low-cost resources will yield significant benefits to the Department, the College, and the University, including an increase in credit hours, an increase in funded research activity and impactful scholarship, and an increase in the number of professionally trained graduates. The Department of Anthropology remains committed to affirming the Goals of the University’s Strategic Plan, and to strengthening the Goals of the emergent Strategic Plan of the College of Arts and Sciences.