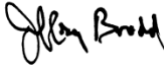


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July 11, 2019

Memorandum

TO: Faculty Senate Executive Committee

FROM: Jeffrey Brodd, Chair 
Academic Program Review Oversight Committee

SUBJECT: Program Review of the Department of Sociology

The Academic Program Review Oversight Committee has reviewed the Academic Program Review report of the Department of Sociology prepared by Review Team chair Kimberly Gordon Biddle and her team and agrees that it is ready for final approval. The Committee thanks and commends all of those involved in the review for their collegial and effective approach to the process.

The Review is ready for action by the Faculty Senate.

cc: Bohsiu Wu, Chair, Department of Sociology
Dianne Hyson, Dean, College of Social Sciences & Interdisciplinary Studies
Kitty Kelly, Chair, Curriculum Policies Committee
Amy Wallace, Associate Vice President, Academic Excellence
Steve Perez, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs (Interim)

Academic Program Review Report

Department of Sociology

BA Sociology & MA Sociology

California State University, Sacramento

Review Team

Chair - Dr. Kimberly A. Gordon Biddle, Undergraduate Studies in Education: Child Development Programs

Member – Dr. De-Laine Cyrenne, Psychology Department

External Consultant

Dr. Kathryn Gold Hadley, Professor of Sociology, Hanover College

Spring 2019

OVERVIEW OF PROGRAM REVIEW PROCESS

The Sociology Department underwent program review during the cycle commencing 2017-2018. Their Self-Study Proposal was submitted in January of 2018 and their Self-Study in August of 2018. The Self-Study contained the three sections required by the Sacramento State *Academic Program Review Manual*. These sections are General Information about the Program, Assessment that focuses on student learning, and a Focused Inquiry on concerns and issues pertinent to the program. In October of 2018 the External Consultant came to visit.

The Sociology Department Focused Inquiry addressed two main issues: A. Attention to factors affecting graduation rates and other elements of student success; and B. Preparation of students to be successful professionals, civic leaders, and informed citizens in a diverse national and global society. Issue A was further divided into three parts: the creation of a cohesive program, the development of a policy for online courses, and the restructure of the graduate program. Issue B was expressly centered on developing a 2-unit capstone course.

This report follows the three section structure of the Self-Study and considers the External Consultant's report. Commendations and recommendations are directed to the Sociology Department, the Dean of the College of Social Science and Interdisciplinary Studies (SSIS), and the Provost. The final recommendation is made to the Faculty Senate.

This report is written after careful consideration of consultations with various groups and individuals and the reading of various documents and websites. The visits to people and groups were conducted by the internal review chair and team member along with the external consultant.

Persons Consulted

Dr. Bohsiu Wu, Chair of Sociology

Groups of Faculty separated into 3 segments – Lecturers, Tenure-Track Faculty, and Senior Faculty

Administrative Staff

Undergraduate Students

Graduate Students

Recent Alumni

Dr. Amy Liu, Director of the Office of Academic Program Assessment

Dr. Ted Lascher, Interim Dean of SSIS

Dr. Chevelle Newsome, Dean of Graduate Studies

Dr. Jim German, Dean of Undergraduate Studies

Documents and Websites Consulted

Sociology Self-Study Proposal

Sociology Self-Study

Sociology BA Annual Assessment Report for 2017-2018

Feedback for the Sociology BA Annual Assessment Report for 2017-2018

Select Course Syllabi

Draft Department Policy Manual

California State University, Sacramento: 2017-2018 catalog

External Consultant's Report by Dr. Hadley

Academic Program Review Policy Manual

Department of Sociology *Fact Book* Fall 2017 and Fall 2018

CFA 2010-148 & CSUR03-2010-250 Agreement

Sociology Department Website

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF COMMENDATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Commendations to Sociology Department

Commendation 1: Providing a quality education program with enthusiasm and passion to both the undergraduate and graduate program with a significant increase in the number of students.

Commendation 2: Providing students with the skills needed to be an effective public sociologists, such as critical thinking, data analysis, and communication by keeping a commitment to a 2-course lab sequence.

Commendation 3: Reducing a curricular bottleneck in the Statistics and Research Methods sequence, by changing the number of courses required from 3 to 2 and offering at least one section of these 2 courses in the summer.

Commendation 4: Being accessible and helpful to students in many ways, including an efficient advising model.

Commendation 5: Providing a number of General Education courses as a service to the university, even while the number of majors was increasing.

Commendation 6: Creating course syllabi that clearly state learning outcomes.

Commendation 7: Redesigning the graduate program by creating and offering an introductory course that orients the graduate students and assists with writing.

Commendation 8: Exploring various options for the MA culminating experience.

Commendation 9: Reorganizing and supporting the Graduate Coordinator position.

Commendation 10: Linking hiring requests to assessment and other evidence.

Commendation 11: Increasing diversity in Faculty since the last program review.

Commendation 12: Securing an outside mediator for a retreat to enrich and foster a collegial, integrative, and supportive department culture.

Commendation 13: Revising Program Learning Outcomes (PLO's) and aligning them with University Learning Goals.

Commendation 13: Identifying a sound set of PLO's as a pretest measurement.

Commendation 14: Designing an effective measure of two major PLO's, critical thinking and integrative learning, and reflecting on the results and usefulness of the process.

Commendation 15: Conducting and writing a thoughtful and meaningful Focused Inquiry.

Recommendations to the Sociology Department

Recommendation 1: Consider creating courses for undergraduate students. First Year Experience courses and Learning Communities for lower division undergraduates and create a Capstone experience for the upper division undergraduates based on the department's end goals for the students and backward design.

Recommendation 2: Use the capstone experience and other coursework to demonstrate the relevance of Sociology knowledge and skills in relation to Sacramento State's anchor movement.

Recommendation 3: Use backward design to create an exam option as a culminating experience that focused on relevant learning outcomes.

Recommendation 4: Expand internship opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students to increase the number of valuable real-world experiences for students and relate to Sacramento State's anchor movement.

Recommendation 5: Consider creating teaching assistant opportunities for your graduate students for undergraduate courses such as Methods and Research, as well as lab courses.

Recommendation 6: Enhance current advising model so that more faculty and staff are involved.

Recommendation 7: Add a Vice Chair or Undergraduate Coordinator. Possible duties could include advising, student internships, scheduling, and Lecturer coordination.

Recommendation 8: Support scheduling workgroup conclusions and consider having a student or two on the workgroup. The main goals of this committee should be transparency and reasonable course coverage.

Recommendation 9: Work with SSIS Dean with use of CFA Settlement Agreement 2010-148 to ensure that expectations for tenure-line faculty approach 120-125 Full-Time Equivalent Students (FTES).

Recommendation 10: Create a more formal process for socialization of new tenure-line faculty and lecturers.

Recommendation 11: Use the outside mediator's advice and program review process to help make the department culture more equitable so that all benefit and none are marginalized. This can also increase transparency and improve collegiality.

Recommendation 12: Complete and finalize a Policy and Procedure Manual for the Sociology Department.

Recommendation 13: Work with the SSIS Dean on creating a five-year hiring plan of tenure-line faculty that takes into account the growth in student numbers and academic areas of pressing educational need.

Recommendation 14: Work with SSIS Dean to secure adequate lab space for methods and lab courses.

Recommendation 15: Create a more useful definition of critical thinking and an accompanying value rubric after reviewing models provided by the Office of Academic Program Assessment.

Recommendation 16: Use a key assignment for assessing Program Learning Outcomes (PLO's) in the future rather than creating a new data collection instrument.

Recommendation 17: Consider separating your use of and assessment of fully on-line courses and hybrid courses as you create department policy and course curriculum.

Recommendations to the Dean, College of Social Sciences and Interdisciplinary Studies

Recommendation 1: Support the advising of Sociology students by the College Student Services Professional (SSP) and consider hiring another one, if need be.

Recommendation 2: Work with Sociology Department with use of CFA Settlement Agreement 2010-148 to ensure that expectations for tenure-line faculty approach 120-125 Full-Time Equivalent Students (FTES).

Recommendation 3: Work with the Sociology Department on creating a five-year hiring plan of tenure-line faculty that takes into account the growth in student numbers and academic areas of pressing educational need.

Recommendation 4: Work with Sociology Department to secure adequate lab space for methods and lab courses.

Recommendations to the Provost

Recommendation 1: Support the Sociology Department on creating a five-year hiring plan of tenure-line faculty that takes into account the growth in student numbers and academic areas of pressing educational need.

Recommendation 2: Support the Sociology Department as they secure adequate lab space for methods and lab courses.

Recommendations to the Faculty Senate

Based on this program review, the Self-study report written by the Sociology Department, and the External Consultant's report; the Review Team recommends that the degree programs in Sociology be approved for six years or until the next scheduled program review.

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

According to their Self-study, the Sociology Department offers a traditional BA with two lower division courses, six core courses, and six electives. The BA is designed to illustrate the sociological perspective, develop critical thinking skills, and introduce and explain sociological tools. To graduate, a total of 43 units are needed. There is also an undergraduate minor with 21 units. The Sociology Department also offers a MA degree. This introduces and explains advanced discipline knowledge and research skills. The MA requires 30 units, with five required courses, three electives, and two thesis courses.

Another major function of this department is General Education. They offer a number of courses that introduce the Sociological Perspective on specific issues. In Fall of 2016, 26 sections of courses were dedicated to General Education.

According to the Self-study, the total FTES for the Sociology Department ranged from 553.7 to 659.7 over the last five years. Instructional Faculty FTEF increased from 18.9 in Fall 2013 to 24.6 in Spring 2016. Tenure track faculty numbered 15 in 2012, but was 14 in 2016. During this same period the number of lecturers actually increased from 10 to 22. The Sociology Fact Book states that there are 725 undergraduate majors, 390 undergraduate pre-majors, and 44 graduate students. Despite these numbers, the Sociology Department has offered a quality and effective education program that is sensitive to student need and Sacramento State initiatives.

PROGRAM REVIEW

Commendation 1: Providing a quality education program with enthusiasm and passion to both the undergraduate and graduate program with a significant increase in the number of students.

Commendation 2: Providing students with the skills needed to be an effective public sociologists, such as critical thinking, data analysis, and communication by keeping a commitment to a 2-course lab sequence.

Commendation 3: Reducing a curricular bottleneck in the Statistics and Research Methods sequence, by changing the number of courses required from 3 to 2 and offering at least one section of these 2 courses in the summer.

Commendation 4: Being accessible and helpful to students in many ways, including an efficient advising model.

Commendation 5: Providing a number of General Education courses as a service to the university, even while the number of majors was increasing.

Commendation 6: Creating course syllabi that clearly state learning outcomes.

Commendation 7: Redesigning the graduate program by creating and offering an introductory course that orients the graduate students and assists with writing.

Commendation 8: Exploring various options for the MA culminating experience.

These first eight of fifteen commendations are supported by data in the Self-Study, the External Consultant's report, and comments from Dr. James German, Sociology students and alumni. Even though the number of students served has increased the Sociology Department is doing a good job educating their majors and GE students. The Self-Study describes changes made in response to student need and university initiatives.

For instance, the Sociology Department changed the number of courses in the Methods sequence and began offering Methods courses in the summer. The external consultant's report relays how the faculty teach with enthusiasm and passion. Dr. Hadley also states that the Sociology Department is poised to assist the university is the new initiative to be an Anchor university.

Students, both undergraduate and graduates, stated that the faculty are supportive and quite knowledgeable. There was also support for the current advising model which consists of the Chair of the Sociology Department doing the majority of advising. Alumni students felt, too, that they were prepared for their current positions.

Dr. German, Dean of Undergraduate Studies, mentioned how valuable the General Education offerings of the Sociology Department were. He really appreciated the offerings not being reduced as the number of Sociology majors increased.

The syllabi were described in the Self-Study and select syllabi were reviewed by the Internal Review Team. This information demonstrated the quality of the syllabi and the fact that learning outcomes were clearly stated. All of this evidence supports the first six commendations.

The last two commendations pertain to graduate courses. The Self-Study and discussions with faculty demonstrate the success an introductory writing course for graduate students. Student conversations also support the usefulness of this new course. The department has also considered other options for the MA culminating experience, such as a portfolio and an exam.

There are many commendations for how the Sociology Department has educated students in their class and made adjustments. However, both the internal and external reviewers have some recommendations on how the current curriculum and procedures can be improved. These recommendations come from reviewing documents and having interviews and discussions with many people involved with the education of Sociology students.

Recommendation 1: Consider creating courses for undergraduate students. First Year Experience courses and Learning Communities for lower division undergraduates and create a Capstone experience for the upper division undergraduates based on the department's end goals for the students and backward design.

Recommendation 2: Use the capstone experience and other coursework to demonstrate the relevance of Sociology knowledge and skills in relation to Sacramento State's anchor movement.

Recommendation 3: Use backward design to create an exam option as a culminating experience that focused on relevant learning outcomes.

Recommendation 4: Expand internship opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students to increase the number of valuable real-world experiences for students and relate to Sacramento State's anchor movement.

Recommendation 5: Consider creating teaching assistant opportunities for your graduate students for undergraduate courses such as Methods and Research, as well as lab courses.

Recommendation 6: Enhance current advising model so that more faculty and staff are involved.

The need for extra support and courses for lower division students is a suggestion of the Internal Review Team. On page 11 of the Self-Study, statistics show that in 2015 the retention rate of native Freshmen students was 73%, while the retention of the transfer students was 92%. Perhaps, getting involved in the university's First Year Experience program or creating Sociology Learning communities can increase the retention of native Freshmen students.

A capstone course was mentioned by many Sociology faculty, the Internal Review Team and the External Reviewer. Sociology faculty stated this is one way students can get more exposure to disciplinary writing and prepare for experiences after obtaining a BA degree. Both the internal and the external reviewers suggest using backward design for the curricular initiatives in order to be sure relevant learning outcomes are obtained.

There was also considerable mention of an alternative for Graduate students in terms of a culminating experience. Many Sociology faculty mentioned an exam option. This could help students with writing in the discipline and also lessen the number of theses which need support. Both the internal team and the external reviewer noted the promise of having another option for MA students. Additionally, backward design was mentioned as useful when creating the exam process.

Undergraduate and graduate students that had internships remarked about how valuable these experiences were. Both the internal and external reviewers agreed that real-world experiences are invaluable for a student's education. Sociology faculty mentioned the usefulness of internships, too. However, there is a need for more staff in order to develop the current internship program more.

One of the methods for giving graduate students real-world experience is teaching assistantships. The Dean of Graduate Studies mentioned various approaches to this, including the model used by the Communication department. The internal review team suggests this could be an answer to staffing of Methods courses and labs for the Sociology department. This is a consideration for the Sociology department to think about using in the future.

Additionally, although having the Chair of Sociology do the majority of the advising is efficient, it is not ideal with the number of students and majors in the Sociology department. Everyone involved in the Program Review process realized that additional staff, faculty, or perhaps peers can improve the advising process. The new advising model will be something created by the Sociology department in the future.

The SSIS Dean can also assist with advising the students and this is the team's recommendation to the SSIS Dean -

Recommendation 1: Support the advising of Sociology students by the College Student Services Professional (SSP) and consider hiring another one, if need be.

The Sociology Department affirms that there are two SSP's. However, the Sociology Department believes that the student numbers in their department and in the College of SSIS may warrant an additional one.

The chair of Sociology and the faculty mentioned that the SSIS SSP wasn't allowed to advise Sociology students on major requirements, only GE and broad university advising. This could very well be a policy that is impacting the graduation rates and success of Sociology students.

Faculty and Staff and Facilities

In 2016 there were 14 tenure-line faculty and 22 lecturers in the Sociology department. However, the number of Sociology students had grown in numbers during the years preceding and including up to 2016. It is commendable how the Sociology department worked with these realities; however, some suggestions on future processes for handling this challenge are warranted. The suggestions are listed as recommendations after listing and discussion of commendations.

Commendation 9: Reorganizing and supporting the Graduate Coordinator position.

Commendation 10: Linking hiring requests to assessment and other evidence.

Commendation 11: Increasing diversity in Faculty since the last program review.

Commendation 12: Securing an outside mediator for a retreat to enrich and foster a collegial, integrative, and supportive department culture.

According to the Self-Study, one change made by the Sociology Department was to better support the Graduate Coordinator position. Some release time (3 units) was given to this position. This allowed the Graduate Coordinator to specifically focus more on Graduate program issues.

The Sociology Department also did some hiring of tenure-track and lecturer faculty over this last review period that was based on assessment results and other evidence. This hiring led to a more diverse faculty in terms of gender and ethnicity. In 2006, the department had 52% female faculty and in 2017, the department had 63% female faculty. In 2012, the department had 36% minority faculty and in 2016, the department had 38.9% minority faculty. However, this more diverse faculty had some growing pains, so during the Academic Program Review the Sociology Department decided to secure an outside mediator to enrich the culture of the department.

During this time of student growth and faculty changes, the duties of chair increased and advising of students and scheduling of classes became quite time consuming. These changes lead to some of the faculty and staff recommendations in this program review report.

Recommendation 7: Add a Vice Chair or Undergraduate Coordinator. Possible duties could include advising, student internships, scheduling, and Lecturer coordination.

Recommendation 8: Support scheduling committee's conclusions and consider having a student or two on the workgroup. The main goals of this committee should be transparency and reasonable course coverage.

Recommendation 9: Work with SSIS Dean with use of CFA Settlement Agreement 2010-148 to ensure that expectations for tenure-line faculty approach 120-125 Full-Time Equivalent Students (FTES).

Recommendation 10: Create a more formal process for socialization of new tenure-line faculty and lecturers.

Recommendation 11: Use the outside mediator's advice and program review process to help make the department culture more equitable so that all benefit and none are marginalized. This can also increase transparency and improve collegiality.

Recommendation 12: Complete and finalize a Policy and Procedure Manual for the Sociology Department.

Recommendation 13: Work with the SSIS Dean on creating a five-year hiring plan of tenure-line faculty that takes into account the growth in student numbers and academic areas of pressing educational need.

Recommendation 14: Work with SSIS Dean to secure adequate lab space for methods and lab courses.

The external consultant and the internal review team all think that in addition to changing the advising model a vice-chair or undergraduate coordinator is needed to assist with the growth of students and faculty hiring in the Sociology Department. Possible duties of this person could include advising, student internships, scheduling, and Lecturer coordination. This person could also chair the scheduling committee, if it is created. This will lend support to the conclusions of this committee that is working towards transparency and reasonable course coverage.

Another consideration with scheduling is the FTES load of the tenure-line faculty. The internal review team recommends the Sociology Department cooperate with SSIS Dean with use of CFA Settlement Agreement 2010-148 to ensure that expectations for tenure-line faculty approach 120-125 Full-Time Equivalent Students (FTES).

To assist the current new and non-tenured faculty with adjusting to their academic life, it is recommended that a formal socialization process be created for them. Additionally, the suggestions of the mediator should be taken into account. Other suggestions along this line to assist new faculty and department climate are to finalize a formal department policy manual. This will lead to more consistency and transparency of department procedures. All of the changes will improve the department culture and ready the department for a five year hiring plan made in conjunction with the SSIS Dean.

Regarding Recommendation 11, as mentioned in previous paragraphs, the Sociology department is more diverse in terms of ethnicity and gender. Some of the female and ethnic minority faculty revealed in interviews they felt marginalized and suggested better collegiality and transparency would help.

The staff of the Sociology Department mentioned during their interview that they want adequate lab space available for scheduling methods and lab courses. This is one challenge that has lingered and the external consultant and internal review team all think this can be solved in conjunction with the SSIS Dean.

The FTES of tenure-line faculty, the hiring of additional faculty, and securing adequate lab space cannot be accomplished by the Sociology Department alone. The Dean of SSIS and the Provost of California State University, Sacramento must assist as appropriate with these matters. Therefore, the review team suggests these recommendations for the Dean and Provost –

For the Dean,

Recommendation 2: Work with the Sociology Department with use of CFA Settlement Agreement 2010-148 to ensure that expectations for tenure-line faculty approach 120-125 Full-Time Equivalent Students (FTES).

Recommendation 3: Work with the Sociology Department on creating a five-year hiring plan of tenure-line faculty that takes into account the growth in student numbers and academic areas of pressing educational need.

Recommendation 4: Work with the Sociology Department to secure adequate lab space for methods and lab courses.

For the Provost,

Recommendation 1: Support the Sociology Department in creating a five-year hiring plan of tenure-line faculty that takes into account the growth in student numbers and academic areas of pressing educational need.

Recommendation 2: Support the Sociology Department as they secure adequate lab space for methods and lab courses.

ASSESSMENT

Consultation with the Director of OAPA and review of assessment documents reveals that the Sociology Department is doing a good job with assessment, but could make some improvements.

Commendation 13: Revising Program Learning Outcomes (PLO's) and aligning them with University Learning Goals.

Commendation 13: Identifying a sound set of PLO's as a pretest measurement.

Commendation 14: Designing an effective measure of two major PLO's, critical thinking and integrative learning, and reflecting on the results and usefulness of the process.

Specifically, they did a good job revising the PLO's and aligning them with University Learning Goals. This can be seen in pages 18-20 of the Sociology Self-study. The measurement of the

PLO's and the subsequent reflection process has been sound and effective, too. This can be seen in the written comments in the feedback received in 2017-2018 and was repeated in the interview responses by the Director of OAPA. However, some suggestions for improvement in Assessment are also part of the program review report.

Recommendation 15: Create a more useful definition of critical thinking and an accompanying value rubric after reviewing models provided by the Office of Academic Program Assessment.

Recommendation 16: Use a key assignment for assessing Program Learning Outcomes (PLO's) in the future rather than creating a new data collection instrument.

Recommendation 17: Consider separating your use of and assessment of fully on-line courses and hybrid courses as you create department policy and course curriculum.

The Director of OAPA, the external consultant, and the internal review team all agree that that critical thinking is an important PLO. However, the definition used by the Sociology Department could be improved. Additionally, key assignments could be used to measure PLO's instead of creating a whole new data collection instrument. This key assignment will obtain more data from students. Also, the internal team felt that hybrid courses and full on-line courses are not the exact same courses. The internal team suggests separating your use of and assessment of these courses when creating department policy and course curriculum. This is because student responses to these two distinct course types may be different. Most importantly, use data from assessment to improve teaching and learning.

FOCUSED INQUIRY

The Sociology Department's Focused Inquiry was specifically centered on "factors affecting graduation rates and other elements of student success." Their Focused Inquiry is relayed on pages 21-26 of their self-study and it has three action steps that were accomplished or were planned and an additional conclusion section.

Commendation 15: Conducting and writing a thoughtful and meaningful Focused Inquiry.

The first action step was to create a structured and cohesive program. To do this, they created and organizational chart, syllabi with PLO's, and and are in the beginning stages of creating a new evaluation system for lecturers. The next step they took was to organize and better define their committee structure. Some committees have been defined and clarified and there are others that they are working to define and clarify still. The third action step they are working on is archiving the decisions made by the various committees. A decision that was made in congruence with this procedure is that Fully on-line courses are not desirable to students and do not positively impact graduation rates or other elements of student success.

The conclusions of their self-study are summarized as follows;

- *Complete online/hybrid course policies,
- *Develop undergraduate capstone course and institutionalize assessment,
- *Clarify course scheduling procedures,
- *Develop consistent committee procedures, and
- *Ensure effective committee communication.

The external reviewer and the internal review team think that when these actions are all completed they will indeed foster improved graduation rates and elements of student success. However, the internal team suggests that the other recommendations in this report be carefully considered to further enhance graduation rates and elements of student success. The main three suggestions are to improve the culture of the department, complete the policy and procedures manual for the department, and take action on all of your plans. The results of the mediator, the policies and procedures, all other plans should be made into action steps and those steps should be completed.

Recommendations to the Faculty Senate

Based on this program review, the Self-study report written by the Sociology Department, and the External Consultant's report; the Review Team recommends that the degree programs in Sociology be approved for six years or until the next scheduled program review.