**Annual Assessment Report for 2020-2021 AY**

Reports completed on assessment activities carried out during the 2020-21 AY will be due September 30th 2021 and must be e-mailed to the Director of Assessment, Dr. Douglas Fraleigh (douglasf@csufresno.edu).

Provide detailed responses for each of the following questions within this word document. Please do NOT insert an index or add formatting. Furthermore, only report on two or three student learning outcomes even if your external accreditor requires you to evaluate four or more outcomes each year. Also be sure to explain or omit specialized or discipline-specific terms.

Department/Program: \_\_Sociology\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Degree \_BA\_\_\_\_ Assessment Coordinator: \_\_Dr. Amber Crowell\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. Please list the learning outcomes you assessed this year.

We assessed Learning Outcomes (LOs) 4 and 5:

* 1. *utilize quantitative and qualitative techniques for the purpose of interpreting andcommunicating research results*
	2. *demonstrate information literacy in evaluating social phenomena in socioculturallydiverse communities and perceiving patterns and relationships within them.*
1. What assignment or survey did you use to assess the outcomes and what method (criteria or rubric) did you use to evaluate the assignment? **Please describe the assignment and the criteria or rubric used to evaluate the assignment in detail and, if possible, include copies of the assignment and criteria/rubric at the end of this report.**

To assess LOs 4 and 5, we used student final projects from SOC 175: Quantitative Research Methods in Sociology, as described in our assessment plan:

*Method 1: Final paper/project will be used; a representative sample of 15-20 papers/projects will be drawn and scored using our rubric by at least two faculty.* SOC 175 serves as the department’s capstone course. Students conduct independent research projects using quantitative research methods and secondary survey data. Their final papers include all of the components of a complete research paper including an introduction, a literature review, empirical hypotheses, a description of data and methodology, empirical results, and conclusions. Two faculty independently scored 20 student papers using the rubric that was designed by our department (see attached).

1. What did you learn from your analysis of the data? Please include sample size (how many students were evaluated) and indicate how many students (number or percentage instead of a median or mean) were designated as proficient.

We evaluated 20 randomly selected student papers drawn from three sections of SOC 175 that were taught in Spring 2021 using our rubric (see attached). Because SOC 175 is an upper-division course, our benchmark is that 80% of the class obtains a minimum score of 3/5. We found that 16 out of the 20 student papers scored a 3 or higher out of 5 possible points, based on averaging the scores from the two faculty evaluators. This exactly meets our benchmark of 80%.

The average score for one faculty evaluator was 3.6 and for the other it was 3.7. The first faculty evaluator gave a lowest score of 2.5 and a highest score of 5, while the second faculty evaluator gave a lowest score of 1.75 and a highest score of 5.

Below is a summary from the first faculty evaluator:

*Generally, the essays demonstrated a clear understanding of the process and procedures involved in the quantitative analysis of social phenomena. Overall, the papers were wellorganized and well-written. Some students did not clearly define/explain their terminology (how is “open-minded” defined; what is “life after death”? is that physical or noncorporeal?), and others did not discuss obvious connections between items on their variable lists (education, income and social class). Some papers’ conclusions were very brief and might have been improved by a more detailed summary discussion. But many other papers were thorough, thoughtful and impressive analyses.*

Below is a summary from the second faculty evaluator:

*We evaluated student papers in 4 areas, scoring them based on the content and purpose of the paper (their ability to articulate a thesis statement and main points), use of appropriate methodology and data analysis, source of evidence, and mechanics, format, and syntax. The student papers scored high on use of appropriate methodology and data analysis, demonstrating proficiency in selecting variables and the appropriate methodological techniques to test hypotheses and address research questions. Students scored lower on content and purpose and source of evidence, primarily because they struggled to build a framework around their research question with clear purpose and a grounding in the literature. They were stronger on primary evidence (i.e. their analysis of the data), but they were weaker on secondary evidence (i.e. the literature review).*

1. What changes, if any, do you recommend based on the assessment data?

While most student papers showed proficiency in data analysis and the use of quantitative techniques (LO 4), they were less proficient in drawing out conclusions from secondary evidence and identifying patterns and relationships (LO 5). These weaknesses were most evident in the literature review and conclusion sections.

To address this, I reiterate one of the recommendations that was made in our 2019 report, which is that the literature review should be taught in our writing-intensive courses, particularly in SOC 130W, as an exercise in synthesizing information and theory construction. I also recommend that the methods courses, and in particular SOC 175, devote more time and attention to framing a research problem, including how to articulate a clear thesis statement with well-defined concepts. The student papers that showed less proficiency in general had issues with drawing connections between the research question, the literature, and the findings to develop strong conclusions about our social world. These connections are a key purpose of the methods courses and should be prioritized to address LO 5.

1. If you recommended any changes in your response to Question 4 in last year’s assessment report, what progress have you made in implementing these changes? If you did not recommend making any changes in last year’s report please write N/A as your answer to this question.

Due to the pandemic, we did not submit a report in 2020. Our last report was in 2019.

Findings from that report were shared with the Sociology faculty, and faculty who teach SOC 176 received the recommendations that they give more direction to students on what constitutes enough data and that there be a greater emphasis on the literature review. This is related to the third recommendation, which was to evaluate how the literature review is handled in SOC 130W, our writing course. On this point, we wrote in our 2019 report that we would revisit this after our assessment of SOC 175. Having now done so, we are going to have more intentional conversations as a department around teaching the literature review in our writing courses.

1. What assessment activities will you be conducting during the next academic year?

We will be conducting our Pipeline Analysis by evaluating Degree Progress Reports (DPRs). Two faculty members will examine DPRs to ascertain if LOs 3 and 6 (as well as the broader Goals A and B) were met. Any patterns of failure or course repeats (implying that LOs 3 and 6 were not achieved) will be identified across several years of upperdivision students and/or alumni. If such patterns (resulting in extended time to graduation) are identified, we will examine curricula and course sequencing to help students move through the required courses.

These activities will be our method for assessing LOs 3 and 6 as they relate to Goals A and B.

*Goal A: The department will provide students with information about key sociological concepts and issues so they will be able to comprehend and apply major classical and contemporary theoretical perspectives. As a result students will be able to:*

  *3. demonstrate knowledge of the assumptions and applications of major theorists*

*Goal B: The department will improve students’ research skills so they can analyze data, examine social phenomena, and create well-organized written and oral reports. As a result, students will be able to:*

*6. compile coherent, well-organized written and oral reports applying sociological analysis*

1. Identify and discuss any major issues identified during your last Program Review and in what ways these issues have or have not been addressed.

The sociology Program has made progress on our Program Review Action Plan in the following areas:

* 1. **Work to improve tenure density and hire at least three new tenure-track faculty—all of whom must be qualified to teach in at least one the core areas (inequality, classical or contemporary theory, quantitative methods, and qualitative methods) and at least one of which should be qualified to provide guidance to the Food Recovery Network Chapter.**

The Department of Sociology is currently in the process of hiring a new tenure-track Assistant Professor of Sociology to begin in Fall 2022 who can teach in at least two of the upper-division core areas. This will improve our tenure density and ensure that we meet the curricular demands of our fast-growing majors.

* 1. **The Department should consider declaring impaction, depending on the level of University and College support necessary to continue to provide the rigor and quality of education to our growing number of sociology majors and minors.**

While we cannot officially declare impaction, we have taken steps to address our fastgrowing majors by implementing a minimum GPA requirement of 2.5 to declare a major in Sociology. As mentioned above, we are also currently conducting a search for a new tenure-track hire.

* 1. **Maintain course caps.**

The Department of Sociology has successfully managed to maintain course caps despite our fast-growing number of majors. The Department treats this as a very important issue and does its best to balance demand with the necessity of keeping course caps low enough that faculty are able to teach effectively in our upper-division courses.

* 1. **Increase the number of computers at the university with SPSS and N-Vivo software and add an additional computer lab for the College of Social Sciences (two computer labs—S176 and SS202 are insufficient to accommodate the number of sections that need computer labs as well as provide time for students to access the computers for homework and study time).**

While demand for space is so far an unresolvable issue on our campus, the Department of Sociology continues to advocate for more and improved computer lab space. We recently submitted an infrastructure proposal to upgrade the SS 202 computer lab. Faculty are also relying more on Apporto, the virtual computing lab, to teach their methods courses. This has greatly benefited students during the pandemic because they do not need to physically access a campus computer lab to use data analysis software, and will continue to support students who need to use University-licensed software for their coursework but cannot always be on campus or access the computer labs.

* 1. **The Department needs to better articulate the educational purpose of its servicelearning, community-engagement, and Humanics offerings and connect these with the sociology program as a whole, including the incorporation of this area into the Program Review and SOAP.**

The Humanics program has a new director, Dr. Justin Myers, who is currently engaged in strategic thinking around how to recruit for Humanics and define the goals of the Humanics program to align with the Sociology program as a whole.

# Student Outcomes Assessment Rubric – Department of Sociology

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|   | **1** **Unacceptable**  | **2** **Developing**  | **3** **Competent**  | **4** **Proficient**  | **5** **Exemplary**  |
| **Content and purpose**  | Minimal attention to content and purpose; errors of fact; lacks thesis statement/research question  | Some attention to content and purpose but reflects incomplete understanding  | Main points presented with limited details; some critical thinking present  | Main points developed with quality supporting details and evidence  | Insightful, cogent analysis of or response to a prompt; compelling, persuasive arguments  |
| **Use of appropriate methodology and data analysis**  | No discussion of methodology or data analysis  | Minimal discussion of methods and analysis  | Adequate application of research methods and data analysis  | Clearly competent application of research methods and data analysis  | Correct, wellapplied methods used; consistently clear explanation and justification for data analysis  |
| **Source of evidence**  | Fails to demonstrate competence; few or unsubstantiated sources used  | Some attempt to use sources; overuse of quotations or paraphrases  | Meets minimum requirement for use of sources; some information may lack relevance  | Consistent use of appropriate, relevant sources to develop and support ideas  | Skillful, thorough, ethical and correct use of high-quality, credible, relevant sources to develop and support ideas  |
| **Mechanics, format, and syntax**  | Pervasive pattern of errors in grammar, structure, word usage; lack of organization  | Lacks coherent structure; repeated, serious errors in grammar and word usage  | Most grammar, structure and syntax correct; some errors remain  | Few errors in grammar, structure, or syntax; may be somewhat less fluid or complex  | Clear organizational structure; excellent grammar and word usage with few, minor, nonrepeated errors  |

Student Paper #1

ng 29.1 (2009): 15-22. Web.