

Sociology Program, Seaver College, Pepperdine University

Self-Study Report

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I. Introduction

A. The Internal Context

Sociology is an important and historically significant part of the liberal arts. Most colleges and universities include sociology in their general education curriculum and most offer a baccalaureate degree. Sociology is also relevant to many disciplines outside the social sciences, including humanities, religion, communication and media studies, and business.

The Sociology major at Pepperdine pre-dates the current faculty and has been part of the curriculum since the founding of Seaver College in 1972. During the past thirty years the number of Sociology faculty has averaged between three and four. Currently there are four full-time sociologists: Elizabeth Essary, Rebecca Kim, Daniel Morrison, and Robin Perrin. In addition, Charles Hall, Dean of International Programs, is a sociologist who typically teaches one class a year and Joel Fetzer, a political scientist, teaches three classes cross-listed with sociology.

In the early years of the Seaver Sociology program the curriculum consisted of four core courses (SOC 200: Introduction to Sociology, SOC 250: Introductory Statistics, SOC 310: Research Methods; SOC 391: Sociological Theory) plus twenty additional units from a list of twelve upper-division electives, for a total of thirty-five units. After a 1995 revision, students took five required core courses (the four listed above plus Senior Seminar), selected one course each from four (of five) substantive areas (Social Inequality, Deviance and Social Control, Micro-Sociology, Social Institutions, Social Change), and selected two additional upper-division courses, for a total of forty-two units.

The most recent revision to major requirements occurred in 2009. Students are now required to take the five core courses listed above, plus five additional courses from a list of fourteen upper-division electives, a total of thirty-eight units. Two factors were influential in the 2009 revision. First, some students have specialized interests within sociology, or may have

career goals related to a specific area within sociology. The current curriculum allows students more freedom to focus on specific areas of interest. Second, the flexibility of the current requirements, combined with smaller number of units required, makes it easier for sociology students to select a second major or a minor. The current degree requirements, as well as course descriptions, are presented in [Appendix A](#).

Since 1992, eight courses have been added to the sociology curriculum (SOC 436: Crime and Delinquency, SOC 442: Culture and Society, SOC 444: Social Movements, SOC 446: Global Society and Its Citizens, SOC 450: Race and Ethnic Relations, SOC 455: Immigration Politics and Ethnic Relations, SOC 460: Public Opinion and Voting, SOC 497: Senior Seminar) and two additional classes are being developed for addition (Gender in Society, Medical Sociology). Ten courses have been eliminated (SOC 311: Cultural and Social Anthropology, SOC 320: Evaluation Research, SOC 362: Interpersonal Behavior, SOC 429: Law and Society, SOC 437: Clinical Sociology, SOC 525: Political and Social Power, SOC 530: Community Organization, SOC 536: Juvenile Delinquency, SOC 561: Public Administration, SOC 572: Criminology). These changes reflect trends in sociology more generally, as well as changes in faculty expertise. In response to a wide-scale change to the General Education program in 2001, one course (SOC 310; Research Methods) was designated as the required Presentation Skills (PS), Research Methodology (RM), and Writing Intensive (WI) course for the major.

B. The External Context

In developing the curriculum and overall program, the Sociology faculty placed a high priority on recognizing that there are three distinct groups of students within the major: those planning to seek graduate degrees in sociology, those planning to seek graduate degrees in related fields (e.g., social work, law), and those seeking employment after graduation. Although

the necessary knowledge-base of these three groups of students are similar, there are other ways in which the needs of these three groups differ. For example, those seeking Ph.D. programs in sociology are benefitted by engaging in research, especially an independent research project of the type that would result in a presentation at a professional conference; this research experience is invaluable in the highly competitive process of applying to a research-oriented graduate program. On the other hand, those who do not intend to pursue graduate work are benefitted by internships, field work, and other experiences that allow them to form professional networks and apply their educational experiences to practical professional settings. Research demonstrates the importance of internships for those students seeking bachelor's level careers. For example, a survey of employers conducted by the employer-members of the [National Association of Colleges and Employers](#) showed that 59% of internships converted into full-time positions. In fact, the [College Employment Research Institute](#) considers an internship to be a "high stakes" experience, because most employers consider an internship to be a requirement before being accepted for an entry-level job; the internship is now the setting in which most college students begin their career journeys. Field work and internship experiences allow our students to serve the nearby community in numerous settings.

C. University Mission

"Pepperdine University is a Christian university committed to the highest standards of academic excellence and Christian values, where students are strengthened for lives of purpose, service, and leadership."

The study of sociology is consistent with the mission of Pepperdine. Sociology is, essentially, the empirical study of the social side of human behavior. This attempt to understand human behavior leads sociology to confront many of the questions historically confronted by

Christians. In fact, one could reasonably argue that sociology's relevance is even more pronounced at a Christian school like Pepperdine. Sociology teaches us about ourselves. It teaches us understanding of others, which fosters compassion and empathy. It teaches us that we are products of our society. Sociology teaches us to think critically about the world. "The fascination of sociology," writes Peter Berger "is the fact that its perspective makes us see in a new light the very world in which we have lived all our lives. It can be said that the first wisdom of sociology is this – things are not what they seem" (*Invitation to Sociology*, 1963, p. 16). As we learn of society's power over us we are freed from society's influence, and empowered to bring about change. All of these ideals, which are so central to a sociological world view, are consistent with the ideals of Christianity.

D. Program Goals

In meetings during Summer 2007, the Sociology faculty identified nine goals.

1. Know the major theoretical paradigms in sociology.
2. Develop the ability to comprehend, analyze, synthesize and apply empirical data.
3. Be able to envision sociological problems as empirical problems, to formulate hypotheses, and to propose methods for testing these hypotheses.
4. Develop a "sociological imagination" (the ability to understand the interplay between the individual and broader social structural forces) and to apply the sociological imagination to his/her own life.
5. Be aware of (and minimize) bias, and see the importance of truthful reporting of research findings, respecting subjects who participate in studies, and other such ethical issues in sociological research.
6. Effectively communicate both orally and in writing.

7. Understand how societies work and how they are shaped by cultural and social structural forces (e.g., race, class, gender, and age).
8. Be prepared for advanced studies in sociology, anthropology, social work, and related fields.
9. Be prepared for a life of service and pursue positive social change and justice in line with the Christian mission of Pepperdine.

E. Program Learning Outcomes

In the Fall of 2010 a university-wide initiative began, in which each program identified a small number of Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs), and examined the degree to which they aligned upward with Institutional Educational Objectives (IEOs) of Pepperdine University and downward with the Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) of each class. In writing the PLOs for the Sociology program, the faculty agreed that students who successfully complete the sociology program are expected to be able to (Table 1):

Table 1. Program Learning Outcomes

PLO #1	Demonstrate the use of the sociological imagination, “the ability to recognize the relationship between large-scale social forces and the actions of individuals”
PLO #2	Identify and apply the major macro- and micro-level theoretical paradigms in sociology
PLO #3	Explain how societies work with regards to social structural and cultural forces
PLO #4	Design and conduct an empirical study that answers a sociological question

These PLOs are related to each of the classes taught in the Sociology program; a detailed Program Alignment Map is provided in [Appendix B](#), identifying the specific courses in which each PLO is Introduced, Developed, and Mastered.

The IEOs for Pepperdine University are formed by two components: our Core Commitments (i.e., Knowledge and Scholarship, Faith and Heritage, and Global Understanding)

and our Institutional Values (i.e., Purpose, Service, and Leadership). The intersections of these three Core Commitments and three Institutional Values provided the basis for the development of the nine IEOs, which are provided in [Appendix C](#). The alignment between the Sociology program's PLOs and Pepperdine's IEOs is also provided.

F. American Sociological Association Guidelines

The Mission, Goals, and Outcomes of the Seaver Sociology program align well with goals identified in the American Sociological Association's (ASA) "Learning Goals for the Sociology Major" (McKinney, 2004):

According to the ASA, the sociology major should study, review, and demonstrate understanding of the following:

Goal 1. The discipline of sociology and its role in contributing to our understanding of social reality, such that the student will be able to: (a) describe how sociology differs from and is similar to other social sciences and to give examples of these differences; (b) describe how sociology contributes to a liberal arts understanding of social reality; and (c) apply the sociological imagination, sociological principles, and concepts to her/his own life.

Goal 2. The role of theory in sociology, such that the student will be able to: (a) define theory and describe its role in building sociological knowledge; (b) compare and contrast basic theoretical orientations; (c) show how theories reflect the historical context of the times and cultures in which they were developed; and (d) describe and apply some basic theories or theoretical orientations in at least one area of social reality.

Goal 3. The role of evidence and qualitative and quantitative methods in sociology, such that the student will be able to: (a) identify basic methodological approaches and describe the general role of methods in building sociological knowledge; (b) compare and contrast the basic methodological approaches for gathering data; (c) design a research study in an area of choice and explain why various decisions were made; and (d) critically assess a published research report and explain how the study could have been improved.

Goal 4. The technical skills involved in retrieving information and data from the Internet and using computers appropriately for data analysis. The major should also be able to do (social) scientific technical writing that accurately conveys data findings and to show an understanding and application of principles of ethical practice as a sociologist.

Goal 5. Basic concepts in sociology and their fundamental theoretical interrelations, such that the student will be able to define, give examples, and demonstrate the relevance of culture; social change; socialization; stratification; social structure; institutions; and differentiations by race/ethnicity, gender, age, and class.

Goal 6. How culture and social structure operate, such that the student will be able to: (a) show how institutions interlink in their effects on each other and on individuals; (b) demonstrate how social change factors such as population or urbanization affect social structures and individuals; (c) demonstrate how culture and social structure vary across time and place and the effect is of such variations; and (d) identify examples of specific policy implications using reasoning about social-structural effects.

Goal 7. Reciprocal relationships between individuals and society, such that the student will be able to: (a) explain how the self develops sociologically; (b) demonstrate how societal and structural factors influence individual behavior and the self's development; (c) demonstrate how social interaction and the self influences society and social structure; and (d) distinguish sociological approaches to analyzing the self from psychological, economic, and other approaches.

Goal 8. The macro/micro distinction, such that the student will be able to: (a) compare and contrast theories at one level with those at another; (b) summarize some research documenting connections between the two; and (c) develop a list of research or analytical issues that should be pursued to more fully understand the connections between the two.

Goal 9. In depth at least two specialty areas within sociology, such that the student will be able to: (a) summarize basic questions and issues in the areas; (b) compare and contrast basic theoretical orientations and middle range theories in the areas; (c) show how sociology helps understand the area; (d) summarize current research in the areas; and (e) develop specific policy implications of research and theories in the areas.

Goal 10. The internal diversity of American society and its place in the international context, such that the student will be able to describe: (a) the significance of variations by race, class, gender, and age; and (b) will know how to appropriately generalize or resist generalizations across groups. Two more generic goals that should be pursued in sociology are:

Goal 11. To think critically, such that the student will be able to: (a) move easily from recall analysis and application to synthesis and evaluation; (b) identify underlying assumptions in particular theoretical orientations or arguments; (c) identify underlying assumptions in particular methodological approaches to an issue; (d) show how patterns of thought and knowledge are directly influenced by political economic social structures; (e) present opposing viewpoints and alternative hypotheses on various issues; and (f) engage in teamwork where many or different viewpoints are presented.

Goal 12. To develop values, such that the student will see: (a) the utility of the sociological perspective as one of several perspectives on social reality; and (b) the importance of reducing the negative effects of social inequality.

As shown in [Appendix D](#), an examination of these goals from the ASA shows a strong alignment Program Learning Outcomes of the Seaver Sociology program;

G. Purposes of this Report

Pepperdine University is currently following a Five Year Review process for all of its programs and majors. This process involves annual reviews in which specific PLOs are empirically assessed, culminating in a fifth year review that assesses the whole program more holistically. This holistic review involves a self-study written by the faculty, which provides the basis for a review by an external reviewer and a focus group of students. Although the Sociology program went through a Five Year Review in 2007/08, the Five Year Review program was in its infancy at that time; indeed, the current list of PLOs had not yet been developed and there was little institutional standardization in the expectations regarding the nature or contents of these

Five Year Reviews. Additionally, standardization in the nature of the Annual Reviews was not achieved until the 2010/11 academic year. The first general purpose of the present Five Year Review, then, is to set a foundation upon which subsequent annual reviews of the individual PLOs will be conducted over the next four years. The second general purpose of this report is to provide a basis for review by the external reviewer and student focus group.

In addition to these general purposes, there are several specific purposes of this report:

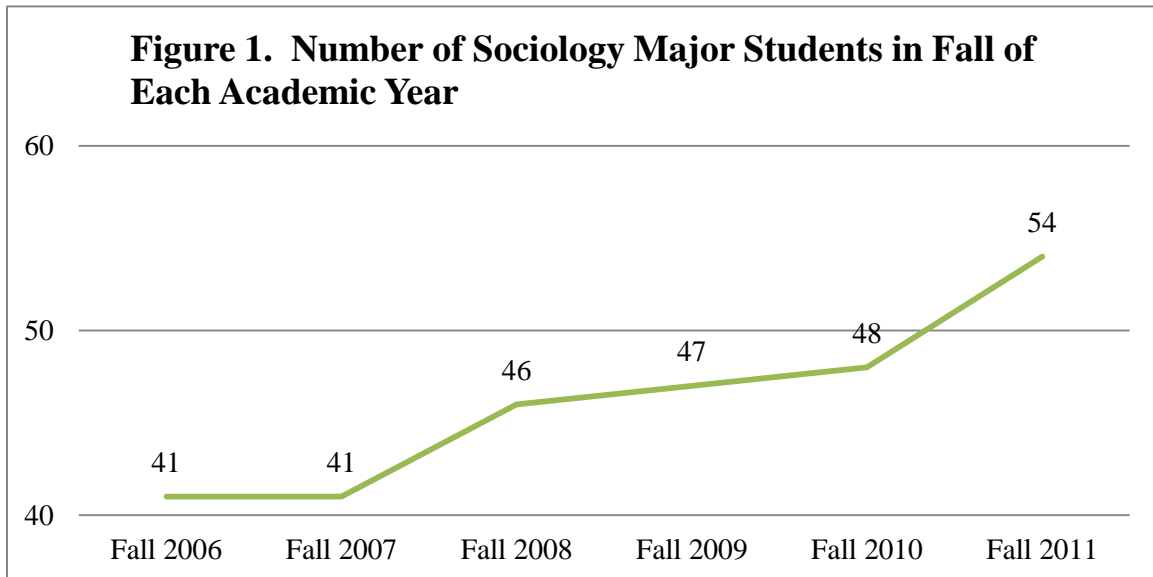
1. Describe the student composition of the Sociology major;
2. Evaluate the curriculum and size of the Sociology program in the context of the curricula and size of our peer and aspirational institutions;
3. Assess the degree to which Sociology majors are participating in High Impact Practices that relate specifically to the major (i.e., independent research and fieldwork/internships);
4. Summarize the data that has accumulated over the past four years to assess the degree to which the PLOs are being achieved;
5. Discuss the qualifications of the current faculty affiliated with the Sociology major;
6. Evaluate the demand for the program;
7. Examine the sustainability of the program in light of the demand for the program and the allocation of resources.

II. Analysis of Evidence

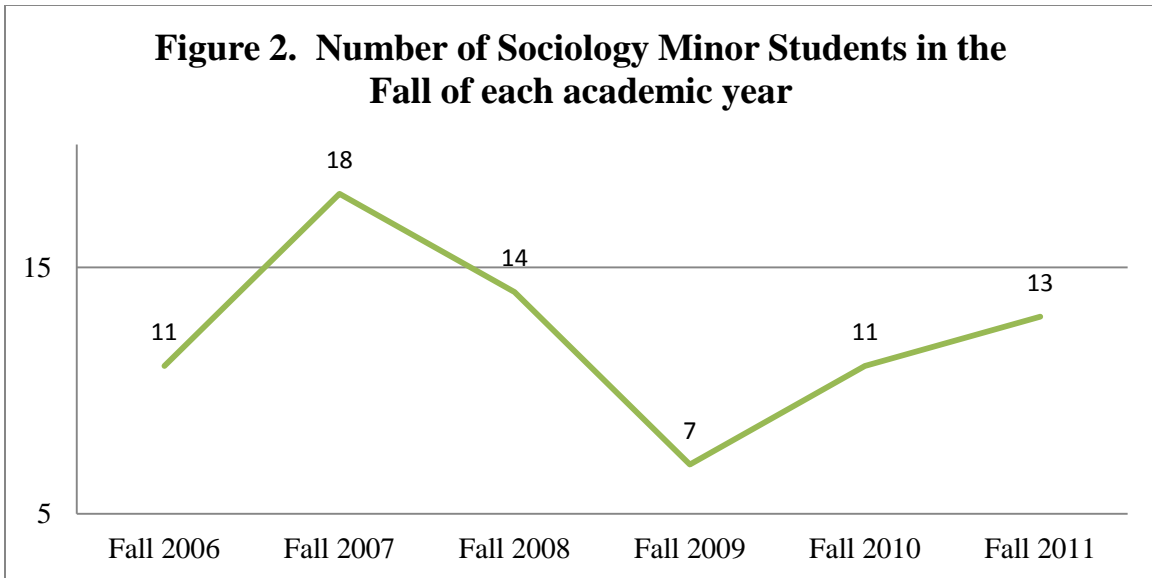
A. Evidence of Program Quality

1. Students

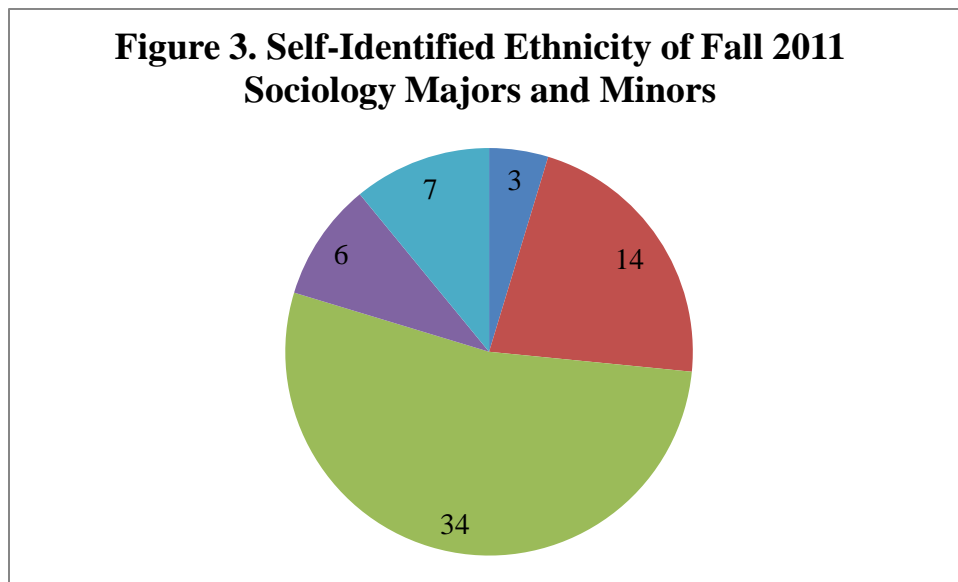
The number of students who have declared a Sociology major at Seaver has grown from 41 in Fall 2006 to 54 in Fall 2011 (Figure 1). During the same period of time, overall Seaver enrollment increased by approximately 5% (from 2,957 to 3,112), so this major grew more quickly than the typical major in the past five years.



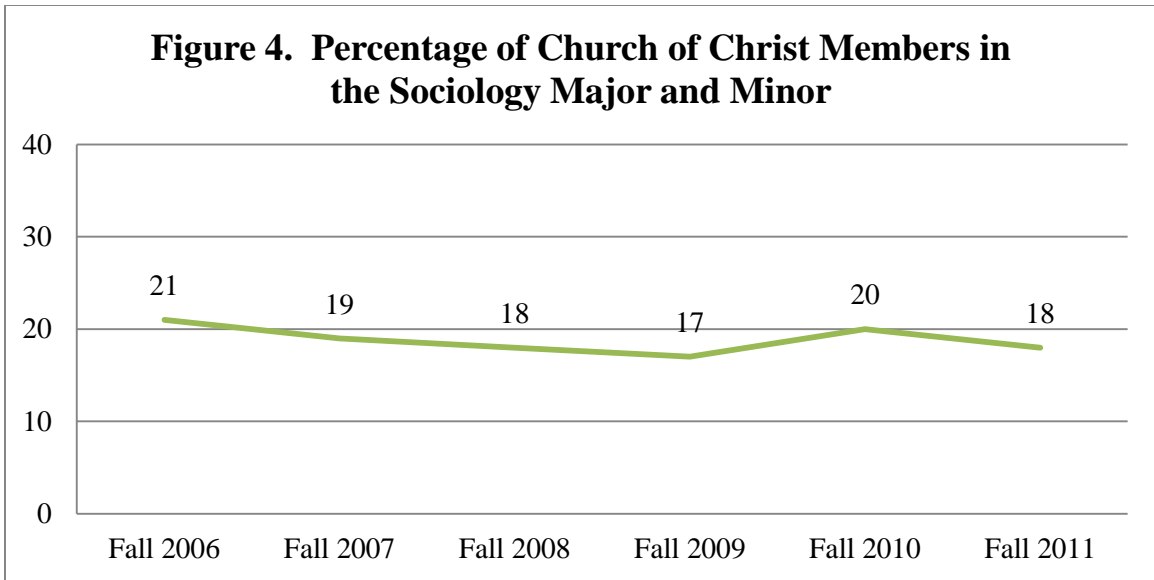
The number of students with a minor in Sociology has fluctuated, averaging about 12 over the past 6 years (Figure 2). In addition, Sociology classes serve several other academic programs. Many students in the Communication Division and the Liberal Arts Major must complete an emphasis or concentration in an outside substantive discipline; the overlap between such fields makes Sociology classes a popular choice. A number of Sociology courses also satisfy requirements for the Ethnic Studies Minor.



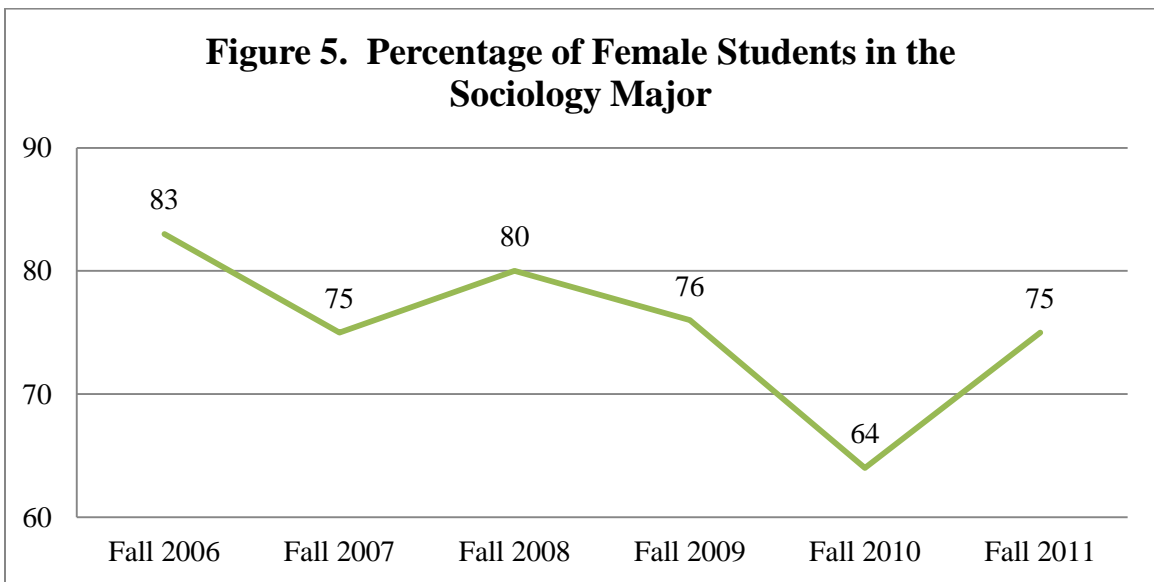
The students in the Sociology program tend to be fairly diverse. For example, almost half of Sociology majors in 2012 self-identify Asian, African American, or Latino/Latina (Figure 3).



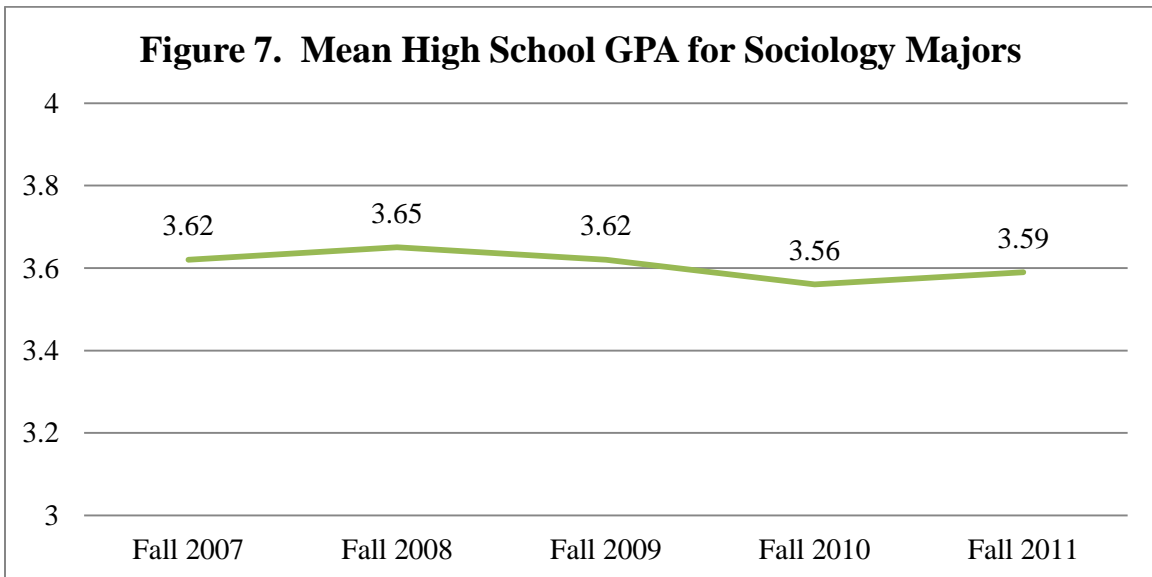
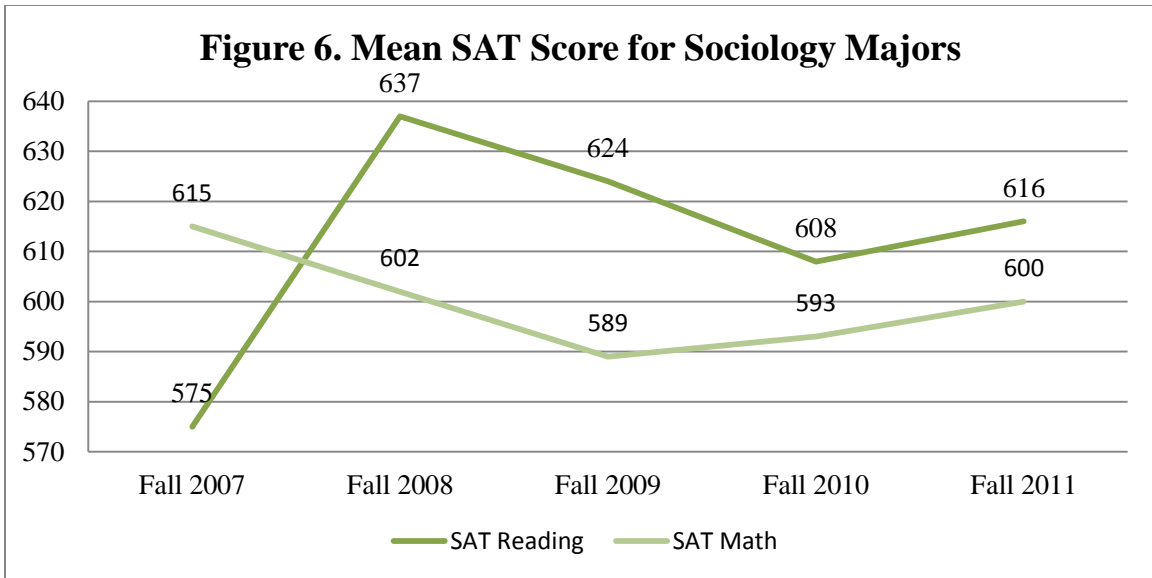
As shown in Figure 4, the proportion of students in the major who identify with the Churches of Christ has been fairly stable over the past few years, with approximately 1 out of every 5 from the university's denominational affiliation.



The Sociology major tends to be far more heavily represented by female students than by male students. Over the past 6 years, approximately three-fourths of Sociology majors have been women (Figure 5).



The mean SAT score and mean high school GPA for Seaver Sociology majors are shown in Figures 6 and 7.



2. The Curriculum and Learning Environment

a. Comparison of Curriculum with Peer and Aspirational Institutions

One of the most informative methods of evaluating the current curriculum is by comparing it with the curricula offered by the eight institutions identified as Seaver College's Peer (i.e., Calvin College, Occidental College, Pomona College, and University of San Diego) and Aspirational (i.e., Baylor University, Carleton College, University of Notre Dame, and Wake

Forest University) Institutions. The course offerings in Seaver's Sociology program are listed in [Appendix E](#), along with those of the designated institutions.

Overall it can be noted that the different sociological programs are very diverse, offering a wide range of courses. As for similarities, our course offerings align very closely with our peer and aspirational institutions. In general, the courses we teach are offered at most of the schools to which we compared ourselves. The only two exceptions are Social Psychology and Medical Sociology. The real surprise here is Social Psychology, which is only offered at two of the other institutions on the list (although it is worth noting that two other schools offer a class in the Sociology of Emotion). Pepperdine is unique in offering a recently instated Medical Sociology course, which reflects the interests of Dr. Dan Morrison.

As for shortcomings in our offerings, we are one of only three institutions not offering a course in Social Problems and one of only two schools not offering a course in Demographics or Populations. Some of the universities on this list offer separate courses for Classical and Contemporary Sociological Theory, and for Quantitative and Qualitative analysis. The majority of the schools on the list, however, offer a single Theory course and a single Statistics course. Finally, most of the other schools offer courses with a focus on either cultures outside the United States (such as European nations) or specific ethnic groups within America. While some of our courses include studies of such groups, we do not offer any classes with an exclusive focus on them.

b. Comparison of Program Size with Peer Institutions

One of the ways to evaluate the health of Seaver's Sociology program is to compare the size of the Sociology major at Pepperdine to the size of the Sociology major at similar

institutions. In this section, we include data from the four schools identified as Seaver College's Peer institutions (i.e., Calvin College, Occidental College, Pomona College, and University of San Diego) and three additional peer institutions that are similar to Pepperdine in mission and size, and are also members of the West Coast Athletic Conference (Loyola Marymount University, Santa Clara University, and the University of San Francisco). See Table 2, below.

It is clear from Table 2 that Seaver has a small Sociology program, relative to peer institutions. We have only 54 majors, second lowest to Pomona's 31, a school that is half our size. Only 1.6% of Seaver undergraduates are Sociology majors, which is the second smallest percentage on the list. Seaver also has the fewest tenured or tenure-track faculty (four) and the second fewest number of faculty, relative to its size (1.2 faculty per 1,000 undergrads).

Loyola Marymount University (LMU) and the University of San Diego (USD), two Catholic institutions in Southern California, serve as an interesting comparison. Once we standardize for undergraduate enrollment, we see that the Sociology major is almost twice as popular at LMU and USD (2.9% of LMU, and 2.5% of USD students are Sociology majors) than at Pepperdine (1.6% of Pepperdine students are Sociology majors). We also see that both LMU and USD have more than twice as many Sociology professors (nine) than Pepperdine (four). These data suggest that the Pepperdine Sociology program is, arguably, the smallest of any of the peer institutions evaluated.

Table 2. Comparison of Sociology Program Size with Peer Institutions

<i>School</i>	<i># Total Undergrads</i>	<i># Soc Majors</i>	<i># Soc Faculty*</i>	<i>Majors to Faculty Ratio*</i>	<i>% Soc Majors</i>	<i># Soc Faculty per 1000 Undergrads*</i>
Calvin College	4,200	60	6	10:1	1.4%	1.4
Loyola Mar	5,500	160	9	18:1	2.9%	1.6
Occidental	2,123	56	6	9:1	2.6%	2.8
Pepperdine	3,474	54	4	14:1	1.6%	1.2
Pomona	1,606	31	5	6:1	1.9%	3.1
U of San Diego	5,500	140	9	16:1	2.5%	1.6
Santa Clara	5,300	110	6	18:1	2.1%	1.1
U of San Fran	5,937	139	11	13:1	2.3%	1.9

* Tenure and Tenure-Track Faculty

c. Involvement in High Impact Practices

Several High Impact Practices (HIPs) have been identified as important in the personal, educational, and professional development of undergraduate students. Many of these HIPs are broadly relevant to an institution as a whole, such as participation in an international program or a first-year seminar. Several, however, are directly relevant to individual programs and majors. Many of these major-related HIPs are built into the Sociology curriculum in such a way that all students will experience them. For example, both Writing Intensive and Senior Capstone classes are considered HIPs, and every student in the Sociology major must complete at least one capstone class and the writing-intensive SOC 310: Research Methods before graduation.

For some of these HIPs, however, an opportunity is available to participate, but they are not required. Specifically, both Internships and Independent Research Projects are recognized as valuable experiential learning opportunities; notably, independent research is a valuable component of applications for graduate school, and an internship can be a valuable component of applications to professional positions.

There are several ways Sociology students can participate in research. Students can enroll in SOC 590: Research in Sociology. Typically this involves teaming up with a Sociology professor and either working on an existing project or initiating an independent project with the professor as a supervisor. Sociology students can also participate in two university-wide research programs designed to facilitate empirical research. The Academic Year Undergraduate Research Initiative (AYURI) supports up to four faculty-student research collaborations with support for both faculty members (faculty members receive \$500 per student that may be used for research supplies) and students (students receive one unit of scholarship). The Summer Undergraduate Research Program (SURP) is specifically designed for summer research projects. Students participating in SURP receive a 4-unit tuition scholarship and professors receive a \$1,000 stipend. Both programs require students to present their research findings at the Seaver-wide Research Conference in the Spring of each academic year.

There are two primary ways Sociology students participate in internships. Students can sign up for SOC 595: Supervised Field Work. Typically this involves the student locating an Internship and finding a faculty member who will approve the Internship, help the student create a syllabus, and supervise the student. Students can also participate in the Randall Internship Program (GSGS 595). Through Randall, students who enroll in at least one graded unit of internship credit can apply for a scholarship of \$500 to offset expenses related to the internship.

3. Student Learning and Success

Pepperdine's Five Year Review process is a relatively new one. The process involves four annual evaluations, each one empirically assessing one or more specific PLOs, followed by a Five Year Review that summarizes the data and sets the foundation for the four subsequent

Annual Reviews. Because this is the first Five Year Review that has been conducted since the standardization of this process, and because the PLOs were not articulated until 2010, the present review can serve as a foundation for future reviews, but not all of the PLOs have been sufficiently assessed in each of the past four years. [Appendix F](#) shows the calendar for the review process, including both the Annual Reviews that have been completed and those scheduled for the future.

In the sections that follow, we examine five sources of data on student learning:

- a. *UCLA's Higher Education Research Institute's Senior Survey*. Here we compare Sociology students to a national sample of college seniors on several Educational Effectiveness Indicators related to our PLOs.
- b. *Results of Senior Sociology Exit Surveys*. Provides indirect evidence of each of our PLOs.
- c. *Introduction to Sociology Pre-Test and Post-Test*. All four PLOs are introduced in Introduction to Sociology, and we assessed each in Spring, 2012.
- d. *Direct Evidence from Annual Reviews*. These direct assessments have primarily focused on PLO#1 (sociological imagination) and PLO#2 (empirical research).
- e. *Focus Groups*. Provide indirect evidence of the Major's strengths and weaknesses.

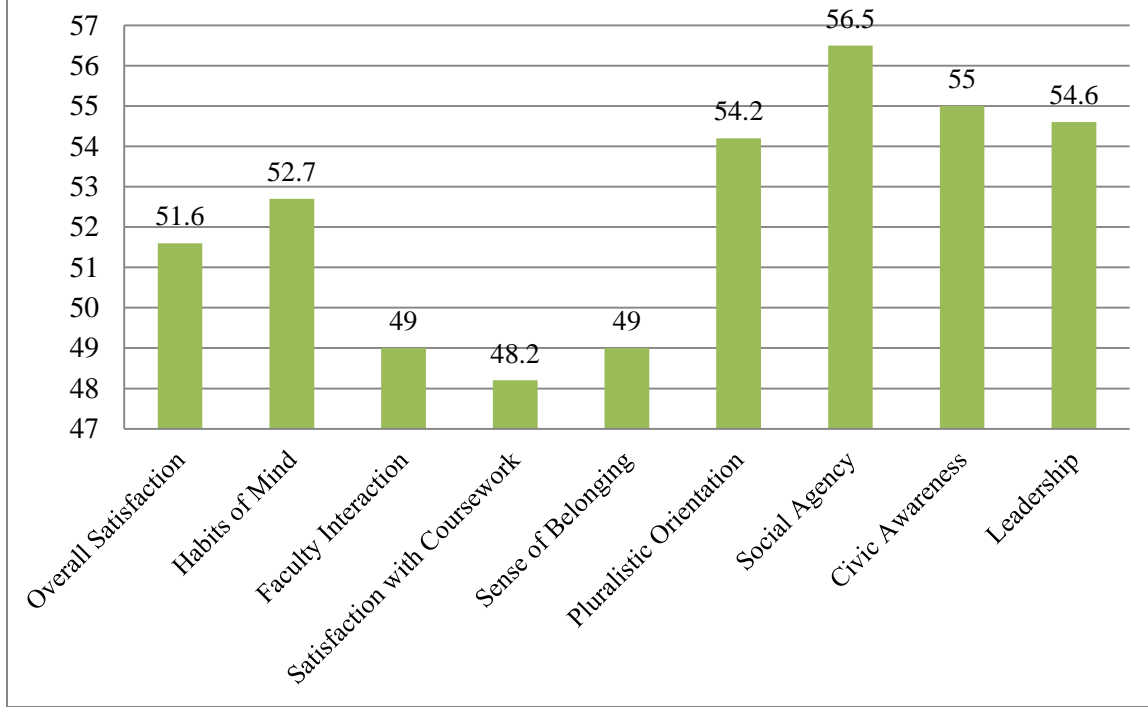
a. *UCLA Higher Education Research Institute's Senior Survey*

One of the problems with assessing any academic program is that it is difficult to establish a reference point. What would it mean to conclude, for example, that we are effectively addressing PLO #1 (use of the “sociological imagination”)? To whom, or what, would we compare ourselves? The UCLA Higher Education Research Institute's (HERI) Senior Survey provides a unique comparison group. The items on the HERI surveys do not address PLOs specific to the Sociology Program at Pepperdine, of course, but the survey does include several general items that are important to us (e.g., student satisfaction, critical thinking, tolerance, etc.).

Results from the HERI surveys, which include a large sample of seniors in US colleges and universities, provide indirect evidence of student learning.

HERI measures nine different Educational Effectiveness Indicators. Each of these scores has a mean of 50 and a standard deviation of 10. This survey was administered to a sample of 13 graduating Sociology majors in the Spring of 2010, and again to a sample of 9 graduating Sociology majors in the Spring of 2011 (N=22). The mean score for Seaver Sociology majors was above the population mean for six of the nine variables measured in the HERI survey (Figure 9, below). For two of the items, *Overall Satisfaction* (with items such as “If you could make your college choice over, would you still choose to enroll at your current college?”) and *Habits of the Mind* (with items such as “Seek solutions to problems and explain them to others” and “Support opinions with logical arguments”), Seaver Sociology students were above the mean, but the differences were not statistically significant (p-values > .05). For four of the items, *Pluralistic Orientation* (with items such as “Tolerance of others with different beliefs” and “Openness to having my own views challenged”), *Social Agency* (with items such as “Helping to promote racial understanding” and “Influencing Social Values”), and *Leadership* (with items such as “I have effectively led a group to a common purpose”), Seaver Sociology students were significantly above the national mean (p < .05 for *Pluralistic Orientation* and *Leadership*, and p < .01 for *Social Agency* and *Civic Awareness*). Of the three items where Seaver students scored below the national mean, *Faculty Interaction* (with items such as “Advice and guidance about your educational program” and “Emotional support and encouragement”), *Satisfaction with Coursework* (with items such as “Relevance of coursework to future career plans” and “Relevance of coursework to everyday life”) and *Sense of Belonging* (with items such as “I feel I am a member of this college”), the differences were minimal and not statistically significant.

Figure 8. Mean Scores on Educational Effectiveness Indicators for HERI Sociology Senior Survey, 2010-11 (National Mean = 50)



b. Results of Senior Sociology Exit Surveys

Sociology majors are required to take SOC 497: Senior Seminar, which is a capstone course for the program. For each of the past four years, students have completed a Senior Exit Survey, which addresses each of the Sociology PLOs. It should be noted that this self-perception can only be considered indirect evidence of student learning; nevertheless, many of these questions are directly relevant to the Sociology program's own learning outcomes and the goals set by the ASA. The results of the Senior Exit Survey from 2008-2012 are displayed in Table 3. In general, the results are quite positive, with between 84% and 100% of the respondents indicating that they Agree or Strongly Agree with these self-perception items.

Table 3. Sociology Senior Exit Survey, 2008-2012 (N = 50)

<i>Statement</i>	<i>Strongly Agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>
<i>1. I know the major theoretical paradigms in sociology</i>	62%	32%	6%	0%	0%
<i>2. I have the ability to comprehend, analyze, synthesize and apply empirical data.</i>	58%	36%	6%	0%	0%
<i>3. I am able to envision sociological problems as empirical problems, to formulate hypotheses, and to propose methods for testing these hypotheses.</i>	70%	30%	0%	0%	0%
<i>4. I have developed a “sociological imagination” and am able to apply the sociological imagination to my own life.</i>	82%	18%	0%	0%	0%
<i>5. I see the importance of truthful reporting of research findings, respecting subjects who participate in studies, and other such ethical issues in sociological research.</i>	88%	12%	0%	0%	0%
<i>6. I can effectively communicate orally and in writing</i>	66%	28%	16%	0%	0%
<i>7. I have developed the ability to think critically about the world.</i>	72%	26%	2%	0%	0%
<i>8. I understand how societies are shaped by cultural and social structural forces.</i>	78%	18%	4%	0%	0%
<i>9. I feel prepared for advanced studies in sociology, anthropology, social work, law, and related fields.</i>	54%	34%	10%	2%	0%
<i>10. I feel prepared for a life of service, positive social change, and justice.</i>	72%	16%	8%	4%	0%
<i>11. I feel prepared to work with a diverse population.</i>	66%	30%	2%	2%	0%

PLO #1: Sociological Imagination. Every student over the four year period (N=50) indicated they either Strongly Agreed (82%) or Agreed (18%) with the statement, “I have developed a ‘sociological imagination’ and am able to apply the sociological imagination to my own life” (Statement #4).

PLO #2: Theoretical Paradigms. Forty-seven out of fifty students either Strongly Agreed (62%) or Agreed (32%) with the statement, “I know the theoretical paradigms in sociology” (Statement #1)

PLO #3: Social Structural and Cultural Forces. Forty-eight out of fifty students either Strongly Agreed (78%) or Agreed (18%) with the statement, “I understand how societies are shaped by cultural and social structural forces” (Statement #8).

PLO #4: Empirical Study. Forty-seven out of fifty students either Strongly Agreed (78%) or Agreed (18%) with the statement, “I have the ability to comprehend, analyze, synthesize and apply empirical data” (Statement #2). Every student indicated they either Strongly Agreed (70%) or Agreed (30%) with the statement, “I am able to envision sociological problems as empirical problems, to formulate hypotheses, and to propose methods for testing these hypotheses” (Statement #3). Finally, every student indicated they Strongly Agreed (88%) or Agreed (12%) with the statement, “I see the importance of truthful reporting of research findings, respecting subjects who participate in studies, and other such ethical issues in sociological research” (Statement #5).

Several of the items measure the degree to which Sociology students perceive themselves to be sufficiently prepared for their futures (#6, #9, #10, #11). In general, while the results remain quite positive, agreement rates are somewhat lower than the PLO-related statements discussed above.

c. Introduction to Sociology Pre-Test and Post-Test

SOC 200: Introduction to Sociology is one option students have for satisfying the Human Behavior and Institutions general education requirement, and it is a required course for

Sociology majors. In SOC 200, students are introduced to all four PLOs. During the Fall of 2012, we collected Direct Evidence of whether students gained introductory knowledge related to all PLOs.

During the second week of classes, a quiz was administered to all sections of SOC 200 as a pre-test measure. The quiz was made up of eight introductory-level questions, two for each PLO. During the last week of classes, the same quiz was administered to all three sections of SOC 200 as a post-test measure. Students completed both quizzes anonymously and their performance was not part of their grade in the class.

In the post-test we expected that each PLO would have at least 50% correct answers, that the average score would be above 70%, and that 70% of students would answer five or more questions correctly.

The results are presented in Table 4 below. As we can see in the left half of Table 3, the differences between the pre-test and post-test show student learning across the board: students scored higher overall and for each PLO on the post-test.

Table 4. SOC 200 Pre-Test and Post-Test

PLO	Pre-Test	Post-Test	# of Qs	Pre-Test	Post-Test
			Correct		
#1	32.7%	50.0%	0 – 2	17.0%	4.3%
#2	42.1%	64.7%	3 – 4	47.3%	22.1%
#3	57.6%	73.6%	5 – 6	30.9%	46.0%
#4	66.1%	81.3%	7 – 8	4.8%	27.6%
All	49.6%	67.4%			

All four PLOs had an average score of 50% or more. The gain was the largest for PLO #2 (theory), but all four PLOs showed an improvement of at least 15%. At both times, students performed best on PLOs #3 (social structure and culture) and #4 (empirical study). PLO #1

(sociological imagination) had the lowest pre-test and post-test score, and just barely met our numerical expectation. The average score on the post-test was only 67.4%, which failed to meet our expected average score of 70%. Still, the average score did improve by 16.8%.

In the right hand half of the table we see that 73.6% of students answered five or more questions correctly, which exceeded our numerical expectation. In the pre-test, 17% of students could not answer more than two questions correctly and none answered all eight correctly; in the post-test, only 4.3% of students could not answer more than two questions correctly and 5% of students got all eight correct.

d. Direct Evidence from Annual Reviews

The Annual Evaluations the past four years have primarily focused on PLO #1 (sociological imagination) and PLO #4 (empirical study).

PLO#1 (Sociological Imagination) was assessed in Spring 2010 in SOC 444: Social Movements. SOC 444 is an elective course that introduces students to the theories and case studies within the field of social movements. At the conclusion of the course, students in SOC 444 completed a survey that asked questions on: a) applying the sociological imagination; b) how society impacts them (as individuals) and specific movements; and c) whether they perceived an improvement in their writing and presentation skills as a result of the course.

Table 5 shows the results from students' efforts to first define the sociological imagination and then apply it to specific case studies covered during the course. Only a few students were able to offer an excellent definition, while most students offered either very vague explanations or seemed to simply guess. On the other hand, the examples from the case studies showed more awareness about phenomena that link individuals, movements, and society.

Table 5. Applying the Sociological Imagination

	<i>Excellent</i>	<i>Average</i>	<i>Poor</i>	<i>Blank</i>
<i>Define “Sociological Imagination”</i>	3	4	3	0
<i>Provide an example for each case study</i>	17	8	9	6

PLO #1 was also assessed in Spring 2011 in SOC 497: Senior Seminar. Early in the semester, students completed a course assignment titled “Sociological Biographies” which asked them to “write a 5-6 page paper that uses the sociological perspective to discuss three key events in either your own life or the life of a fictional character. Each event should represent a different social institution (e.g. family, education, and religion).” The professor developed a rubric to evaluate the assignments, which measured the significance of chosen events, the analysis of those events, organization of the paper, and mechanics.

The “Sociological Biographies” rubric incorporated two relevant measures: the Choice of Events (each of which had to relate to a different social institution) and the Analysis of Events (wherein students articulated how society shapes individual lives). Students were scored on the quality of their work based on four categories: Excellent, Good, Fair, and Poor. Table 6 shows the distribution of student scores on these two measures, including the average score for each.

Table 6. Sociological Biographies

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Avg. Score
<i>Choice of Events (20pts)</i>	8	4	0	0	18.2
<i>Analysis of Events (60pts)</i>	5	6	1	0	51.5

PLO#4 (empirical study) has been assessed twice in SOC 310 (Research Methods). SOC 310 requires students to conduct and present their own research and is directly relevant to *PLO#4*. The course objective for SOC 310 reads as follows:

The research reports we read in journals or hear about in the news reflect the outcomes of a research process which involves a series of critical decisions.

Researchers must limit their topics, pose relevant questions, define their concepts, formulate testable hypotheses, develop means of measuring variables, design samples, and decide how to collect information. The purpose of this course is thus threefold: (1) to provide students with an in-depth introduction to that decision-making process; (2) to provide the knowledge necessary to be an informed consumer of research; and (3) to encourage the development of the skills required to conduct good research.

Students are required to come up with their own research questions, produce research proposals, present their research proposals, conduct their own research, present their research, and submit final written research reports. All of the students that complete and pass the course meet this requirement. All of the students pose their own sociological research questions, formulate hypotheses, and propose and conduct research to test their hypotheses. They demonstrate their work through oral as well as written research reports.

In Spring 2009, SOC 310 students took three similar tests consisting of twenty questions at different points in time throughout the semester. The three tests assessed students' ability to comprehend, analyze, synthesize, and apply empirical data. For example, students were given particular research scenarios and were asked to identify causal relationships, independent and dependent variables, positive and negative associations, and so on.

From the results of the three tests (Table 7), we can conclude that students are meeting PLO #4. Students' average scores at three different points during the class indicate that students' knowledge of research improved over time. The average score for the test that students took on

the first day of class was 10.6, but by the end of the course, the average score was 17.3. The highest score possible was 20. The most common score at the very end of the course was also an A while the most common score before the course began was an F.

Table 7. SOC 310 Student Test Scores (N = 11)

	<i>Pre-Test (1/8/09)</i>	<i>Post-Test (4/7/09)</i>	<i>Final Test (4/27/09)</i>
<i>Mean</i>	10.6	15.2	17.3
<i>Median</i>	10	14	18
<i>Mode</i>	10	13	19
<i>Range</i>	9	7	5

In Spring 2012, we assessed PLO #4 again in SOC 310, this time using a content analysis of a research paper written by the students. The papers were graded for the course by Rebecca Kim. They were then evaluated by Elizabeth Essary, using a rubric that contained eight components relevant to PLO #4: Abstract, Research Question, Literature Review, Methodology, Sampling, Results/Discussion, Tables/Charts, and References.

We expected to find that 75% of the papers would score at Fair or Good for each component of the rubric, and that no paper would have more than one component missing. The results of the analysis met the numerical expectations: only one student paper sampled was rated as “poor” on any component, while the remaining three papers were rated as “Good” or “Fair” on all components; no papers were missing any components. There is variation in which components students completed well and which were only satisfactory. Students most commonly faced problems discussing their results in a clear and concise way, or they would neglect to highlight a finding in a theoretically-informed way. While no methodology section was perfect, the students were generally able to correctly describe what they had done, potential biases, problems encountered, and sampling.

e. Focus Groups

Three students enrolled in SOC 497: Senior Seminar in Spring 2012 (Kathryn Malone, Kristen Tinsley, and Vanessa Wiles) agreed to organize and conduct a focus group for Sociology majors. The focus group provides Indirect Evidence of student satisfaction with the sociology program. The focus group included questions about classes, professors, the major as a whole, and the discipline. After the focus group, the organizers wrote a report that summarized the discussion and offered suggestions for ways to improve the Sociology major at Pepperdine.

Over the past year, the faculty have discussed how the size, teaching, and course offerings of sociology have impacted students. So we expected to see these themes mirrored in the focus group. Specifically, we expected students to be happy about the small size of the major and the teaching, but dissatisfied with the course offerings. The key topics and corresponding quotes from the report are provided in Table 8 below.

Table 8. Summary of Quotes from Sociology Focus Groups

Topic	Summary Quotes
Structure	“Majors found the new sociology major lacking structure. ... [They] noted that it would be nice to have multiple classes to choose from to fulfill each major requirement under a larger, core, umbrella-like topic.” “Students were concerned with consistency of scheduling within the major, the main issue being not always knowing when classes were going to be offered again.”
Size	“Students like that the major is small because it offers students the chance to specialize in multiple areas of study by adding a double major or a minor onto the Sociology major.” “The number of students within the major was also discussed as a both a positive and negative attribute. Students like the more personal feel of the learning environment when the major is small. ...However, they mention that the morale and discussion may benefit from recruiting more majors.”
Classes	“Students agreed that Intro to Sociology was a helpful, broad-sweeping introduction to the major and that it gave them the working knowledge that they would draw from in their later classes. Social Theory was also noted as a great foundation for study as it laid a further groundwork while reinforcing the major ideas from the Intro class.” “Similarly, Methods was deemed useful by Sociology majors. While they acknowledge the class was difficult, they found it applicable in other classes.”

Professors	<p>“Sociology majors discussed how well suited each of the core required class teachers were to his or her subject area. . . . Students overall were very pleased with the current professors and their methods of teaching.”</p> <p>“Sociology majors did, however, mention the desire to regulate the quality and number of adjunct professors.”</p>
Other	<p>“...[T]hey wanted a better connection between the sociology major and the social work minor. . . . “[T]hey might want to be able to add an emphasis to the declared sociology major.”</p> <p>“...[W]hen they were asked about their favorite projects in Sociology, overwhelming the answers referred to research papers.”</p> <p>“Students discussed the lack of ability to sell the Sociology major to future employers.”</p>

The discussion of the focus group met our expectations regarding general views on size, teaching, and course offerings. The report provided more detailed information about why students were satisfied or dissatisfied and how they would propose to improve the Sociology major. They report having learned from the courses and the professors, but are uncertain on how to sell that knowledge or skill on the job market. They also seem to enjoy the flexibility and content of the major, but want more consistency in the course offerings and more ways to add employment-related substance to their major.

4. Faculty and Staff

The degrees, rank, and courses taught by the four tenured or tenure-track professors in the Sociology Program are listed in [Appendix G](#). Charles Hall, Dean of International Programs, is a tenured faculty member in Sociology who occasionally teaches a section of SOC 200: Introduction to Sociology. Joel Fetzer, Professor of Political Science, teaches three courses cross-listed with Sociology. These faculty members are from specialization areas that are broadly dispersed across the domain of Sociology. The list of publications since the 2007 program review attests to the high productivity of the program faculty ([Appendix H](#)).

All four faculty members hold membership in appropriate professional organizations, including the American Sociological Association, the Association for the Sociology of Religion, the Association for Asian American Studies, the Pacific Sociological Association, the Religious Research Association, and the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion. In addition, the Sociology faculty have served on the Editorial Boards of several professional journals, including *Journal of Integrated Social Sciences* (Robin Perrin), *Religions* (Rebecca Kim), *Society of Asian North American Christian Studies* (Rebecca Kim), and *Mobilization* (Elizabeth Essary).

Several faculty members have been honored for their teaching and professional accomplishment. Elizabeth Essary was named Seaver Fellow in Social Science (2009 – 2013). Rebecca Kim currently holds the Frank R. Seaver Professor in Social Sciences (2010-present), and Robin Perrin is a past recipient of that honor (2001-2005). Robin Perrin was also honored with Pepperdine's Howard A. White Award for Teaching Excellence in 2004. Rebecca Kim was also included in the ninth edition of *Who's Who Among America's Teachers*, 2005.

Rebecca Kim has received several external grants in recent years, including the John Templeton Foundation, USC Center for Religion and Civic Culture (\$10,000 in 2010-12), the Religious Institutions Grant Award from The Louisville Institute (\$39,877 in 2009-2010), the Institute for the Study of American Evangelicals, Wheaton College (\$1,000 in 2009-2010 and \$5,000 in 2005-2006), the Lilly Endowment (\$20,000 in 2008-2009), the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Administration for Children and Families Office of Community Services (\$4,000 in 2007).

The faculty evaluation policy is described in detail in the Seaver College Rank, Tenure, and Promotion (RTP) Handbook. In short, the formal evaluation system includes a third-year pre-tenure review and a tenure review. In each of these cases, five designated peers evaluate the

candidate on the basis of a review of a submitted portfolio and observation of the candidate's classes; the Chair of the Social Sciences Division makes an independent review, based on the materials available to the designated peers and the candidate's student course evaluations. The RTP Committee (which is comprised of one member from each of the eight divisions of Seaver College and one pre-tenured at-large member) examines the submitted materials, the five peer reviews, and the chair review, before making a recommendation to the Seaver College Dean, who independently examines the same materials. Although the pre-tenure reviews do not get directed to the university level, the tenure recommendation of the RTP committee and the recommendation of the Dean are ultimately directed to the University Tenure Committee, the Provost, the President, and eventually the Board of Regents. Faculty members receive a similar review when applying for promotion to Full Professor, and a similar review after every five years. Finally, faculty members are evaluated on a periodic basis by the Chair of the Social Sciences Division, who is responsible for recommending step increases to the Dean, whereby a person progresses through nine different ranked steps (i.e., Levels I, II, and III for Assistant professor, Associate Professor, and Professor), and they are evaluated on an annual basis by the Chair of the Social Sciences Division.

The course grades assigned by tenured and tenure-track faculty members in the Sociology program tend to be lower than those in Seaver College in general. For example, the mean GPA assigned by tenured/tenure-track Sociology faculty in Fall 2011 was 2.77, which is considerably lower than the mean Seaver-wide GPA of 3.16 for that semester.

Course evaluations written for the Sociology program faculty members tend to be strong. The course evaluation form has two main sections: questions related to The Course (e.g., "The course tests and evaluations are appropriate in content and difficulty" and "The course has

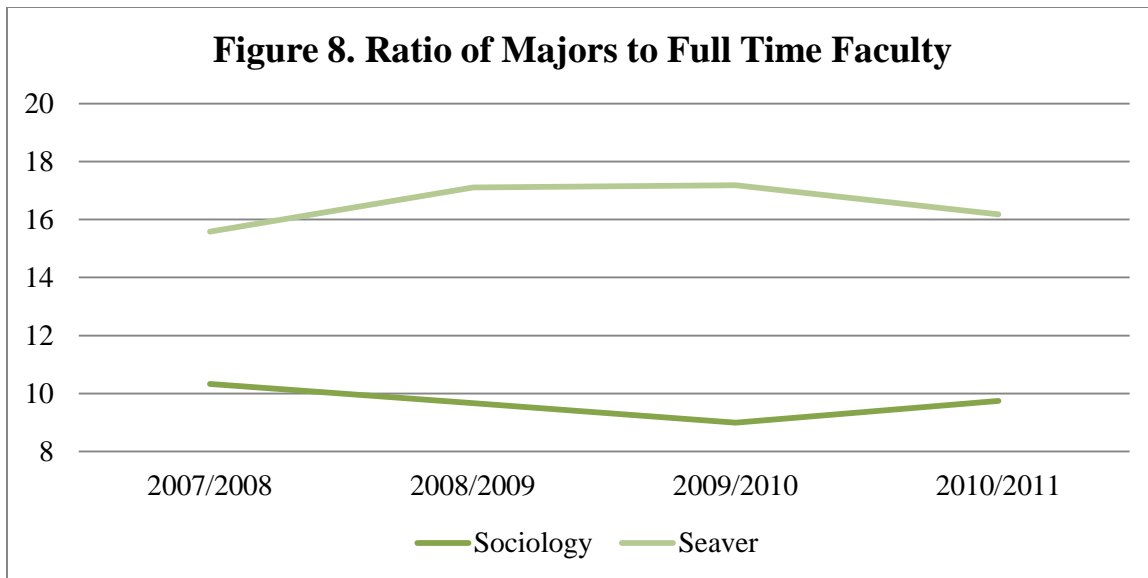
increased my knowledge or understanding of the subject.”) and questions related to The Professor (e.g., “The professor shows interest and enthusiasm for teaching the course” and “The professor presents course material in a clear and engaging manner”). Each item is rated on a 5-point Likert scale, allowing summary scores for each item, for *The Course*, and for *The Professor*. Although college-wide comparison data are not available, the last four semesters yielded mean scores of 4.27 (Fall 2010), 4.05 (Spring 2011), 4.23 (Fall 2011), and 4.09 (Spring 2012) for *The Course* in classes taught by tenured or tenure-track faculty members, and mean scores of 4.49, (Fall 2010), 4.29 (Spring 2011), 4.48 (Fall 2011) and 4.26 (Spring 2012) for *The Professor* in classes taught by tenured or tenure-track faculty members.

B. Evidence of Program Viability and Sustainability

1. Demand for the Sociology Program

As we discuss above, Sociology is a small major. At the same time, the overall demand for sociology classes at Seaver is relatively high. Indeed, the question of “demand” depends, at least in part, on the kind of data we choose to consider.

Sociology is the smallest major in the Social Science Division, with 54 majors in Fall 2011. Furthermore, as we saw above in Table 2, the Seaver Sociology major is small relative to other similar institutions. As we can see in Figure 8, the Ratio of Majors to Full Time Faculty, although growing in recent years (from 9 in 2009/2010 to 13.5 in 2011/2012), is below the Seaver average of 15.72, and is the lowest in the Social Science Division.



Although Sociology is a relatively small major, the Sociology program services a large number of students. We have several Sociology Minors, “Emphasis” students from the Communication Division, and “Concentration” students from the Liberal Arts Major. In addition, both SOC 200: Introduction to Sociology and SOC 250: Introductory Statistics fulfill General Education requirements. As a result, while our Ratio of Majors to Full Time Faculty is low, the overall demand for sociology classes is quite high.

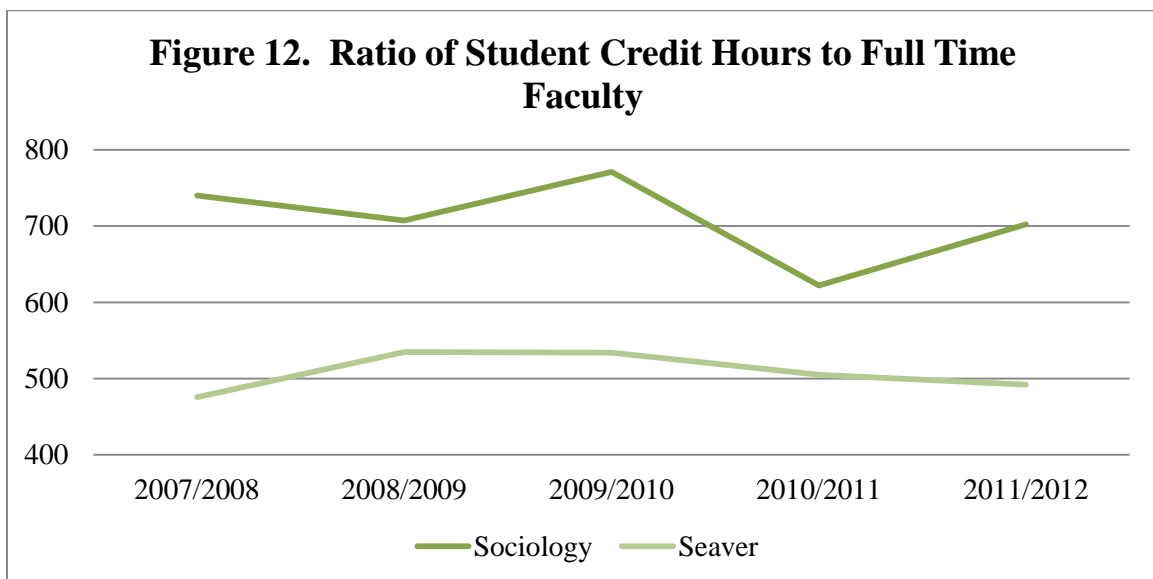
We see this reflected in Table 9 and Figure 9 below. Table 9 is a summary of class sizes in Sociology over the past three academic years. It is worth noting that in the last three semesters, the mean class size for Sociology has been in the upper 30s. Keep in mind that the mean is a measure of the number of total students per class, and is greatly influenced by the fact that Soc 200 is typically taught in a large lecture section once a year, with between 150 and 200 students. The median class size is considerably smaller, typically in the 20-30 range.

Table 9: Sociology Class Sizes, 2009 – 2012*

Term	0 to 15 Students	16 to 25 Students	26 to 44 Students	45 to 99 Students	100+ Students	Mean class Size*
Fall 2009	2	3	1	0	1	47
Spring 2010	6	3	3	3	0	24
Fall 2010	3	5	2	0	1	35
Spring 2011	5	4	6	0	0	25
Fall 2011	1	4	1	1	1	43
Spring 2012	2	2	5	0	1	35
Fall 2012	2	4	2	0	1	35

* Note: Includes all classes with a SOC prefix, including cross-listed courses. In the case of a cross-listed course (e.g., SOC 250/Posc 250), the total enrollment in the class is counted.

Another way to measure the demand for sociology classes is the Ratio of Student Credit Hours to Full Time Faculty (Figure 9). Here we see, once again, that Sociology faculty members are serving a substantially higher number of students than their counterparts Seaver-wide. In fact, by this measure, Sociology is servicing the largest of students in the Social Science Division. The mean Ratio of Student Credit Hours to Full Time Faculty over the last five years in Sociology (mean = 708.5) is higher than Economics (mean = 706.7), Political Science (mean = 633.7), and Psychology (mean = 567.8).



2. Resource Allocation

a. Size of Faculty. The data presented above on the size of the Seaver Sociology faculty are somewhat mixed. On the one hand, the ratio of majors to full-time faculty is below the Seaver average, and is the lowest in the Social Science Division. On the other hand, mean class size in Sociology is above the Seaver mean, and is the highest in the division.

b. Administrative and Support Staff. The Sociology program is part of the Social Sciences Division, which also includes the Economics, Political Science, Sociology, Industrial/Organizational Psychology, and Social Work programs. As a result, it receives division staff support: an Office Manager (Bob Escudero), an Administrative Assistant (Suzan Ton), a Technology Liaison (Chris Low, whose responsibilities are shared with the Religion Division), and seven student employees. No concerns have been voiced to suggest that this staff is insufficient for the needs of the program.

c. Physical Space. The Social Science Division has priority use of six classrooms, ranging in seating from 24 to 54, and access to the large lecture hall, Elkins Auditorium, for general education classes. Sociology students have access to a dedicated computer lab with fifteen workstations. These workstations have SPSS and the Microsoft Office packages available for statistical analyses and for preparing papers and posters for presentations. No concerns have been voiced to suggest that this physical space is insufficient for the needs of the program.

d. Financial Resources. The salary structure for faculty in the Sociology program follows the general guidelines that are fully described in the Seaver College Faculty Handbook. In short,

Seaver uses a fixed salary structure; although stipends may be awarded for specific duties, the base salary of all people at the same rank (e.g., Assistant Professor II or Associate Professor III) is standardized.

The Social Science Division funds each faculty member's professional travel to two conferences per year, one national and one local. In addition, it sponsors professional travel for any student who is presenting research at a professional conference by paying up to \$300 in costs related to the trip.

Limited internal support for research is available through four programs. First, the Academic Year Undergraduate Research Initiative provides \$500 of funding for the expenses of a student's independent research project. Second, the Summer Undergraduate Research program provides a \$1,000 stipend for faculty members supervising a student's summer independent research project, and provides the student with a scholarship to cover the cost of 4 units of credit. Third, the Dean's Research Grant provides awards up to \$1,500 for faculty research projects. Finally, the Seaver Research Council awards grants that range from \$1,000 to \$4,500 for faculty research. For additional expenses, faculty members are expected to apply for external support.

III. Summary and Reflections

The two general purposes of this report were to summarize results from the Annual Program Reviews conducted over the past four years, to provide a foundation for the Annual Program Reviews over the next four years, and to provide a basis for a review that will be written by an external reviewer. In addition, several specific purposes were articulated, as described below.

1. *Student Composition.* The number of declared majors in the Sociology program has grown in the past several years. While there is a substantially larger proportion of female students than male students, it is a racially and religiously diverse group of students.
2. *Comparison of Curriculum and Size with Peer and Aspirational Institutions.* In general, the curriculum offered in the Sociology program is comparable to those offered by our peer and aspirational schools. In comparison to peer institutions, the Seaver Sociology Program has few Sociology majors and fewer full-time Sociology faculty.
3. *High Impact Practices.* Students who complete the sociology major will have engaged in several HIPs, such as a writing intensive course (SOC 310) and a senior capstone course (SOC 497). In addition, students have the opportunity to engage in many other HIPs, such as independent or collaborative research with a professor or an internship.
4. *Achievement of Program Learning Outcomes.* Through an iterative process, data has accumulated and will continue to accumulate to measure the degree to which the four PLOs are being met.
5. *Qualifications of Faculty.* The eight primary faculty members in the Sociology program have appropriate backgrounds for their positions and broadly cover the main domains of the field. This is a highly productive group of professors, who have been honored for high quality teaching and research, and who are active in their service to relevant professional organizations.
6. *Demand for Program.* While the Sociology major is relatively small, the demand for Sociology class is relatively large. Sociology faculty members are each serving a substantially higher number of students, relative to faculty size, than counterparts Seaver-

wide. This results in class sizes that often exceed the size of the small, intimate classes described in Seaver's student recruitment materials.

7. *Sustainability of Program.* The support staff, physical space, and research funding is generally sufficient to serve the needs of the program.

IV. Goals, Action, and Quality Improvement Plans

We conclude with a series of Action Items which reflect both our own reflections on this 5-year review and the *External Reviewer Report* ([Appendix I](#)).

A. Action 1: More consistent and more predictable elective offerings.

1. Evidence to Support the Action

The external reviewer concluded that the sociology requirements and course offerings are appropriate. However, the elective courses are not offered as frequently as they could/should be. The external reviewer concluded: "It seems that the department does not offer a wide enough array of electives that explore substantive areas of sociology on a regular basis."

With only 4 full-time faculty, and a high GE load, several of our upper-division classes are can only be offered every other year at best. Two classes – Sociology of the Family and Social Stratification – have not been offered in several years, and we have no plan to offer either in the near future. The only obvious solution is to begin teaching in Elkins every semester, but we hate to go this route. Currently, we are in Elkins every other semester.

2. Expected Outcome

One thing we can do, and should do, is more consistently follow our 4-year plan. We have not done an effective job of communicating this 4-year plan with our students, nor have we consistently followed this plan. If a class can only be offered every other year, but students know

when it will be offered, we can plan accordingly. Needless to say, with sabbaticals and overseas appointments, there will inevitably be disruptions in the 4-year plan. Yet we can certainly try to more consistently follow this plan. Another option is to begin to think about bringing in adjuncts from time to time to help ensure we follow the 4-year plan.

3. Timeline for Action

May 1, 2013

4. Type of Action

Communicating more clearly with students about our 4-year plan is Resource-Neutral. Bringing in more adjuncts, however, would require additional resources. (Although, if we only do this for times when we have sabbaticals, overseas appointments, or course load reductions, adjuncts are budgeted in.)

B. Action 2: Additional Tenure-Track Hire

1. Evidence to Support the Action

The ideal solution to the course offerings problem above (Action 1) would be to add a fifth full-time faculty member. The external reviewer concluded: “The self-study report indicates that the sociology faculty are serving a substantially higher number of students than their counterparts Seaver-wide and when compared to other departments in the Social Science Division. Presumably this is because of the high number of students served in the GE intro class. It seems reasonable then to prioritize sociology as the social science department most in need of a new full-time faculty line.”

We are not prepared to argue, as the external reviewer did, that we are “the social science department most in need” of a new tenure track hire. Indeed, as we acknowledge in the report, if

one measures “need” in terms of the “Ratio of Majors to Full Time Faculty” (Figure 8), we are the least needy in the Social Science Division. However, if one looks at the “Ratio of Student Credit Hours to Full Time Faculty” (Figure 12), we are indeed the most stretched in the Social Science Division. And, importantly, on each of these measures of demand, sociology is well above the Seaver average, which supports the argument for an additional person.

Finally, if we compare ourselves to other peer and aspirational institutions (Table 2), we see that we have the fewest full time faculty on the entire list. Indeed, one could argue that we *should* have a much larger major (both in terms of the number of majors and the number of faculty). We would argue that this relative weakness could be addressed, at least in part, with one more tenure-track hire.

2. Expected Outcome

If we had one more tenure track hire we (1) could consistently offer the classes we need to offer; (2) could move out of Elkins and offer smaller sections of Introduction to Sociology; (3) would presumably be a much stronger program and could more effectively recruit students.

3. Timeline for Action

Hopefully one day....[I suspect this answer will not satisfy. Since we just hired Dan, maybe say something about a year of adjustment, so put out an ad for 2014-15?]

4. Type of Action

Resources required.

C. Action 3: Consider whether to ask Payson Library to purchase Sociological Abstracts or SOCINDEX.

1. Evidence to Support the Action.

As discussed in the external review, the students in the focus group, and three of the four full-time faculty, mentioned that the current library database options are limited for full text access to sociology articles.

2. Expected Outcome

Dan Morrison has volunteered to look into our current data base limitations. Among the issues he will consider include (1) whether we do, in fact, need to add a new database; (2) whether the cost is feasible; (3) which data base, Sociological Abstracts or SOCINDEX, is the better option;

3. Timeline for Action

Summer, 2013

4. Type of Action

“Resource-Necessary.” We will know more about whether the cost is feasible after Dan investigates.

D. Action 4: Provide students with more opportunities to connect with Seaver graduates working in the community, information on career options for sociology majors, and structured access to internship opportunities.

1. Evidence to Support the Action

According to the external reviewer, “students expressed the desire for more opportunities for career planning and development. Students would like to gain more information on possible careers well-suited for sociology majors, internship opportunities, and opportunities to connect with community organizations.”

2. Expected Outcome

One solution, suggested by the external reviewer, is to create an Internship course. Presumably this course could be taught by an adjunct who would coordinate internship options and monitor student progress. As for the more general issue of “career planning,” we sociologists need to be more actively involved in exposing our students to potential careers and successful people.

3. Timeline for Action

Robin Perrin has agreed to investigate the possibility of an internship course (possibly for Fall, 2015). Elizabeth has agreed to investigate ways to connect our students with career options and ideas (Fall, 2014).

4. Type of Action

Many of these efforts will be “Resource-Neutral.” Creating an adjunct Internship course, however, is “Resource-Necessary.”

E. Action 5: Engage more students in research

1. Evidence to Support the Action

Compared to our colleagues in Psychology, we have done very little research with students. The external reviewer noted that the students who had done research described with excitement their participation in research projects: “One student described an independent student project that was funded by the university with help from faculty, and another described a faculty project that a student was brought in on which resulted in a publishable paper.”

2. Expected Outcome

We acknowledge the value of student research, and we recognize the need to be more actively involved. The benefits are obvious for students who plan to pursue graduate work in the

social sciences, yet even for students who do not plan to do graduate work the experience can be invaluable

3. Timeline for Action

Summer, 2013

4. Type of Action

“Resource-Neutral,” although whenever possible we should pursue funding through the Academic Year Undergraduate Research Initiative (AYURI) or the Summer Undergraduate Research Program (SURP).

F. Action 6: Create a Sociology Honors Program.

1. Evidence to Support the Action

One of the recommended changes from the External Reviewer was to “create a sociology honor society where motivated students can organize their own community-based research projects and events and/or service projects with community-based partners.” When we consider this recommendation, along with our desire to engage more students in independent research, it might be time to consider whether we want to propose an honors program.

2. Expected Outcome

We envision something similar to the honors program in Political Science. For our top students this would be a fantastic opportunity. On the other hand, with only 8-15 graduates per year, we might not find sufficient demand for an honors program.

3. Timeline for Action

Rebecca Kim has agreed to investigate the need of an honors program.

4. Type of Action

Resource-Neutral.

Appendix A. Sociology Program Degree Requirements and Course Descriptions

Sociology Major (38 units)

- SOC 200 Introduction to Sociology (GE) (3)
- SOC 250 Introductory Statistics (GE) (4)
- SOC 310 Introduction to Research Methodology (PS, RM, WI) (4)
- SOC 391 Sociological Theory (4)
- SOC 497 Senior Seminar (3)

Students must take 20 additional upper-division units in sociology. Up to four units can be taken as SOC 590, SOC 595, or SOC 599.

Sociology Minor (19 units)

A total of 19 units in the area of sociology is required for the sociology minor. Students should take SOC 200 (Introduction to Sociology) in the typical first year program, and four upper-division sociology courses. No more than eight units from this minor may be counted toward fulfilling any requirements for the political science major.

Sociology Courses

SOC 200 Introduction to Sociology (3)

A general introduction to the history, principles, and methodology of sociology intended for non-sociology majors. Emphasis is on introducing students to the sociological analysis of human groups, institutions, and societies. (GE)

SOC 250 Introductory Statistics (4)

A systematic introduction to descriptive and inferential statistics, including both parametrics and nonparametrics. (Equivalent to POSC 250.) (GE)

SOC 310 Introduction to Research Methodology (4)

A survey of basic scientific methodology with attention given to philosophy of science, research design, data collection and analysis, report writing, application, and research ethics. Prerequisite: SOC 200. (SOC 310 is equivalent to POSC 310.) (PS, RM, WI)

SOC 391 Sociological Theory (4)

A systematic analysis of major contributions to the field of sociological thought with the main emphasis on the sociological theories in current use.
Prerequisite: SOC 200.

SOC 421 Deviant Behavior and Social Control (4)

An analysis of different types of deviant behavior focusing on why people commit deviant acts, consequences of deviant behavior, creation of deviant labels, and control of deviant behavior.

SOC 422 Urban Development (4)

An interdisciplinary study of the structures, functions, needs, and problems of urban areas. Analysis of the political, economic, sociological, and psychological aspects of the city, which is viewed as microcosm of urbanized mass society. (SOC 422 is equivalent to POSC 437.)

SOC 424 Social Psychology (4)

A study of the relationship between the individual and the social environment, including such topics as the social factors in personality development, attitude formation, social interaction, etc.

Prerequisite: SOC 200.

SOC 426 Sociology of Religion (4)

Sociological analysis of religious belief and behavior with special attention given to the relationship of religious institutions to the larger society.

Prerequisite: SOC 200.

SOC 427 Sociology of the Family (4)

The family as a social institution and its relationship to other social institutions. Attention is also given to the developmental approach to the study of the family.

Prerequisite: SOC 200.

SOC 431 Social Stratification (4)

A study of the ways in which people are divided and ranked in all societies and how these structured inequalities affect one's life chances. Special attention is given to the causes and effects of social stratification in the United States.

SOC436 Crime and Delinquency (4)

A sociological study of crime and delinquency. Emphasis is placed on the history of criminology; the nature, definition, and measurement of crime; theories of causation; administration of the criminal and juvenile justice systems; and rehabilitation.

SOC 442 Culture and Society (4)

This course looks at a variety of cultural forms (such as norms, language, and fashion) and attempts to understand their role in society. The class will consider different definitions of and theoretical approaches to "culture." This includes a look at how culture shapes and reflects major social cleavages, individual and collective identities, and social institutions.

SOC 444 Social Movements (4)

This class adopts a sociological approach to social movements to understand why they emerge, how they operate, and what their effects are. Students will be introduced to the dominant theoretical perspectives and the most compelling case studies in the field, including the civil rights movement and global networks of activists.

Prerequisite: SOC 200.

SOC 446 Global Society and Its Citizens (4)

A survey of the theoretical perspectives on and substantive trends of globalization in terms of political, cultural, and economic processes and outcomes. The focus is on how "the global era" differs from previous historical periods, what processes account for such changes, how globalism poses new challenges for states and international actors, and what the meaning of a global society is for us, its citizens.

SOC 450 Race and Ethnic Relations (4)

Attempts to understand the struggles and conflicts that frequently characterize inter-group relations as well as the struggles of specific racial and ethnic groups in the United States and around the world.

Prerequisite: SOC 200 and SOC 310 or approval from instructor.

SOC 455 Immigration Politics and Ethnic Relations (4)

This course examines immigration politics and relations between immigrants

and the native-born in the United States, France, and Germany. Major topics include immigration history since the 1880s, immigration and citizenship policy, and public attitudes toward immigration. The class also covers the economic and ethical aspects of immigration and political asylum. (SOC 455 is equivalent to POSC 555.)

SOC 460 Public Opinion and Voting (4)

Examines the causes and effects of individuals' socio-political attitudes and voting in the United States. Laboratory work teaches secondary analysis of quantitative social surveys. A previous course in introductory statistics is strongly recommended. (SOC 460 is equivalent to POSC 560.)

SOC 462 Sociology of Education (4)

This course discusses emerging theoretical and methodological approaches to the field of sociology of education. These emerging perspectives focus on the scholarship of class, race, gender, and the state in education. With a broad focus on how schools relate to society and how individuals and groups interact with schools, the course will cover the development of education, access to schooling, a study of school outcomes, and policy implications of research in the sociology of education.

Prerequisite: SOC 200. (WI)

SOC 475 Intermediate Statistics and Computer Applications (4)

A survey of advanced inferential statistics, including partial and multiple correlations, regression, and advanced analysis of variance procedures. Also included is an introduction to computer statistical packages used in the social sciences with emphasis upon SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences).

Prerequisite: SOC 250. (SOC 475 is equivalent to PSYC 442.)

SOC 497 Senior Seminar (3)

Designed as a capstone experience for senior Sociology majors focusing on methodological, theoretical, and substantive issues of interest in the field. Must be taken during the last semester of the senior year or with consent of instructor.

SOC 590 Research in Sociology (1-4)

Consent of the divisional chairperson is required.

SOC 592 Selected Topics (1-4)

SOC 595 Supervised Field Work (1-4)

All field work must be approved and supervised by the sociology field work coordinator. Students must have completed all the minimum requirements for the major, and must have at least junior standing. Consent of the divisional chairperson is required. Cr/NC grading only.

SOC 599 Directed Studies (1-4)

Consent of divisional chairperson required.

Appendix B. Alignment Map for the Sociology Program Learning Outcomes

Course Number	PLO#1	PLO#2	PLO#3	PLO#4
200	I	I	I	I
250	I			D
310	I			M
391	D	M	D	
421	D	D	D	
422		D	D	
424	D	M		
426	D	D	D	
427			D	
431				
436	D	D	D	
442		D	M	
444	D		D	
446		D	D	
450			M	D
455		D	D	
460	D	I		M
462		D	D	
475		D	D	
497	M	M	M	
592 (Gender)	D	D		M

Note: I = Introduce; D = Develop; M = Master

PLO 1: Demonstrate the use of the sociological imagination, “the ability to recognize the relationship between large-scale social forces and the actions of individuals”

PLO 2: Identify and apply the major macro- and micro-level theoretical paradigms in sociology

PLO 3: Explain how societies work with regards to social structural and cultural forces

PLO 4: Design and conduct an empirical study that answers a sociological question

Appendix C. Pepperdine University Institutional Educational Objectives

	Knowledge/ Scholarship	Faith/ Heritage	Community/Global Understanding
Purpose	ILO#1 Demonstrate expertise in an academic or professional discipline, display proficiency in the discipline, and engage in the process of academic discovery.	ILO#2 Appreciate the complex relationship between faith, learning, and practice.	ILO#3 Develop and enact a compelling personal and professional vision that values diversity.
Service	ILO#4 Apply knowledge to real-world challenges.	ILO#5 Respond to the call to serve others.	ILO#6 Demonstrate commitment to service and civic engagement.
Leadership	ILO#7 Think critically and creatively, communicate clearly, and act with integrity.	ILO#8 Practice responsible conduct and allow decisions and directions to be informed by a value-centered life.	ILO#9 Use global and local leadership opportunities in pursuit of justice.

Table 10. Alignment Between Pepperdine IEOs and Sociology PLOs

	ILO #1	ILO #2	ILO #3	ILO #4	ILO #5	ILO #6	ILO #7	ILO #8	ILO #9
PLO #1	✓			✓			✓		
PLO #2	✓			✓			✓		
PLO #3	✓		✓	✓			✓		
PLO #4	✓			✓			✓	✓	

PLO 1: Demonstrate the use of the sociological imagination, “the ability to recognize the relationship between large-scale social forces and the actions of individuals”

PLO 2: Identify and apply the major macro- and micro-level theoretical paradigms in sociology

PLO 3: Explain how societies work with regards to social structural and cultural forces

PLO 4: Design and conduct an empirical study that answers a sociological question

Appendix D. Alignment Between ASA Goals and Seaver Sociology PLOs

	PLO 1	PLO 2	PLO 3	PLO 4
ASA 1	✓			
ASA 2		✓		
ASA 3				✓
ASA 4				✓
ASA 5		✓	✓	
ASA 6			✓	
ASA 7	✓		✓	
ASA 8		✓		
ASA 9		✓	✓	
ASA 10	✓		✓	
ASA 11		✓		✓
ASA 12	✓			

PLO 1: Demonstrate the use of the sociological imagination, “the ability to recognize the relationship between large-scale social forces and the actions of individuals”

PLO 2: Identify and apply the major macro- and micro-level theoretical paradigms in sociology

PLO 3: Explain how societies work with regards to social structural and cultural forces

PLO 4: Design and conduct an empirical study that answers a sociological question

Appendix E. Sociology Course Offerings at Seaver and our Peer (P) and Aspirational (A) Institutions*

	Seaver	Calvin (P)	Occidental (P)	Pomona (P)	San Diego (P)	Baylor (A)	Carleton (A)	Notre Dame (A)	Wake Forest (A)
Introduction to Sociology	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Statistics	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓
Research Methods	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓
Sociological Theory	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓
Deviant Behavior	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓			✓
Social Psychology	✓					✓		✓	
Urban Development	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Sociology of Religion	✓	✓				✓		✓	✓
Sociology of the Family	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Social Stratification	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	
Crime and Delinquency	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Culture and Society	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Social Movements	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Race and Ethnic Relations	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Immigration	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	
Sociology of Education	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓
Sociology of Gender	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Independent Studies	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓
Death, Dying, and Bereavement	✓	✓				✓			✓
Globalization	✓		✓	✓	✓			✓	
Medical Sociology	✓								
Senior Seminar	✓			✓		✓	✓		
Social Control					✓				
Sociology of Sport		✓	✓		✓	✓			✓
Social Gerontology		✓			✓	✓			✓
Internship in Sociology		✓			✓				
Demography and Population		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Social Problems		✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓

Table continued on next page...

	Seaver	Calvin (P)	Occidental (P)	Pomona (P)	San Diego (P)	Baylor (A)	Carleton (A)	Notre Dame (A)	Wake Forest (A)
Immigrant Youth & Youth Cultures			✓						
Sociology of Food			✓						
Punishment and Corrections			✓		✓				
Environmental Sociology			✓					✓	
Sexual Behavior			✓		✓			✓	✓
Mass Media and Consumer Culture			✓						
Classical Sociological Theory			✓	✓	✓				
Contemporary Sociological Theory			✓	✓	✓				
Quantitative Research Methods				✓	✓				
Qualitative Research Methods				✓	✓		✓		
Sociology of Violence				✓			✓		✓
Women's Roles in Society				✓		✓		✓	
Sociology of Poverty				✓					✓
Sociology of Emotions				✓					✓
Sociology of Art				✓					✓
Chicanas and Latinas in the U.S.				✓					
Power and Inequality					✓			✓	✓
Juvenile Delinquency and Urban Gangs					✓	✓			✓
Law and Society					✓		✓		✓
Women and Health							✓		
Economy and Culture							✓		
Gender Roles and Violence								✓	✓
Approaches to Conflict Transformation								✓	✓

*Note: The course titles are not always the same across schools, but an effort has been made to align similar topic areas. Courses offered by only one institution were omitted from this list.

Appendix F. Schedule of Annual Reviews for Sociology PLOs

A student who successfully completes the Sociology major is expected to be able to:	Previous Assessments	Next Assessment
Demonstrate the use of the sociological imagination, “the ability to recognize the relationship between large-scale social forces and the actions of individuals”	2009/2010 2010/2011 2011/2012	2014/2015
Identify and apply the major macro- and micro-level theoretical paradigms in sociology	NA	2011/2012
Explain how societies work with regards to social structural and cultural forces	NA	2011/2012
Design and conduct an empirical study that answers a sociological question	2008/2009 2011/2012	2014/2015

Appendix G. Faculty in the Sociology Program

Faculty Member	Degree	Position	Courses Taught (2007 – 2012)	Hire Date
Elizabeth Essary	Ph.D. in Sociology; Duke University	Assistant Professor	Introduction to Sociology Culture and Society Global Society and Its Citizens Social Movements Gender in Society Senior Seminar	2008
Rebecca Kim	Ph.D. in Sociology; University of California, Los Angeles	Associate Professor	Introduction to Sociology Sociological Theory Research Methods Race and Ethnic Relations Social Stratification	2003
Dan Morrison	Ph.D. in Clinical Sociology; Vanderbilt University	Assistant Professor	Introduction to Sociology Medical Sociology	2012
Robin Perrin	Ph.D. in Sociology; Washington State University	Professor	Introduction to Sociology Introductory Statistics Senior Seminar Sociology of Religion Deviant Behavior	1992

Appendix H. Publications by Sociology Faculty Members, Fall 2007 to Present*

*Note: This list includes all publications, including books, referred articles, book chapters, encyclopedia entries, and book reviews. Faculty members' names are in bold.

- Barnett, O. W., Miller-Perrin, C., & **Perrin, R. D.** (2011a). Abuse of elders. In S. J. Ferguson (Ed.), *Shifting the center: Understanding contemporary families* (4th edition). New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Barnett, O., Miller-Perrin, C., & **Perrin, R. D.** (2011b). *Family Violence Across the Lifespan: An Introduction* (3rd Edition). Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.
- Bishop, J., & **Morrison, D.R.** (2011). The Roman Catholic Church, Biopolitics, and the Vegetative State. *Christian Bioethics*. 17, 165-184.
- Brothers, K.B., **Morrison, D.R.** & Clayton, E.W. (2011). Two Large-Scale Surveys on Community Attitudes Toward an Opt-Out Biobank. *American Journal of Medical Genetics*. 155A, 2982-2990.
- Casper, M.J., & **Morrison, D.R.** (2010). Medical Sociology and Technology: Critical Engagements. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*. 51, S120-S132.
- Essary, E.** & C. Ferney. Forthcoming. "Pomp and Power, Performers and Politicians: The California Theatre State." *American Journal of Cultural Sociology*.
- Essary, E.** (2010). Review of *Serbia's Antibureaucratic Revolution: Milosevic, the Fall of Communism and Nationalist Mobilization* (2008), by Vladislavjević, Nebojša. *Mobilization*. 15:103-104.
- Ferney, C., & **Essary, E.** (2009). "The Golden State Theatre State: Lessons from California Elections." *Political Sociology: States, Power and Societies*, Summer Issue, Official Newsletter of the Political Sociology Section, American Sociological Association
- Kim, R.** (2008). *Crossing the Ethnic Divide: The Multiethnic Church on a Mission*. [Review of the book *Contemporary Sociology*, by K. Garces-Foley]. 37 (2).
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- Kim, R.** (2009). Assimilation and Acculturation. In *Asian American History and Culture: An Encyclopedia*. New York: M.E. Sharpe Publishing Group.
- Kim, R.** (2009). "Deliverance and Submission: Evangelical Women and the Negotiation of Patriarchy in South Korea." *Pastoral Psychology*, 60 (4), 593-600.
- Kim, R.** (2009). Deliverance and Submission: Evangelical Women and the Negotiation of Patriarchy in South Korea. [Review of the article in the *Journal of the Society of Asian North American Christian Studies*, by K. H. Chong].
- Kim, R.** (2009). Getting Saved in America: Taiwanese Immigration and Religious Experience. [Review of the article in the *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, by C. Chen]. 48 (1).
- Kim, R.** (2009). Korean Americans and Religion. In *Asian American History and Culture: An Encyclopedia*. New York: M.E. Sharpe Publishing Group.
- Kim, R.** (2009). Sacred Assemblies and Civic Engagement: How Religion Matters for America's Newest Immigrants. [Review of the article in the *Journal of American Ethnic History*, by F. Kniss & P. D. Numrich]. 29 (1).
- Kim, R.** (2009). Reprint: "Second-Generation Korean American Evangelicals: Ethnic, Multiethnic, or White Campus Ministries?" In *Asian American Christianity Reader*, *Sociology of Religion* 65 (1), 19-34.
- Kim, R.** (2010). "Academic Achievement Differences between Cambodian and Vietnamese Children: Cultural and Structural Explanations." In J. H. Lee (Ed.), *The Cambodian American Experience: Histories, Communities, Cultures and Identities*. IA: Kendall/Hunt Publishing.
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- Kim, R.** (2011). A Faith of Our Own: Second-Generation Spirituality in Korean American Churches. [Review of the book *Sociology of Religion*, by S. Kim].

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- Miller-Perrin, C., & **Perrin, R. D.** (2008). "Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997." In C. Renzetti and J. Edleson (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of Interpersonal Violence* (pp. 7-8). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
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- Morrison, D. R.**, & Casper, M.J. (2012). Intersections of Disability and Trauma studies: Lessons from TBI and Obstetric Fistula. *Disability Studies Quarterly*. 32, 2.
- Morrison, D. R.**, & Isaac, L.W. (2012). Insurgent Images: Genre Selection and Visual Frame Amplification in IWW Cartoon Art. *Social Movement Studies*. 11, 61-78.
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Appendix I. External Reviewer Report

Dr. Steve Rouse
Chair, Social Science Division
Pepperdine University

Dear Dr Rouse:

I enjoyed spending time with Pepperdine's sociology department on January 14 and 15, 2013. My overall impression is that after some unstable and difficult years of transition, the sociology department now has a highly effective team of faculty and is well positioned for the future. The current full-time faculty are very strong in the classroom and have cultivated deep and very positive relationships with students. The department is also quite productive with regards to scholarship. As an added plus, the atmosphere of the department is warm, collegial, and collaborative. As a whole the sociology department seems to be in a very healthy place.

The following summary is based on my focus group interview with 6 sociology majors, my individual meetings with each of the full-time faculty, and my reading of the self-study prepared by Robin Perrin.

Program Learning Outcomes and Assessment

The four PLO's of Pepperdine's sociology department provide measurable goals for students in mastering the core competencies for practicing sociology. The discipline of sociology explores the effects of social structures and institutions in the lives of individuals by applying theoretical constructs and empirical research. The four PLO's that the department has developed fully reflect the core concerns of the discipline.

Based on the self-study prepared by Robin Perrin, the department is using a wide array of measures to assess whether or not students are adequately meeting the PLO's. The department uses eight different assessment procedures to measure student learning, including two pre-and post test designs, two surveys measuring understanding of sociological principles, content analysis of student written work, a survey instrument which allows for comparison to national survey data, and focus group interviews with students. This is an impressive arsenal of assessment measures that, taken as a whole, yields a comprehensive and accurate picture of the extent to which students are achieving the learning outcomes. Based on the results of these assessment procedures, students are indeed showing competence in the core practices of the discipline of sociology. Overall, the program is therefore quite successful in producing graduates that understand the core principles of the discipline of sociology and are able to apply them effectively.

Curriculum

The curriculum offered by the sociology department adequately reflects the core areas of the discipline of sociology. In the core courses required of all sociology majors (intro, statistics,

theory, research methods) students learn the central skills and knowledge of the discipline. The senior seminar class is a fantastic addition, providing a small graduate school-like setting to wrestle with serious theoretical and methodological issues. Many sociology departments do not have this and it should be seen as a valuable distinctive of this department.

With regard to electives, the courses listed in the catalog include the major substantive areas in the discipline of sociology. With the exception of sociology of gender, which I understand is now being taught as a special topics class and will soon become part of the catalog, the curriculum does not contain any glaring holes. However, it seems that many of these elective courses are not offered very regularly. Based on my own interviews and on those conducted for the self-study, there seems to be dissatisfaction among both students and faculty as to the number and regularity of electives offered.

The lack of consistent elective offerings in the department seems to result primarily from the high GE load that the department carries through the introduction to sociology class. In any given semester, the GE intro class accounts for roughly half of the teaching load of the faculty as a whole. When adding the core required major courses, which need to be taught once a year in order for students to graduate on time, there are few faculty units left for electives. In practice, therefore, it seems that the department does not offer a wide enough array of electives that explore substantive areas of sociology on a regular basis.

The ideal solution to this would be to add a fifth full-time faculty line to allow for more regularly offered electives. The self-study report indicates that the sociology faculty are serving a substantially higher number of students than their counterparts Seaver-wide and when compared to other departments in the Social Science Division. Presumably this is because of the high number of students served in the GE intro class. It seems reasonable then to prioritize sociology as the social science department most in need of a new full-time faculty line.

Other potential ways to increase the number of electives offered all have their drawbacks. One solution might be to offer more large sections of intro, thus freeing up for faculty for electives. Larger sections of intro, however, are less ideal because of the inability to generate meaningful discussion, and the difficulty of students getting to know professors. In fact one of the recommendations mentioned in my interviews by both students and faculty was that smaller sections of intro should be taught in order to recruit more majors to the department. Another solution might be to hire adjuncts to teach elective classes. This also has its drawbacks as adjunct faculty vary in quality and typically have less ability to connect with students outside of class.

Student Experiences and Learning Environment

Students are overwhelmingly positive about the faculty in the sociology department. In my focus group interviews, students enthusiastically expressed appreciation for the ability of professors to engage them and to create safe spaces for open dialog about difficult and controversial issues. Students enjoy the small class sizes in sociology which allow for in-depth discussions. They were also very appreciative of their ability to connect with faculty outside of the classroom. Faculty invite groups of students to their homes, out for meals, and to their

offices regularly to engage informally in academic and personal discussions. This seems to be one of the primary strengths of this department: the willingness and ability of faculty to build strong and deep relationships with students. Students repeatedly expressed that the thing they love most about the department is the high-quality faculty.

Students also appreciate the willingness of faculty to supervise independent student research projects. Several students in the focus group described with excitement their participation in research projects outside of the normal curriculum. One student described an independent student project that was funded by the university with help from faculty, and another described a faculty project that a student was brought in on which resulted in a publishable paper. They also mentioned that faculty will regularly e-mail them articles or research findings that are related to their interests. All of this is in addition to their overwhelmingly positive reports of classroom learning.

There were two primary areas in which students would like to see improvement in the department. First, as mentioned above, students would like to see a greater variety of regularly offered electives. In particular, students mentioned wanting additional courses on gender, globalization, stratification, and race/ethnicity. Second, students expressed the desire for more opportunities for career planning and development. Students would like to gain more information on possible careers well-suited for sociology majors, internship opportunities, and opportunities to connect with community organizations. When I asked “if you could change one thing about the sociology department, what would it be?” four out of six students in the focus group stated they would like more career planning and development opportunities.

Possible ways to introduce career-oriented opportunities to majors without compromising the academic program or unduly burdening faculty could be 1) having an adjunct –taught internship class as an elective, 2) holding a career night with sociology alumni and other professionals in sociology friendly fields, and 3) introducing service learning components in some of the elective courses which utilize partnerships with community-based organizations.

Besides these two primary concerns, another concern that was raised was the inadequacy of the current library database for accessing full-text articles in sociological journals. Faculty also expressed this to be a problem. Other than the library database, students expressed that they are well supported in terms of classroom space, computer labs, and other resources.

Faculty Quality

As mentioned above, the faculty is the primary strength of the sociology department. All four members of the faculty have Ph.D’s from high-quality research institutions. All are well qualified to teach the courses they are currently teaching, and all four are highly effective teachers and committed to the success of students, as evidenced by the awards they have won and by the rave reviews given by students. In addition, the faculty has produced an impressive and lengthy list of high-quality books, chapters, refereed journal articles, book reviews, as well as numerous external research grant awards. The department is quite productive in the area of research given the teaching load at Pepperdine.

The sociology faculty seems to be well supported in ongoing professional development in the form of travel money for conferences, opportunities for course release to pursue research, and reduced course loads for pre-tenure faculty. Because it is a small department, however, there may be some limitations regarding the fostering of a research-promoting culture. For example, each faculty member is pursuing quite different research interests, so it is difficult to collaborate or share knowledge of research opportunities. As a result, there may be a need, particularly among younger faculty, for more information-sharing and motivation regarding ideas on how to secure internal and external research grants, how external grants can be used at Pepperdine, and to which journals it would be appropriate to submit a particular article. Perhaps a semi-regular informal research meeting within the department could allow for these kinds of conversations to take place.

Diversity

In terms of race/ethnicity, the sociology major is slightly more diverse than the Pepperdine undergraduate population as a whole. African American students, in particular, make up a much higher percentage of sociology majors (22%) than they do the overall undergraduate population at Pepperdine (6.7%). The sociology major is also more female (75%) than the undergraduate population as a whole (54%). Given that the major is highly female, it is encouraging that two of the four full-time faculty are female. If a fifth full-time line is approved in the future I would strongly recommend that female candidates of color be aggressively recruited for that position.

The women faculty in the department feel well supported within the department and that they are valued and respected by their fellow sociologists. They do, however, appear to face difficulties and obstacles that their male colleagues do not face. They feel that undergraduates in the classroom, particularly male students, sometimes give them less respect and are less likely to acknowledge their full authority as professors compared to their male colleagues. They are also troubled by the lack of females in leadership positions on campus, which sends a message that there are obstacles for advancement for women at the university. They also mentioned that a clear parental leave policy and having on-campus child-care would improve the environment for women on campus.

With regards to diversity in the curriculum, students in the focus group mentioned that they desire more regularly offered elective classes exploring gender, race, ethnicity, and social inequality. These courses are important not only for the interests of sociology majors but also for the needs of women students and students of color throughout the campus. These types of courses tend to improve the campus climate for underrepresented groups, as important issues of inequality and justice are highlighted. It would be beneficial for majors and the campus as a whole if the department could find a way to regularly offer more of these types of electives, because the sociology faculty does an excellent job of addressing these issues in a sensitive and enlightening way.

Program Administration and Support

The sociology department seems to be well supported in terms of administrative resources. Administrative staff, classrooms, computer software, and computer labs seem to be meeting the needs of the department quite adequately.

The exception to this is the need for a more complete library database to access full text journal articles. As mentioned earlier, the student focus group and three of the four full-time faculty mentioned that the current library database does not allow full-text access for many needed sociology journals and that this has hindered their ability to do research. The library apparently will get articles for students and faculty that aren't available full text, but this is less than ideal because of the time it takes to retrieve the articles. I recommend that Sociological Abstracts, SOCINDEX, or another larger database be purchased by the library to allow for greater access to full-text articles.

Student recruitment to the sociology major could possibly be improved. Both students and faculty expressed that they would like to see the major grow in numbers. Students in the focus group suggested the following ideas for spreading the word about the sociology major:

- Have a representative of the department speak at freshman orientation
- Promote the major as a possible double major—flexible curriculum allows double majoring without losing time for graduation.
- Offer more small sections of intro so potential majors could get to know professors (although this would make it more difficult to offer electives).
- Somehow promote the major through the social action and justice colloquium or social justice clubs on campus.

Overall Program Summary and Recommended Changes

In summary, as mentioned numerous times above, the strength of the sociology department is in its full-time faculty. Students are meeting the learning goals of the department and express great satisfaction with their professors and their ability to create dynamic and engaging learning environments both inside and outside the classroom. They particularly appreciate the effort and time that faculty take to engage them personally and facilitate independent learning opportunities. The faculty as a whole is also quite productive with regards to scholarship given the teaching load at Pepperdine. This team of scholars seems well positioned to have years of future success, both in teaching their own students and in making significant contributions to the larger academic community.

The primary weaknesses of the program seem to be a relative lack of regularly offered elective courses and the lack of structures in place for student career planning.

I propose the following recommendations to address the major findings of my review of the sociology program (in order of priority):

- 1) *Add another full-time faculty line in order to regularly offer more elective courses , particularly in the areas of gender, race/ethnicity, and social inequality . This recommendation for another faculty line is consistent with the self-study report, which also identified the need for*

another faculty member. The self-study report cited both the lack of regularly offered electives and the large student load that sociology faculty are carrying compared to other departments. Both of these problems would be solved with a fifth full-time line. In the absence of another full-time line, there are other ways to offer more electives, such as offering fewer larger sections of intro, or having more adjunct-taught electives. These solutions, however are less than ideal because having larger intro sections would further limit the program's ability to recruit new majors, and the quality of adjunct teaching and advising is difficult to ensure.

2) *Develop structured opportunities for students to engage in career planning.* Effective options that would not overly strain current faculty might be:

- a) Offer an adjunct-taught internship course where students can connect with potential employers.
- b) Hold a career night where alumni, potential employers, and professionals in sociology-friendly careers could speak with students.
- c) Offer service learning opportunities in existing courses through partnerships with community organizations.
- d) Create a sociology honor society where motivated students can organize their own community-based research projects and events and/or service projects with community-based partners.

3) *Request that the library purchase a more comprehensive sociology database such as SOCINDEX or Sociological Abstracts with access to full-text journal articles.*

4) *Hold semi-regular informal research meetings within the department* where faculty can discuss their current research projects, strategies for securing external research funding, and strategies for publishing results.

5) *Devise a plan to recruit more majors.* Possibilities could include advertising and representing the department at freshman orientation events, the social action and justice colloquium, and various social justice and action clubs on campus.

6) *Advertise and widely distribute the department's multi-year plan for when elective courses are planned to be offered.*

In my view these recommendations, if implemented, would further strengthen an already healthy and strong department, and ensure continued growth and success in the future.

Brad Christerson
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