

DEPARTMENTAL RESPONSE TO “FINAL REPORT ON THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY”

INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS

We thank all of the members of the Review Committee for the time and effort that they invested in evaluating the programs of the Department of Sociology at the University of Washington. This is an important service to the Department, College, and University, but also a service to the discipline of Sociology. We very much appreciate the professional manner in which the site visit was conducted and the thoroughness of the final report. This review has provided us with a valuable opportunity to assess the state of the Department – to recognize our strengths and to identify the challenges that face us. Naturally, we are pleased with the overall positive tone of the Committee’s report. We are very proud of our individual and collective accomplishments, and it is gratifying to see those acknowledged by the Committee. At the same time, the Committee raises concerns, makes suggestions, or poses questions that deserve our serious attention and require at least a preliminary response. Therefore, we take this opportunity to describe our plans, provide some perspective, clarify a few points, and, in a very few cases, to note statements or observations with which we disagree. Our response follows the general organization of the Committee’s report.

FACULTY

The Review Committee’s report notes the extraordinary record of senior hires that were made by the Department during the past few years. These hires have strengthened the Department substantially, enhancing our productivity and our ability to offer first-class graduate training. But, as the Committee recognizes, the changing composition and “personality” of the Department also presents some challenges. First, we agree that the Department needs to take stock of what we have become and to plan for what we want to be. In our self-study we described this as a time for “consolidation.” Second, we were pleased that the Committee recommends that the Department be allowed to hire junior faculty “to fill in behind a top-heavy senior faculty.” Of course, these two recommendations are closely related. In order to maximize the impact and benefit of future hires, we need to know what kinds of new colleagues will have the greatest positive impact on the Department (and the University). By assessing the current composition of the faculty – identifying areas of strength, holes that need to be filled, linkages that can be made – we will be in a better position to plan for the future. Indeed, this was the objective of the ad hoc departmental committee that was formed last Spring, with representation from several different specialty areas, to create a short-term hiring plan. That committee will continue its work during the 2004-05 academic year with an expanded objective to propose both short-term and long-term recruitment strategies that build on, and take advantage of, the many changes in the composition of the Department’s faculty in recent years.

The Committee notes that it received “mixed reports” about the mentoring of junior faculty, and claims that “the jury still appears to be out on the ability of the department to successfully promote and tenure junior faculty (p. 5).” Again, these are issues that were raised in the departmental self-study. Regarding mentoring, the Department is engaged in an ongoing effort to provide junior faculty with easy access to the professional advice and guidance of senior

colleagues. Each junior faculty member is assigned two senior faculty, generally from the same specialty area, to serve as departmental “career guides.” These guides are available for informal consultation about departmental and professional matters, and also serve as an “early warning” system to inform the Chair about emerging problems and special needs. In response to the Committee’s report, the Department’s Executive Committee has recommended that these career guides be involved in a more structured way during the annual review and conference that the chair has with all untenured faculty. Specifically, prior to the conference, the guides will be consulted about the faculty members’ activities and progress, and the chair will ask the faculty member about the effectiveness of his/her current guides. If changes in the assignment of guides are required, they will be initiated by the Chair. In addition to the role of specific career guides for junior faculty, the current and immediate past Chairs have tried to (1) encourage senior faculty to be more proactive in looking for opportunities to support the work of junior faculty, and (2) encourage junior faculty to be more aggressive in seeking advice from senior faculty when it is needed. Still, the success of these efforts remains partially dependent upon individual personalities and the number of faculty that is available within different specialty areas.

As the Review Committee points out, it is difficult to know whether the current faculty will be more successful in promoting and tenuring junior faculty than it was in the past. Until this Fall, we have not had an opportunity to consider an internal candidate for promotion and tenure for five years, and the composition of the Department has changed dramatically since then. Katherine Beckett’s positive tenure and promotion decision was made during the first year of her appointment in the Department (2000), so provides somewhat limited evidence about the Department’s record of promoting internal candidates. While the jury may still be out, we believe that there is little reason to expect the historical conditions and departmental dynamics that resulted in a disappointing record of promotion and tenure 5 to 10 years ago to prevail in the “new” Department. Early this Fall Quarter the tenured faculty considered three personnel cases (for promotion to associate professor with tenure). The final outcome of these cases is not yet known, however there is strong consensus among the tenured faculty that they have been handled fairly and objectively within the Department, and that the recommendations made to the College Council are based completely on the merits of each case.

GRADUATE EDUCATION

The Review Committee concluded that our graduate program is “healthy.” Beyond that general conclusion, the Committee made a number of specific recommendations for improvement in the graduate program. Because we are largely in agreement with the Committee, our response to these recommendations will be relatively brief.

Substantive Program Content. The Committee expressed a concern that our current graduate offerings are narrow, and that the Department should offer more survey courses that provide comprehensive overviews of the discipline’s major areas. The Department only relatively recently abandoned the requirement that students complete such survey courses in four areas of Sociology (e.g., Demography, Social Psychology, Stratification, Deviant Behavior and Social Control, etc.), in favor of the current program. The advantage of such survey courses is, as the Committee observes, that students are given a broader introduction to the field which may, in turn, reduce the tendency toward departmental “balkanization” and the development of “research shops” (see below) . A disadvantage is that they engage students in more formal, classroom

activity, allowing even less time for intellectual pursuits and research that are directed at the student's own special interests. To some extent, the objective of providing broader training in Sociology and the desire to prepare students so that they are competitive for academic appointments in the top-20 departments (see below) may be contradictory. The former is relatively unlikely to lead to original research that will result in scholarly publications, while the latter demands it. While we are naturally reluctant to reverse course so soon after revising the graduate program, during the coming academic year the Department's Graduate Program Committee will consider this recommendation about offering more survey courses. The GPC will also explore the possibility that those courses that were perceived as too narrow by the Review Committee may, in fact, include broader overviews of substantive areas than is implied by the course titles.

Student Recruitment. While the Committee describes as "appropriate" the number of applicants to our graduate program, and the size of incoming cohorts, they consider their GRE scores to be "on the low side." This point was raised in the departmental self-study and attributed, at least partially, to the consideration of a wider variety of factors in an effort to diversify new cohorts, rather than adhering strictly to the objective criteria of GRE scores or GPAs. Without additional information and considerable effort, it is impossible to adjudicate among the competing explanations responsible for the somewhat low GRE scores of recent cohorts. However, we enthusiastically endorse the Committee's recommendation to take steps to identify a highly competitive pool of applicants who match the current interests of the faculty. Furthermore, we appreciate the Committee's suggestion that we advertise more widely the current profile of the Department's faculty, noting the strength that has been achieved through recent hiring.

Pace of Progress Toward Degree. The Committee expresses a concern that, on average, our graduate students take too long to complete their degrees. They attribute this to two primary factors (1) students taking too long to prepare for their Ph.D. specialty examinations, and (2) the Department's heavy reliance on teaching assistantships to support students. It was partially out of concern over the average time to degree that the Department implemented a variety of revisions to its graduate program this past year, including a stated expectation that students complete their major and minor qualifying examinations by the end of their third year. The Executive Committee also recommended that the Department try to increase the number of repeat assignments of teaching assistants to the same classes, thereby reducing the amount of preparation they are required to do each quarter. We will monitor graduate student progress during the next few years to determine whether those revisions are having the intended effect. In addition, in the coming academic year, the Graduate Program Committee will consider additional steps that might reduce the average time to degree for our students.

We agree with the Committee that the Department's heavy reliance on teaching assistantships (TAs) to provide support for graduate students tends to slow progress through the program. As noted in the self-study, we have made some progress in increasing alternative sources of support during recent years, for example through research assistantships and fellowships. Our faculty have experienced a recent increase in extramural funding, and there is every indication that this will continue into the future. Research grants are an important source of research assistantships in the Department. If serving as a teaching assistant impedes the progress of students through the program, then this recent progress in securing non-TA funding for our students should be reflected in shorter times to degree in future cohorts. Nonetheless, we agree with the

Committee's recommendation that the Department continue to explore alternative types of graduate student support.

Graduate Student Placement. As pointed out by the Committee, our recent placements of Ph.D.s have not included any appointments in top-20 universities. This concern was also included in our self-study. Although our most recent academic appointments have been in very respectable programs (e.g., UC-Irvine, University of Southern California, Purdue University, University of California at San Diego, Wake Forest University, etc.), we also would like to see more placements in the top-20 Sociology Departments. Like the Committee, we believe that the recent hiring successes of our Department will eventually result in improved placements for our graduates. Some of our most recent graduates have accepted post-doctoral appointments in top-rated programs (e.g., the University of Wisconsin, the University of Michigan, Princeton University, and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill) which increases the likelihood of subsequent academic appointments in more highly ranked departments. By supporting more of our graduate students with research assistantships, and stressing the need to publish while in graduate school, the Department hopes to position our students for even better placements in the future.

UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAM

According to the Review Committee's report "the undergraduate program is in need of serious attention." This conclusion is based on the following two primary concerns: (1) the number of Sociology majors has dropped significantly over the last few years, and (2) the experience of undergraduate majors is not as enriching or as rewarding as it could be. Indeed, the Department has set as a high priority making significant improvements to our undergraduate program, including addressing these two specific concerns. This effort was initiated last academic year, when the Undergraduate Program Committee (UPC) was charged with evaluating the current program requirements, examining the approaches that have been taken by successful undergraduate programs (either in Sociology elsewhere, or outside of Sociology on our campus), and preparing a proposal for revising the undergraduate program for presentation to the full faculty. Only modest progress was made last year toward achieving these goals. This effort will be continued during the coming academic year. Following the Committee's advice, we have selected a tenured-faculty member, Professor Julie Brines, to chair the Undergraduate Program Committee, and have also appointed a number of respected senior faculty to serve on the UPC. Below, we respond to some of the specific observations/recommendations that the Committee made regarding the undergraduate program.

Enrollments and Number of Majors. Although the annual enrollments in Sociology courses have remained quite stable in recent years, the number of majors dropped from a high of 630 in 1998-99 to a low of 328 in 2002-03. As a result, the Department has taken on more of a "service" role within the University, at the expense of our involvement in the training of new sociologists. The stable enrollments were achieved partially as a result of the regular offering of large classes such as "Murder," "Sociology of Sport," and "Sociology of Sexuality." That these three courses are taught by two faculty members led the Committee to recommend "more equity in teaching loads." In fact, the two faculty members teaching these courses have been operating under a special arrangement in which they agreed to teach relatively large classes, with limited TA support, in exchange for having their regular teaching obligation reduced from four courses

per year to three courses. Thus, what might reasonably be interpreted as inequity in teaching loads is really more accurately described as a reconfiguration of the teaching assignments of two faculty members.

In response to our concern over the declining number of Sociology majors, the Department made two rather minor changes, really more of a fine-tuning effort, late in the 2003-04 academic year. First, we eliminated the “Pathways” which were confusing to some students, and not providing a coherent sequence of courses as they were intended to do. Second, we changed Sociology 220 (Undergraduate Research Methods) from a requirement for entry into the major to a graduation requirement. We believe that some potential Sociology majors either had difficulty achieving the minimum grade in SOC 220 to qualify for entry into the major, or were intimidated by encountering a more quantitatively oriented course as one of their first exposures to the discipline. While the adoption of SOC 220 as an entrance requirement probably did serve to more positively select students into the major, as intended, it was followed rather quickly by the sharp decline in students majoring in Sociology. It is still too early to tell whether these two recent changes will increase the number of Sociology majors. From a broader perspective, these changes are best viewed as short-term measures that will eventually be made irrelevant by more major transformations in the undergraduate program.

It is natural for the numbers of majors to fluctuate over time, along with economic swings as well as along with changes in the fads and fashions that influence undergraduates’ choices of majors. Those fluctuations will continue to influence the popularity of Sociology as an undergraduate major. Whatever the cause(s), there is very recent evidence of a modest increase in the number of Sociology majors. Eventually, the Department will need to identify a target for the number of majors it can support. The 600+ majors of the late 1990s clearly exceeded the capacity of the faculty to offer an appropriate number and variety of upper-level courses. But, given our current size of thirty faculty (26 FTE), we can support more than the 389 majors that we now have. The Department intends to design an undergraduate program that will be attractive to students, while also maintaining intellectual rigor. As a result, we expect, in the long-run, that student demand will maintain a suitable number of Sociology majors.

Honors and B.S. Programs. The Review Committee points out that the Department has a “small, very talented and dedicated subset of majors,” and encourages us to “revise and expand the Honors program.” We are in agreement on both points. Last year we introduced the revised Honors program in an effort to provide a better experience for those talented and dedicated majors. We encountered some scheduling and staffing problems with the required Honors courses, but believe that the new program is off to a reasonably good start. Feeling that it is necessary to allow the revised program at least two years to “work out the bugs,” we have reserved a more thorough evaluation until the end of the current academic year. At that time, the Undergraduate Program Committee will solicit feedback from students and faculty in order to make recommendations about the future size, structure, and organization of the Honors program.

The Committee also perceived some tension between the Department’s ability to simultaneously support a high-quality Honors program and offer a Bachelor of Science (B.S.) degree. Although the Department voted in favor of offering a B.S. degree in the Spring of 2003, a request to establish the new degree has not been submitted to the College for approval. There are two primary reasons for this delay. First, the requirements for the B.S. degree are closely linked to

those of the B.A. program. Therefore, we decided to make progress on evaluating and revising the B.A. degree requirements before seeking approval for the new B.S. degree that uses the B.A. as a point of departure. Second, there is some concern that the Department will have difficulty supporting both the B.S. degree and the Honors program, as the Review Committee speculates. These issues also will be considered by the Undergraduate Program Committee during the next academic year.

Research and Experiential Opportunities for Majors. The Review Committee recommends that the Department provide more opportunities for undergraduates to become involved in research. The Department has also identified this as an important objective for the undergraduate program. Accordingly, we have already taken some steps to inform undergraduates of opportunities to participate in the research programs of faculty and graduate students. The Department offers SOC 499 (Undergraduate Independent Study or Research) so that undergraduates can earn credit for gaining research experience. A number of students have taken advantage of this opportunity, while others have been employed as research assistants on funded projects (e.g., by Bob Crutchfield, Lowell Hargens, Charles Hirschman, Ross Matsueda, Martina Morris, Barbara Reskin, and Stew Tolnay). Tolnay, Hargens, Kitts, and Reskin have written undergraduate research assistants into the budgets of recent grant proposals to the National Science Foundation. Last year Kevin Mihata, Director of Student Services, taught a section of Sociology 401 in which the class conducted original research that was tied to the Department's ongoing evaluation of the undergraduate program. This included a survey of current and former Sociology majors, analysis of official records, and analyses that compared Sociology with other departments. In Spring Quarter, two of our Honors students presented their research at the annual Undergraduate Research Symposium, and the Department is considering making this a requirement of all students in the Honors Program. These represent a good start. However, the Department realizes that it can do a better job of publicizing these opportunities within the community of undergraduate majors, and of encouraging faculty to involve our majors in their research. We are currently considering a variety of options for accomplishing this, including a description of undergraduate research opportunities on our new departmental webpage and email distribution of announcements to our majors. We also plan to offer stronger encouragement for our majors to take advantage of the research opportunities provided by the Office of Undergraduate Education, including the Mary Gates Scholarships and Travel Awards for Undergraduates to Present Research.

As part of the Department's ongoing evaluation of the undergraduate program, we are also considering strategies for implementing a more rigorous and sociologically-grounded internship program. We have consulted with a member of the Department's Advisory Board who has experience with the implementation and execution of a very successful internship program at the University of Virginia. The model that we are exploring would combine in-class activities with internship assignments in the local community. We have experimented with a service-learning course that has a similar organization, with students tutoring in local middle schools while also participating in class sessions designed to provide a sociological perspective on their out-of-class experiences. Based on feedback from the instructor and students, this course appears to have been quite successful.

Undergraduate "Community." In our self-study we noted that the Department has not been very successful in creating a sense of "community" among our undergraduate majors. The

Review Committee also identified this lack of community as a limitation to our undergraduate program. During the last academic year we took steps to resurrect the local chapter of Alpha Kappa Delta, the national Sociology honor society. We identified a number of Sociology majors who were enthusiastic about the prospect of a local chapter, and about the possibility of becoming more connected to the intellectual life of the Department. However, because of our late start, and the fact that most of the participating students were graduating seniors, the effort lost steam. We intend to continue this initiative in the coming academic year.

As we look for ways to strengthen the sense of community among our majors, we will seek the advice and suggestions of the students, themselves. For example, once we have successfully launched the local chapter of Alpha Kappa Delta, we will engage the members in this planning process. In addition, the Department's Advisory Board is discussing the possibility of adding a recent graduate of our Department to its membership, in order to provide insights into possible strategies for making our undergraduate students feel more connected to, and invested in, the Department.

DEPARTMENT CULTURE AND GOVERNANCE

The Review Committee identified two aspects of Departmental culture and governance that are, at the same time, viewed as strengths and limitations. These are (1) the existence of "semi-autonomous research programs or 'shops,'" and (2) the highly democratic nature of departmental decision making. In general, the Department agrees with the Committee's evaluation, as they are quite consistent with our own assessment in the Self-Study. Nevertheless, we believe that each is worthy of some further elaboration and, in some cases, qualification.

Intellectual Shops. Much of the Department's intellectual life is organized around distinct curriculum areas, some of which (e.g., Demography & Ecology, Institutional Analysis, Deviant Behavior and Social Control) have established strong identities within the department, including successful seminar series. The structure and organization of the Department's graduate program requires that faculty identify with one or more of these curriculum areas. It is true that those faculty who are connected with the more active and better organized areas will likely feel a stronger sense of involvement than do faculty connected to less active and more loosely organized areas. As the Committee notes, there are both advantages and disadvantages associated with this intellectual "balkanization" of the Department. In our view, the best strategy for the future is to preserve the benefits (e.g., the intellectual vitality within specialty areas) while taking steps to minimize the costs. This strategy will include four basic principles, (1) retain the ability of faculty to identify with curriculum areas in order to enjoy the benefits of intellectual exchange among faculty and students who share the same interests, (2) strengthen the department-wide culture of intellectual exchange by continuing our efforts to establish a successful, regularly scheduled departmental seminar series, as suggested by the Review Committee, (3) initiate efforts to bridge the curriculum areas, and (4) encourage an atmosphere of mutual respect across curriculum areas and methodological approaches. Points 2 through 4 deserve further comment.

During the last academic year the Department attempted to initiate a regular department-wide speaker series as a partial strategy to counteract the effects of balkanization created by the activities of specific curriculum areas. For a variety of primarily logistical reasons,

arrangements were made for only four speakers, rather than the six or seven that we had planned. On the positive side, those four colloquia were very well-attended, by a cross-section of faculty and students from different specialty areas. Therefore, we are encouraged about the prospects for the Department-wide speaker series that will be organized for the 2004-05 academic year. On this point, we are in agreement with the Review Committee about the potential contribution of the department-wide seminar series toward the development of a common departmental identity and culture.

We believe that there already exist more bridges across curriculum areas than was apparent to the Review Committee. Most faculty are nominally affiliated with at least two curriculum areas, and some are actively engaged in more than one area. In addition, the annual MA “Research Symposium” in which graduate students present their MA Thesis research brings together students and faculty working in different specialty areas. This event, which has been well-attended by faculty and students alike, has helped to increase communication across areas and to foster a sense of departmental identification. Still, additional bridge-building will be beneficial. Toward that end, an ad hoc committee, with representation from multiple curriculum areas, was appointed last Spring to prepare the Department’s annual hiring plan. A priority that emerged from this committee’s work was the need to recruit new faculty who can contribute to more than one substantive area within the Department. The following quotation from the Department’s 2004-5 hiring plan summarizes this commitment,

“Because we are trying to build connections within our own department and links to other units, we reject a hiring plan that searches for faculty on the basis of subfield specialization. Instead, we seek individuals who are capable of making fundamental contributions to theory or methods and whose work will have substantial implications for understanding and resolving social problems. We are particularly interested in candidates whose research interests span two or more subfields in sociology and who have the potential for strengthening our ties to other strong units on campus.”

The Review Committee also considered the dominance of intellectual shops to be an impediment to intellectual openness and to tolerance for diverse perspectives. The Department is especially concerned by the observation of the Review Committee that some faculty “complain of a decline in recent years of the collegial tradition of showing respect for fellow faculty regardless of intellectual traditions.” It is difficult to gauge the scope or severity of this problem without knowing how widely shared is the feeling of lack of respect. It is one thing for faculty to make judgments about the work of their colleagues based on its quality – we are required to make such judgments routinely in making decisions about promotion or merit increases. It is quite another thing for faculty to disdain the work of colleagues simply because of its substantive focus or methodological approach. Not knowing more about the nature of the complaints that were made to the Review Committee, we are at a disadvantage in responding adequately to them. As a general observation, the Department has considerable control over the conduct of official business, and less control over the nature of informal interactions and communications among faculty and students. Nevertheless, it will be a priority of the Department to continue striving for a collegial atmosphere in which discussions of all kinds are conducted in a professional and respectful manner. Furthermore, the Department is committed to seeing that personnel decisions (e.g., promotion and merit increases) are based on an objective evaluation of the merits of each case, rather than on preferences for certain types of substantive inquiry or methodological

approaches. It is in our interest for everyone to feel like a valued and integral member of the departmental community.

Departmental Democracy. The Review Committee notes that our Department has a very democratic style of governance. Great effort is expended to reach consensus on most issues and even to achieve unanimity. While this assures that all faculty are given an opportunity to have their voices heard, it is also time consuming. The Committee recommends that the Department “modestly revise its governance practices” in a way that grants more power to committees and gives greater discretionary authority to the chair. We agree with this recommendation, and have already begun exploring ways to achieve this cultural shift without straying too far from our democratic principles.

In response to concerns expressed by some faculty that too much time was devoted to meetings and decision-making, the Executive Committee took up the issue of departmental governance last Spring. It was agreed that the Department should consider ways to insure that committee recommendations are taken more seriously when they are brought to the full faculty, and that they are not overhauled without the benefit of careful thought and planning. It was also agreed that some decisions that are currently referred to the full faculty could actually be made by the Chair. In the coming year, the Executive Committee will make specific recommendations to the faculty for achieving these goals. But, as the Review Committee observed, these types of changes must be made with great care, and will succeed only in an atmosphere of trust. We believe that such an atmosphere exists within the Department at this time, and the Executive Committee is mindful of the risks of departing too drastically from the basic democratic model that has prevailed within the Department. Therefore, we are confident that we can accomplish successfully the modest revision recommended by the Review Committee.

The Department has also taken a preliminary step toward increasing the influence of key committees. The Department’s committee structure has been reorganized for the coming academic year by reducing the number of committees and increasing the size of the Department’s two most important committees – the Graduate Program Committee and the Undergraduate Program Committee. Both committees will now include greater representation from senior faculty and, therefore, provide a valuable imprimatur to recommendations that emanate from these committees. In addition, the revised committees will be large enough to support a subcommittee structure that will increase the amount of work that can be conducted within committees, thereby reducing the number of demands that are placed on the entire faculty.

DIVERSITY

We are very pleased that the Review Committee believes that “The Sociology department has made a concerted effort to be inclusive of underrepresented groups.” [p. 13.] And, that effort has been especially successful in achieving an appropriate representation of females on the faculty, staff, and among our graduate students. As noted in the report, women have also taken key leadership roles within the Department. For example, Debra Minkoff is the Department’s new Associate Chair and Julie Brines is now chairing the expanded Undergraduate Program Committee. Both will play central roles in the important departmental initiatives that we have outlined elsewhere in this document.

The Department has been less successful at recruiting and retaining graduate students of color, despite, as the Committee observed, “serious and multifaceted efforts.” [p. 12] The Review Committee suggests the possibility of addressing this challenge through our long-term faculty recruitment plan. That is one option that we intend to explore. However, in the shorter-run, we believe that our plans to more aggressively market the Department to prospective students (mentioned above) will also attract a larger minority applicant pool from which we can recruit. Specifically, such marketing can include information about the expertise in specialty areas (e.g., race, ethnicity, inequality, discrimination, racial violence) that are likely to match the substantive interests of more prospective minority students.

The Committee’s report refers to “difficulties in the way faculty portray women in class and how the views of graduate students of color have been respected.” This observation draws from a discussion that appears in our departmental Self Study. We believe that it is important to put this observation in perspective because it may have been unclear that these “difficulties” referred to in the Self Study actually occurred some time in the past. To our knowledge, there have not been recent instances of faculty portraying women in inappropriate ways in the classroom, nor of graduate students of color being accorded anything but proper respect. Apparently, the Committee did receive some complaints about the “climate for underrepresented groups” in the Department, and urges that we “work to vigorously eliminate them.” We are pleased to learn that the Committee “did not find widespread concern among graduate students and faculty in this regard.” However, we strive for a departmental atmosphere in which all faculty, staff, and students feel comfortable. Therefore, in response to this comment by the Committee we have invited Lois Price-Spratlen, University Ombudsman for Sexual Harassment, to visit the Department during Fall Quarter to discuss a variety of related issues concerning the departmental climate for underrepresented groups.

RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER UNITS

The Review Committee is correct in noting that the Department enjoys generally productive relationships with many other units on campus. These relationships add energy and vitality to the intellectual atmosphere in the Department and, especially with the Center for Studies in Demography and Ecology (CSDE) and the Center for Statistics and the Social Sciences (CSSS), also give faculty access to resources that can support their research and teaching. As the Committee observed, the Department’s relationship with CSDE is currently strained. We agree with the Committee’s conclusion that this is a “serious problem” for the Department and for CSDE. We endorse the Committee’s judgment that “The restoration of a productive relationship between the department and CSDE should be a high priority for the College,” and we look forward to working with the College to find a suitable solution to this problem.

In a few cases, the Department’s ties to other units have pulled productive faculty away, as noted in the Committee’s report. Senior faculty have been tapped to provide leadership for other units and in central administration. This is to be expected with a strong department, and is a credit to the reputation of the senior faculty. These losses of faculty time amount to a sizeable reduction in effective faculty FTE available to the Department. When the Department is not compensated for these losses, it can mean a reallocation of departmental resources – including increasing reliance on graduate student and temporary instructors – to insure that the requisite classes are taught. In a few extreme instances, this has also resulted in the loss of the faculty member’s

intellectual and social contributions to the life of the Department. This situation warrants monitoring – especially given the University’s emphasis on interdisciplinary research – and ameliorative measures should be considered.

CLOSING REMARKS

Reviews and evaluations of all kinds are, by their very nature, “critical.” It is easy to lose sight of the broader, overall, messages while attending to the more specific, finely focused, criticisms and recommendations. We have not done that while preparing this response. Thankfully, the Review Committee has endorsed the Department’s very positive assessment that was presented in our self study. We are a department that takes very seriously its many and varied programmatic responsibilities and that is continuously engaged in efforts to improve our ability to meet those responsibilities. We are grateful that the Review Committee recognized this. Nonetheless, we understand that improvements can be made and that new initiatives can be launched that will make an already strong program even stronger. With that in mind, we look forward to implementing the measures outlined above in our response to the Review Committee’s report.