I. Mission Statement

Our goal is to give wider scope to discovery, learning, and engagement in the study of humanity at Purdue University. By drawing from anthropology’s rich store of knowledge about humans, and its diverse research methodologies and theories, we aim both to enhance the research efforts of colleagues across the university while cultivating the vision and skills needed by students as they face the global “Grand Challenges” of our time.

II. Vision

“I urge the reader to study the tradition, begin where you are, get off your home turf, play with ideas, practice dis-belief, observe emphatically, theorize wildly, think ahead, and conduct exploratory analyses.” —John Gerring (2012: 37)

Through communication and collaboration, we seek to make anthropology a resource that can enhance Purdue’s strengths in engineering, agriculture, science, and technology. We see our discipline as having the potential to be a source of novelty and change as we think about ways to meet global Grand Challenges including the depletion of natural resources, threats to health, food and water security, urbanization, migration and displacement, social inequality, and conflict. Our commitment is to examine continuity and change in societies and cultures across the globe and over time in a way that will challenge our Purdue colleagues to, as Geering suggests, get off of their home turfs and to play with new ideas.

Our vision is both to maintain excellence in our traditional areas of inquiry and teaching while focusing new attention in several areas that intersect with the Grand Challenges theme:

Identity and Diversity
Whether in ancient societies or contemporary contexts, cultural diversity and conflicting values may create complexities that are the focus of anthropological inquiry. Diversity enhances the growth of knowledge and contributes to creative problem-solving, yet it can present challenges when in-group solidarity leads to conflict with out-groups and thus limits the possibilities for cooperation. As a discipline, anthropology has a long history of addressing diversity and identity issues through both empirical and theoretical work with inequality and social justice and human rights issues in sight. These topics are well represented in teaching and research interests in the department as they relate to gender, sexuality, ethnicity, religion, race and class, communication and cognition in cultural context.

Development, Economy, and Politics
To better understand the varieties of human social economies and their histories, the historical residues of colonialism, and the flows of people, ideas, and information across social boundaries, will be key to making us better able to meet the Grand Challenges, for example, by aiding development efforts. Departmental research in state formation, market
evolution and other attributes of sociopolitical institutions is enriched by our strengths in material culture study. We also critically engaged with development studies and domestic and international applications of anthropology in planned change.

Ecology, Health and Well-being
Many of the grand challenges are ones that adversely affect the quality of life across the globe. As a faculty we address environmental, ecological, and health-related issues from a variety of perspectives and in interdisciplinary contexts. We emphasize multiple approaches to these questions that include: evolution, adaptation and the human diet, health and aging, human-animal relationships, nonhuman primates and environments, and communities and conservation.

Science and Technology
The ecological, demographic, and social sequelae of technoscientific change have been topics of anthropological inquiry and teaching across the spectrum from archaeology to cultural, social, and biological anthropology. Currently we are expanding our inquiries in this regard to investigate the emerging challenges presented by such things as artificial life, e-waste accumulation, and digital social media.

III. Goals and Strategies

In order to realize our vision, we will advance faculty research, enhance the educational experience of students, and strengthen the impact of our department's outreach in the Purdue community. The following goals and strategies will be pursued during the period of this strategic plan to bring us closer to our vision:

A. Goals and Strategies to Advance Anthropological Research:
   1. Promote our discipline's ability to carry out research addressing human grand challenges through resource allocation decisions pertaining to curricular development and strategic hiring.
   2. Better align departmental rewards and recognition policies to encourage research success in designated focal areas.
   3. Work to strengthen research infrastructure in the College of Liberal Arts and at Purdue. This may include negotiating greater return from salary savings and indirect costs associated with external grants, developing support systems for grant writing and administration, and other initiatives to assist faculty and graduate students to obtain research support.
   4. Work with CLA and Sponsored Program Services to improve recognition of the particular anthropological needs for off-campus research at field sites and streamline the approval of appropriate indirect costs.

B. Goals and Strategies to Enhance the Educational Experiences of Students:
   1. Undergraduate Program
      a. Develop specific tracks and course recommendations to prepare students to address grand challenges and to prepare them for specializations. This will be done within the context of a broad anthropological education while expanding preparation for practicing and applied anthropology with new undergraduate courses.
      b. Expand the possibilities for career and pre-professional preparation and internship placements in our areas of excellence.
c. Promote our courses in the University and College of Liberal Arts core requirements, and improve channels for publicizing our courses and to encourage their inclusion as recommended courses for students in other majors.
d. Enhance our involvement with existing and new Purdue initiatives, such as learning communities and the Honors College and honors programs.

2. **Graduate Program**
   a. Evaluate our master’s and Ph.D. programs with the goal to make them more consistent with strategic goals and to better meet the variety of career goals of our graduate students, to provide appropriate training in our areas of excellence, and to enhance possibilities for training and research tied to interdisciplinary programs including Ingstive Behavior, Interdepartmental Linguistics, Interdepartmental Nutrition, and The Center on Aging and the Life Course.
   b. Institute a formal graduate track in practicing/applied anthropology.
   c. Develop funding models to better meet the needs of graduate students for research and professional development travel support.
   d. Strengthen recruitment of top students.

C. **Goals and Strategies to Strengthen the Impact of Department of Anthropology:**
   1. Improve how we publicize our activities and achievements and promote involvement of alumni and friends in support of our department and students, including an annual fall newsletter to be distributed by mail, beginning in Fall 2013.
   2. Maintain a dynamic web presence by developing a mechanism to regularly update the department website, and include a convenient means for on-line donations.
   3. Develop the means for articulating the anthropology’s unique approach to understanding human issues, such as providing intellectually stimulating contributions to the Purdue community including well-publicized speakers and regular department colloquia.
   4. Expand alumni and donor networks for fundraising.

D. **Goals and Strategies to Strengthen Resources and Opportunities Needed to Meet Our Goals:**
   1. Faculty and Staff
      a. Plan strategic hiring of faculty to enhance research and teaching strength in Grand Challenge areas and to meet teaching and mentoring needs in our established areas. The searches we are conducting for 2013-14 and 2014-15 include anthropology of practice, cultural anthropology, and a hire in the inter-departmental “sustainability cluster.” Other positions will be realized from future cluster hires, from faculty retirements or departures, and when new positions are approved to enhance growth areas.
      b. Explore means of devoting faculty, lecturer, or professional staff time to internship coordination, community engagement, and professional practice opportunities.
      c. Promote faculty success through improved mentoring process, for example, to enhance training for faculty mentors, and to facilitate more frequent collaborative support with other pre-tenure faculty in the college.
      d. Promote honors and awards for faculty accomplishments by forming an awards committee to nominate faculty for appropriate university and
external awards and to honor faculty accomplishments in the department and college.
e. Work to improve travel support for faculty to attend professional meetings.

2. Research Funding Opportunities
   Promote strong external grant activities. Facilitate greater success at garnering research support; currently we recognize a pressing need for enhanced research opportunities and funding for students.

3. Facilities. Optimize and coordinate research space use with changing needs and address unmet research space needs.

4. Alliances and collaborations.
   a. Work to build bridges to other units on campus for research and curricular collaborations. Senior faculty, who have already established their reputations in anthropology, should take the lead in such initiatives.
   b. Facilitate collaboration for opportunities for interdisciplinary seed grants and initiatives.

IV. Implementation and Outcome Assessment

1. At annual beginning of the year retreats, committees and individuals will be assigned to further strategic plan goals.
2. A brief annual progress report on each goal will be prepared as part of the Department of Anthropology Annual Report submitted to the College of Liberal Arts and circulated to the faculty.
3. As appropriate, metrics or specific outcomes will be identified to assist the department in monitoring our accomplishments.

V. References

Gerring, John