

June 16, 2014

To: David Eaton, Vice Provost & Dean of the Graduate School
Rebecca Aanerud, Associate Dean for Academic Affairs & Planning, Graduate School

Cc: Jerald Herting, Research Professor and Chair, Department of Sociology
Patricia Moy, Associate Vice Provost for Academic and Student Affairs
Robert Stacey, Dean, College of Arts and Sciences
Jason Johnson, Associate Dean, Undergraduate Academic Affairs
Edward Rice, Professor, Foster School of Business, and Graduate School Council
Representative
John Palmieri, Professor, Department of Mathematics, and Graduate School Council
Representative
Augustine McCaffery, Senior Academic Program Specialist, the Graduate School

From: Graduate School Review Committee for the Department of Sociology
Robert Hummer, Professor, Department of Sociology, University of Texas, Austin
Linda Nash, Associate Professor, UW Department of History
Malcolm Parks, Professor, UW Department of Communication (Committee Chair)
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Re: Report on the Department of Sociology

Background

The Review Committee for Sociology (hereafter, Committee) was formally charged in February 2014 by David Eaton, Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School and Rebecca Aanerud, Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and Planning in the Graduate School. We were charged with assessing the quality of undergraduate and graduate programs, with providing suggestions for strengthening these programs, and with assessing the overall standing of the department within the University and the discipline. Four broad questions guided the review:

- ✓ Is the Department of Sociology doing what it should be doing?
- ✓ Is the Department doing it well?
- ✓ How can they do things better?
- ✓ How should the University assist them?

The Department of Sociology was last reviewed by the Graduate School in 2004-5. At that time, the Committee and the Graduate School Council both recommended continuation of the undergraduate and graduate programs and set the next review for the 2013-2014 academic year. The 2004-5 Committee concluded that the Department was emerging from an extended transition over the previous decade, but was now in position to reassert past leadership in instruction and research as a result of strong senior hires. The graduate program was judged to be healthy, though greater effort to place graduate students in top programs was recommended. The undergraduate program, however, was judged to require significant attention. Priorities for the undergraduate program at that time included the need to simplify pathways for students and to engage more students in internships and research. More generally, the 2004-5 report called on faculty to reduce the “balkanization” of department culture, to be more open to intellectual approaches not in the mainstream, to shift to a hiring strategy focused on junior scholars (rather than senior and target-of-opportunity hires), and to more fully involve faculty members who felt marginalized.

The present Committee was convened on February 7, 2014. Internal members and external members (via conference call) discussed the review with key University stakeholders including staff and leadership of the Department of Sociology, the College of Arts & Sciences, the Graduate School, Graduate School Council, and Undergraduate Academic Affairs. During and following that meeting we were provided with the Department’s self-study document as well as charging and supplementary documents from the Graduate School and the Department. The

Committee discussed these documents and the questions raised by them via e-mail in advance of the site visit.

The site visit occurred on April 6-8, 2014. On April 6 the committee held a working dinner session with Jerald Herting, Department Chair. During the next two days, we met individually with the Chair, the Associate Chair, and the Graduate and Undergraduate Program Coordinators. We also met with faculty, usually in twos or threes, representing nearly all parts of the department and across the full range of faculty ranks. In addition we met with a group of graduate students who were at various points in their programs and a select group of undergraduates. We also met with staff including the Department Administrator, Assistant to the Chair, Director of Student Services, Graduate Program Assistant, and a computer specialist who served the Department's information technology needs. A two-hour exit discussion was held in the afternoon on Tuesday, April 8. Department representatives (Herting, Pfaff, Stoval) attended the first hour. Administrative representatives attended both hours. They included Robert Stacey (Dean of the College of Arts & Sciences), Rebecca Aanerud (Assoc. Dean of the Graduate School), Patricia Moy (Assoc. Vice Provost for Academic & Student Affairs), Jason Johnson (Assoc. Dean, Undergraduate Academic Affairs), professors Ed Rice and John Plamieri (Graduate School Council), and Augustine McCaffery (Senior Program Specialist, Graduate School).

The Committee met in executive session over dinner after the first day of the site visit and then again after the exit discussion.

This report represents the Committee's collective assessment of the Department of Sociology and recommendations based on the documents we have been provided and discussions during the site visit.

Overall Assessment

Our overall assessment of the Department of Sociology is quite positive. The department has addressed several key issues raised in the last review and, with some exceptions, appears to be a collegial environment for students and faculty alike. Faculty are generally positive about the first term of service by the current Chair, Jerry Herting, as well as the leadership given to the graduate program by Kate Stovel.

To answer briefly the broad questions contained in our charge, the department is doing what it should be doing and doing it well at both the graduate and undergraduate levels. This is a "top-20" department with a strong faculty. As we note below, the department has been enriched by very high quality junior hires since the time of the last review. Since the last review, the undergraduate program has also been streamlined and an innovative practicum has been implemented to give undergraduates applied experience and enhanced opportunities within the community. The department has developed a small, but very strong honors program and is in the process of repositioning and revitalizing many of its offerings. The graduate program remains strong and should become even stronger as a result of recent reforms that have increased faculty engagement and student opportunities. Partnerships with the Center for Statistics and the Social Sciences (CSSS) as well as with other units ensure a very high level of training in quantitative methods.

The department also faces challenges and could improve in a number of areas. In terms of faculty, the greatest needs are to rebuild core substantive areas and to address imbalances in terms of rank, gender, and race/ethnicity. Faculty are extremely concerned about recent trends in hiring that have brought excellent faculty to some areas, often those shared with other units, at the expense of hiring in the most central areas of the discipline. By its own analysis, the faculty is top heavy in terms of rank. Women and people of color are badly underrepresented on the faculty, especially the senior faculty. There are concerns about equity in workload and about opportunities for leadership and advancement.

The graduate and undergraduate programs have each undergone major revisions since the last review. We believe that both programs are on a positive trajectory, but that there is also more work to be done. Although efforts have been made to streamline the undergraduate requirements, service to students could be enhanced with a more coordinated approach to curriculum planning. The department has been less active than it might be in promoting the program to potential majors. Strong service courses, the honors program, and the sociology practicum could all be leveraged to a greater degree in an effort to build enrollments. The graduate program continues to attract very strong students. Here, however, we heard concerns about an overemphasis on methodological training at the expense of substantive training, particularly in core areas of sociology where students perceived the department growing weaker over time. Graduate students were also concerned about the informal, even haphazard, approach to mentoring taken by many faculty. Some also expressed concerns about the level of inclusiveness for women and minorities in the department. Faculty and students agreed, however, that the greatest challenge facing the graduate program is inadequate, non-competitive graduate stipends. UW's stipends significantly trail most of our peer institutions and are a

particular problem for the department because it routinely competes for students with other programs with much more generous funding. The department has little to offer in the way of fellowships and is thus left in a difficult position. In the past, increases in the number or amount of stipends have been accompanied by larger class sizes for TAs. Inadequate stipends affect the entire University and are therefore a matter for the College and University as a whole.

Nonetheless, the problem is significant and cannot be fully resolved without an effort to increase support in the form of fellowships.

The challenges facing the department's culture and governance are similar to those facing the academy as a whole. These challenges include an aging faculty that no longer reflects the discipline or the student population in terms of gender and diversity. A long period in which target-of-opportunity hires were nearly the only option for hiring is ending and the department would benefit from developing a longer-term hiring plan that focused on greatest needs. At the same time, there is a need to attend to issues of equity in teaching, advising, and administrative loads. Although we did not do a systematic assessment, we heard several complaints from faculty who felt they were asked to do more than their share and who pointed to the lack of clear expectations about teaching load. Faculty and graduate students also worried that too little was being done to foster a shared intellectual culture or community within the department. The feeling that communal interests were secondary to individual desires ran through many of our discussions, including those on hiring, teaching loads, administrative decision-making, and those that touched on the intellectual commons within the department.

Faculty

The Department of Sociology has long been and continues to be characterized by a very high quality faculty. This is *the* major strength of the unit and the College and University should do what it can to help the department maintain and even increase the very high overall quality of the faculty. The strength of the departmental faculty that we found is supported by the most recent rankings published by US News and World Report; they ranked the graduate program of the department as 20th best for overall quality in the country (tied with the University of Arizona, University of Minnesota, and Yale). The current faculty is particularly strong in the areas of demography (tied for 11th overall in US News and World Report), sociology of health, and quantitative methods.

We found the department faculty to be deeply engaged with all three major components of the job: research, teaching, and service. Targeted hires over the last 5-10 years have been particularly beneficial for building strength in the demography and health areas; the Department is to be commended for working with the College and other campus units to make such opportunistic hires within a context of budget austerity. Equally as important, the Department has made what we consider to be some fantastic hiring decisions at the assistant professor level over the past 5 years. All departmental faculty members that we met with regarded the current group of assistant professors as dynamic, productive, and collegial. The Department has also been fortunate to be under the very level-headed and trusted leadership of Jerald Herting over the past three years; overall, Professor Herting has led the Department with a steady hand and with values of productivity, collegiality, and fairness.

Despite these major faculty strengths, we also identified some key concerns. First, the department is very top heavy in terms of rank. While the rank structure is difficult to fully assess with 100% accuracy given some of the complex appointments on the departmental faculty (e.g., joint appointments, administrative appointments, etc.), 19 of 29 (65.5%) tenured/tenure-track faculty listed on the departmental website are full professors. Another 5 (soon to be 6) are associate professors, which will leave only 4 assistant professors (3 FTE's, given that 2 of them are joint appointments) as of fall 2014. The department will need to focus most future hiring efforts over the next 5-10 years at the assistant level.

The faculty is also male dominated, particularly at the senior level. Again, it's hard to be completely precise given the joint and administrative appointments, but only 12 of the 29 (41%) faculty listed on the department's webpage are female. While this is a higher percentage than a couple of other very strong public university sociology departments (e.g., Penn State at 36%; UNC at 33%), it is significantly lower than others (e.g., UC-Berkeley at 50%; Indiana University at 50%). However, the 41% figure is somewhat deceiving: with Howard serving as Dean, Morris and Beckett spending all/most of their time outside of Sociology, and Pettit leaving for UT-Austin, there will be only 1 female full professor (Schwartz) spending the majority of her time in the department as of fall 2014. This compares with 14 males at the full professor level, the vast majority of whom spend their time in the department. This is an unacceptable ratio for a very high quality modern sociology department. The small number of senior women raises a number of concerns including what can only be judged to be inadequate access to same-sex mentors for junior faculty, graduate students, and undergraduate students. Clearly, strong efforts must be made to bolster the senior female faculty in the department over the next 5 years, both through

greater attention to promotion from the associate ranks as well as to a strategic hire or two at the senior level.

Closely related to the above point, the department has not been chaired by a senior woman for nearly 25 years. In a discipline that is centrally concerned with gender equity, this is perhaps symbolic of larger, more substantive issues: weaknesses in the key research/teaching area of sexuality/gender studies and female mentoring. One strategy the department should very strongly consider within the few years is to focus a search for an external chairperson that has a very high likelihood of yielding a strong senior woman; coupling this external chair search with an area focus on gender/sexuality is one possibility. In the meantime, the departmental leadership should focus attention on the mentoring and promotion trajectories of departmental associate professors, among whom a majority (4 of 6) will be female as of fall 2014.

Faculty racial/ethnic diversity is also low, again with important implications for research/teaching (e.g., racial/ethnic inequality) and the mentoring of junior faculty and students. A vast majority of the faculty is white (25 of 29; 86%), which is far different than both the UW student body and the state population. Future searches will need to be centrally focused on producing a diverse pool of candidates. Again, searches focused on areas that are likely to draw a diverse pool of applicants (e.g., sociology of race/ethnicity) are especially advised.

Two key areas of classic faculty strength (gender and criminology) have weakened in recent years. Pettit's departure is going to further hurt both of these areas. Both areas are very important to the overall discipline and, classically, to the UW Sociology Department. Future attention should be given to rebuilding these two key areas.

There is a collective sense throughout the department that faculty want/need greater self-direction in hiring decisions over the next 5-10 years (i.e., fewer targeted positions and more hiring decisions generated from full faculty discussions and assessments of need). While it is very clear that the Department has benefited in key ways from the preponderance of targeted searches over the past 10 years, it is also clear that the Department is at risk of losing its identity as a department rooted in core interests of the field (e.g., social stratification; gender/race inequality). The Department needs to develop a hiring plan for the next 10 years; however, faculty are understandably reluctant to devote the time and energy to such an effort without some strong assurances of future hiring from the College. This plan should attend to potential retirements, areas in need of replenishment (e.g., gender, race/ethnicity, stratification, and criminology), compositional issues (e.g., gender, race/ethnicity, rank) and currently strong areas in need of continued maintenance (e.g., demography, health, statistics).

Finally, the Department faculty is in desperate need of a regular seminar series to maintain identity as a department, share ideas, and bring faculty and graduate students together on a regular basis. Without such activity, the Department is at risk of splintering given the varied interests of its members and the many joint appointments that characterize the faculty. Such activity is also needed to bring external ideas, energy, and attention from the broader field to the Department.

Recommendations for Faculty Hiring and Development

- The department needs to develop an aggressive, self-directed hiring plan for the next 10 years that takes potential retirements and the concerns/needs as described above into account. The Department should work closely with the Dean's Office to develop the plan and gain College support. Given the Department's historic and continued very high level

of productivity, the College and University need to do everything they can to support a well thought out departmental plan over the next 10 years.

- The Department needs to increase gender diversity and to increase female leadership in the full professor rank. The Department should strongly consider a search for an external chairperson as one option for achieving this, in addition to seeking to promote female faculty in a timely manner, and to retain senior women faculty.
- Aside from the external chair search, the hiring plan should clearly focus on junior searches given the rank structure of the Department.
- Racial/ethnicity diversity in hiring should be a major priority going forward. Focusing at least a couple of hires in the plan on areas that are likely to yield a very diverse applicant pool (e.g., sociology of race/ethnicity) is strongly advised.
- The hiring plan should devote priorities to other core areas of the discipline and core areas of UW strength that have been weakened in recent years. The Committee sees the areas of criminology, social stratification, gender, and race/ethnicity as being especially in need. At the same time, the Department must not let key areas of current strength weaken; that is, strategic attention must be given to maintaining its major strengths in demography, health, and statistics.
- The Department desperately needs to develop a regular seminar series and faculty members need to commit to regular attendance. Without such activity, the Department is at risk both of splintering and losing esteem from the broader sociological community.

Graduate Education

Our site visit occurred at a time when the Department had just recently begun implementing a major reform of its graduate program. The reform replaces the Department's traditional "strong areas" approach to graduate education with a more decentralized "student/research centered" model. This change is taking place after a multi-year process of study and faculty debate, and it has been in effect only since last fall quarter. As such, it is far too new to evaluate fully, but the review committee came away quite impressed with the process the

Department went through to both design the reform and to build consensus for it. The new model is specifically intended to respond to changes in the academic job market, which today places a very high premium on research experience and publications while students are still in graduate school, and to the changing composition of the Department's faculty. The reform also address some of the weaknesses identified in the graduate program at the time of the 2004 review.

We met with about a dozen graduate students, and based on our conversations with them, along with our review of the Departmental Self-Study and conversations with faculty, we believe that the reform is off to a strong start. It successfully aligns the graduate program to reflect a faculty that has been reconfigured over the last decade, largely in response to targeted searches, which, taken together, have substantially shifted the balance of faculty expertise in the Department. It also builds on and reinforces the very high level of training in quantitative methods traditionally received by graduate students in the Department, often in partnership with the Center for Statistics and Social Sciences. It additionally builds on what both students and faculty agree are several very strong research seminars in a variety of subfields. Finally, the reform addresses some of the key concerns raised in the 2004 review, especially by tackling head-on many of the reasons students exceed the normative time to degree. Most notably, it reduces the number of requirements for PhD students to bring it more in line with the practice of peer departments; it provides greater mentorship through its individualized "course of study" focus; and it streamlines the process by which students move from the completion of their MA degree into dissertation work.

We believe that many of the changes are very constructive and the graduate students we met with were also generally positive about the new program. However, several expressed concern that the reform would do little to counter a troubling weakness they see in the current

program; specifically, that it tends to turn out PhDs who are “well trained to be technicians,” rather than producing well-rounded sociologists. This echoes a worry about “narrowness” expressed by graduate students at the time of the last review. The students we spoke with were especially uneasy about the current program’s weakness in sociological theory, and they told us the reform is likely to further erode the department’s training in theory. We share the graduate student’s concern on this score, as engagement with sociological theory is an important feature of most of the articles that are published in the discipline’s top peer-review journals. Without graduate-level exposure to the field’s guiding theorists, it is difficult to see how the Department will make substantial progress towards its goal of better preparing students for today’s top academic positions. The ability to speak broadly across and about the discipline as a whole is often key to landing top academic posts, and thus an overly narrow program has the potential to weaken the competitiveness of PhDs.

Graduate students also conveyed concern that core areas of the discipline and key areas of departmental strength have weakened in recent years, particularly in gender, race and ethnicity, and criminology. They complained that it is already difficult to find faculty to work with in these areas, and that the new program’s “course of study” design, which depends upon student’s putting together an advising team of faculty members, will make this problem more acute. More generally, graduate students told us that mentoring has often been too informal to be effective. They understand that the program reform is designed to provide better mentoring but they have a “wait and see attitude” for now, an attitude that seems to us to be related at least in part to the dearth of faculty in fields many graduate students came to the Department to study.

Beyond the graduate program reform, three other aspects of graduate education emerged as concerns in our review of the Department: graduate student stipends, the climate around inclusiveness, and graduate student placements.

We heard broad concern about graduate student stipends from both faculty and students. In its Self-Study, the Department estimates that the stipends it offers are 30-40% behind those offered by peer institutions, undermining its ability to recruit top students and decelerating students' progress to degree. University-wide initiatives have recently been undertaken that partially address the problem, but they are not enough to bring stipends in the Department up to a level that will make them competitive with top departments. The Department's dependence on teaching assistantships to fund graduate students adds to the Department's competitive disadvantage, since many top sociology departments provide funding packages that combine fellowship support with teaching and research assistantships.

There is also a collective sense among the graduate students with whom we spoke that the Department is less inclusive than it should be, and that this negatively affects graduate student recruitment and retention. Students were quick to emphasize that the environment is not hostile; instead it is just less inclusive than it could – or should – be. They mentioned that although the Department has a diversity committee, it seems to be moribund.

Finally, graduate students voiced concerns about what they took as the Department's lack of attention to post-PhD placement and faculty's overall disinterest in non-tenure-track and non-academic careers. It should be noted that the Department's placement record has improved noticeably since the last review, when it was reported that no placements had occurred in a top-20 department over the prior decade. In the ten years since the 2004 review, 3 PhD students have been placed in a top-20 department (measured by U.S. News and World Report rankings),

and one of these was placed in a top-10 department. This success is a notable achievement. Yet, the Department might do even better if it invested in creating a placement committee to track both opportunities and the trajectories of recent graduates. Such a committee could also address the issue of students who seek non-academic jobs. Some of the students said they felt uncomfortable even telling faculty that they might aspire to jobs outside of the academy, for fear of losing faculty support, although they also noted that younger faculty are generally more supportive of alternative career trajectories.

Recommendations for Graduate Program:

- The Department should address graduate student concerns about the perceived over-emphasis on technical skills and concomitant de-emphasis of sociological theory in its graduate program reform. Potentially, this can be addressed by simply revising the first-year theory course, or it might alternatively require more profound rethinking. Either way, the necessity for graduate students to gain familiarity with the discipline's major theorists should be taken seriously, as such familiarity binds the practitioners of the discipline together and is one key to publishing in the discipline's top journals. .
- The Department should work closely with the University Development Office to develop a fund-raising plan to raise fellowship support for graduate students.
- The Department should do more to support graduate students in their search for academic and non-academic positions. A first step would be to appoint a faculty member to be a placement chair each year. The person in this position should focus attention on the job market for both academic and non-academic positions.

Undergraduate Education

The Department of Sociology has admitted an average of approximately 415 new majors and graduated approximately 300-325 undergraduates each year over the past decade. The undergraduate program calls for the completion of 50 credits. Beyond three required courses (one each on theory, methods, and statistics), the major appears to be relatively open, requiring a cumulative GPA of 2.5 in UW sociology and statistics courses, and a minimum grade of 2.0 in any course used to meet requirements of the major.

Strengths: Four strengths of the undergraduate program emerged clearly in our review. First, the department took steps to simplify and streamline undergraduate pathways in the wake of concerns raised in the 2004-5 review. Faculty agreed that a reduction in the number of core or required courses and streamlined pathways to degree had resulted in a significant enhancement of the student experience. The undergraduates to whom we spoke did not mention having difficulty with a high number of required courses or moving through the program in a timely way. Although they thought the changes made in the program were positive, some faculty also noted that it was now harder to sequence courses so that students would systematically acquire the background and skills needed for more advanced courses.

The honors program is a second strength of the department. The students we spoke to were uniformly enthusiastic about their experience and opportunities. The overall honors program within the department is small (averaging about 11 per cohort), but appears to attract excellent students. We believe that the honors program could be expanded to attract even more strong students and to give the honors program a more prominent role within the major. The fact

that its internal honors program is so successful might suggest opportunities for the department to work with the university honors program (e.g., advertising to its students, offering courses).

The department has a long history of popular and influential service courses. These include courses on social problems, the sociology of sport, sexuality, deviance, and social change as well as a broad introductory course. Almost 38,000 students have enrolled in these courses over the past decade and several of the courses have become deeply embedded in undergraduate culture. Ensuring that these courses remain current and relevant for the undergraduate community should be a priority for the department, as too should be efforts to expand popular service offerings. We were pleased to learn that faculty members are very actively discussing ways to reposition and retitle courses so as to appeal to the current undergraduate community as well as trends within the College.

The Sociology Practicum is another of the department's successes. This program has enrolled approximately 1400 students since its inception in 2003. The program offers three practicums each year: a tutoring program in the local public schools, a research practicum in which small groups of students work on an actual research project for a local organization, and an internship program that places students in various civic and governmental organizations. Each practicum enrolls approximately 120 students per year. Students, local community leaders, and faculty have all responded very positively to this program. It not only gives students work experience and leads for employment, but links the academic interests of the department to the needs of the community. We were pleased to learn that the department is working to extend and sustain the program by institutionalizing partnerships with community organizations. Internships and practicums in the community are often a lower priority for departments, so it was refreshing to see the department place them in the center of its activities.

Concerns: Several areas of concern cloud our otherwise positive assessment of the undergraduate program. Chief among these is the decline in enrollments and majors. Over the past three years, enrollments have declined by approximately 20% and the number of majors has declined by roughly 15%. Some of this may reflect recent trends in sociology nationally and in the social sciences more generally, but given changes in University budget models and greater competition for majors, we believe that the department is not doing enough to sustain and build enrollment. Indeed, we heard little about this issue in our discussions with faculty, even though undergraduates told us that there was too little information made available about course and career options in sociology. It was unclear how much effort the department makes to market itself to potential majors. Although such efforts might seem unseemly to some faculty, changes in university budgeting and culture point to advantages for departments that take a more proactive approach to attracting students.

Several of the faculty believed that efforts to attract students were being hampered by a shortage of larger classrooms and a shortage of TAs. These constraints are common to many units at the UW, of course, but are of particular concern in departments that have large service courses. As real as these concerns are, we also heard from undergraduates that potential majors were “turned off” by the reliance on large classes – even in upper division courses.

Although the shortage of larger classrooms and TA support represent significant challenges, so, too, does the lack of systematic curriculum planning. Faculty told us that curriculum planning was fragmented, often done in small groups or individually with the Chair. This ad hoc approach puts the department at a disadvantage in the pursuit of classrooms, but also results in confusion and delay for students. This could be addressed by involving larger groups

of faculty in the planning process. Greater involvement could also facilitate needed discussions of coverage and equity in teaching loads among faculty.

Finally, the students with whom we spoke wanted more exposure to ongoing research by faculty and graduate students. They wanted to be invited to colloquia and other faculty research presentations. They were hungry for more opportunities to work on research projects with faculty and graduate students. Admittedly, most of the students we spoke to were honors students, but their desire to see the excitement of the department's research brought to more undergraduates is a good one.

Recommendations for Undergraduate Program:

- Make promoting the major to undergraduates a priority. Involve undergraduate students and alumni in promotional activities.
- Explore opportunities to promote, expand, and institutionalize the practicum program.
- Involve more people in curricular planning; make it more of a faculty-wide activity.
- Enhance the undergraduate experience by making sure that a greater number of small classes are available in both the lower and upper divisions. (Students told us that potential majors were turned off by the lack of small classes).
- Enhance the undergraduate experience by inviting undergraduates to research colloquia, creating mechanisms for them to participate in research with graduate students and faculty.
- Increase understanding of undergraduates' needs and opportunities by tracking what happens to them after they leave and by involving alumni in a greater range of activities with current undergraduates.
- Create events that enhance identification with the department among majors and alumni.

Department Culture & Governance

Strengths: The Sociology Department has been on a very positive trajectory since the last review. Several key issues have been resolved, and there is a widely shared sense that the department is a better place to be than it was in 2004: it is more collegial; it is a good place to do research; it has a vibrant undergraduate program; it has more connections to the broader campus; and several new interesting research areas and collaborations are developing within the department.

Key factors that have improved the departmental climate are: (1) the emergence of dynamic new leadership at the associate professor level; (2) excitement over the research trajectories of a new cohort of assistant and newly associate professors; and (3) increased transparency in departmental governance (largely the work of the current chair) which has helped decrease tensions and put faculty more at ease. Problems with other units (i.e., CSDE) noted in the previous review have been fully resolved; these relationships are now a source of strength for the department overall.

Concerns: These positive developments notwithstanding, some troublesome new issues have emerged, while a couple of longstanding issues remain unaddressed. Key issues that the Department should address include: the effects of Target-of-Opportunity hiring, a perceived inequity in teaching loads, the absence of a shared intellectual culture, and the issue of diversity in hiring and department culture.

Target of Opportunity Hiring: The sheer number of Target-of-Opportunity (TO) versus department-directed hires since 2007 is clearly having a corrosive effect on the culture of the department. Every faculty member we spoke to mentioned this as an issue, although a small minority noted that they were not personally troubled by it. As most faculty and graduate students pointed out, the imbalance between TO and department-directed hiring affects not only the direction of the undergraduate and graduate programs, but the culture of the department overall. There is a sense that TO hiring has given some faculty members disproportionate influence in shaping the department. Although the department has established a clear procedure for addressing TO proposals, the majority of TO proposals are quickly brought to the full department for consideration. There is some concern that this process is not working well and should be revisited.

Inequity in Teaching Loads: Several faculty voiced concern over what they perceived as inequity in teaching loads. While the Committee was not in a position to assess this claim independently, we do note that there are no clear expectations for teaching loads, and assignment/modification of teaching responsibilities is handled by the Chair and is not transparent. Perceived and/or actual inequity in teaching loads is of even greater concern in the era of Activity Based Budgeting, since those carrying larger teaching loads potentially help bring more resources into the department and vice versa.

Absence of Shared Intellectual Culture: Both faculty and graduate students noted the lack of a shared department culture/intellectual community. While the balkanized “shop culture” noted in previous review has largely broken down, it is not clear what, if anything, is replacing it. While there are collaborations occurring among particular faculty members, there was a strong sense that the department lacks any shared intellectual culture. Most individuals felt that the

department would be a more vibrant place if faculty as a whole came together periodically to discuss research. This is particularly true in periods where no searches are being conducted-- because faculty searches indirectly serve the purpose of bringing the whole department together to discuss research and developments in the broader field.

Related to this concern is the sense that the department lacks a strong, coherent identity and any shared sense of intellectual direction. As noted above, the department has not tried to craft a strategic hiring plan, largely out of the concern that such a discussion will be divisive and will yield few benefits in a period of limited resources. At the same time, the failure to have these discussions has left the sense that the department has no direction and is gaining/replacing positions only by fiat.

Diversity Issues: Some concerns over the department's commitment to diversity, as well as its handling of diversity-related issues, were expressed at all levels of students and faculty. Although these concerns were not so strongly or uniformly voiced as the concerns over TO hiring, these two issues are intertwined. In particular, several faculty pointed out that TO hires, in their more recent incarnations, may work as a kind of "old boys' network" and thus may work against the goal of maintaining and increasing diversity among the faculty. Out of the most recent 7 TO hires (since 2008), four have been men and one has been from a minority group. While TO hires have not negatively affected the gender balance of the department, they have been significantly less ethno-racially diverse than what is desirable.

Numerically, the faculty proportion of women and minority faculty are similar to those in comparable social science units at UW (roughly 1:2 and 1:5, respectively).¹ However, the number of women in the department may give a misleading impression, since sociology—like

¹ This comparison is based on a review of the University of Washington's *2013 Workforce Analysis*, available at: <http://ap.washington.edu/cms/wp-content/uploads/Workforce-Profile-Academic-Personnel.pdf>.

most departments—has far fewer women at the full professor rank: four. (This excludes Judy Howard, the current Divisional Dean.) Moreover, one of these senior women is leaving. And of the three remaining full professors who are women, only one has a full-time appointment in Sociology and maintains her office in the building. The sense that women are not fully integrated into the department at the upper levels is heightened by the fact that the Department has lost key people in sex/gender studies (a strong research area for the department in recent years) and it is currently unclear whether this area will emerge as a priority for hiring.

Among the other concerns voiced were: that teaching and administrative burdens may fall more heavily on women; that paths-to-promotion may be gendered to some extent; and that occasionally disrespectful and inappropriate comments have been made by male faculty members at meetings and not fully addressed. Undergraduate students also noted that they had, on occasion, felt “tokenized” in class. Although the committee was not in a position to fully assess their depth, these are serious concerns. More broadly, we realize that these types of concerns are hardly unique to Sociology on this campus. However, diversity issues must be addressed at the department as well as at higher levels. Good leadership and clear procedures are crucial. Although the Department has a “diversity committee” on paper, several faculty members reported that it was inactive.

Recommendations regarding Department Culture and Governance:

- Review Target-of-Opportunity (TO) hiring procedures. Although TO hiring is unlikely to go away completely, the Department should review its procedures and priorities for TO hiring, and develop criteria to assess how well particular TO hires do or do not fit into a larger strategic hiring plan. (See Recommendation #1 in “Faculty” section.)

- The Department should consider the development of a colloquium series or similar vehicle to develop a shared sense of intellectual culture among both faculty and graduate students along with ways to encourage consistent faculty participation.
- The Chair, in consultation with the Graduate and Undergraduate Program Coordinators, should set clear expectations for teaching loads and the staffing of core courses. Faculty-student ratios will vary from year-to-year for a given faculty member for good reason, but there should be an expectation that over 2-3 years each faculty member will, on average, shoulder their fair burden of teaching.
- Clarify expectations for promotion, especially for promotion from associate to full professor.
- Critically examine the career trajectories of women within the department over the last several years, with the goal of developing a plan to encourage the promotion of female faculty in a timely manner and to retain female faculty at the senior level.
- Prioritize ethnoracial and gender diversity across ranks in any strategic hiring plan.
- The Chair, in consultation with the Executive Committee, should develop a plan/procedure for addressing specific concerns over climate voiced by faculty and students. One possibility would be to reconstitute and re-energize the Diversity Committee, perhaps seeking input from other departments.
- Address diversity issues in pedagogy through workshops and/or peer teaching reviews.