

12/5/2023

**Questions from Dan Werner, Department of Philosophy (Chair and Faculty Senator),
re: Anthropology's proposed Field Engagements requirement:**

I don't know how many events you host each semester, and obviously you'll need a sufficient number. But I am also wondering about timing: what would you do in the case of students who are unable to attend many/most of your department's events due to a work conflict or class schedule conflict? (I don't know if your events are typically in the evenings, e.g.)

Is [the Field Engagements requirement] something that will be visible or notated on a student's progress report? And if so, does someone have to be in charge of entering a grade of P or some such? Or will it just be done "in house," so to speak, with the online platform that you have mentioned?

Response from Ben Junge, Chair, Department of Anthropology:

Thanks for the note and the very reasonable question. Here's our thought process:

1. When we hold our events/convenience for students: We hold at least half of our events on Wednesday at 4 or 5 pm. This day/time preference came out of a survey we conducted with our majors a couple years back to ask about most convenient times for departmental activities. Wednesday is a day when faculty are usually on campus but not teaching (we don't schedule classes at that time) and when the Anthro Club meets (upping the chance of good attendance by both faculty and majors).

2. Frequency of events: We *began* our deliberations on this part of the Field Engagements Experience component by asking: "How many department events are we already doing?" The answer was: Each faculty member organizes about one event per semester. And, as important, we are unanimously happy to continue at this overall rate. These include academic presentations (speaker series), but also hands-on activities (Joe Diamond recently did a ceramics activity, for example), films, and Anthropology webinar-viewing sessions. Since we have four full-time faculty members (with one more starting next fall), and taking into account occasional sabbaticals (Lauren Meeker is on one now) we estimate that with no change to our existing rate of events, *we can easily offer an average of five qualifying events/activities per semester (or 10 per academic year)*.

3. Since most of our majors declare as 2nd-year students (with some as first-semester 3rd-years), we are confident that the events-offerings frequency described above should provide majors with enough options to satisfy the six-activity requirement prior to graduation.

4. Exceptions: We absolutely take seriously that commuters (or students who work or have other obligations when events take place) are at a disadvantage. This is in part why we don't often schedule activities at night, and we've picked a day and time-slot when classes are least likely to be happening. Nonetheless, we recognize that a contingency plan may be necessary in certain cases. Accordingly, similarly to when an advisor approves a course substitution for a major requirement, the Anthro chair can approve a substitution for a field engagement experience. Here it is important to clarify that, in the new system, the meetings our faculty have with advisees each semester (for advisors to grant pre-registration clearance after reviewing the student's proposed schedule for the next semester) will now *routinely* include touching base on the student's field experience record (which will be easily accessible using the online platform I have described in correspondence with Andy Evans and is archived in the Teams folder.) Hence, we have built a step into the process that ensures that—short of extreme laziness on the student's part—no Anthro major will reach graduation with insufficient field engagement “points.”

5. Finally: While we're pretty confident we will be offering enough activities/events on a range of days/times so as to increase the likelihood of “attend-ability” for students, we recognize that this is, after all, a new initiative and we will need to assess it regularly as it is implemented. That will include activities like anonymous online surveys with majors (on the question you've raised, but certainly others as well) on an annual basis. (We do such a survey already, so the structure is already in place to add new questions about the curricular overhaul.)

Following the Psych Department model, we will have an in-house platform for the individual details - but once all field engagement requirements are satisfied, we will notify the Registrar's Office so that the overall (zero-credit) Field Engagements requirement shows as “satisfied” on the student's progress report.