

Annual Assessment Report

Department: Sociology and Anthropology

Academic Year: 2019-2020

Date of Submission: September 15, 2020

Department Chair: Sarah Jirek (incoming chair, beginning AY 2020-2021); **Felicia Song** (outgoing chair)

I. Response to the previous year PRC's recommendations

Item: Requested progress in establishing internship requirement	Response: Discussions of establishing a new internship requirement were enfolded in the larger discussions about curriculum revision because of the ways a new requirement would potentially impact the required core class and the credits needed for major completion, as well as a shift in how SOC 190 is currently taught (since it is presently only required for students in the Human Services track).
Item: Describe current issues at stake in reviewing effectiveness of cross-cultural track	Response: The existing cross-cultural track is premised in an outmoded understanding of sociology as a "US/domestic" discipline and anthropology as a "global/international" discipline. It is already being undone by the range of sociology classes which are taught with a cross-cultural perspective, as well as anthropology courses that tend to be comparative, holistic, ethnographically/ empirically grounded and global in scope. The dept would like to create a curriculum that reflects this updated view that is held by anthropologists and sociologists alike. If, however, the cross-cultural track is abandoned, and given the fact that the department is limited to only officially granting sociology degrees, the practical questions of how the existing Anthropology courses will get adequate enrollment and how anthropology can be more adequately woven into the broader college curriculum remains to be addressed. We intend to pursue ways of contributing more centrally to the Global Studies minor. As a result, discussions of these issues were enfolded in the larger discussions about curriculum revision.

II A. Program Learning Outcome (PLO) assessment

If your department participated in the ILO assessment you may use this section to report on your student learning in relation to the assessed ILO. The assessment data can be requested from the Dean of Curriculum and Educational Effectiveness.

Program Learning Outcome	Assessment of Oral and Written Communication was postponed
Collaboration and Communication	The original plan for assessing the oral and written communication was to gather data on the Oral Communication component by assessing the research presentations given by seniors completing the Senior Research Capstone class. However, the college-wide shift to remote-learning made this plan obsolete. While there was a brief consideration of assessing the online-zoom presentations that would be made, it was concluded that such data –both because of the extenuating circumstances of the spring semester in general and also because of the medium of presentation delivery--would prove to be too great of an anomaly to be useful for any future assessment or analysis. Therefore, the plan to assess this PLO was postponed.

or/and

II B. Key Questions

III. Follow-ups

Program Learning Outcome or Key Question	How should the curriculum revision proceed? In piecemeal format, with internship requirement first and then the rest? OR implement the revision all as one wholistic overhaul?
Who was involved in implementation?	Entire Department

What was decided or addressed?	<p>As discussed in the above responses to the PRC's recommendations, the existing questions about the wider effects on the department's curriculum when the internship requirement is introduced and the future of the cross-cultural track and its relationships with the Anthropology courses, were all bound up in a number of other live questions at play in the department's desire to revise its existing curriculum structure. Other live questions include what core courses students should be required to take (therefore, addressing the question of what we believe sociology graduates ought to know), how to retain a distinctiveness that can be easily documented among Human Services students, if the heavy 6-credit package of Senior Seminar and Senior Research Capstone during a student's last semester can be alleviated, and how elective courses ought to be presented to students in the curriculum to avoid the unusually large amount of paperwork that is required currently in Course Substitution forms (which images out of the departmental challenges of regularly offering the requisite courses for three separate tracks).</p> <p>These matters were discussed within the context of a series of extra department meetings last spring (totaling approx four extra hours) where we collectively looked at how other departments handle tracks/concentrations/emphases, and had substantial conversations on these topics. The department is currently considering 3 possible models that address several of the issues articulated above in different ways, and the hope is to continue the conversation this academic year 2020-2021 as we are possible.</p>
How were the recommendations implemented?	

Collaboration and Communication

Over the course of the entire academic school year, we held 4-5 extended meetings to discuss curriculum revision. Michelle Hardley was brought in to advise us regarding deadlines and recommendations for how to implement the changes we were considering. During this time, the department was also preoccupied with running a search to fill a tenure-track Sociology position during the fall and early spring semesters.

While there remains some homework to be done in looking at what peer institutions do for particular parts of the curriculum (such as the Human Services track or the unofficial Anthropology major), and while the discussions held often moved to difficult but necessary philosophical questions about what our disciplines are about, who our majors are, what they need to know, and how they need to be equipped, it has been determined that – given the challenges to be expected in AY 2020-2021—the need to focus on the practical solutions for the time being override the more idealistic hopes for settling some of the deeper philosophical questions that simply demand much more capacity than the department can give right now.

Three possible plans of the curriculum were drafted and considered in the last meeting of the school year as a way to determine how to realistically move forward given the existing constraints on our faculty. These three plans were generally inspired and modeled after the English, Philosophy, Political Science departments' curricular structure.

While there are still specific puzzles to resolve, it is clear that the dept is invested in:

- Creating a core with a new internship requirement and a new stratification requirement
- Keeping the total units required fairly close to what it is now
- Being less strict and prescriptive about the courses that most students need to take (currently students often have to choose between 2-3 courses to take to fulfill a particular category), but still finding a way to offer some guidance
- Finding a way to more clearly distinguish between the lower and upper-div courses (so that Intro is not the only lower div course)
- Establishing a clear articulation in the curriculum of how academically-ambitious students can pursue a major-honors project instead the senior research capstone project
- Be open to creating requirements or recommending courses from outside the department to enhance student learning, and to prepare students for particular career paths and/or graduate programs
- Dissolving the false dichotomies between discipline and area (US domestic or global) by making use of the specific strengths we already have in our teaching expertise, and making our student's program of study more flexible but still definable.

IV. Other assessment or Key Questions related projects

Project	
Who is in Charge /Involved?	
Major Findings	
Action	
Collaboration and Communication	

V. Adjustments to the Multi-year Assessment Plan

Proposed adjustment	Rationale	Timing
Postponing the Annual assessment schedule by one year	Because of the extenuating circumstances characterizing the spring semester of 2020, the schedule of annual assessments needs to be adjusted to reflect the postponement of this year’s PLO assessment.	The assessment schedule will need to be re-adjusted to reflect the following: 2020-2021: Oral & Written Comm 2021-2022: Faith & Learning 2022-2023: Research & Methods 2023-2024: Six Year Review 2024-2025: Core Knowledge

VI. Appendices

- A. Relevant assessment-related documents