1996 Survey

By David B. Givens and Timothy Jablonski
Department of Academic Relations
American Anthropological Association

The modal academic anthropologist in 1996 is a white male, full professor, nearing retirement, whose principal subfield is sociocultural anthropology. The modal US program employs five full-time anthropologists in a joint sociology/anthropology department, at a public university on the semester system, offering a BA as its highest anthropology degree. Despite a chilly academic climate, BA and MA degrees in anthropology each have risen 30% above rates measured two years ago. Meanwhile, the number of doctoral degrees awarded in anthropology in 1995 rose 16% over 1994.

Surveys

To monitor the academic fitness of anthropology, the American Anthropological Association has, since 1977, produced a biennial survey of departments as a basis for longitudinal study of enrollments, degrees, curricula, faculty size, tenure rates, salaries and noteworthy academic trends. The 1996 AAA Survey of Departments was compiled, in part, from questionnaires mailed in 1996 to 317 four-year colleges and universities listed in the 1995-96 AAA Guide. The survey's 64% return rate compares with 51% in 1994, 67% in 1987, 72% in 1985, 68% in 1983 and 1981, 71% in 1980, 70% in 1979, 59% in 1978 and 41% in 1977.

Additional statistics were computed from information published annually in the AAA Guide. As in previous reports, minority anthropologists were classified according to US federal categories: American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian/Pacific Islander, Black and Hispanic. The 1996 report is divided into quantitative and qualitative sections.

Quantitative Summary and Analysis

Optimism

The "cautious optimism" of the 1994 Survey of Departments has been upgraded to "optimism" in the 1996 report. Despite the chilly climate that has gripped US higher education thus far in the 1990s, anthropology has managed not only to survive but to grow. As it continues to adapt with innovations in curricula and programmatic agility in the face of downsizing, there is every indication that collegiate anthropology will enter the new century alive and very well.

During the last two years the number of undergraduate degrees granted increased in 65% of the departments returning the survey questionnaire (remained the same = 29%; decreased = 6%). Degree figures published in the 1995-96 AAA Guide show that 1995's anthropology BAs and MAs each rose 30% over those of 1993. Meanwhile, the number of doctoral degrees awarded in anthropology in 1995 rose 16% over 1994's figure--but only 4% over 1993. Thus, academic anthropology has a stable platform upon which to grow, as US higher education itself expands to keep pace with the 22% increase in high school graduates forecast by the US Education Department to occur by the year 2005.
Faculty

Pay. In 1995, according to the College and University Personnel Association, the average pay raise for professors was 2.8% at public colleges and 2.6% at private colleges (the Consumer Price Index rose 2.5% that year). For full-time anthropology faculty, yearly salaries in 1995-96 rose $1000 to $2000 over 1994-95 figures. On average, faculty in doctoral departments earned 22 to 38 percent more in 1995-96 than colleagues teaching in BA programs.

New Hires. According to the survey, the average beginning salary for new full-time anthropology faculty [with PhDs, but without full-time teaching experience] hired in the 1995-96 academic year was $36,000. The median starting salary figure was $36,000.

Ethnic Minorities

Faculty. In AY 1995-96, minority professors made up 11% of the full-time anthropology faculty in the US. This is a small increase over the 10% reported in the 1994 Survey of Departments. Native American anthropologists lost one percentage point, while Asian/Pacific Islander gained a point.

PhDs. Minority representation in anthropology-PhD cohorts increased from 13% in 1990 to 16% in 1995, according to the AAA's 1995 Survey of Anthropology PhDs. Meanwhile, the percentage of white anthropology PhDs decreased from 96% in 1972 to 84% in 1995. (Comparative figures for all US PhD degrees conferred, by racial and ethnic group, in 1995, are as follows: race unknown = 1.1%; American Indian = 0.5%; Asian = 4.1%; Black = 4.7%; Hispanic = 3.3%; White = 86.3%; data source: National Research Council (NRC) Summary Report 1995, reported in Chronicle of Higher Education Almanac, June 14, 1996.)

According to the National Research Council's 1992 Summary Report, "Just over 10% of all PhDs [in all academic disciplines] awarded to US citizens in 1992 were earned by racial/ethnic minorities--Asians, blacks, Hispanics and Native Americans." The US Equal Employment Opportunity Commission calculated the following figures for US college and university faculty in 1992: American Indian = 0.3% [0.8%], Asian = 5.1% [2.9%], Black = 4.7% [12.1%], Hispanic = 2.2% [9.0%] and White = 87.7% [80.3%]; total minority = 12.3%; figures in brackets indicate US racial and ethnic composition [3.9% = "other and unknown," bracketed figure for Hispanic = "may be any race"]; source: Chronicle of Higher Education Almanac, September 1, 1995.

The 1995 Survey of Anthropology PhDs determined that most minority PhDs were in cultural anthropology. Representation in the subfields, computed for the 1994-95 PhD cohort, is as follows: archaeology = 0%; sociocultural = 74%; biological/physical = 4%; linguistic anthropology = 4%; applied/other = 17%. (Note: based on small numbers, these percentages may be statistically unreliable.)

Foreign Born. According to the National Science Foundation (NSF), immigrants are 14.4% of US residents with PhD degrees in anthropology or sociology; comparative data: engineering = 40.3%, life sciences = 21.3%, physics/astronomy = 30.6% (source: NSF's Science Resources Studies Division Data Brief, November 14, 1995).

Students. In AY 1995-96, undergraduate minority students made up 9.1% of declared anthropology majors in the US. In AY 1994-95, US Department of Education figures for
undergraduate and graduate US college enrollments (combined) were American Indian = 1%; Asian = 6%; Black = 10%; Hispanic = 8%; and White = 75%; demographically, the number of white high-school graduates has dropped in the past decade as the number of minority graduates has risen (source: Chronicle of Higher Education, May 24, 1996).

**Women**

*Faculty.* Women gained 6 percentage points toward parity in the full-time anthropology faculty since 1992-93. Female anthropologists attained record levels in 1995-96 in the ranks of full, associate and assistant professor--and as a percentage of all ranks combined. Parity between the sexes is coming slowly, but steadily and surely.

AAA's 1994 Survey of Departments reported that "as a percentage of their own sex, women anthropologists are uniformly sorted into grades (professor = 35%; associate = 31%; assistant = 31% [instructor = 3%]), while men anthropologists are bunched together at the full-professor level (55%; associate = 26%; assistant = 17% [instructor = 2%])."

In its 1992 "Summary Report on the Academic Employment of Women in Anthropology" (*Anthropology Newsletter*, February 1992, pp 1-2, 23; covering the years 1983-87), an Association committee under the auspices of the AAA's Committee on the Status of Women in Anthropology (COSWA) found that the average female assistant professor made $1,830 less than male colleagues (associate = $459 less; full = $8,899 less; on average, male full professors had held the PhD 2.5 years longer than female colleagues). According to the report, "The effect of the lag for the discipline as a whole was that male anthropologists made over $6 million more than female anthropologists over the five-year period."

As a follow-up, in its 1994 "Academic Employment of Women in Anthropology" (*Anthropology Newsletter*, October 1994, pp 11-12; covering the year 1992), COSWA's research committee found that "across all ranks, 31% of faculty are now women." (The 1994 Survey of Departments' figure for 1992-93 was 30%; in 1995-96 the figure stands at 36%) Regarding compensation, the committee reported, "According to the 1992 results, there are no statistically significant [salary] differences at any rank." Regarding time to promotion, "By 1992 there were no gender differences in waiting time." The report concluded, "if trends toward equity at the assistant professor rank and toward an increased percentage of females at the higher ranks persists, equity at the higher ranks eventually will be attained."

*PhDs.* Of the 464 American anthropology doctorates awarded in 1995, 268 (58%) were earned by women (1994 = 53% female, 1993 = 58%, 1992 = 49%, 1991 = 63%, 1990 = 51%; source: *AAA Guide*). Thus far in the 1990s, women have earned an average 55% of North American anthropology PhDs. This reflects a national trend in gender of PhD recipients, showing constant increases in female social-science doctorates since 1958, with the number of male PhD recipients beginning to decline in 1976, until parity between the sexes was reached in 1994. Women attained comparable rates of growth in the life sciences from 1958-94, yet parity has not been reached because the growth rate for men has not declined (source: "Recent Data on Women and Minorities," p 1921, *Science*, March 29, 1996).

Women anthropology-PhDs increased from 32% of the 1972 cohort to 59% of the 1995 PhD cohort (source: 1995 Survey of Anthropology PhDs; breakdown: sociocultural = 64% female, archaeology = 43% female, physical = 54% female, linguistics = 100% female, applied/other = 65% female).
Degrees

BA Degrees. A strong BA program constitutes the heart of most anthropology programs. It prepares graduates for entry-level employment in a wide variety of careers, and lays a foundation for training at the postgraduate level.

The previous record for BA degrees awarded in anthropology--7,184--was set in 1994. This record was broken with 1995's total of 7,555. The 1970s produced more BAs than the 1950s, 1960s and 1980s combined. A steep decline in BAs occurred from 1975 through 1983, when large numbers of college students opted for business and career-related majors rather than for arts-and-sciences degrees. Starting in 1985, anthropology BAs began rising and continued to rise through 1995. At the current rate, the 1990s will eclipse the record set in the 1970s, leaving anthropology well positioned for growth in the next century as US higher education expands.

MA Degrees. The previous record for MA degrees awarded in anthropology--1,206--was set in 1994. This record was broken by 1995's total of 1,364. Anthropology MA degrees have been rising steadily since 1986, after declining from mid-1970s levels.

As academic departments, MA programs are the minority in American anthropology. As reported two years ago, 21% of the discipline's degree-granting institutions confer the MA as their highest anthropology degree (BA = 53%; PhD = 26%). This percentage is expected to rise as some BA departments expand through the addition of applied-anthropology curricula leading to the applied-MA degree.

Since the 1950s, roughly 2 to 2.5 MAs have been awarded for every PhD conferred in anthropology, while the number of BAs awarded has ranged from 4 to 6 times more than MAs over the last 40 years; in 1994-95, 5.5 BAs were awarded for every MA degree conferred (1992-93 = 5.5 as well).

PhD Degrees. A new record for PhD production was set in 1995: 464 anthropology doctorates were awarded that year. The doctorate in anthropology has remained steady at plus-or-minus 400 degrees granted per year since 1974. This parallels a national trend in social science PhDs, reported by the National Research Council (NRC) in its 1992 Summary Report. The NRC report shows a steadily rising number of life-science PhDs, as well, and a gradually declining number of humanities PhDs, since 1974, paralleling the situation in anthropology (humanities doctorates began climbing again in the 1990s, and in 1992 reached their highest level since 1977).

Despite 1995's record-setting 464, it is not clear whether anthropology doctorates will continue to climb above the 400-degree ceiling set in 1974. The mean number of anthropology PhDs awarded from 1974 through 1995 is 399.5 (median = 398.5). For the ten year period from 1974 through 1983, the mean was 401.8 (median = 402.0), yet the period 1984 through 1993 recorded a lower mean of 390.7 (median = 384.0). As long as the size and number of PhD programs remain stable--and the average time-to-PhD of 8-10 years stays the same--it is unlikely that yearly PhD figures will significantly increase during the rest of this century.

Contributing to the no-growth scenario is a nascent administrative strategy under discussion in many states to eliminate program duplication. In larger states, such as California and New York, legislators are asking if each tax-supported campus should offer a PhD degree in each academic field--or if individual schools should specialize to prevent duplication.
According to the Association's biennial Survey of Anthropology PhDs, roughly half to a third of each year's cohort of new recipients of the anthropology doctorate take nonacademic positions in government or in the private sector (profit and nonprofit). Increasingly, PhD students begin their training with academic as well as nonacademic careers in mind, and seek admission to programs that have applied anthropologists on board. Currently, there is no discernible ceiling or cap--like that prevailing in the tightened academic job market--for PhD anthropologists targeting the nonacademic realm for employment.

**PhD Unemployment Rate.** According to the National Science Foundation's Division of Science Resources Studies' 1993 Survey of Doctorate Recipients (completed in 1996), the unemployment rate in 1993 for sociology and anthropology was 1.6% (computer and information sciences = 1.0%; psychology = 1.3%; biological and health sciences = 1.4%; economics = 1.4%; political and related sciences = 2.0%; physics and astronomy = 2.3%).

**Academic Job Availability.** One measure of the academic job market is the number of position-open ads listed in the Anthropology Newsletter. The *AN* carries over 95% of all academic anthropology jobs available in US four-year colleges and universities. In 1995, 308 positions (nearly all academic) were listed: two-thirds as many jobs as new PhDs available to fill them (1994 = 215; 1993 = 353; 1992 = 310; 1991 = 387; 1990 = 350; 1989 = 473; 1988 = 423; 1987 = 318; 1986 = 242; 1985 = 247). Meanwhile, 93 open positions were listed at the 1995 AAA Annual Meeting in Washington, DC (FY 94 = 118; FY 93 = 111; FY 92 = 95; FY 91 = 91; FY 90 = 117; FY 89 = 154; FY 88 = 140; FY 87 = 105; FY 86 = 90; FY 85 = NA; FY 84 = 78; FY 83 = 72; FY 82 = 43; FY 81 = 52; FY 80 = 51).

**Student Enrollments**

**Undergraduate.** A noteworthy finding of the 1996 Survey of Departments is that the mean number of anthropology majors is still significantly on the rise. For precision, and as a check against sampling error, a sample of 130 anthropology departments whose chairs have faithfully reported undergraduate enrollments, since 1975, in the AAA Guide has been tracked. In this sample, undergraduate majors in 1996 increased 14% over 1993 (and 31% over 1991). Majors are up 109% from 1987 (one of the doldrum years in the late-70s/mid-80s decline).

**Graduate.** The 1994 Survey of Departments reported that from 1975 to 1993, graduate enrollments had shown comparatively flatter levels than undergraduate figures. Figures for 1995 graduate enrollments are up 14% over 1993, however--and up 35% over 1991--an indication that they may be catching up. Anthropology graduate-student enrollments are up 43% over the doldrum-marker year, 1987. The 1994 Survey's anticipated increase in graduate-student enrollments--based on expansion at the undergraduate level--may be underway. ("Growth" in anthropology, however, can be deceiving. From 1970 to 1990, the US population jumped nearly 25%, from 203 million to 249 million. [1995's figure is 260 million.])

**Qualitative Findings**

To supplement the quantitative analysis of the 1996 Survey of Departments, department chairs were asked to respond to open-ended questions about their curricula and programs. One hundred and sixty chairs responded to the qualitative section of the survey questionnaire. Questions and representative answers appear below.

**Applied/Practicing Anthropology: 1996-2000**
"In your viewpoint as chair, what role--present and future--do you see for applied/practicing anthropology in your department?"

(1) Of the 160 departmental representatives who responded with written answers, 77% indicated that applied/practicing anthropology in their departments is very important (54%), important (16%) or will be important in the near future (7%); while 23% indicated that applied currently has little or no presence, nor will it be enhanced in the near future.

Chairs attributing a very important role for applied curricula used phrases such as "Absolutely critical," "Increasingly important," "Growing component," "Very strong focus" and "Major role." Others stressed the importance of existing applied curricula, but did not emphasize further growth in that realm. One wrote, "Though we have no applied program per se, we are convinced of the importance of practicing anthropology, and many of our graduates work in this field." Another wrote, "We involve students in our consulting and contract work." Another comment was, "Applied is currently part of our five-field introductory course."

Many hoped to expand in applied directions over the next few years: "We would like to hire an applied anthropologist eventually," remarked one chair. "It may take a while to develop a program in applied anthropology," another offered, and still another colleague commented that "We would very much like to have a position for an applied/practicing anthropologist."

Those who saw little importance for applied/practicing responded with such comments as, "Limited," or "Very little"--and "I don't see us teaching applied anthropology, but we are all aware of--and promote--ideas of being flexible in terms of professional orientation."

(2) Of the 77% favoring applied curricula, courses, faculty and programs, many cited career benefits for students: "We require all majors to do a practicum with a community organization." "Our archaeologists regularly place graduate students in contract work." "Because few of our students are likely to become academic anthropologists, we offer a course in applied anthropology and public policy, and one in medical anthropology."

The former chair of a BA program wrote, "We are reorganizing our undergraduate curriculum to emphasize research skills that will make our students attractive to a wide range of employers. These include team research projects, interviewing techniques, methods to present findings, and training in hypothesis formulation."

The chair of a mid-sized PhD program wrote, "Anthropology here is grounded in empirical social and biological sciences. We believe there is--or can be--a strong applied aspect to everything we do here in archaeology, biological anthropology and sociocultural. We do not see applied anthropology as a fifth subfield, and are convinced that in another quarter century surviving departments of anthropology will come around to this perspective as well."

**World Wide Web: 1996-2000**

Since the 1994 Survey, academic anthropology has experienced a communications revolution known as the World Wide Web (WWW). Indeed, of the nearly 300 science-organization members of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS; of which the AAA is one), 92% use the WWW and 73% have Web sites. Even if the Web does not live up to expectations of the general public, it is already a fact of life on campus.
Today, anthropology may be accessed through several hundred Web sites, including the World Lecture Hall (http://www.utexas.edu/world/lecture/), World-Wide Web Virtual Library of Anthropology, and University of California-Santa Barbara's Department of Anthropology (http://www.sscf.ucsb.edu/anth/netinfo.html).

"Do you see the World Wide Web as a vehicle to connect your department to anthropologists in your region? To anthropologists nationally? Internationally? To remote field/research sites?"

Of the 160 department chairs who responded with written remarks, 66% answered unreservedly--Yes--to all four parts of the question. Typical responses were "Absolutely," "Yes to all," and "Useful in all respects." Others (22%) hedged, agreeing the Web would link anthropologists regionally, nationally and overseas, but forecast that it would be less useful as a connection to remote research sites. Overall, 88% agreed that the Web is or soon will be an important departmental tool.

One chair wrote, "I would imagine that remote field sites might eventually link through satellite hook-ups, but today it requires a phone line and many such places do not have phone service." But as another suggested, "It may be used--possibly as early as this summer--to connect our department with one faculty member's research site in Central America."

One in five respondents (21%) volunteered that their departments already had established Web sites or will have sites up and running by year's end. (It is likely the actual figure is higher.) Chairs in this category were among the most optimistic about anthropology's presence on the Web: "Its potential is vast." "We see the WWW as our most important new tool in communicating with colleagues and potential students around the world." And, "We are putting our departmental program on the WWW, and it will be available to anyone in the world."

Among those departments currently on the Web, additional benefits mentioned included (1) "Graduate student recruitment," (2) "Advertising our graduate program," (3) "A way to link local high schools to our department," (4) "A means to cut down on our administrative expenses," and (5) "Listing course syllabi and materials."

Nine out of 10 respondents (88%) were optimistic about benefits of the WWW for students and faculty alike. Yet 12% expressed pessimism or uncertainty about their departments' participation on the Net. Many so indicated by writing "No," "Eventually," or "Somewhat." Longer comments conveyed skepticism: "I see people `surf' and play on the WWW more than work." "The `hype' is running ahead of the current use value." And, "No strong opinion just now."

Some nonsurfers pointed to the scarcity of hardware. "We'll need upgraded computers before this can be done extensively," one chair wrote. Several complained, as a colleague put it, that "I don't have departmental access to the Web."

**Career Tracking: 1996-2000**

"Do you have a procedure for tracking the careers of your BA (MA and/or PhD) students? If so, how do you share the information with your students?"
Of 160 chairs who responded to this open-ended question, 52% answered unambiguously—No. Typical remarks included: "No formal procedure." "Nothing formal in place yet." "Nothing organized."

Many who answered No indicated that plans were underway to formalize tracking and information exchange. "We're working on this," one person wrote. "We are looking into some possible ways via our new anthropology alumni club," responded another. And, "the university as a whole is moving toward tracking alumni."

Of the 48% of departments answering Yes, the range of career-tracking efforts and job-communication opportunities varied. Perhaps the most organized procedure was the following:

"Our department tracks BA students' careers through an annual survey of alumni, conducted each summer. Graduates since 1971 (when our program began), regardless of geographical location, are contacted by mail. We have current addresses for approximately 75% of our alumni. Responses regarding their academic and professional careers are published in the fall edition of our departmental newsletter, which is distributed to current anthropology majors, anthropology minors, potential anthropology students and alumni."

Other comments of those answering Yes ranged from institutionalized yearly tracking systems to less ambitious, informal procedures: "We keep in correspondence with our students who continue in anthropology." "We track 25% to 35% of them, but the 'procedure' depends on factors out of our control." And, "We use periodic surveys."

The most usual propagation technique is a yearly alumni newsletter. Typical of responses received was, "We send out periodic questionnaires, and the results are published in our departmental newsletter."

Less mentioned ways of sharing job/career information included the following: (1) "We use our anthropology colloquium," (2) "We share information informally," (3) "We put survey questionnaires in binders for current students to read," (4) "We share the statistics we gather with current majors in advising conferences," (5) "We discuss jobs at gatherings during alumni week and graduation," (6) "We sponsor a homecoming every 4-6 years," (7) "We distribute the results of our survey in our welcome booklet for new majors," and (8) "We keep a binder with resumes, CVs and business cards—we also have a departmental Web page and alumni are encouraged to contact us here."

**Scenario 2025: Scarcity of Anthropology PhDs**

*Years 1974-96:* Since 1974, anthropology PhD production has stabilized at plus-or-minus 400 per year. At present, 93 academic anthropology departments in the US award a doctorate. Based on present and probable future trends, there is little reason to assume a substantial increase in anthropology-PhD production over the next several years, either in greater output from existing departments or from the creation of new doctoral programs.

*Assumptions:* Assuming 400 new PhDs are produced per year indefinitely, what might American anthropology look like in 30 years? To boldly guess this far ahead one might also assume (1) a retirement age of 65, (2) a life span of 76 years and (3) a mean age of 36 at
time of degree. Under these assumptions, the career "shelf life" of a PhD anthropologist today is 30 years.

Year 2025: By 1995, approximately 11,000 men and women (representing 0.004% of the US population) had earned a doctorate in anthropology. By the year 2025, straight-line forecasting yields a grand total of 12,000 US-awarded anthropology PhDs--only 1,000 more than existed in 1995. If the value of a commodity is determined by its scarcity alone, future anthropologists will be valued indeed.

(For further information, please contact Kathleen Terry Sharp, AAA Department of Academic Relations, 2200 Wilson Blvd, Suite 600, Arlington, VA 22201; 703/528-1902, ext 3010; fax 703/528-3546.

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