

**Department of Sociology and Social Services
2009-2010 CAPR Annual Report**

Self Study

A number of strategic objectives were articulated in our April 27, 2007 Five Year Plan. Selected objectives are repeated below with comments on progress during the 2009-2010 academic year:

Objective 1: *To maintain the departments' standing as one of the reputable departments of the university.*

Comment: This goal was to acknowledge a concerted effort on the part of the department's faculty to successfully pursue external research and training grants, and to increase monographs and publications in peer review journals. None of our four 2009-10 research and training grant applications was funded but there were four journal publications.

Objective 2: *To strengthen the department's teaching, research, supervision and multidisciplinary contributions.*

Comment: We lost of one regular faculty member to retirement without FERP (Schonborn) and five lecturers due to budget cuts. These loses have been devastating. We no longer have sufficient faculty (regular and lecturers) to cover our curriculum and are doing all that we can to fulfill our commitments to teaching and service, without losing our ability to engage in extracurricular projects such as grant writing and research. For instance, one of our faculty members is engaged in ongoing research on the Afghan community. His research has gained media attention. Another member of our faculty is a member of an organization that worked with state legislatures to pass AB1317. This is a bill that addresses medical risk in egg donation. These types of activities enhance our ability to teach inequality, research and theory. We are concerned that recent changes will dramatically impact our ability to continue in these efforts. Because of constraints on teaching, we asked to and received a suspension on admissions to our Master's degree program.

Objective 3: *Provide a supportive and stimulating intellectual environment.*

Comment: The effective loss of half the department's teaching faculty due to budget cuts and retirements present time, financial and human resource constraints. While we strive to continue to engage in extracurricular activities, our ability to do so is under threat. Increased class sizes present another threat to our capacity to provide a stimulating intellectual environment. For example, several faculty members have omitted class activities such as field trips and group presentations since these activities become unwieldy in larger classes.

Objective 4: *Increase the department's teaching and research capacity in global/international studies.*

Comment: Two of our lecturers whose contracts were terminated were core to our global/international efforts in lieu of regular faculty. We now no longer have the capacity expand teaching and research. A tenured member of the faculty developed and taught a graduate course on globalization in 2008. She was prepared to offer this course to graduate students on a continuing basis. However, freezing admissions to our graduate program has forced her to put these plans on hold. Furthermore, she planned to develop a new course on gender and globalization that would be offered to undergraduates. However, the plan to submit this new course to the Curriculum Committee is now on hold since lecturers are not available to cover her other course offerings. Finally, we are unable to offer several of our other courses that have an international focus, since the faculty who teach these courses must cover courses typically taught by lecturers.

Objective 6: *To serve communities beyond the university at the local, national and international levels.*

Comment: We no longer have the capacity to do more than teach our core curriculum. No new community initiatives have been initiated. Two of our regular faculty members were hired to advance the social service option of our program. Both of these faculty have PhDs in Social Work and, thus, have the necessary skills to cultivate relationships with community-based organizations that serve underserved populations. The loss of lectures that typically cover social service courses has resulted in a workload shift for regular faculty who service this option. This shift in focus and attendant time constraints impedes their ability to devote time to developing and sustaining networks with local community-based organizations.

Objective 7: *To reform, develop and revise current requirements and procedures to more effectively meet the vision set out in this strategic plan.*

Comment: We no longer have the capacity to carry out our current strategic plan.

Assessment Results

In our 2007-2008 Annual Report we noted that we attempted to assess our courses through an exit survey in 2006-2007. This method did not measure the depth and breath that constitutes the goals of a sociology major. This experience convinced us that a capstone course was necessary to properly assess our work. We had hoped to propose and offer this course once we had additional faculty to offer it along with our current curriculum. Since 2006-2007, we have had three faculty searches aborted due to the university's budget constraints and have further lost more regular faculty. This academic year, we lost half (five) of our lecturers as well. The capstone course has not been

developed. If it was developed, it would have to be taught by a regular faculty member. This would further erode our ability to cover our core curriculum.

Despite the increased workload, this past year we developed a survey instrument with a set of questions that measure theory and methods. While, an essay exam would provide us with a more thorough assessment tool for theory, time constraints force us to use a survey instrument.

Statistics from Planning and Enrollment

In 2007 our new university President requested that we increase enrollments to generate higher budgets for the university and CLASS. This department made a concerted effort to do so. We accompanied this as reflected by department majors despite declining numbers of regular faculty. We did so by increasing the number of lecturers who taught for us and increased our core class sizes, except research methods which are physical constrained by available computers in our labs. The results are as following:

Table 1
Sociology Undergraduate Enrollment
(Fall Majors, Bachelor)

Year	Headcount
2005	304
2006	350
2007	358
2008	361
2009	375

Not shown here is the impact of the 2009-2010 loss of faculty and lectures on our ability to sustain the fifth highest enrollment in the largest college in the university. We can no longer sustain 375 majors and the number of classes necessary to support them. Due to far more students trying to get into fewer and fewer classes, there had been tremendous pressure to further increase class sizes. To do so would further erode the quality of instruction and remaining faculty's ability to reach and work with individual students who need extra attention. Underneath our high enrollments is a severely diminished capacity to teach all of these students. We have gone from being able to offer in any regular academic quarter 34 classes to just 18. Prior to 2009, our major requirements were already minimal with just two options, eight core courses and flexible electives.

One outcome of budget cuts and loss of lecturers is a rapid increase in student advisement. Only regular faculty members advise students. The loss of ability to offer second and night core classes has thrown student planning into chaos. Many students simply cannot get into the classes they need to complete their major and graduate. They come to faculty for advisement in lieu of dropping and stopping out and attempting to transfer. This is

frustrating experience for regular faculty because there is little we can do to address their concern.

Looking Ahead

In 2010-2011, we will lose an additional regular faculty member who has come to the end of her FERP. This department chair has early-retire but will continue in FERP. We will begin the fall 2010 quarter with five regular faculty members and two retired faculty – 7 in total. In contrast, there were 15 regular sociology department faculty members in 1990. The difference has been covered by up to 14 lecturers; we will start the fall quarter with only 5 lecturers. We estimate that given the small number of current faculty we can only sustain 250 majors, not 375. We are going to need assistance on how to advise students who are having to leave the university for lack of courses. We expect our student headcount to begin dropping in the coming year.

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