

Institutional Effectiveness Report
Academic year 2010-2011
Department of Sociology

Dr. Joel Thayer, Chair

Mission of the Sociology Program

The Department of Sociology offers a major, minor, and collateral in sociology. The program operates in accord with the general purpose of Francis Marion University by providing an educational program within the liberal arts tradition by presenting a balance of theoretical views and varied analytical orientations. The bachelor's degree in sociology provides students with an understanding of sociology as the scientific study of human social life. The degree focuses on applying objective and systematic methods of investigation to identify patterns of social life and to understand the processes by which these patterns are established and changed. The program enables students to learn to think critically, to communicate effectively, to appreciate individual and cultural diversity, and to develop their skills in computer applications and library research. The program also provides student with opportunities for internships in applied settings. A major in sociology provides students with a broad-based education that will prepare them for entry-level positions in business, government, and a wide variety of human service organizations. The major also prepares students to pursue further education in areas such as law, medicine, business, religion, and social services, as well as sociology.

Measurement:

- Analysis of senior survey responses regarding learning experiences, faculty performance, attributes of program
In all but one of the past several years, gathering completed survey from graduating seniors has been challenging and, at best, only modestly successful. A more organized, somewhat more intrusive approach to distribution was adopted this year, along with follow-up mailing yielding modest, but better completion rate. The current year's respondents can be considered more representative than any previously reported year except 2008-2009.
- Analysis of students' performance in research skills course--Sociology 403, which serves as the program's capstone, without being so designated formally.
- Summarize faculty productivity in research and service

Goal 1. Students will have the ability to understand and apply the core concepts and principles of sociology.

No "objective" measure. When asked how well their sociology classes have prepared them "to understand the sociological perspective and its relevance," and "to read and understand research articles in sociological journals," seniors responded with a average rating of "very well prepared." When asked how well sociology classes had prepared them "to understand different cultures," the average response also was "very well prepared." These subjective measures

Sociology I. E. Report, 2010-2011, p.2

indicate that the goal is met. However, students' ratings of understanding research articles and different cultures show no real improvement, suggesting need for faculty attention. (See Table 1.)

Goal 2. Sociology students will understand the core concepts and principles of sociological theory.

No "objective" measure. When seniors participating in the exit survey were asked how well their sociology courses have prepared them "to understand sociological theories," the average response for the current year was "very well prepared." Ratings for the past two years are the highest in the twelve year reporting period. In recent years, application of theories has been stressed. While there is room for improvement, we consider this goal to be met. (See Table 1.)

Goal 3. Students will understand and be able to apply the core methodologies of sociology.

When asked how well their sociology courses have prepared them to:

 "analyze and interpret sociological data;" and to

 "understand how sociologists collect information about the social world."

 and "to communicate effectively, both orally and written,"

seniors indicate that they view themselves as "very well prepared" in those areas. (See Table 2.) These ratings indicate that the goal is met, but with need for improvement.

Goal 4. To provide students with information about careers in sociology-related occupations and to help students develop skills for professional careers in sociology-related occupations.

Seniors were asked in the exit survey, "How well have your sociology courses prepared you to have a career? The average response was "somewhat prepared." (See Table 2.) Student comments on the exit surveys urge us to give this important matter more attention. We meet this goal, but with room for improvement. Materials have been ordered from the American Sociological Association to assist faculty in making improvements in this area.

This year, we placed 9 interns in different agencies, lower numbers than in most previous years.. The evaluations by both the students and on-site coordinators were uniformly positive. In written and telephone evaluations, on-site coordinators specifically noted the students' reliability, willingness to assume responsibility, appropriate dress and demeanor, sensitivity to boundaries, and positive contributions to the host agencies.

Goal 5. Sociology faculty will deliver quality instruction.

A. Course availability and quality

When asked about "the availability of course offerings," seniors' average rating was "very good," the highest rating in five years. This is a somewhat surprising result given the limited

Sociology I. E. Report, 2010-2011. p.3

number of elective courses offered this academic year. (See Table 3.) Students comments on the exit surveys and in conversation with faculty were more critical

When asked about “the extent to which class objectives were specified and met,” the average rating is “very good.” The ratings are the highest in several years.

Seniors average rating of the “overall quality of courses you took in sociology” was “very good,” Ratings for the past two years are higher than any but two of the previous ten years..

Seniors’ ratings of the “overall quality of instructional strategies” and the “overall fairness of grading in sociology classes” were somewhat below “very good.” Both verbal and written concerns expressed by students were focused upon one area. Steps taken to respond to those concerns should result in higher ratings by students in the future.

With noted qualifications, we consider this goal to be met.

B. Faculty Performance

As in the past, seniors evaluations of:

“faculty’s overall knowledge of the subject matter” had a average rating of excellent.

Seniors’ responses to questions about:

“faculty’s overall course conduct”

“faculty’s treatment of students in the classroom”

“each faculty member’s approachability and availability”

all yielded average ratings of “very good,”⁵ in a range from 1 to 6. (See Table 4.)

The ratings of treatment of students and approachability each dropped substantially from the previous year. As noted above, we think that appropriate responses to students’ concerns have been taken and anticipate higher future ratings.

Goal 6. Sociology faculty will emphasize an individualized approach to education through personalized attention to academic advising.

Senior exit data indicate that sociology faculty meet this goal. When asked to rate “the quality of advising you received,” the average rating was “very good.” This important goal is met.

Goal 7. Sociology faculty will be engaged in productive scholarly activity.

This has been an active and productive year for sociology faculty: Scholarly activities include:

- Articles published in peer-reviewed journals –4
- Co-editing research paper collections – 2
- Conference presentations – 1 at international conference, 1 teaching workshop at national meeting, 1 at national meeting, 5 at regional meetings, 2 at state conference, 12 on campus.

Sociology I. E. Report, 2010-2011, p.4

This work is mostly produced by two members of the department. An important objective for future years is to have broader participation by other faculty.

Goal 8. Sociology faculty will engage in professional service at department, university, and discipline levels.

- three senior members served on ten different university committees.
- one member served on the executive committee of a regional association.
- one member served as reader for a journal.
- one member served a president of the local AAUP chapter
- one member served as coordinator for the campus humanities and social sciences symposium series
- the department hosted a statewide undergraduate research symposium with much faculty and student participation

APPENDIX
ASSESSMENT OF SOCIOLOGY 403 RESEARCH PROJECTS
2002-03 TO 2010-11

	A or B	C	D or F
Number and quality of references			
2002-2003 (n = 16)	38%	38%	25%
2003-2004 (n = 19)	47%	42%	11%
2004-2005 (n = 20)	40%	30%	30%
2005-2006 (n = 20)	35%	25%	40%
2006-2007 (n = 30)	33%	57%	10%
2007-2008 (n = 26)	38%	23%	38%
2008-2009 (n = 36)	50%	42%	8%
2009-2010 (n = 27)	52%	26%	22%
2010-2011 (n = 30)	40%	57%	3%
Thoroughness of literature review¹			
2002-2003	56%	25%	19%
2003-2004	63%	32%	5%
2004-2005	50%	20%	30%
2005-2006	45%	30%	25%
2006-2007	63%	23%	13%
2007-2008	46%	27%	27%
2008-2009	53%	31%	17%
2009-2010	56%	30%	15%
2010-2011	30%	47%	7%
Sample size and design²			
2002-2003	6%	94%	0%
2003-2004	100%	0%	5%
2004-2005	95%	0%	5%
2005-2006	40%	45%	15%
2006-2007	37%	60%	3%
2007-2008	31%	65%	4%
2008-2009	47%	53%	
2009-2010	56%	44%	
2010-2011	53%	43%	3%
Questionnaire³			
2002-2003	63%	25%	13%
2003-2004	79%	21%	0%
2004-2005	85%	5%	10%
2005-2006	90%	0%	10%
2006-2007	87%	13%	0%
2007-2008	58%	38%	4%
2008-2009	86%	14%	

2009-2010	85%	11%	4%
2010-2011	87%	10%	3%

Assessment of Sociology 403 Research Project Reports, 2002-03 – 2010-11, page 2

	A or B	C	D or F
Accuracy and thoroughness of methods section ⁴			
2002-2003	38%	31%	31%
2003-2004	58%	26%	16%
2004-2005	45%	40%	15%
2005-2006	45%	25%	30%
2006-2007	30%	33%	37%
2007-2008	35%	50%	15%
2008-2009	56%	38%	6%
2009-2010	67%	30%	4%
2010-2011	50%	43%	7%

Accuracy and thoroughness of data analysis/interpretation ⁵			
2002-2003	31%	38%	31%
2003-2004	47%	32%	21%
2004-2005	40%	45%	15%
2005-2006	45%	30%	25%
2006-2007	43%	23%	33%
2007-2008	62%	19%	19%
2008-2009	61%	22%	17%
2009-2010	52%	26%	22%
2010-2011	60%	20%	20%

Index/scale construction and analysis ⁶			
2002-2003	0%		
2003-2004	26%		
2004-2005	5%	10%	
2005-2006	10%		
2006-2007	17%		
2007-2008	12%		
2008-2009	14%		
2009-2010	22%		
2010-2011	20%	7%	

Multivariate analysis ⁶			
2002-2003	0%		
2003-2004	16%		
2004-2005	10%		
2005-2006	10%	20%	
2006-2007	13%		
2007-2008	15%	4%	
2008-2009	33%	6%	
2009-2010	33%	19%	4%
2010-2011	53%	13%	

Sociology 403, Research Design and Analysis, serves as the unofficial capstone course for the sociology program. Students formulate hypotheses, support their predictions with summaries of published research, create a questionnaire, gather original data, conduct statistical analysis using SPSS to test their hypotheses. The research report is typically the longest paper of a student's undergraduate career.

1. Quality and thoroughness of discussion of hypotheses and literature review have not shown consistent improvement, even with substantial class time devoted. More detailed and instructions with examples will be attempted.
2. Class time devoted to options for innovative sampling appears to have resulted in modest improvement.
3. Questionnaire construction and formatting has become almost uniformly good, the result of several class periods and revising by students using instructor comments.
4. Improvements in the thoroughness of methods section of research reports have leveled. More class time will be devoted to this matter.
5. Improvements in accuracy and thoroughness of students' interpretations of their data analysis also have leveled. More data analysis activities in and out of class will be added. Student remain too dependent upon instructor. More attention and discussion will be devoted to reasons for data analysis decisions.
6. Index construction and analysis and also multivariate analysis (cross-tabulation and/or multiple regression) are being conducted and usually conducted well by an increasing proportion of students. More emphasis and firmer expectations will be applied to encourage more participation.

Table 1- Ratings of Learning (0=extremely unprepared; 6=extremely prepared)

Academic Year		To understand the sociological perspective and its relevance	To understand sociological theories	To read and understand research articles in sociological journals	To understand different cultures
1999-00	Mean	3.88	4.63	4.25	4.38
	N	8	8	8	8
2000-01	Mean	4.55	4.00	4.91	5.09
	N	11	11	11	11
2001-02	Mean	4.85	4.58	5.00	5.15
	N	13	12	13	13
2002-03	Mean	4.29	4.43	4.71	4.50
	N	7	7	7	6
2003-04	Mean	4.83	4.67	5.33	4.67
	N	6	6	6	6
2004-05	Mean	4.70	3.90	4.80	5.00
	N	10	10	10	10
2005-06	Mean	4.67	4.11	5.11	4.67
	N	9	9	9	9
2006-07	Mean	4.70	3.30	5.40	5.20
	N	10	10	10	10
2007-08	Mean	4.64	4.45	5.09	4.91
	N	11	11	11	11
2008-2009	Mean	4.55	4.00	4.82	4.32
	N	22	22	22	22
2009-2010	Mean	5.27	4.73	5.18	5.09
	N	11	11	11	11
2010-2011	Mean	4.95	4.95	4.75	4.90
	N	20	20	20	20
Total	Mean	4.69	4.32	4.93	4.82
	N	138	137	138	137

Table 2-Ratings of Skills Development (1=very poor; 6=excellent)

Academic Year		To analyze and interpret sociological data	To understand how sociologists collect information about the social world	To communicate effectively, both written and orally	To have a career
1999-00	Mean	3.88	4.12	4.25	3.50
	N	8	8	8	8
2000-01	Mean	4.73	4.91	5.00	4.82
	N	11	11	11	11
2001-02	Mean	4.54	4.85	4.77	4.54
	N	13	13	13	13
2002-03	Mean	4.14	4.71	5.29	4.67
	N	7	7	7	6
2003-04	Mean	4.67	5.17	5.67	4.33
	N	6	6	6	6
2004-05	Mean	5.40	5.30	4.50	4.50
	N	10	10	10	10
2005-06	Mean	5.11	5.33	5.22	4.78
	N	9	9	9	9
2006-07	Mean	5.10	5.50	5.10	3.70
	N	10	10	10	10
2007-08	Mean	4.91	4.36	4.73	4.73
	N	11	11	11	11
2008-09	Mean	4.59	4.64	4.82	4.32
	N	22	22	22	22
2009-2010	Mean	5.00	5.45	5.70	4.55
	N	11	11	10	11
2010-2011	Mean	4.85	5.25	5.05	4.15
	N	20	20	20	20
Total	Mean	4.76	4.96	4.97	4.37
	N	138	138	137	137

Table 3-Seniors' Ratings of Sociology Courses

Academic Year		The availability of course offerings	The extent to which class objectives were specified and met	overall quality of courses you took in sociology	The overall quality of the instructional strategies	Overall fairness of grading in sociology classes
1999-00	Mean	3.75	3.75	4.25	4.00	4.00
	N	8	8	8	8	8
2000-01	Mean	4.09	4.45	4.45	4.55	4.82
	N	11	11	11	11	11
2001-02	Mean	5.00	4.85	4.92	4.85	5.00
	N	13	13	13	13	13
2002-03	Mean	4.50	4.67	4.57	4.50	4.43
	N	6	6	7	6	7
2003-04	Mean	4.83	5.50	5.00	5.17	4.83
	N	6	6	6	6	6
2004-05	Mean	4.90	5.20	5.20	5.20	5.00
	N	10	10	10	10	10
2005-06	Mean	5.11	5.44	5.22	4.67	5.11
	N	9	9	9	9	9
2006-07	Mean	4.80	4.80	5.00	4.70	5.20
	N	10	10	10	10	10
2007-08	Mean	4.36	4.82	5.36	5.00	5.18
	N	11	11	11	11	11
2008-2009	Mean	4.23	4.82	4.91	4.36	4.91
	N	22	22	22	22	22
2009-2010	Mean	4.18	5.36	5.45	5.27	5.20
	N	11	11	11	11	10
2010-2011	Mean	5.10	5.15	5.20	4.80	4.80
	N	20	20	20	20	20
Total	Mean	4.58	4.91	4.99	4.74	4.90
	N	137	137	138	137	137

Table 4-Seniors' Ratings of Faculty Performance

Academic Year		Faculty's overall knowledge of the subject matter	Faculty's overall course conduct	Faculty's treatment of students in the classroom	Each faculty member's approachability and availability	Quality of advising you received
1999-00	Mean	5.50	3.50	4.63	4.50	4.86
	N	8	8	8	8	7
2000-01	Mean	5.55	4.00	4.82	5.00	4.55
	N	11	11	11	11	11
2001-02	Mean	5.69	4.62	5.38	5.08	5.31
	N	13	13	13	13	13
2002-03	Mean	5.43	4.43	4.57	4.57	4.86
	N	7	7	7	7	7
2003-04	Mean	5.83	5.67	4.83	5.33	5.50
	N	6	6	6	6	6
2004-05	Mean	5.70	5.40	5.40	5.50	5.30
	N	10	10	10	10	10
2005-06	Mean	5.78	5.67	5.33	5.22	5.50
	N	9	9	9	9	8
2006-07	Mean	5.60	5.20	4.90	5.40	4.70
	N	10	10	10	10	10
2007-08	Mean	5.82	5.45	5.55	5.82	5.00
	N	11	11	11	11	11
2008-2009	Mean	5.59	4.91	5.05	4.82	4.90
	N	22	22	22	22	21
2009-2010	Mean	5.73	5.18	5.73	5.64	5.64
	N	11	11	11	11	11
2010-2011	Mean	5.80	5.15	4.90	5.15	5.10
	N	20	20	20	20	20
Total	Mean	5.67	4.94	5.11	5.16	5.08
	N	138	138	138	138	135

