Sept. 25, 2014.

To Whom It May Concern,

Thank you very much for your interest in our graduate program. The online application for fall 2015 will start online on Oct. 1, 2014. The priority deadline for our graduate program is Feb. 1, and the regular deadline is March 1, 2015. That’s to say you have to apply online and make sure your application fee and all your transcripts must be received by the Graduate Office before Feb. 1, 2015. I would strongly encourage you to apply as early as you can.

Please note: if the graduate office has not received your application, your application fee, and one of your transcripts by Feb 1, 2015, your application will not be reviewed by the university nor forwarded to the department for admission recommendation. This is just like you have never applied for our graduate program.

After you carefully read the following four documents (Pages 2 to 7) and study the information on the website from the Office of Graduate Studies (http://www.csus.edu/gradstudies/FutureStudents/GraduateAdmissions/index.html), I strongly encourage you to apply online for fall 2015 admission, which will start on Oct. 1, 2014.

If you have any other questions about the sociology graduate program, please contact me directly. The best way to get in touch with me is the email: amyliuus@yahoo.com. You can also call 916-278-7572.

I look forward to reviewing your application materials soon.

Sincerely,

Amy Liu, Ph.D.
Director, Sociology Graduate Program
I. Sociology Graduate Program

Our graduate program presents opportunities for systematic studies that differ significantly from the undergraduate experience. Our graduates are prepared to be independent and analytical researchers/scholars that can succeed in any profession focused on improving the human condition. Small seminars provide close student-faculty interaction and promote a supportive learning environment. Our program design supports working people who want to attend classes part-time. It typically offers 3 to 4 classes per semester, and schedules most classes in the evening, which meet once per week. A total of 30 semester units are required, including 24 semester units of coursework and six units of thesis work. Most of our students are part-time and complete the program in 3 to 4 years.

Most of our graduate students majored in Sociology as undergraduates, but we also accept students who majored in other disciplines. If your bachelor’s degree is not in sociology, we may be able to accept you with the conditions that you will take three upper division undergraduate prerequisites in our department earning B or better grade in each of these classes:

- Soc. 101 – statistics
- Soc. 102 – Research Methods
- Soc. 192 – Sociological Theory

The graduate application is online. You can apply for fall 2015 admission online after October 1, 2014. All the application materials must be received by the University by Feb. 1, 2015. PLEASE MAKE SURE THE REQUIRED APPLICATION MATERIALS, INCLUDING THE APPLICATION FORM, FEES, AND ALL OFFICAL TRANSCRIPTS, ARE RECEIVED BY THE OFFICE OF GRADUATE STUDIES (916-278-6470) BY Feb. 1, 2015, SO YOUR APPLICATION WILL BE PROCESSED ON TIME AND SENT TO THE DEPARTMENT FOR REVIEW.

PLEASE NOTE: IF THE GRADUATE OFFICE HAS NOT RECEIVED YOUR APPLICATION FEE AND ONE OF YOUR TRANSCRIPTS BY FEB 1, 2015, YOUR APPLICATION WILL NOT BE REVIEWED BY THE UNIVERSITY NOR FORWARDED TO THE DEPARTMENT FOR ADMISSION RECOMMENDATION.

It is also critical that you go and visit the website of the Office of Graduate Studies for additional information about the graduate application (http://www.csus.edu/gradstudies/FutureStudents/GraduateAdmissions/index.html), before you start to apply for our program.

In addition to the online graduate application, please send the following supplementary materials DIRECTLY to the Sociology Graduate Program Director as soon as possible...
BEFORE Feb. 1, 2015: 1) two letters of recommendation from anyone who knows your potential to be a successful graduate student; 2) two writing samples; 3) a statement of purpose; and 4) one copy of all the transcripts (unofficial copies are fine for the department). Please note you still need to send all your OFFICIAL transcripts to the Graduate Office before Feb. 1, 2015:

Amy Liu, Ph. D.
Director, Sociology Graduate Program
Department of Sociology
Sacramento State University, Sacramento
6000 J. Street,
Sacramento, CA 95819-6005

The two writing samples should include 1) an empirical research paper from your capstone class, methods class (i.e. Soc. 102a and/or Soc. 102b for CSUS students), or any other class, and 2) a short essay of no more than 800 words: “How I became aware of class, race, gender, and/or other inequalities?” Students’ ability to think sociologically and to conduct academic and/or applied social research is very important for admission consideration. The admission committee uses the writing samples to evaluate if the student can effectively apply sociological perspectives, quantitative and/or qualitative research methods, and problem solving skills to analyze and explain significant social issues, questions, or problems facing our communities.

The students’ statement of purpose should reflect their interest and ability to succeed in the graduate program. Students’ statements should demonstrate clarity and understanding of sociology and their objectives for acquiring the degree (e.g., to pursue a Ph.D. program or applied work). Background, work history, and internship/volunteer experiences that relate to their sociological research/teaching interests may be considered as evidence of their commitment to graduate studies. A focused area of study that fits with the program’s offering is also valuable evidence of commitment and interest in our sociology program. See section IV below for guidelines on writing the statement of purpose.
II. Guideline for Admission to the Sociology Graduate Program

The Sociology Graduate Admissions Committee has developed the guidelines for admission to the sociology graduate program. Five general categories constitute the criteria for admission: 1) grade point average (GPA); 2) two writing samples that include an empirical research paper from a capstone or methods class (e.g., Soc. 102a and/or Soc. 102B) and a short essay; 3) statement of purpose; 4) recommendation letters; and 5) diversity.

Grade point average is an important factor in the admission process, and a GPA of 3.0 or better is desired. Higher GPAs will have an advantage, but the grade point average will be contextualized to avoid excluding exceptional students with demonstrated evidence of academic excellence in Sociology. In analyzing the context of an individual GPA, the committee will look at the GPA (1) that relates to the discipline (Sociology), (2) that reveals anomalies (e.g., a good GPA that was disrupted by an odd semester [outlier---personal hardship/tragedy] that does not reflect the more solid/stable pattern of academic excellence), and (3) that demonstrates familiarity/proficiency with sociological theory and methods (exceptions may be made if the student took comparable classes from other social science disciplines).

Whether students are able to conduct academic and/or applied social research is also very important for admission consideration. Two writing samples can provide us with valuable information to evaluate whether students can use sociological perspectives, quantitative and/or qualitative research and statistics, analysis and problem solving skills, information acquisition skills, and communication skills to effectively carry out social research projects which analyze and explain significant social issues, questions, or problems facing our local community, our state, or our nation and to provide insightful solutions or suggestions for decision-making.

The students’ statement of purpose should reflect their interest and ability to succeed in the graduate program. Students’ statements should demonstrate clarity and understanding of sociology and/or their objectives for acquiring the degree (e.g., to pursue PhD program or applied work). Background, work, internship/volunteer experiences that relate to their sociological research/teaching interests may be considered as evidence of their commitment to our graduate program. A focused area of study that fits with the program’s offering is also valuable evidence of commitment and interest in sociology.

Letters of recommendation that discuss substantively the student’s academic ability and related experiences that enhance the student’s preparation for graduate school are also very important. The letters should show good understanding of and familiarity with the
student in the areas that would be indicative of the ability to succeed in the sociology program.

The inclusion of graduate students from historically underrepresented groups in higher education is an important goal. Diversity is a core value held by the university in its mission, its strategic plan, and its affirmative action plan. As the enrollment at the university becomes more diverse, a diversified graduate program becomes more important for several reasons: it brings new perspectives that can inform the curriculum and research; it provides a variety of perspectives in the classroom that can enrich the academic experience and maximize the universe of knowledge; and it helps prepare future faculty members that are well-equipped to teach and conduct research in an increasingly diverse society.
III. Guidelines for Writing the Statement of Purpose

I.
Please feel free to share with us anything that would help us evaluate your application to our graduate program. You can consider the following questions in an essay of no more than 1,000 words:

1. Why are you interested in sociology and our graduate program?
2. What are your research and/or teaching interests? Do your interests match any of our faculty’s interests? If you are accepted into our program, with whom are you willing to work with and why?
3. How good are your written and oral communication skills?
4. How confident are you that you will be able to finish a thesis and why?
5. What do you plan to do after you graduate from the master’s program?
6. Please share with us your racial/ethnic, gender, class, or any other background information that has affected or will affect you, your study, your career, or your future plans. How would your background contribute to the diversity of our graduate program and the university?
IV. Guidelines for Writing the Letter of Recommendation

Please give these guidelines to the professors or others who write your recommendation letter and ask them to address the following questions in the letter. Your professors can add anything that would help us evaluate your application to our graduate program:

1. How interested is the student in sociology: very interested, interested, somewhat interested, not very interested, or not at all interested?

2. What are the student’s research and/or teaching interests? Do the student’s interests match any of our faculty’s interests? Who and why?

3. How good are the student’s written and oral communication skills: excellent, very good, good, fair, poor, or very bad?

4. How confident are you that the student will be able to finish writing a thesis: very confident, confident, somewhat confident, not very confident, or not at all confident?

5. Is there anything else you think we need to know in order to evaluate the student to see if she/he can finish our master’s program successfully?