

We have received your CPR Report for: Bachelor of Science in Sociology.

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Institution:	Columbus State University
Status:	Triggered Review
Level:	Bachelors
Acronym:	BS
Deg. & Major:	Bachelor of Science in Sociology
CIP:	45110100
College/Div.:	College of Science
Dept:	Department of Psychology & Sociology
BOR process:	Yes
Future Plans:	Maintain at present level
Resource Plans:	maintain
Supplemental file:	Findings&Plans_Soc.doc (MSW)

If you have questions or concerns regarding this report, contact Dr. Bettie Horne, Office of Academic Affairs, Board of Regents. email: bettie.horne@usg.edu ph:404-651-8391

Comprehensive Program Review Findings and Plans for the Sociology Program at Columbus State University

17 June 2003

Section I: Summary of the Review Committee's Findings

After completing their visit to the Department of Psychology and Sociology earlier this year, review committee members (i.e., Dr. Thomas Johnson of Georgia Southwestern State University, Dr. Laura Vance of Georgia Southwestern State University, and Dr. John Lupold of Columbus State University) submitted their report to the department chair on February 13, 2003. In their report on the sociology program at Columbus State University, the committee members found that the sociology program's mission was clearly outlined and consistent with the institutional mission of the university. Further, the committee found the curriculum to be "adequate and appropriate" and limited only by faculty size. The review committee also felt that the number of majors was "appropriate" and that student diversity (e.g., gender, age, race, ethnicity, etc.) among sociology majors was "typical" for similar programs within this region.

The committee made a point in its report to note that the number of non-productive grades in lower division sociology courses declined significantly during the period 1998 to 2003. Further, when speaking of faculty service, the committee wrote, "...given the demands on the faculty for teaching, advisement, and research, the contributions of the faculty to service are extraordinary."

Committee members cited needs in areas of classroom facilities (i.e., technologically enhanced classrooms, seminar rooms, etc.), additional faculty, and funding for research and scholarship.

A) The following were identified as "strengths" by review committee members:

- 1) Faculty participation in scholarship, particularly given the extensive teaching, advising, and service responsibilities of faculty;
- 2) Faculty involvement with students in research and conference participation;

- 3) Faculty mentoring of students via research, practica, internships, conference presentations, and conference participation;
- 4) Recent creation, approval and implementation of varied upper-level sociology course offerings;
- 5) The significant recent decline in the number of 'non-productive grades' in both lower and upper-division courses;
- 6) The effective service of a diverse student population with a high proportion of non-traditional students.

B) The following suggestions for improvement were made:

- 1) Implementation of a consistent, comprehensive, long-term assessment plan, to include assessment of sociology majors and more effective assessment of alumni;
- 2) More equal division of internship supervision responsibilities between all Program faculty;
- 3) More equal division of advising responsibilities between all Program faculty;
- 4) Continued efforts to increase the variety of course offerings in sociology;
- 5) Addition of another full-time faculty member in order to increase the diversity and consistency of course offerings;
- 6) Inclusion of new courses normally offered in sociology in order to make the Program consistent with sociology programs nationally, specifically:
 - a) a statistics course,
 - b) a course in the area of criminology/juvenile delinquency/deviance
 - c) a Sociology of the Family course at the lower-division level—perhaps for inclusion in area F.

- d) Greater use of its internship courses.

Section 2: Implementation of Suggestions for Improvement

Suggestion: **Implementation of a consistent, comprehensive, long-term assessment plan (See Section I, above)**

Response: A low response rate from previous survey assessments resulted in fewer useful dates than desirable. Two factors contributed to that low response rate: return of assessment surveys was voluntary, not mandated, and out of date alumni contact information supplied by the Office of Alumni Affairs. Henceforth, the department will be responsible for developing and maintaining contact information on alumni, to the best of its ability, and in support of information provided by the Office of Alumni Affairs. Further, a plan has been implemented to require graduating sociology majors to provide assessment data, including assessment of content on exit exams.

Suggestion: **There should be a more equal division of internship supervision by sociology faculty.**

Response: Because of past budget constraints, only one full-time sociology faculty member served sociology majors and was able to direct student internships. In the fall of 2002 an additional sociologist was hired, and once her Ph.D. is completed, she will share responsibility for directing some of the student internships.

Suggestion: **There should be a more equal division of advising responsibilities by sociology faculty.**

Response: Because of past budget constraints, only one full-time sociology faculty member served sociology majors as an advisor. In fall of 2002 an additional sociologist

was hired, and it is expected that she will assume some advising duties once her Ph.D. is completed this June.

Suggestion: **Efforts should be made to increase the variety of course offerings in sociology**

Response: A significant number of catalog changes have been made within the past year. Changes to the curriculum that have already been made, coupled with changes to the curriculum made as a response to reviewer comments and the addition of the new faculty member in 2002, leave sociology faculty feeling confident in the diversity of course offerings.

Suggestion: **Addition of a third full-time sociologist in order to increase the diversity and consistency of course offerings**

Response: The hiring of a third full-time sociologist is desired but completely dependent on the state of fiscal affairs (see below—Section 3).

Suggestion: **Inclusion in the sociology curriculum of such courses as statistics, criminology, sociology of the family (at the lower division level, Area F), and greater use of internships by students**

Response: In fall 2003, the Curriculum committee will be asked to approve changes in Area F major requirements to incorporate the first three courses. Again, once the newly hired sociologist completes her Ph.D., and takes on responsibilities for directing internships, we believe additional students will participate in internships.

Section 3: Allocations for Implementation of Suggestions for Improvement

The main new resource requiring major funding is the hiring of a third full-time sociologist who could contribute to the diversity, variety, and greater frequency of offerings of upper-level courses for sociology majors (see above--section 2). While the program can continue to be delivered with current faculty implementing most of the external committee's recommendation, it should not be overlooked that the External Review Committee made frequent reference to the idea that increasing the number of faculty would enhance the program in several ways (see Section 2). Their recommendation to create a required Capstone course and to encourage greater student use of internships will also add to the current faculty load.

It can be expected, too, that adding another faculty member would lead to increased student interest in the field of sociology as a major field of study due to the increased diversity of specializations reflected in upper-level offerings.

It is not surprising that the Committee concluded its report with the recommendation that "the University allocate funding to increase Program faculty at such time as funding becomes available." Therefore, the department chair has asked the dean's office to consider this recommendation, and the dean has agreed to support it, in so far as fiscally possible. Until such time as any new position may possibly be filled, it is hoped that the program will continue to be funded to hire a part-time instructor (Master's level) to teach 2 courses per academic semester at the standard rate of pay (\$1500 per 3-semester-hour course).

Section 4: Plan for Increasing Sociology Program Productivity

Recent alumni who are enrolled in CSU graduate programs have chosen a variety of community-related areas of study: MPA in General Government Administration, MS in Community Counseling, MED in Middle Grades Education, MED in School Counseling. Other alumni are working locally in the helping professions such as family service worker and caseworker, as well as in other employment situations. A few recent sociology alumni have enrolled in doctoral programs elsewhere (e.g., sociology, anthropology).

Increases in total CSU enrollment are leading to increased need for core offerings and, thus, to increased need for Introductory Sociology sections. Increases in credit-hour production due to enrollment in this course have already been seen, and this survey course is a frequently chosen selection to fulfill the behavioral science requirement of Area E. Some sections have expanded to 80 and 90 students in recent semesters. While not as large as sections in some other universities, here the difficulty has been to fit such sections into IT-equipped rooms which are large enough to hold that many students.

Sociology faculty will continue to provide extra review and mentoring sessions for students who experience difficulty in core sections or upper-level sections. Core students in particular will be strongly encouraged to take advantage of the services available at the Learning Support Center, e.g., free tutoring in core subjects. Majors who experience difficulty in upper-level courses will be strongly encouraged to request the assistance of the Learning Support Center in making arrangements for tutoring in such courses, as well encouraged to consult their advisor and the instructor of each such course.

Such activities are believed to be significant contributing factors in the recent increases in productive grades observed for all levels of sociology courses. This improvement of productive grades (or decline in non-productive grades) is expected to continue and to result in more sociology majors being ready to graduate in a timely fashion.

In addition, the department will support development and printing of an updated brochure to be provided to advisors of students with undeclared majors, to local high school counselors and social science instructors, to Enrollment and Marketing recruiters who visit high schools, and to anyone who inquires about the sociology major program. Information available from the American Sociological Association (and other organizations) on careers, jobs, and variety of uses of the sociology degree will be obtained and also distributed as above and displayed prominently in the department office.

Faculty will design a plan to emphasize career preparation specifically for students who do not plan to pursue graduate training in sociology. In this project we will make use of any and all input we may be able to obtain from alumni who did not pursue graduate training but immediately entered the employment market. An improved tracking process and possibly the use of focus groups will give us more insight into how sociology graduates use their education as a springboard into various lines of work and various graduate programs. We expect to use this information both in recruiting of new majors and in mentoring juniors and seniors regarding entry into the job market and preparation for graduate school application. We expect

this information to be useful as a motivational tool as well and hope to strengthen recruiting and mentoring efforts by directly involving alumni in these activities.