



Louisiana State University

and Agricultural and Mechanical College

Department of Mathematics

June 22, 2001

To Professor Dan Fogel, Executive Vice-Chancellor and Provost

From the General Education Committee of the Faculty Senate

Via the Faculty Senate Executive Committee

Report on the Review of These Courses¹:

Anthropology 1001: Introduction to Physical Anthropology and Prehistory

Anthropology 1003: Introduction to Cultural and Social Anthropology

Anthropology 2015: Introduction to Archaeology

Anthropology 2050: World Archaeology

Anthropology 2051: Introduction to World Ethnography

Geography 1001: Human Geography: Americas and Europe

Geography 1003: Human Geography: Africa and Asia

The Committee recommends unanimously that the University should renew and confirm the listing of these seven courses in the Social Sciences Area of General Education. The forms for doing so are herewith submitted for your approval. We

¹We decided to postpone the review of Anthropology 2423 (Introduction to Folklore), cross-listed as English 2423, which was originally on the list of courses to be reviewed this year. The Department teaches two other courses which are listed in the General Education Program: Geography 2050 and 2051. They are listed in the Natural Sciences Area. They were not reviewed this year.

offer the following remarks and further recommendations. We are notifying the Department by means of a copy of this memorandum.

In recommending the renewal of the seven courses, the Committee takes the view that they need not be reviewed again until after the current ten-year cycle of the all-courses review is complete.

The Department of Geography and Anthropology is one of the University's distinguished academic units. In teaching these courses, which attract and serve substantial numbers of non-majors, the Department is making an excellent contribution to the General Education Program. The faculty is attuned to the values and purposes of the Program. In their discussions with us, we found them thoughtful, conscientious, and passionate about the role of these courses in the education of LSU students. They made the case convincingly for their continued listing, in terms of the importance of course content.

We believe that the Department does a good job of teaching such courses in large sections. No doubt, smaller sections would be better for the active engagement of the students with the subject matter. We would be glad to see additional resources brought to bear, to that end.

It is important for General Education courses to be taught at a true university level, with high expectations for student achievement. We commend the department for maintaining reasonably high grading standards, as reflected in the overall grade distributions shown in the table at the end of this memorandum for the two-year period 1998-1999, 1999-2000. However, there have been some very high grade distributions for some courses, some semesters.

The Committee recommends that at some time in the future the Department faculty, as part of their ongoing program review, should examine these courses systematically. We would like to see the faculty develop and maintain a shared knowledge of and commitment to their role in General Education, while addressing the basic questions. Are the resources devoted to these courses being spent in the best possible way for the cause of General Education? Is this the best possible array of courses, or should some be added or some replaced?

We think that the Department should establish some small-section, freshman or sophomore Honors courses---either new courses, or Honors versions of existing courses. The Honors Program and the General Education Program might both benefit significantly if the Department provided such offerings for suitably qualified students. At present, the Department, at this level, operates only in a large-section mode. We think that the faculty would enjoy operating in an Honors mode part of the time.

In large sections, wherever it's not already done, the faculty should consider ways to incorporate writing and speaking in class to engage students with the reading materials and the lectures. For example, "write to learn" activities can be used successfully which do not require that faculty respond individually to students' writing.

We are grateful for the Department's exemplary cooperation in the review. We extend our profuse thanks to the Chair, Professor Bill Davidson; to the other faculty of the Department who also met with us: Professors Jay Edwards, Paul Farnsworth, Kent Mathewson, and Heather McKillop; and to those and other faculty who prepared the proposals-to-renew.

Yours sincerely,

Carruth McGehee, for the Committee

Copies to the other members of the Committee; to Professor Bill Davidson and other faculty mentioned above; and to Dean M. Jane Collins.

Enclosures to the Provost only: The seven renewal forms, and a copy of the memo launching the review.

Note: Reports on the surveys of students taking these courses in Fall 2000, as well as other pertinent material, are on file with the Committee.

**Table of Grade Distributions in the
Geography and Anthropology Courses
Overall for Fall 98, Spring 99, Fall 99, and Spring 00**

These data are taken from a study produced by Ms. Sandra Walker,
Office of Budget and Planning,
September 6, 2000.

Course	Enrollment	A	B	C	D	F	W	ABC
Anth. 1001	2362	30%	25%	25%	9%	4%	8%	79%
1003	2692	22%	31%	25%	9%	6%	7%	78%
2015	450	20%	22%	26%	13%	10%	9%	68%
2050	58	21%	29%	16%	17%	9%	9%	66%
2051	93	36%	14%	13%	17%	12%	9%	62%
2423	188	30%	27%	14%	10%	6%	14%	71%
Geog. 1001	4058	20%	29%	30%	8%	5%	8%	79%
1003	2523	28%	31%	22%	8%	6%	6%	80%