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4. What courses should I take? What skills would it be good to acquire while I am in college?

Preparing for a career as a practicing anthropologist requires solid and well-rounded academic training in anthropology. First, you should take available courses that will provide you with a strong grounding in

working in the institution that interests you. Call the organization and see if they currently employ an anthropologist or other social scientist. If they do, that is a good person to start with on your way to landing an internship. If not, the director of personnel or even the executive director's office may be able to help you in applying for or proposing an internship. Write a letter (followed up a week later with a call) explaining your interest in an internship. Explain why you are interested in the potential host organization/institution. Try to be as specific as possible and explain:

- the types of things you'd like to do during your internship (e.g., "learn about program development and management," "gain a better understanding of community-based research," "develop a better understanding of organizational culture and its impact on employee relations");
- the amount of time you have available and possible starting and ending dates for the internship;
- the need for an organizational liaison with your college or university to ensure course credit;
- any special needs you might have (e.g., time you will need to be away from the internship and sees

Third, review a variety of sources for information about job opportunities (e.g., through your own networks, career placement services, newspaper ads). Typically, you will not see job openings for an "anthropologist" position outside of a university setting, although positions for anthropologists are advertised in the American Anthropological Association's Anthropology Newsletter and on the job boards at the AAA's annual meeting and in your department. Instead, your skills and past work experience may qualify you for any number of jobs (e.g., intercultural training, program director, consultant, refugee services coordinator, policy scientist, curator, marriage and family therapist, development officer in a community organization, city planner, housing administrator, social worker, survey researcher, market analyst, archaeologist, project development officer).

Fourth, tailor your one page resume (or academic vita, in the case of academic/research positions) to a particular job opening. Many people find it useful to organize their experiences by the skills they acquired during particular projects, internships, or jobs (e.g., evaluated survey results, designed research project, supervised two assistants, developed communication plan, coordinated outreach efforts).

Fifth, if you are mailing your resume, always include a customized cover letter in which you highlight your special attributes as they apply to the position you seek and note the unique perspective (e.g., global, comparative, holistic)- you might bring to the job opening and to the organization.

Finally, since many employers are not sure what anthropologists are or what they have been trained to do, you should not necessarily assume that they are knowledgeable about anthropological training. Instead, during an interview, you may want to emphasize certain aspects of your background or provide them with specific details about your abilities to carry a project through from start to finish, the knowledge that you would bring to the position or organization, or examples from your training in which you were able to shed light on certain issues or understand and explain different viewpoints that people held or the actions in which people engaged

7. Who employs practicing anthropologists?

In fact, you'd be surprised at the different kinds of places anthropologists are finding work. Some anthropologists have been hired in the private sector, for corporations or businesses involved in domestic operations as well as international trade. Others have found work as internal research analysts or consultants, assisting in product development, market research and advertising strategies. For example, one anthropologist works for a large, international drug company and is involved in research on nutrition and infant feeding practices. Another works for a U.S.-based consulting company that assists large corporations in employee relations and human resource management issues. Other anthropologists work in the field of technology developm

careers in health. A companion volume is [Training Manual in Development Anthropology](#). See the suggested reading list at the end of this document.

Careers in non-profit agencies and organizations often provide anthropologists with opportunities to work as part of multidisciplinary teams, both within organizations and "in the field." Many anthropologists are employed by governmental agencies at all levels: federal, state and local. They may be program directors, research analysts, policy consultants, or service providers. Anthropologists interested in folklore have found employment at state and local historical societies and at community arts organizations; archaeologists often work for federal agencies like the US Forest Service, state highway departments or state or local museums. In addition, anthropologists have proven to be valuable members of research teams examining the problems of urban crime, HIV infection and AIDS, refugee resettlement, and domestic violence. For example, one anthropologist uses her skills and knowledge to direct a program which provides services to Native American people.

8. How much do practicing anthropologists make? What about benefits?

Salary levels range widely for practicing anthropologists. Several factors affect salary levels, including the employer, externally perceived degree of expertise of the anthropologist, prior experience, and the geographic location of the job. At the upper end of the salary range, a small number of practicing anthropologists make well in excess of \$100,000 annually, including significant royalties from publications. At the other end of the continuum, here are salary levels for practicing anthropologists who work in rural human services fields (add roughly \$1,000- 3,000 for similar urban employment):

Entry level (starting, little or no experience)

\$16,500 and up with a BA

\$18,500 and up with an MA

\$25,000 and up with a PhD

With 5+ years of experience

\$20,000 and up with a BA

\$23,000 and up with an MA

\$30,000 and up with a PhD

Practicing anthropologists with an MA and little/no experience can expect to start at about \$25,000 for a state or federal agency and about the same in a community organization. Those with a PhD but little/no experience can expect to start at about \$30,000. In larger corporate settings or in medical settings (e.g., hospital, primary health care clinic), those with an MA and little/no experience can expect about \$30,000 to start, while a new PhD can expect to start at about \$35,000. However, it must be emphasized that few of the larger corporations hire anthropologists at either the MA or PhD level with little prior experience. Community-based organization (as they are called in the U.S.) or Non-governmental Organizations (as they are called outside of the U.S.) are more inclined to hire anthropologists at the entry level.

Most of the mid-career practicing anthropologists make \$35,000 to \$75,000 annually. Those in the high cost metropolitan centers, like Washington, D.C., earn salaries in the range of \$40- 80,000 annually. The benefits packages associated compare to those of other professional jobs. For example, it is likely that the corporate, federal, or state employers will pay 50% or more of health insurance costs. However, because salaries and benefits packages, vary considerably, the best way to find out information that applies to your local area is by contacting local practicing anthropologists directly. NAPA can assist you in learning the names of practicing anthropologists who live in your area that you can contact for further information (also see response to question 10).

9. Are many anthropologists self-employed? How do you make a living as a private consultant?

Recent survey data provide some information on the number of anthropologists working in the consulting field. In the 1990 NAPA Membership Survey, 25 percent of the respondents indicated that they work in the private sector for large consulting firms, as independent consultants, or in corporations. THE AAA also publishes data from its Survey of Anthropology PhDs. According to the 1990 AAA Survey, 8 percent of respondents listed themselves as employed in consulting firms or as self-employed. It is not surprising that there a higher proportion of consultants in the NAPA survey both because it is an organization oriented towards anthropological practice and its membership (and thus its survey) is not limited to PhD holders but includes bachelors and masters recipients as well.

Consulting employment is generally of two types. First, there is group that consists of full-time independent consultants (free-lancers), part-time consultants, and individuals involved in small

privately owned companies in which the owners are also the managing partners (and usually the founders as well). This group of consultants typically is self-employed (although the part-timers usually have some form of salaried employment in addition to their "moon-light" consulting work). There are a growing number of anthropological free-lancers and small consulting firms. They often find consulting work in their local area or region by bidding on publicly announced contracts, engaging in organizational publicity (e.g., circulating brochures on their work experience and capacity to community organizations, provider institutions, companies, and government bodies), and getting to know key people in organizations that do work in their area of expertise (e.g., evaluation, grant-writing, particular health or development topics, international relations). Becoming well known and developing a track-record are the keys to success in private consulting. Free lancers and members of small partnerships often spend considerable time finding new jobs, but once they develop a good reputation, they may become inundated with new opportunities.

Second there are anthropologists who are employees of large contract research companies or mid-size consulting companies. Often anthropologists in these organizations specialize in the health care field, international development, organizational management, or natural resources. Because they are salaried, anthropologists in larger firms are not dependent on their ability to attract outside funding. At the same time, they may have less control over which work assignments they will undertake.

Some actual examples of consulting jobs filled by anthropologists include:

- senior consultant in an organizational management consulting firm;
- vice president of a small consulting firm that specializes in natural resource management issues;
- an independent consultant based in Kenya who specializes in public health and family planning issues
- an anthropologist who works in the agricultural and natural resource division of a large, Washington, D.C.-based consulting firm that focuses on international development work;
- president of a consulting firm that specializes in cultural resources management and archeology;
- a part-time independent consultant who specializes in program development, organizational technical assistance, evaluation, and grant-writing for community-based health, arts, and social service organizations.

10. How are working conditions for practicing anthropologists? Are there special risks or difficulties?

As a practicing anthropologist, you will face different working conditions depending on the location and nature of the organization you work for (e.g., its size, demographics, function, structure, goals, resources, values) and your role in that organization. If your job involves field work in other countries, that will, of course, be a major factor to consider. You will continually reevaluate the degree of fit between your job with its attributes and demands, and what you gain from that position (e.g., knowledge, ability to influence policy, opportunities to work on multidisciplinary teams, problem solving skills). The combination of your background, anthropological training, and prior work/internship experience will provide you with skills that will assist you in making the transition from either academics to practice, or from one practice job to another. Keen observation and interpersonal communication skills will be invaluable to you in trying to understand how work gets done in your new position, and how best you might fit in within that new work setting.

The difficulties that first-time practitioners face vary tremendously from person to person. Some encounter problems working with professionals from different disciplinary backgrounds. Some find that a quantitative perspective and its associated techniques appear to be valued more highly than qualitative approaches to understanding organizational and client issues. Some discover that they face and must resolve ethical challenges (e.g., related to the dissemination of information, conflict between job position and advocacy role) that they may not have encountered in an academic setting. Others who follow the consulting or contract path find that they must continually market their skills and expertise since many employers are not familiar with what anthropologists can offer their organization.

There are a number of professional associations that might provide useful networks or sources of information for anthropologists seeking career-related advice. In addition, they hold informal sessions at their annual meetings on career issues. These associations can be international, national, or regional in focus. The Society for Applied Anthropology (SfAA), which can be reached at (405) 843-5113, and the American Anthropological Association (AAA), which can be reached at (703) 528-1902, hold annual meetings, publish journals, and offer their memberships various services. For example, the AAA has committees established to deal with selected membership issues (e.g., Committee on the Status of Women, Committee on Ethics). As noted in response to question 1, NAPA, one of the AAA sections, sponsors a Mentor Program for those seeking career advice. Other associations known as Local Practitioner Organizations (LPOs) are regionally based in various parts of the US. (e.g., Washington, DC., Southern California, Memphis, Chicago, Great Lakes Region, Denver, Northern Florida). Their members typically meet on a regular basis and publish newsletters.

Certainly some jobs hold special risks and dangers. Anthropologists who are studying the role of cocaine in urban settings, AIDS risk among injection drug users, or gang prevention among youth, for example, have encountered quite dangerous situations that demand they exercise all of their ethnographic skills in rapport building and conflict resolution. Books like Being an Anthropologist, Surviving Fieldwork, and Doing Fieldwork: Warnings and Advice provide additional examples of risks in anthropological work and the strategies anthropologists have developed to minimize those risks.

11. Tell me about some or the other careers or practicing anthropologists that are not shown in the video.

international organizations, such as the World Health Organization or the Pan American Health

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