

Professional Assessment Statement

Shan-Estelle Brown

Introduction

Anthropology is the study of past and present humankind. I became an anthropologist because of my curiosity about human resilience and adaptation to problems. Everyone can benefit from exposure to anthropological concepts, especially its methods. My teaching style embraces active learning, is purposefully trauma-informed, and encourages community engagement. The COVID-19 pandemic caused me to concentrate the knowledge that students need for future success in an altered world. For these efforts, I am honored to be the 2021 recipient of the Hugh F. McKean Award from the graduating class to one professor for excellence in teaching. Below, I present my achievements in teaching, scholarship, and service to earn tenure.

Teaching

The Rollins Anthropology department states that “Effective, quality teaching means challenging students to develop new perceptions and ways of thinking about their humanity and their world.” To this end, I motivate and prepare students to work effectively in a future health profession. A student wrote in their evaluation, “she shows the students that she cares about their future to be able to complete college at Rollins.” Through my course design, participation in experimental educational programs at Rollins, and positive record of student evaluations, I meet department standards for teaching. In total, I have developed over 150 assignments for twelve new courses for Anthropology (ANT), Global Health (GBH), Rollins Foundation in the Liberal Arts (RFLA), and Rollins College Conference (RCC).

A student wrote that I give them “the opportunity to be successful in the class.” My main goals as an instructor are to ensure that students develop an appreciation for empathy and evidence. I weave empathy and evidence through my courses because they contribute to new ways of perceiving themselves, other humans, and the world. Empathy builds meaningful connections between people and promotes helpful participation in communities. Evaluating evidence requires looking at different sources and multiple cultural perspectives. I ask students to apply concepts we covered in class to new situations. Activities like take-home exams require students to synthesize new information to show that they truly understand the concepts.

To increase students’ empathy and understanding of evidence, I employ trauma-informed pedagogy, a style that minimizes traumatization while still meeting educational goals and objectives. This pedagogical style acknowledges negative potential impacts of traumatization and re-traumatization that can arise from discussing difficult or controversial subjects. Trauma-informed pedagogy requires careful attention to: ensuring safety, establishing trustworthiness, maximizing choice, maximizing collaboration, and prioritizing empowerment. Trauma-informed pedagogy is achieved through careful thought about course objectives and activities, pacing of assignments, and empowering students by offering choices and moments for reflection.

To put this teaching philosophy into practice, I:

- Infuse ethnographic methods into class activities
- Provide students with research opportunities
- Build community in the classroom
- Connect students to the campus and community
- Make the familiar strange and the strange familiar
- Develop authentic assignments using real information

I infuse ethnographic methods into class activities and course assignments. Ethnographic techniques include reflection, observation, active listening, mapping, asking questions, writing, and recognizing one's own positionality. Students become better observers, better researchers, more empathic individuals, and more appreciative of the human diversity they will encounter over their entire lives. This infusion is most prominent in ANT 312: Ethnographic Methods, ANT 405: Senior Seminar: Socially-Engaged Design, RFLA 200: The Patient Experience, RCC 100: Becoming a Rollins Student.

I provide students with research opportunities. Research can intimidate students, but I try to remove potential barriers by simplifying research into its basic building blocks: an interesting question whose answer you don't currently know, a set of systematic designs and methods to answer it, and evidence to support your conclusions. I collaborate with Olin Library and Cornell Fine Arts Museum to help students make visual connections with course content. Students usually read research articles instead of textbooks in my courses. Three courses, GBH 200: Introduction to Public Health, ANT 308: Drugs, Sex, and HIV, and RFLA 200: Social Issues in Social Media have only research articles, which is not only cost-effective for students but also the readings make them stronger readers more accustomed to the scientific method.

Students conduct either original research to gain experience with human subjects or secondary research, where students work with existing data; my goal is for them to gain experience gathering and analyzing data as a way to convert curiosity into action and provoke new research questions. In the GBH 200 course, students incorporate statistics from databases into a persuasive letter to their Congressperson explaining why public health should be a priority. In ANT 308: Drugs, Sex, and HIV, students choose a country to investigate cultural factors and social determinants of health that allow HIV to persist. The end of the course involves a United Nations assembly where students represent the country and write resolutions to improve HIV worldwide. This assignment directly relates to the college mission of responsible leadership and global citizenship, fosters empathy for the people they studied, and empowers students to think of novel solutions.

I build community in the classroom. After about two years at Rollins, I learned from students that they infrequently enroll in courses with their friends because their schedules do not permit it. I help students potentially expand their network of friends by providing opportunities for them to interact with each other. Group and solo presentations, small group discussions, and one-on-one practice interviews require students to think critically about material, confront

their biases, and listen to each other. I initiate collaborations with other faculty for in-class activities, as in RFLA 100: Social Issues in Social Media, to show that collaboration is a norm. By building community in the classroom, students empathetically learn about each other's lives, hear each other's voices, learn each other's strengths and weaknesses, with the potential to build long-term friendships and affinities.

I connect students to the campus and community: In GBH 200, students attend health events on campus and write response papers about what they now know; during the pandemic, this assignment became webinar-based. Providing students with choices is a feature of trauma-informed pedagogy. Through this assignment, students connect to campus resources, learn more about a particular health topic, and think critically to develop their own opinions on health issues. In GBH 200, students plan a local health event to learn about health promotion; this event is situated in a Central Florida community experiencing a health issue they chose to study in-depth and locally. The event is hypothetical, but the assignment helps students learn about health disparities and available local resources for prevalent health issues.

Community engagement (CE) adds a layer of complication to an academic course because you are working with a community partner who may have a different timetable and goals for students conducting service learning with them. I make each CE-designated course a research course so that students become familiar with community-based participatory research, a standard in Anthropology that is growing in popularity in the fields of medicine and public health. Students go one step beyond service learning to fulfill a research need. With its twists and turns, the research process is often confusing, messy, and disorienting for students, even without community partners. Although students consistently rate my CE-designated courses lower than my non-CE courses on evaluations, community engagement adds real value to students. Students learn research in a very applied way by gathering data that a community partner can use for their own marketing materials and grant activities. For ANT 312: Ethnographic Methods, we conducted interviews with staff and patrons of Winter Park Public Library and designed a survey for Hannibal Square Heritage Center. For ANT 405: Senior Seminar: Socially-Engaged Design, students conducted interviews with older adults for Winter Park Health Foundation. Several students have leveraged these activities into internships with local community partners.

I make the familiar strange and the strange familiar: The field of Anthropology embodies T.S. Eliot's phrase "making the familiar strange, and the strange familiar" so that students learn cultural relativism, compare beliefs and behaviors, and question things that seem normal to them. This shift can be unsettling for students, and trauma-informed pedagogy helps students stay engaged in course activities. An example of helping students see in new ways is when students conduct research on social media, something they use every day; students come to recognize possible societal impacts of social media.

I develop authentic assignments using real information: By emphasizing a real audience, assignments seem more realistic than "something just for class." I create original assignments where students write opinion pieces and travel brochures to show critical thinking and their

evaluation of information as evidence. In the Introduction to Public Health course, students play a game where they discuss real-world response to public health emergencies. Letters to politicians about public health being a priority actually get sent, and class projects turn into proposals for Fulbright and Truman Scholarships.

The summative evaluations from the Course and Instructor Evaluations (CIEs) show that, quantitatively and qualitatively, students most frequently perceive me as prepared to teach, enthusiastic about teaching and knowledgeable of the material, as well as respectful and tolerant of students' views, supportive of their progress, and available to them. An accurate snapshot of student feedback comes from GBH 200: Intro to Public Health, Fall 2018: Dr. Brown "speaks very well about public health but also ties in her anthropology background as she teaches. I like getting multiple perspectives and not just the scientific perspective on viewing the different scenarios. I also enjoyed the different case studies. Sometimes following the lecture style is difficult because the use of PowerPoint may not always be engaging. However, there were pauses for discussion so I think the structure as a whole wasn't disengaging." Through the CIEs, I realized that students often have difficulty engaging in less structured discussions of course material and connecting course material to current events; over time, I have added more structure by developing specific questions for them to explore, rather than starting with broader "what do you think about this?" questions.

Building flexibility into all courses provides more opportunities for students to succeed even when problems arise. Over the years at Rollins, I have adopted a more active teaching style to support learning. Lectures have always been interactive but are now much shorter in length to focus on only the most important ideas, thanks to student feedback. I continue to work on articulating the relevance of class activities to students' current and future lives. My syllabi feature an accessible "frequently asked questions" format that communicates expectations and a course's added value. I have thought more carefully about developing questions to guide in-class discussions and I have added debriefing sessions and reflections into assignments and after class activities for students to reflect on why we do these activities. In keeping with trauma-informed pedagogy, I include numerous opportunities for student choice such as choosing presentation dates, assignments with rolling deadlines, and choice of prompt for take-home exams. I am working on making sure students spend an appropriate number of hours on out-of-class preparation, and adding more in-class accountability measures might help. I am growing as an instructor by listening to other teachers in person or through professional development seminars so that I will continue taking calculated risks and listening to feedback.

Scholarship

The Anthropology department criteria outline "a consistent and ongoing record of scholarly involvement" with a minimum of two essay length, research-based, peer-reviewed publications or a book from an academic press, one piece of public scholarship, and presentation of at least two papers at a professional anthropology society. I have met these criteria.

My professional activities entail collaborating on existing projects, writing up reports for publication, and designing future research. These efforts have resulted in one single-authored book and six peer-reviewed articles, two of which are first-authored. The most recent publication on essential workers and the COVID-19 pandemic is an opinion piece resulting from a collaboration with Zoe Pearson, a biochemistry student whom I advised for the 2020 Student Faculty Collaborative Scholarship summer season.

As a medical anthropologist, I consider illnesses and health systems as reflections of socio-cultural values. Public health responses to illnesses are influenced by social processes and the social determinants of health, or the social and environmental conditions in the communities where people live. My research interests are informed by social science, medicine, and public health: 1) patients' self-management of chronic disease and 2) acceptability and usability of new and current applications of existing treatments and technologies such as mHealth and biomedical HIV prevention. These research interests develop better interventions and technologies to innovate patient health outcomes. My research interests include community-engaged research, improving patient-centered outcomes with medical technologies, understanding patients' perceptions of risk and well-being, and identifying structural facilitators and barriers to health care access and retention in care.

Students need an understanding of the most prevalent health issues globally and in the United States. My research interests shape my course design. ANT 308: "Drugs, Sex, and HIV" originates from my experience as a researcher in the AIDS Program and explains epidemiology, cultural beliefs and approaches to HIV, and how and why key populations are at elevated risk for HIV. Students who take my classes are very well prepared to enter professional and graduate education because they are knowledgeable about current health issues.

I have presented research at five national conferences since 2016 at professional anthropological societies, health technology, and conferences on HIV [once with a student]. For public scholarship, I have spoken publicly in Central Florida on the social determinants of health and HIV hosted by organizations like American Institute of Architects Orlando and Hope and Help. For my community-engaged research, I design surveys and interviews and analyze data with Winter Park Public Library, Winter Park Health Foundation, and Hannibal Square Heritage Center. I have submitted grant proposals to conduct local health research to the National Institutes of Health, Social Science Research Council, and Spencer Foundation. I am the recipient of a Critchfield grant from Rollins to study healthy decision making in Eatonville, FL. Future research projects involve studying Florida HIV prevention.

Service

The Anthropology department criteria describe "continuing commitment to the life and mission of the college" through "contributing professionally and fairly to the goals and work of the department," effective advising of students, and participation on committees. For each year at Rollins, I have participated in several ways: coordination of the Global Health academic

program, service on two standing committees - Faculty Affairs and Faculty Research and Development Committee, service on the Board of Visitors for the Cornell Fine Arts Museum, and other recurring activities.

Co-coordinator of the Global Health Program

As Co-coordinator of the Global Health Program with Dr. Nolan Kline, I oversee one of the largest minor-only programs at Rollins. This role has been one of the most rewarding because I prepare students for health careers by giving students tools and opportunities to address and overcome pressing issues in global health. I review and add electives to the six-course minor map, identify internship, research, and study abroad opportunities for students, and update program assessment.

Committee Work

I served on two standing committees: Faculty Research and Development Committee 2019-2020 and Faculty Affairs from 2017-2019. Both committees discussed internal grant submissions, and on Faculty Affairs I participated in reviewing faculty policies and data about endowed chairs and lecturer positions. I am on the Board of Visitors for the Cornell Fine Arts Museum (CFAM). I participate on the Outreach subcommittee, which intends to increase the number of faculty who involve students in CFAM activities. I work on increasing faculty collaborations between CFAM and Rollins faculty, and raising students' awareness of CFAM student leadership opportunities. I served two years as a Rollins Foundations in the Liberal Arts Coordinator where I facilitated workshops on pedagogy and assignment construction. I also served on a faculty search committee for the Sociology Department in 2017.

Student Advising

I have supervised four independent studies and seven student theses. This academic year, I advise twenty-three students and have acted as an unofficial advisor to students exploring health careers since my arrival at Rollins. Most of these students find me through the Global Health minor, but students with even the slightest interest in health ask for my insight.

Community Engagement

In January 2018, I was part of a Rollins delegation to Uganda and Rwanda with Global Livingston Institute (GLI); the goal was to meet GLI's community partners and determine a possible model for students to participate in GLI activities. This opportunity has created several cohorts of Rollins students completing summer internships, networking on campus, opportunities to advise students about their projects, and gauge student interest across campus in international Global Health work, regardless of academic program. I participated on the Center for Leadership & Community Engagement's 2018-2019 Community Impact Sub-team: Health whose goal was to develop concept maps on campus efforts in the health impact area and compare to other benchmark institutions. This information was used to align campus community engagement activities with the college mission. Each year since arriving at Rollins, I have reviewed abstracts for the Latin American Studies Symposium held in April 2018 by Latin American and Caribbean Studies.

Other Professional Service

Having loyalty to academic institutions is important to me. I am an alumni interviewer for my undergraduate institution, Yale University, where I conduct college interviews with Central Florida high school students and write summaries to accompany their applications. Since Fall 2018, I have been an alumni delegate representing the Yale Alumni Club of Central Florida at the annual Assembly for volunteer leadership. I hope to instill in Rollins students not only knowledge but also a similar loyalty through their academic experiences.

Conclusion

I have met the Anthropology Department's criteria for tenure and promotion to Associate Professor. I have thought carefully about how to instill in Rollins students curiosity about other people, preparation for informed discussions, and ability to follow patterns of inquiry. By being continuously involved in my department, community, and academic discipline, I am ready to continue making meaningful contributions to Rollins.