DIVERSITY MISSION STATEMENT [1]

June 2014

PREAMBLE

At the heart of anthropology research, theory and practice lies a shared appreciation of and commitment to understanding the full range of human identity and experience. We have come to recognize that diversity exists across culture, race, ethnicity, nationality, class, gender, sexuality, religion, language, age, and ability. These multiple identities do not simply coexist in individuals; they intersect. Acknowledging and honoring this richness enhances the process of discovery by engendering multiple modes of experiencing, interpreting, and acting.

However, we live in a world in which these identities are not value-free. Our society is hierarchical and systematically awards power and privilege to some individuals, while others’ experiences are marginalized, punished, or erased. Our valuation of these identities has historical and social meaning as well as biological, economic and emotional consequences. We recognize that the academy at large, and our discipline specifically, have often reinforced, and continue to reinforce, these hierarchies.

Statistics can help highlight elements of this complex story. For example, Non-Hispanic White males comprise 31% of the US population but 60% of all full professors in the US. Blacks and Latinas/os comprise 13% and 16% of the US population, respectively, but only 6% each of recently awarded PhDs. Six-year graduation rates for bachelor’s students at public universities are 60% for whites, but only 49% for Latinas/os, 39% for Blacks, and 38% for Native Americans.[1] Progress has been slow, and in some cases non-existent. For example, enrollment in four-year colleges among low-income students actually dropped—precipitously—from 1992 (54%) to 2004 (40%).[2] One recent study demonstrated that the vast majority of high-achieving students from low income households never apply to any selective college, despite the fact that their records would make them competitive for such schools, and those schools would cost them less than those they attend after financial aid.[3] Many qualified students simply do not see selective colleges as part of their world.

Educational and academic employment statistics are much harder to come by for other demographic groups and communities who have been historically marginalized, such as sexual and gender minorities and those with disabilities, which speaks to the invisibility and erasure of their experiences. In addition, numerical representation only tells us part of the story—just as important are the related questions of whether and how we accommodate the needs of, and value and support the experiences of, everyone within our academic community.

Given that institutions tend to reinforce the dominant ideologies and social hierarchies of the societies in which they exist; AND

Given that these hierarchies keep everyone in this society and the society as a whole from reaching our greatest potential; AND

Given that in order to remain relevant, anthropology as a discipline must reflect the diversity of the communities in which we live, work and serve, and that we have far to go in achieving this goal; AND

Given that change can come out of institutions in which identity, power, and privilege are a part of the collective conversation;

WE, the UW Department of Anthropology have adopted the following vision and mission statement:

VISION STATEMENT
The UW Department of Anthropology is committed to the interwoven goals of:

- promoting an inclusive departmental culture that draws and supports faculty, staff and students who collectively reflect the diversity of our society
- considering and addressing issues of privilege within our community, and in being mindful of the power many of us are afforded over others by virtue of our varied identities and roles
- promoting research, advocacy and activism that operates collaboratively to serve the diverse and often marginalized communities with whom we as anthropologists work

MISSION AND OBJECTIVES STATEMENT

Our mission and objectives are to:

1. identify institutional resources and create departmental policies that lead to the recruitment, retention and promotion of;
2. increase the presence of;
3. promote the well-being of;
4. support the advancement within the university of;
5. improve the departmental environment for;
6. encourage the application, hiring and enrollment of;
7. raise departmental awareness of the value and need for;
8. celebrate the importance and work of

a community of faculty, students and staff that is diverse with respect to culture, race, ethnicity, nationality, class, gender, sexuality, religion, language, age, and ability, with special attention to US minorities historically underrepresented on U.S. university and college campuses.

These stated objectives reflect the overall effort of the Anthropology department to challenge the structures of privilege and discrimination that limit our experience and success. Together, they underscore our commitment to creating respect and appreciation for the diversity of human experiences and perspectives within our department, our university, our communities, and our world.

[1] US Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, The Condition of Education, 2013. We recognize that these broad categories of identities hide diversity within groups as much as they highlight diversity between groups. Our intent is not to reify these categories, but to use them as starting points. This is a common challenge, and requires us to remain continually open to the complexities of the human world and mindful of the categories we use to organize it.
