

**Report of the Academic Program Review (APR) Team
Department of Sociology, University of New Mexico**

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The APR review team visited the University of New Mexico on April 10-12, 2016. In preparation for our visit, we reviewed the Department of Sociology's Self-Study; the University of New Mexico document titled *Academic Program Review Policies, Principles, and Procedures*; and the Review Team Worksheet. During our campus visit, we met with representatives from the Office of the Provost, the department's Undergraduate Committee and lecturers, the Department Chair, department faculty by rank and by research area, and the Sociology Graduate Students Association. Each meeting provided new insights into the opportunities and challenges faced by the department. We greatly appreciate the care with which our visit was organized and the hospitable and welcoming campus environment.

We organize our report into three sections. In section one we provide a broad holistic assessment of the department, with specific recommendations for the administration and for how the department might adapt to the system-wide constraints under which it is presently forced to operate. Using the APR Review Team Worksheet as our guide, we use Section II to offer a detailed narrative assessment of how the department measures up on each of the criteria included in the worksheet and to expand on the justification for our recommendations. Section III consists of the completed worksheet.

SECTION I. OVERALL ASSESSMENT

In our meeting with Dean Mark Peceny, we were struck by his characterization of the University of New Mexico (UNM)'s mission as one of "educating the emerging majority." He went on to explain that UNM is the nation's only public flagship university with a majority-minority undergraduate student body. Given this distinction, it would be hard to imagine a UNM department better suited or more indispensable to this mission than sociology. The discipline's central concern with issues of race and inequality and the department's specific strengths in health and health disparities, global/transnational sociology, criminology, and race and ethnicity, position it perfectly to serve the unique needs of the state's undergraduate and graduate student populations.

This is especially true given the remarkable transformation the department has undergone since its last review in 2006. At the time the department was a collection of aging faculty, primarily oriented to undergraduate teaching. Today it is a dynamic aggregation of younger faculty who share a clear and abiding commitment to cutting-edge research, to high-quality undergraduate teaching informed by their scholarship, and to further strengthening an already much improved graduate program. In sharp contrast to 2006, virtually all of the current faculty members boast scholarly records that would make them attractive to more highly ranked sociology departments

around the country. This should be simultaneously a source of great pride and considerable concern.

The university and the College of Arts and Sciences should be commended for investing so wisely and successfully in the department. Given the steady stream of retirements since the last review, it is hard to conceive of where the department would be without the remarkable string of hires made over the past five-to-six years. The college deserves credit for the foresight and judgment shown in authorizing and providing the resources to support these hires. In touting the great strides Sociology has made, however, it is important to note that while teaching more credit hours and producing far more—and much higher quality—research than the department of a decade ago, the unit remains essentially unchanged in size because of retirements. This means that today's department is doing much more with essentially the same faculty and fiscal resources that it had in 2006.

Notwithstanding the department's notable success, we regard it now to be in a very fragile state, and therefore at a pivotal moment in its development. The fragility owes to three factors. The first has to do with the extraordinary expenditures of time and energy that have gone into the dramatic transformation and improvement of the department. Relative to their counterparts in sociology at other comparable flagship state schools, the UNM faculty have been asked to perform "beyond rank" for a good many years in the service of the rebuilding project. This has left the young full professors and most of the associate professors feeling "burned out." The department's laudable commitment to protect its large and impressive group of junior faculty from the burden of undue service has only compounded the problem. The volatile combination of exhaustion and frustration at the severe resource constraints under which they labor makes the senior faculty especially vulnerable to overtures from other institutions.

This brings us to the second, and much more positive, source of department fragility. Virtually all faculty at all three ranks have compiled the kind of records that would make them competitive for positions in higher ranked departments. To this point, their commitment to the rebuilding process and to each other has served to discourage exit. But we worry that recent cuts and the looming threat of even more severe constraints in the future may begin to erode these commitments. Given the overall high quality of the faculty, the worry is that should one leave, a cascade of departures would follow, decimating the department and forcing a strapped university to rebuild once again, and at even greater cost. For the sake of the department and the university, we support any steps that can be taken to protect the significant investment that has been made in the department.

In the final analysis, then, the third and most important source of fragility is the lack of resources. Our visit left us with a clear and sympathetic understanding of the severity of the current budget crisis. Indeed, we spent most of our time with the Dean, the Provost and Associate Provost getting educated on the causes, nature and likely temporal extent of the crisis. We did so to ensure that in evaluating the department and offering recommendations for the future, our suggestions would be informed by a realistic sense of what might be possible. With that in mind, we make three recommendations to the Provost and Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences.

1. We urge the Provost and Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences to approve the faculty hire in the area of race and ethnicity for next year. This hire has already been delayed two years, and given the university's unique mission and the demand for courses and research training in this area, the need for faculty could not be clearer or more pressing. With only two members of the department specializing in race and ethnicity (Gonzales, Lopez), Sociology is unable to meet the demand for courses and training in this vital area of the discipline. The problem is especially acute at the graduate level, where nearly half of all graduate students list this as their primary area of specialization. The three retirements that took place this year in Sociology make the need for at least one replacement hire all the more urgent. Given the current state of departmental exhaustion, the thought of asking an already strapped faculty to make do with three fewer colleagues next year and no relief in sight is deeply concerning. On the other hand, a crucial hire at this pivotal moment in the department's development could well be the substantive and symbolic outcome that solidifies the unit and renders it less vulnerable to unraveling.

By prioritizing the race/ethnicity hire, we do not intend to suggest that the other hires the department proposed are unworthy of support. Indeed, we do not see how the department can sustain its current levels of undergraduate instruction, graduate training, and research productivity without several new hires. However, because it seems very unlikely that the department will receive all of the hiring authorizations it has requested in the near future, we consider other steps the department can take to relieve its overburdened faculty in the short term (see below).

2. We ask that the administration take whatever modest steps it can to begin to redress the glaring inequities in GA/TA funding and the operations budget that characterize Sociology relative to other departments in Arts and Sciences. Whether measured against the number of tenure-track faculty, student credit hours, majors, or tuition dollars, the department's operating budget ranks at or near the bottom. Although different metrics might yield a different ranking, it is difficult to imagine more relevant metrics from a budgeting perspective. We understand that the new performance-based budget formula will be introduced in 2017-18, but that it will treat the current resource distribution as a baseline. If that is true, departments such as Sociology that already contribute high undergraduate enrollments will not benefit as much as they should from the new budgeting system. Some reallocation in 2016-17 seems justified. Even minimal relief would send a powerful signal, to a department that has done everything right in the recent past, that the administration recognizes its plight and values the center of excellence it has created.
3. Finally, we close with one very specific and modest resource request. Relative to the few recommendations we have directed to the administration, we have many more to make of the department. Most of them will involve difficult choices borne of the fiscal constraints they are likely to confront for the foreseeable future. To help them make these difficult choices, we are recommending that they kick off the next academic year with a one-day faculty retreat dedicated to the issues and suggestions raised in this report. Rather than ask Sociology to pay for the retreat out of its already strained budget, we ask that the administration cover the cost of the event.

We turn our attention now to the department. We begin by underscoring the sobering message embedded in the previous paragraph. Even trusting that the administration will act positively on our recommendations, the stark reality of the current fiscal and political situation should be all too clear. Nor is there any reason to think that a significant positive change in the situation is on the horizon. Given this assessment, the key question becomes: What can the department do to consolidate the impressive gains of the recent past and to continue its efforts to deliver an efficient, high-quality undergraduate curriculum, improve the overall quality of the graduate program, and promote the intellectual and professional development of its impressive faculty?

Our specific recommendations aim to (1) increase flexibility in faculty teaching loads so that, under certain conditions, faculty can devote more attention to their research, and (2) increase the quality of graduate student cohorts and the training they receive. In addition to financial resources such as salaries and travel funds, faculty also value time to do their research and capable graduate students who can provide assistance. In a constrained budgetary context that is largely outside of the department's (and even the institution's) control, the institution should take full advantage of the resources it *can* control, including teaching releases and graduate student support, to retain its strongest faculty.

We believe that most of our recommendations can be implemented without new financial resources *if* the college and campus are willing to support the Sociology Department's efforts to offer a more efficient undergraduate curriculum. This will require that the college and campus allow the department to redirect graduate support from independent instruction to discussion section assistance, reduce the number of sections taught by graduate students, and increase flexibility in faculty teaching loads. Without support from the campus and college, the department cannot act on our next set of recommendations, which follow:

1. Revise the undergraduate sociology major to meet instructional demand more efficiently. Our recommendations follow from the impressive reorganization of the criminology major that the department has undertaken and the significant curricular efficiencies it has achieved. We believe the department can go even farther in this regard *without* in any way compromising the quality of graduate or undergraduate instruction and *without* significant reduction in student credit hours. If the department is able to develop a feasible plan, we encourage the college to allow some or all of the efficiency measures listed below *and* to use the resulting savings to create an "FTE pool" of course releases that could be used to selectively reduce the teaching load of departmental faculty.

While we leave to the department how best to approach this task and decisions over which curricular revisions would have greatest impact, the following list of options occurred to us over the course of our two-day visit:

- a. Create a Sociology Reorganization Committee to revise the sociology undergraduate curriculum along the lines achieved by the criminology faculty. We recognize that the sociology curriculum is more diffuse and that the path to efficient curricular offerings is less clear. To tackle this complicated problem, we recommend that the department appoint a Sociology

Reorganization Committee. Its goal would be to create a more efficient undergraduate major that increases student contact with tenure-track faculty while also reducing the number of course sections. Because this committee would ask even more of an already overburdened faculty, we recommend that the college offer compensation to its members (e.g., \$1,000 in travel funds).

- b. Develop one very large section of Sociology 101 with discussion sections led by graduate assistants (GAs). Depending on room availability, we recommend that enrollment be somewhere in the range of 250 to 500 students. (The 2006 APR team first made this recommendation, and we reiterate it here.) Besides freeing up considerable FTE, offering such a course would allow graduate students to ease into teaching by first running the discussion sections. To do this, we suggest that the department identify at least two faculty (tenure-track or lecturers) with excellent teaching records who are prepared to alternate in teaching the large course sections, and that faculty who teach the course be given a one-course teaching-load reduction.
- c. Reduce offerings of non-core sociology courses. One of the recommendations of the previous review team was that the department should increase the “variety and innovation” in its undergraduate curriculum by narrowly-defined topical courses that would be “of interest to the current generation of students.” Given how strapped and resource-constrained the department is currently, we agree with the department that these courses are a luxury that it cannot afford. We recommend that the department keep these courses “on the books,” but suspend offering them until such time as the faculty size and department resources allow them to be offered without compromising the integrity of the core curriculum. We recognize the problems with reducing the number of small upper-level courses (articulated effectively in the department’s self-study), but see no reasonable alternative in the current budgetary context.
- d. Reassign some or all of the two lecturers’ classes to main campus. Given the relatively low enrollments for the courses they are teaching at West Campus, the lecturers are not being utilized efficiently. Add to that the fact that most of the students taking their courses are actually from the main campus, and the present arrangement makes even less sense. Moving more of their teaching to the main campus would allow the department to serve more students at lower cost and save significant FTE in the process.

We learned that some faculty are concerned about integrating the lecturers more fully into the main campus curriculum. As assurance, we note that the two lecturers appear quite dedicated to undergraduate instruction and express no interest in pursuing tenure-track positions. Integrating the lecturers into the main campus would reduce the need to hire adjuncts and help stabilize undergraduate offerings.

- e. Review faculty course assignments with an eye toward equalizing workload across faculty. Although faculty expressed high levels of satisfaction with the department, a few faculty commented on inequities in course assignments. We encourage the department to address this issue in the context of discussions about the undergraduate curriculum. To achieve curricular efficiencies, it may be necessary for all faculty to teach some large courses.
- f. Allow faculty to teach eight-week (or, perhaps, online courses) when those assignments would facilitate research progress. While we caution against making too much use of these options, deploying them selectively would give the department another way to free up faculty time.

If the college and campus are willing to support the department in offering more course releases, the department might use these releases and other flexibility in course scheduling for the following purposes, among others: a) to provide “administrative leave” following exceptional departmental service; b) to allow faculty to prepare proposals for external funding that would benefit the department as a whole (e.g. submission of a large graduate training grant in medical sociology); c) to reward instructors who develop and staff high-enrollment undergraduate courses (e.g., Soc101, Soc206); and d) to support intellectual/professional development at a critical juncture in a faculty member’s career (e.g., the final stages of preparing a book manuscript).

If the department chooses to consider any of these options, we encourage the department Executive Committee, or an ad hoc committee appointed for this purpose, to develop clear and transparent criteria for allocating course releases.

2. Revise graduate student support to reduce the graduate student teaching burden while also increasing multi-year support packages.
 - a. While we have emphasized the use of the proposed FTE pool to reduce faculty teaching, we also hope that the department would use some of the FTE “degrees of freedom” to realize further reductions in the burden that graduate students continue to bear in regard to undergraduate instruction. We applaud the efforts that the department has made in this regard since the last review, but in our meeting with graduate students we learned of rare cases in which students are still teaching two sections of a course or even two courses a semester. We strongly encourage the department to end this practice and to use some of the FTE savings to do so.
 - b. We recognize that the department has begun to make use of multi-year graduate packages in its efforts to improve the quality of its graduate admits. We encourage the campus and college to allow the department more flexibility in how it allocates graduate support so that it can increase and systematize these efforts.
3. Create a Director of Graduate Admissions position. Other than Department Chair, the single most onerous service assignment in Sociology is clearly that of Graduate Director.

Ideally, that position would be held by a full professor, but with so few in the department, it is almost certain that for the foreseeable future the burden of the position will fall on an associate professor. To make the burden a bit more manageable, we encourage the department to create the position of Director of Graduate Admissions (DGA). While the Graduate Director would still be responsible for overall direction of the graduate admissions process, responsibility for the demanding day-to-day coordination of the process would fall to the DGA.

4. Hold a department retreat. Deciding how to create, manage, and allocate the proposed FTE pool is going to require a great deal of creative thought on the part of the department community. Rather than try to do this in the constrained context of regular faculty meetings, we encourage the department to kick off the 2016-17 academic year with a retreat dedicated to this purpose.

In sum, we encourage the department and college to work together to reduce faculty burden and increase graduate student support, within the context of resource constraints. Modest short-term investments would go a long way toward preserving the investment the college has already made in the department. If the new budgeting model can be adjusted to reward departments that already generate high levels of undergraduate student credit hours, the department should receive increased resources in future years. If the new budgeting model does not divert resources to the department, we urge the college to take steps to reallocate resources now so that the department can continue its extensive service to the institution.

SECTION II. REVIEW CRITERION

In this section, we present comments that address the specific review criteria provided by the Office of the Provost. Some of our comments repeat material presented in our overall assessment. We include them here, nonetheless, as justification for our review criteria ratings.

Program Goals

The goals and educational objectives of the Sociology Department are clearly stated and consistent with the mission of the University of New Mexico (UNM), the mission of the discipline of sociology, and the needs of constituents. In particular, we note that the Sociology Department serves the mission of the university in two key ways:

- 1) As a department whose excellence is increasingly recognized in the discipline, the unit supports UNM's goal of "foster[ing] programs of international prominence that will place UNM among America's most distinguished public research universities";
- 2) As a department that serves a diverse student population via its curriculum, its faculty, and the popularity of its undergraduate major programs, the Sociology Department furthers the university's vision to become the flagship institution that serves the "emerging majority": a diverse, minority-dominant population in the state that also reflects the future course of the nation.

Teaching and Learning: Curriculum

The Sociology Department provides strong curricular, extracurricular, and professionalization opportunities to its undergraduate and graduate majors. We were impressed by the faculty's dedication to undergraduate education despite their high research profiles. Faculty members within the various specializations meet to plan courses. They have made it a priority to offer required courses regularly and use a range of delivery modes, including classroom, online, and community engagement. Most courses are lecture-based, owing to Sociology's large class sizes, but faculty recognize the importance of offering lower-enrollment, upper-level courses for majors whenever possible. At the current faculty size, however, it has become very difficult for the department to do so.

Although the Sociology Department has long been committed to undergraduate education, it has made additional curricular changes since the last review that have increased undergraduate access to its stellar research faculty. Most notable among these changes is the revision of the criminology major and the restructuring of the undergraduate statistics sequence. With respect to the criminology major, the faculty streamlined the course requirements and moved more tenure-track faculty into the core courses. They were able to do so only because faculty at all ranks were willing to take on more core undergraduate teaching. We suspect that revising the sociology major will require a comparable commitment from non-criminology faculty. With respect to the statistics sequence, the department changed what was a two-sequence course—the first focused on mathematical formulations, the second focused on applications—into a single-semester course, typically taught by tenure-track faculty, that emphasizes practical applications. This change allows students to take full advantage of advances in statistical computing while also increasing their access to research-active faculty.

The overall success of the department's undergraduate instruction is evident in student evaluations. Students report that their undergraduate training in the department improved their critical thinking and quantitative reasoning skills. These generalizable skills will prove valuable to students regardless of their eventual career path. The two areas in which students expressed some dissatisfaction were "access to faculty" and "opportunities for useful non-classroom experiences." The department's efforts to move more tenure-track faculty into undergraduate courses should help with the former. It has already begun to address the latter by increasing the size of its internship program (see below).

Teaching and Learning: Continuous Improvement

Department faculty members have engaged seriously and effectively with the mandatory assessment of student learning outcomes (SLOs). They have identified clear and appropriate SLOs for each undergraduate and graduate degree program. They engage in regular assessment of each SLO on a three-year schedule. Following best practices, their assessments incorporate both direct (e.g., exam question) and indirect (e.g., student perceptions of learning) measures.

The department's commitment to assessment is evident in several of its practices. It has an assigned Assessments Coordinator—a tenure-track faculty member who oversees the collection, analysis, and interpretation of assessment data. The Assessments Coordinator reviews the data

with faculty teams who make recommendations to the full faculty for changes to future assessment procedures, curriculum, and pedagogy. The Assessments Coordinator also works with individual faculty to address concerns raised by the assessments. The department has done all of this while maintaining a collegial and respectful atmosphere by treating assessments as opportunities for improvement rather than discipline.

The assessment process was integral to recent changes to the criminology undergraduate major. In our meeting with the Undergraduate Committee, we learned that the decisions to streamline the criminology major and to increase the number of sections taught by tenure-track faculty were the direct result of prior assessments (i.e., evidence of poorer learning outcomes in sections taught by non-tenure-track instructors). We anticipate that the department will look to assessment results again if and when it revises the sociology major.

Students

The department provides good support to its undergraduate students given the high ratio of majors to faculty. The College of Arts and Sciences assigns two professional advisors to the department, which gives undergraduate students the opportunity to meet regularly with an advisor. The department also engages with a variety of campus resources for undergraduate students, including the McNair and Research Opportunity Program and the Center for Academic Programs Support.

There is undoubtedly more that the department could do, but not without additional staff resources. Given the number of undergraduate majors it supports, the department cannot make its career-oriented internship program available to all students who might benefit (although it is doubling the size of the program), or track job placements for these students.

At the graduate level, the department culture and practices have shifted dramatically since the previous program review. Department faculty members make extensive efforts to engage with graduate students—especially remarkable in light of the faculty’s heavy undergraduate teaching loads. Faculty members follow an “open door” policy in which students are welcome to speak with any faculty member, regardless of formal advisory status or research area. Research area groups meet once each month in colloquium format to share faculty and student research and thereby provide research and professionalization training. Many faculty members publish with graduate students, giving their students additional research training and professional credentials that will be valued on the job market. To ensure that all graduate student instructors receive adequate training before teaching independently, the department established a course in pedagogy for graduate students. The department has also made an effort to reduce student teaching loads so as to better align available instructional resources with graduate student need. The success of these efforts can be seen in the job placements of several recent program graduates in tenure-track positions at research-oriented institutions. We view this as a strong indication of marked improvement in the graduate program.

Despite the many positive features of graduate training, we note several areas of concern:

Graduate student financial support remains far below standard for research-oriented programs, both in terms of the level of the stipends and the number of years of guaranteed support. The department has reduced cohort sizes so that it can offer multi-year funding packages to some of its students, but it cannot extend strong, multi-year offers to all students given current resources. There also appears to be significant variation in the number of hours students work each week relative to their formal contracts. (Some students on 20-hour contracts reported working 20-30 hours per week; others reported working 7-10 hours per week.) Because of the way funding is allocated to graduate programs, students often do not know what funding they will receive until very close to the beginning of the semester, which adds to their financial challenges. The Council of Graduate Schools identifies stable funding as a primary determinant of graduate student success (Council of Graduate Schools, 2010). Without more stable and consistent support, it will be difficult for the department to increase the quality of its incoming cohorts, bolster student retention, and further improve its student placements.

Given the likelihood that the department will not receive new resources to support its graduate students, it may have to consider reducing the size of its cohorts even further so that it can provide consistent funding packages. While very small cohorts would not necessarily hurt the program (there are strong sociology graduate programs that maintain small cohorts), they will make it difficult for the department to offer a full array of graduate courses. The department may have to consider rotating its more focused graduate seminars so that only some areas are covered each year, if it is not viable to allow small graduate seminars to run.

Although the faculty are very dedicated to graduate mentoring and students spoke positively about the department's efforts to improve graduate student mentorship, students characterized advising as somewhat "hit or miss." Of particular concern is advising for students with interests in race and ethnicity. Over the past 10 years, 17 (of 38) students have taken their qualifying examinations in race and ethnicity. Although several faculty members have interests in that area, only two identify race and ethnicity as their primary area of interest. The few faculty members who specialize in this area are overburdened with graduate students and, despite herculean efforts, unable to adequately support those students. Indeed, in our meeting with members of the Graduate Student Association the single most important concern they raised was the urgent need for a faculty hire in race and ethnicity. While not all students of color have interests in race and ethnicity, many do; the institution must help the department provide adequate intellectual support for those students.

Although we do not wish to belabor the point, having high-quality graduate students is central to the department's success in all areas. Strong students help to recruit good faculty. Strong graduate students enhance both the undergraduate education and the research portfolio of the department. The limited graduate support UNM provides imperils the recruitment and retention of excellent faculty.

Faculty

We were deeply impressed by the research quality and productivity of the Sociology Department faculty. Faculty members regularly publish in top sociological and criminological journals, and their books appear with top presses. They have received significant grant support and, with more

time to work on proposals, could receive even more. Given their research records, most faculty members are either highly “mobile” now or likely to become so in a short time. Also impressive is the reorganization of the department into five main research and teaching specializations: 1) crime, law and social control; 2) sociology of health and medicine; 3) global/transnational sociology (GTS) with focus on Latin America; 4) social movements; and 5) race and ethnicity. These areas enhance the profile of the department in the discipline and enable it to concentrate investments and generate synergies within the department and across campus units.

Nonetheless, the strength across these sub-fields is uneven. Whereas sociology of health and medicine and criminology are more robust (owing to concentrated hires in those areas, some supported by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the BA/MD program), GTS is small (only two faculty members and few graduate students), due in part to recent departures and retirement of faculty in this area. We agree with the department about the need to hire in GTS and social movements to sustain these as core areas.

Yet, even as important as these hires are for maintaining the department’s national reputation in those areas, we agree that the most glaring need is a faculty hire in race and ethnicity. As noted, the graduate program cannot currently meet demand in this area. A faculty hire in race and ethnicity would also respond to needs at the undergraduate level and be consistent with the mission of the university, which serves a state population that is “majority minority.”

Currently, the faculty are both the greatest strength of the department and the area in which the department is most vulnerable. The quality of the faculty overall and of recent hires in particular is very high, as noted earlier, but the number of faculty remains disproportionately small (22) when one considers the number of undergraduate majors in sociology and criminology (894 in 2014, or 41 majors per tenure-track faculty, the second highest in the college). Upcoming retirements threaten to reduce the size of the faculty further. Although all faculty members are stretched thin, the composition of the faculty (only three full professors, majority assistant professors) places particular strain on the associate professors. To their credit, the associate professors are firm in their commitment to protect junior faculty from increased service loads, yet they are clearly feeling the greatest need for relief. Many of them are also committed to service; they are engaged in program and institution building at the university and in public sociology and activist scholarship in the community. Yet, some faculty expressed that they felt a lack of recognition for this kind of service work. Although this lack of recognition is common at research-intensive institutions, the presence of a review criterion related to adequacy of university service suggests that the University of New Mexico places higher value on service than some other institutions. If so, the university should explore ways to recognize high levels of service, such as offering administrative leaves following major service responsibilities.

Limited resources and a high teaching and service burden also mean that faculty are unable to realize their full research potential. This may be the single strongest challenge to retention of faculty. Several faculty members noted that the most important resource they seek is time to devote to research and writing.

Assistant professors acknowledged feeling protected from service by their senior colleagues, but were concerned about how this might change after promotion. In particular, they worried about

the lack of basic resources (such as computers, software, and IT support) and funding for conferences and travel once their start-up funds are exhausted. In the absence of such funds, faculty are unable to engage in continuing professional development. (We address the resource issue in more detail in the section on Resources and Planning below.)

The faculty's heavy burdens of teaching and service, combined with a lack of resources for research, professional development, and equipment, produce faculty who are wary, exhausted, and demoralized. In this climate, the potential loss of both assistant and associate professor ranks to other universities is a real concern, and underlies most of our recommendations. In the absence of new resources, the college must do all it can to reallocate resources to the program if it does not want to lose the investment it has already made.

With diminishing resources and the faculty stretched thin, another concern is the erosion of collegiality. We have been impressed by the extent to which department faculty apparently communicate with and support each other. Nonetheless, unless addressed directly, perceived inequities in teaching loads and questions about how decisions are made around resource allocations can begin to unravel this collegiality.

Resources and Planning

The Department of Sociology does a good job of planning for the use of its resources. The department holds monthly faculty meetings, and in this very democratic department, all members of the faculty have an opportunity to participate in this and all aspects of departmental governance. The department also has a very robust governance structure that provides multiple means by which the voices and opinions of department members can be heard. This governance structure includes a democratically elected Executive Committee that works with the chair in developing policies and executing decisions, including those about the deployment of resources. Additionally, the department has regular retreats that can facilitate longer conversations about issues the faculty needs to consider, including planning and resource allocation. In our meetings, faculty at all ranks commented on the department's open, collegial atmosphere—a clear indication of the effectiveness of faculty governance. The department does not currently have an external advisory board but we see no need for such a board at this time.

In the spirit of the department's collegiality, we recommend that the department take steps to ensure that resource allocation principles are transparent to all faculty. For example, although we did not hear complaints about the decisions themselves, the process by which GAs are allocated to courses seemed to be a mystery to some faculty. Faculty also seemed unsure about the conditions under which grant-related course buyouts are allowed.

These are minor concerns compared to the fundamental concern regarding resources in this department, which is that it does not have enough. This is a small department with a small faculty; it does remarkably well with what it has. By any measure the faculty is too small, the staff is too small, and the operating budget is woefully inadequate. Support for the graduate program is inadequate. And basic support for the faculty is inadequate. Recently hired faculty report that their start-up packages are good, but when those funds are exhausted they are unable to obtain or upgrade equipment that they need to do their research, and they have but \$500 per

year to travel to professional meetings. Members of the department reported giving up phones in their offices in exchange for an additional \$200 in their travel accounts. This “shifting of costs” to the faculty is not sustainable in the long run. The members of the Sociology Department cannot capitalize on their considerable talent if they do not have access to basic resources for their work and cannot attend professional meetings. As noted earlier, the resource limitations extend to graduate students as well.

We also heard some concerns about staff support. The faculty respect the staff and readily state that staff work hard and are highly competent. For a brief period in the past, the department had more staff members than it does now and administrative processes in the department worked well. Now, with fewer staff, responses to requests are sometimes slow. For example, there is not a staff person dedicated to financial matters, so tasks ranging from getting reimbursements to managing budgets take longer than they should. Faculty take on some of the responsibility for these tasks themselves, which adds to their burden.

Within the College of Arts and Sciences, resources appear to be distributed inequitably across departments, to the disadvantage of Sociology (see the tables on pages 55-56 and 150 of the Self-Study). The operating budget is woefully inadequate and much too low by any metric we observed.

With the caveat noted above, we anticipate that the department will see an infusion of new resources with the university’s move to a tuition-based budget model. Sociology is carrying a high number of majors and providing spaces for a large number of non-majors in its classes. Its extraordinary work in the undergraduate teaching mission, the improvements in its graduate placements, and its dramatic “building to excellence” warrant substantial improvements in the operating budget, GA support, staff, and faculty FTE. In the absence of new resources, however, any effort the college can make to release faculty time for research would improve morale and retention.

Facilities

There are several reasons to be concerned about the department’s facilities. When faculty members are hired they have good startup packages, which allow them to purchase the computers and software they need to do their work. Unfortunately, after those funds are expended there is insufficient support for upgrading computers and purchasing new software. To stay current in the field, whether researchers are using quantitative or qualitative techniques, faculty need new software and computing capabilities in much the same way that physicists and chemists need new lab equipment. Without these resources, faculty cannot do their research and graduate students cannot be trained in state-of-the-art methods. The new computing lab for graduate students represents a significant step forward in facilities, but the software must be updated regularly if students are to be trained at the same level as students at other research-intensive institutions. UNM faculty and students who work with existing data sets face an additional challenge: UNM does not host a secure data facility. Many of the most interesting sociological data sets require special secure-data use agreements, some of which involve storing the data in a secure data facility. (The same is true for new data in economics, political science,

and other social sciences.) Without such a facility, faculty will not be able to advance their research programs.

We also heard many complaints about the lack of IT support available to faculty. Faculty members wait for days and weeks to have both acute problems and basic maintenance requests addressed. The lack of IT support appears to hold across the entire college, jeopardizing its research mission. We urge the administration to do all it can to address this shortcoming. As a point of comparison, other research-intensive sociology departments with which we are familiar have dedicated technology staff members (ranging from 1-4 staff) *within* their departments to support the faculty, graduate students, and computer labs. Although it seems unlikely that UNM can support that staffing level, it must find a way to support IT needs more effectively.

At present, the shortcomings we have identified in facilities do not appear to be negatively affecting undergraduate teaching and learning, but as coursework becomes increasingly technology-driven and dependent, the concerns detailed above may negatively affect teaching. One important current concern for undergraduate teaching is the insufficient number of large lecture rooms at UNM. This prevents the department from maximizing its efficiency by teaching large introductory-level classes, which skilled instructors can do well in large classroom settings.

Although the department currently has sufficient office space, it was described as “bursting at the seams.” Sociology desperately needs additional faculty and if more are hired, they will need additional office space.

Program Comparisons

The Department of Sociology enjoys very strong leadership from the current chair, Professor Richard Wood, and the members of the faculty are confident that they will continue to have excellent leadership when Professor Sharon Nepstad returns to the chair later this year. The senior faculty are also doing an excellent job of cultivating leadership within the department. The department has an enviable lineup of faculty members with leadership experience who will be able to serve as chair into the future.

The campus and college showed forethought in investing in Sociology with recent hires in medical sociology and criminology. These are two of the American Sociological Association’s very substantial subareas, and the employment demand for PhD’s whose work focuses on these topics remains strong. The key challenge for UNM is to retain those strengths. That will require a willingness on the part of the college to set priorities and reallocate resources away from other units and toward Sociology.

The UNM Department of Sociology is about the size of its aspirational peers (with the notable exceptions of UT-Austin and CU-Boulder, which are larger), but with its more than 1,200 majors, its ratio of students to faculty is far outside the norm. If it functions appropriately, the upcoming change to UNM’s budgeting model will provide an excellent rationale for adding more faculty and resources to Sociology to help retain and build on the current excellent faculty.

Summary and Future Directions

The Sociology Department has built a strong collegial environment that facilitates faculty involvement in strategic planning. The department seems well aware of its strengths and weaknesses. It is keenly aware of its position in the broader discipline and relative to peer institutions and has been ready to capitalize on hiring and funding opportunities. Recent conversations about future hiring needs have provided the department with the opportunity to plan for its future in the context of strong resource constraints.

Our report highlights four main concerns with regard to future directions of the program:

- 1) The size of the faculty needs to be increased, with an immediate need for a faculty hire in the area of race and ethnicity. We recognize the severe constraints within which the university is operating, but would do a disservice to the department and the university if we did not emphasize the costs of failing to replenish the faculty ranks and advocate for whatever new investments may be possible.
- 2) The college must address the historical inequities in operating budgets of programs and units in the college and increase the department's operating budget, given the student-faculty ratio and overall student credit hours that Sociology sustains.
- 3) Given prolonged resource constraints, the department needs to focus on acquiring "degrees of freedom" for its faculty, especially for the associate professors, who are most seriously burdened. Possibilities include internal sabbaticals or service leaves after heavy periods of service and flexible scheduling of teaching. Some reorganization of teaching and added assistance from existing lecturers could help provide space for flexibility by keeping teaching demands in check.
- 4) A final area of concern is the possible erosion of collegiality as competition for scarce resources and tension over allocations of release time and teaching increase. The department should take pains to sustain the collegiality it has built by ensuring the transparency of decision-making procedures and the existence of forums for faculty involvement.

References

Council of Graduate Schools. 2010. *Ph.D. Completion and Attrition: Policies and Practices to Promote Student Success*. Washington, DC: Council of Graduate Schools.

APPENDIX F

ACADEMIC PROGRAM REVIEW TEAM WORKSHEET

This worksheet should be used as a supplement to the review team report to document any department/program shortcomings relative to the UNM Criteria for Program Review. For each criterion, please note whether the criterion is Met (M) or if a shortcoming exists. If a shortcoming is identified, please note it as Not Met (NM), or Met with Concerns (MC) (refer to manual for descriptions). For any shortcomings, please summarize the basis for your conclusion in the appropriate box. If a potential shortcoming changes in level or is resolved during the campus visit, provide an explanation for how it was resolved or changed.

Visit Dates: April 11, 12, 2016

Department/
Program: Sociology Evaluator(s): Dr. Maria L. Cook
Dr. Robert D. Crutchfield
Dr. Doug McAdam
Dr. Jane McLeod

Criterion	Assessment (M/MC/NM)	Comments
1. PROGRAM GOALS		
Published goals/educational objectives for each program (undergraduate and graduate)	M	
Consistent with mission (UNM's and unit's) and the needs of constituents	M	
Students are aware of program goals		We have no information on this criterion.
2. TEACHING AND LEARNING: CURRICULUM		
For each program, adequate coverage of program-appropriate curricular components, and consistent with the learning goals of the program/university	M	
Contributions to other units are adequately coordinated (with other units) and appropriate for the offering unit	M	Department collaborates widely with other programs on campus, including the BA/MD program. It cross-lists courses with several other units. Given the challenges of covering courses on gender at the graduate level, the department might consider allowing students to count some Women's Studies courses toward the MA or PhD, if it does not already.
Extracurricular programs/activities are sufficient and consistent with program goals/educational objectives	MC	Unable to offer robust internship program due to lack of resources.
Program delivery modes are of sufficient quality and address student needs	M	
3. TEACHING AND LEARNING: CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT		
Regular use of appropriate, documented processes for assessing and evaluating the extent to which the program educational objectives are being attained	M	
Regular use of appropriate evaluation tools for assessing teaching effectiveness	M	
Results of evaluations systematically utilized as input for the continuous improvement of programs	M	
4. STUDENTS		
Policies for accepting new and transfer students (including transfer credits) are in place and are enforced	M	

Student performance and progress are adequately monitored	MC	Although department advisors are available to meet with undergraduate students on request, there are not enough advisors to proactively address student challenges.
All students receive adequate and appropriate advisement and referral to student support services	MC	Undergraduate advising has improved due to introduction of professional advisors. At the graduate level, the quality of advising varies by area.
Student success and retention initiatives are appropriate for the unit and evaluated for effectiveness	M	
The success of graduates is tracked and assessed	NM/M	Due to its large size, the program cannot track career placements of undergraduate students. They track graduate students effectively.
5. FACULTY		
Sufficient number and competencies to cover all program and curricular areas	MC	Small faculty, high student-faculty ratio; urgent need for new faculty to cover some areas (see report).
Appropriate qualifications	M	
Adequate levels of research and creative activities	M	More than adequate in light of significant resource constraints.
Adequate levels of student-faculty interaction, student advising and counseling	MC	Some areas of graduate program have too few faculty to adequately advise students.
Adequate levels of university/professional service activities	M	Give unusually high levels of service to department, university, and profession.
Adequate levels of professional development	NM	Lack of resources to attend conferences.
6. RESOURCES AND PLANNING		
Unit engages in resource planning and allocation, possibly with use of external advisory board	M	
The unit has sufficient resources and institutional support to carry out its mission	NM	Lacks basic resources
Staff composition and deployment is adequate	MC	Staff are highly competent and valued but are inadequate to the needs of the program.
Unit solicits and receives appropriate levels of external support	MC	Faculty lack time and resources to develop large grant proposals.
7. FACILITIES		
Facilities are adequate to support student learning, along with scholarly and research activities	MC	Lack of classroom space for large classes.
Office space for faculty, staff and graduate students is appropriate	MC	No additional office space for expansion.
Adequate library services, computer infrastructure and information infrastructure	NM	Faculty lack basic IT support and software for their research. Campus lacks secure data facility.
Laboratories (if appropriate) contain modern tools and equipment, are available, accessible, and systematically maintained and upgraded		
8. PROGRAM COMPARISONS		
Institutional support and leadership sufficient to assure quality and continuity of the program	MC	Strong department leadership. Concerns about level of support at higher levels of administration.
Institutional services, financial support, and staff adequate to meet program needs	NM	See #6 and #7

Sufficient to attract and retain a well-qualified faculty and provide for their professional development	MC	The positive program climate and emerging growths in medical sociology and criminology have helped attract new faculty. Resources may be insufficient to retain faculty.
Sufficient to acquire, maintain, and operate infrastructure, facilities, and equipment	NM	See #7
Sufficient to provide an environment to attain student outcomes	MC	Insufficient support for graduate student independent research and scholarly travel
9. FUTURE DIRECTION		
Unit engages in strategic planning	M	
Unit make use of appropriate data, including peer comparisons, in strategic planning	M	
Unit is aware of its strengths and weaknesses, and prioritizes its improvement activities accordingly	M	