1. Assessment information collected
   a) Thesis and project evaluations on graduates
   b) Comprehensive Exam evaluations on all who took exams during the previous two years

2. Student evaluations of their own growth in the program and of the Arctic & Northern Studies MA Program

Conclusions drawn from the information summarized above

Eleven students graduated from our MA program in the past two years. We use a rubric to evaluate the quality of the writing, the quality of the analysis, the research skills demonstrated, and the value of the contribution represented in the thesis or project.

a. Thesis and project evaluations
   1. Faculty gave the theses and the one project high points in writing quality, analysis, research skills demonstrated, and the contribution to the field(s) made by the thesis or project.
   2. Faculty gave students slightly lower marks (averaging 93.1 and 93.3% respectively) on writing and analysis. They gave slightly higher marks (97% and 98% average, respectively) for research skills and the contribution.
      a. Faculty clearly are evaluating the final product, which reflects significant guidance from and sometimes substantial editing by faculty members. We therefore are not satisfied with the performance levels of some of our students, and are making curricular changes, in particular to strengthen students' analytical writing (see below).
      b. On the other hand, we are very pleased with the scores on research and the contribution. These scores reflect the strong research skills that students have developed in the program.
and their conducting research that is making valuable contributions to the circumpolar northern region.

b. **Comprehensive exam evaluations**

Note: the data reflects evaluations on seventeen students who have taken exams during this two-year period. We use a rubric to evaluate the writing, analysis, competency in the field of literature, and accuracy of the exams.

1. Faculty gave students high scores on their exams.
   a. Sometimes the scores represented the final performance after a rewrite or a follow-up oral exam.
2. On average, faculty gave students scores from 90 to 94% in the four categories.
3. Students scored lowest on analysis (89.86%), which does not surprise us. Students tend to be more descriptive and relate what scholars have written, rather than taking the analysis as far as we would like.
4. On the other hand, the comps serve the purpose of forcing the students to become conversant in two bodies of literature related to conditions in the north, and this literature supports their thesis work, so we find the comprehensive exam process productive.

c. **Student Evaluations**

Our questionnaire asks graduates to reflect on the growth they’ve experienced in a) writing skills, 2) analytical skills, 3) research methods, 4) knowledge of the circumpolar north. It also asks students to comment on the strengths and weaknesses of the program.

1. All graduates reported growth in their writing skills. Several students noted the dedication of faculty to marking up their theses.
2. All graduates reported improvement in their analytical skills. Some specifically mentioned being stretched to consider multiple perspectives and disciplinary approaches. One noted the value of the comprehensive exams in honing his analytical skills. Another specified learning how to hone his/her arguments.
3. Students were most equivocal about research methods. This reflected the way the course was taught in the past and the fact that students are required to learn multiple methods, not all of
which they deem useful. Still, all said that their research skills improved.

4. All students noted having grown significantly in their knowledge and understanding of northern conditions and challenges. They praised specific classes, special lectures, and the breadth of the program and variety of classes students can take.

Strengths: Students praised the interdisciplinary nature of the program. They expressed appreciation for the warm and nurturing culture of the Arctic & Northern Studies Program, and they identified specific faculty members as having contributed greatly to their experience in the program. Other strengths students noted included:

- The emphasis on the human dimension / experience in the north
- Stimulating class discussions
- Learning how to learn
- The program’s support of students with diverse interests
- Special (extra-curricular) events and programs

Weaknesses: Students mentioned their struggles with research methods. While most students appreciate the flexibility within the program, one student who concentrated quite a bit in anthropology, wished (in retrospect) that she’d been forced to take a course in each of our concentrations.

3. Curricular changes resulting from conclusions drawn above

We are making a number of curricular changes, based more on what we have observed than what emerged through our SLOA process. These changes also reflect the growth in foreign and online students in the program. Given that we anticipate further growth in international students, we are revising our curriculum to accommodate these students.

1. Writing workshop class: Alex Hirsch, Asst. Professor of Political Science, developed a writing course for ANORS that we plan to make a required course for all.
   a. More of our students than ever before are not native English speakers and therefore need extra training in scholarly writing.
   b. Even our students whose mother tongue is English benefit from this intensive work on their writing.
c. Dr. Hirsh has the students workshop their writing in class, and he gives them extensive feedback as well. Students have responded enthusiastically to the class.

d. Dr. Hirsch is developing this class for hybrid delivery so that our international and other distance students may take the course online.

2. **Analysis:** Core ANORS faculty (Political Science and History faculty, who provide our three concentrations) are committed to emphasizing analysis to a greater degree in all of our courses.

3. **Methods:** We have a strong Research Methods class now. Dr. Brandon Boylan teaches it each spring. He guides the students through writing their research proposals. Starting this summer, he will offer an online section of the class each summer, so that we can meet the needs of distance students and those students who do not feel ready to take the class in their second semester of the program. (Full time students typically would take the class in spring semester of their first year in the program. If they have not yet identified their research topics, they may be better off waiting until summer, so they can benefit from the guidance they receive in writing their research proposals.)

4. **Historiography:** Within the Northern History Concentration, we had required NORS 690: Researching and Writing Northern History. We now will have all students take Dr. Hirsch’s intensive writing course. Instead of requiring Northern History Concentration students to take NORS 690 we will require them to take Historiography with Professor John Heaton, who teaches the course at the undergraduate level (HIST 475). Until the course is approved by the Curriculum Council as a stacked course (HIST475/NORS675 Historiography), Dr. Heaton will allow graduate students to take the class as a Directed Study with the HIST 475 class. He will teach this course as a hybrid course (online and in-class).

5. **More courses offered by distance:** ANORS faculty are revising several courses to offer them hybrid, so that we can accommodate our growing number of distance students.

We have considered carefully all of these changes in the interest of improving student learning outcomes, accommodating students with diverse needs and growing the program.
4. Identify the faculty members involved in reaching the conclusions drawn above and agreeing upon the curricular changes resulting

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