December 8, 2016

To the External Review Committee:

First, let us express our sincere appreciation for your service as external reviewers for the Georgia State University Department of Anthropology. We understand the demand on your time and very much appreciate your willingness to help. Your expertise and insights into the state of the department and its future directions will be very critical to our effort in formulating a strategy to move forward.

We have enclosed the department’s self-study report, which provides a comprehensive summary of the state of the department consistent with the strategic directions specified in Georgia State’s current 10-year strategic plan. We appreciate the evident hard work of the self-study committee (Steven Black, Jeffrey Glover, and Bethany Turner) and its chair (Emanuela Guano). We believe the report clearly demonstrates how the Anthropology Department has made important contributions to the university’s strategic planning goals, and it helps shape a pathway for future sustainability and accomplishment.

We applaud the Department of Anthropology’s progress over the course of the review period and since its most recent self-study. The department has been successful in increasing its graduate enrollment and is working to increase undergraduate enrollment and majors in anthropology. During the period since the last self-study, the department has developed into a mature and balanced unit with 2 professors, 6 associate professors, 2 assistant professors, and 1 senior lecturer. A positive indicator of faculty development has been the department’s success in hiring 2 assistant professors, and 6 faculty members have been promoted. The faculty has also been successful in securing external research funding, as well as in both the quantity and quality of faculty productivity. The Department also has actively contributed to the urban and global goals of the university, not only through its urban and international research but also through its active involvement in field schools and study abroad programs.

The Dean’s Office agrees with the goals outlined in the Department of Anthropology’s self-study. We do, however, have further questions about how to proceed in the most effective way to achieve these objectives. In the context of Georgia State University’s revenue-neutral budgetary climate, we essentially have 3 options for developing the strengths of our programs: (1) redirection of resources within existing departmental budgets to maximize programmatic impact, (2) lateral redirection of resources from other units within the college where we are convinced that the value added in a particular unit is an effective way of achieving the goals of the university’s strategic plan, and (3) entrepreneurial pursuit of opportunities for external funding.
In accordance with those contextual parameters, we would like the external review team members to consider the following items:

- Beyond continuing to seek external support for individual faculty members and their projects, are there new directions for interdisciplinary, collaborative research teams to successfully compete for both university and external funding? Similarly, are there opportunities for building partnerships with city and community agencies, non-profits, and businesses that can develop into funded research projects?

- Are 4 undergraduate concentrations too many (or an appropriate number) for a department of 11 regular faculty members? Would a new Bachelor of Science major attract new students to the department or strain the department’s need to offer required undergraduate and graduate courses?

- Would a new M.A. program in Museum Anthropology and a graduate certificate in Ethnography attract new graduate students and would they provide employment opportunities for graduates or certificate holders? Are there other professional programs or certificate programs that the department could develop to attract students seeking professional training and employment? For example, are there programs that would be attractive to (and supported by) non-profit organizations and/or businesses and corporations with culturally diverse work forces or serve culturally diverse clients/customers?

- Is a Ph.D. program feasible and desirable as a long-term goal for the department? Is there a need for more Ph.D.’s in Anthropology now or in the near future?

- How can the Anthropology Department best engage and complement the university’s strategic goals of understanding the complex challenges of cities and globalizing the university? What else can the department do to advance these goals?

- Are there any other recommendations or suggestions to increase undergraduate enrollments, improve the graduate program, and/or enhance faculty research productivity?

We look forward to your analysis and insights on the state of the department and its future directions.

Sara Rosen, Dean
College of Arts and Sciences

Donald C. Reitzes, Associate Dean
Social and Behavioral Sciences