

Response to External Review Report, Department of Sociology and Sexuality Studies: Sociology

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Introduction

Two external reviewers, Dr. Dana Collins (CSU Fullerton) and Dr. Maxine Craig (UC Davis) visited the Department of Sociology and sexuality Studies to evaluate the undergraduate program in Sociology. The faculty in our department enthusiastically agreed with the assessment and recommendations about our program and the specific challenges and opportunities the reviewers outline. In the following pages, we respond to the external reviewer's report and discuss our plan for incorporating their recommendations.

Reviewer Recommendations

The recommendations for the program in Sociology reflect some of the ongoing work we have been involved in and, now, continue to prioritize. We will address each of these recommendations, and their sub-themes, in subsequent paragraphs. In order, they include:

- Delivering the Curriculum and Advising Post-impaction
- Integrating Sociology and the Sexuality Studies MA
- Growing the major with sufficient resources
- Developing a Formal Mentoring Program for Incoming Faculty

Delivering the Curriculum and Advising Post-Impaction

In April 2017, Sociology faculty put together a curriculum committee made up of T/TT faculty, and adjunct faculty. Since that time, the committee has addressed some of the most effective ways to deliver the curriculum and assist students in achieving individual and departmental goals of maximizing time to graduate (TTG). One of the first goals was, as the reviewers note, to relax the core courses sequencing requirements for Theory and Methods. As introductory courses, faculty voted to no longer make theory a requirement for methods, but instead, a suggestion. This reduces the required courseload from four semesters to three, with a potential for graduation in four years. Currently, the committee has turned its attention to SOC 300 and creating a set of writing objectives for the Bachelor's program, with corresponding writing skills introduced in SOC 300 and developed throughout the remaining four required courses. They plan to round out the semester by meeting with all of the SOC 300 faculty and additional faculty in April and May. As the reviewers note, for a long time, T/TT faculty taught the GVAR course because of the commitment to teaching in the discipline, as agreed upon by the department. However, as suggested, adjunct faculty have begun to teach SOC 300 GVAR more regularly since Fall 2016, with new adjuncts teaching the course in the Fall.

Another important observation by the reviewers is that the core courses (SOC 300, 370/1, 392, 393/4, except one (SOC 500 series), are all 4-unit courses, which often means a more demanding course load. The class meet for long periods of time and because they are required courses, don't always match the instructors research and professional endeavors (electives often line up more

with faculty expertise). With often the same faculty teach these courses regularly, questions of equity and teaching have surfaced. As suggested, we will begin discussing equity in the department, regarding teaching loads, modes of teaching, and specific course, at the April 2018 retreat. We hope to continue these conversations and as we work on delivering and revising the curriculum and creating a more equitable environment for all faculty in the program.

One of the recommendations from the ARPC in 2004, was to develop a formal advising process for undergraduate students. The following year, in 2005, we developed an advising system that aligned incoming students with faculty, according to last name, i.e. Barbosa: A-Br, etc. Our most recent reviewers suggest that we again examine our advising process by assigning individual faculty (1-2) as undergraduate advisors for termed, rotating positions. Each faculty member would receive a course release to take on this task fully and allow other faculty to engage in professional development, teaching and service. Though we haven't discussed this fully, we will explore this as an option upon further discussion and agreement, as this will contribute to some of the mentoring and professional development suggestions from the external reviewers.

Further Integration of Sociology with Sexuality Studies

Another significant recommendation from the reviewers addresses our 2012 merger with Sexuality Studies. Since our merger, we have been challenged to integrate the departments (programs) more fully, with suggestions from the College and University to develop it more into one, seamless department. Though we have faced these challenges as best we can, our primary "solution" has been to have more SOC faculty teaching in the Sexuality Studies MA program. However, the external reviewers astutely noted that this has taken a significant toll on SOC faculty and the overall program offerings in the Sociology program. The reliance of Sexuality Studies on SOC faculty to teach in the program weakens our ability to deliver the undergraduate curriculum. For instance, if one, often two SOC faculty are teaching in the graduate program, they are not teaching one of three courses for the Sociology program. This, at times, poses significant challenges to delivering the undergraduate curriculum and ensuring student success and time to graduation.

The external reviewers suggest that, moving forward, Sexuality Studies faculty should teach in the undergraduate program in Sociology and, that each incoming hire be informed that there are expectations that they will teach courses in SOC, as well as SXS. To date, no faculty hired in SXS has taught the SOC curriculum, nor have they been asked to. We have also not discussed this as faculty and, given the interdisciplinary nature of SXS—not all faculty are sociologists—we are not sure how this equitable distribution will work, particularly in terms of content. At the same time, incoming faculty may be "cycled in" to teach our methodology courses, including SOC 393 and 394, once we agree, collectively, on the crossover between programs. This will, as noted, facilitate shared responsibility and equity among faculty on behalf of the B.A. in Sociology and M.A. in Sexuality Studies.

To begin this process, it may be useful to have SXS faculty engage in curriculum discussions and decisions on SOC curriculum, as suggested. And, in preparation for position requests, we are designing position descriptions that will allow for this crossover. More importantly, as we develop our bylaws, which we have been in the process of engaging since our Teagle assignment, we will "facilitate a decision-making process that enable the entire Sociology

Department including the Sexuality Studies master's program to function as a unit." As a department, this is something we will continue to address in the coming year, in an effort to reflect upon and move close to how others "see us" as one unit. Importantly, if some of these changes are implemented prior to the Sexuality Studies external review in AY 2019-2020, we will be able to evaluate the functioning of the whole department.

Growing the department with sufficient resources

To support the growing number of majors in our program and the stabilization of a student/faculty ratio similar to nationwide standards, we agree that the hiring of tenure track faculty is a pressing need. The Spring 2018 semester marks the last semester for three of our SOC/SXS faculty: Drs. Luiz Barbosa and Clay Dumont, who were hired in the Sociology program in 1991, will both retire in August 2018. Additionally, Dr. Darius Bost, an Assistant Professor hired in 2014, will also be leaving the department for another position. All three of these departures will have significant impacts on the current Sociology faculty—as several will continue to teach in the graduate program in Sexuality Studies in Bost's absence, leaving a deficit in our Sociology curriculum and a need to fulfill the absence of two Sociology faculty. Importantly, Dr. Dumont and Dr. Barbosa have been two of the most consistent faculty teaching in the core (SOC 300, SOC 370, SOC 500), which has been described as a much-needed resource by the reviewers. We have begun to address the impending changes to our faculty, our number of majors, and delivering our curriculum, by creating new faculty position requests for submission this Spring and, in the future as we continue to grow.

Developing a Formal Mentoring program for Faculty

The need for faculty mentorship at all levels (pre- and post-tenure) is a welcome recommendation for our faculty. Though we have been successful at bringing in strong candidates in recent years, they have benefitted from mentorship from department faculty and, importantly, from recently developed College initiatives. Our process of mentorship within the department, though strong, has been more informal. We have been engaged in discussions about faculty mentorship in recent years and are encouraged by this opportunity to formalize a process. In particular, for faculty post-tenure. The current and previous chair began their position at the Associate level and, though each was/has been able to maintain a professional and research profile, it does significantly impact their movement toward promotion. At the same time, much of the leadership in the department is centered within the Associate level faculty.

As a department, we hope to support Associate level professors in their research and teaching endeavors to ensure timely movement towards promotion, one that reflects their own personal and professional needs. Specifically, the RTP Chair and committee has begun to turn their attention to addressing post-tenure needs. We hope to, as the reviewers suggest, work with the College and University to "develop resources to help newly tenured faculty balance the greater responsibilities that will fall to them post-tenure and to help them renew their research programs," when necessary. Resources for writing and research (and course release), specifically, will help ensure timely movement towards promotion.

In addition to these resources, we again highlight and support the need for individual offices, as recommended by current (2018) and past (2004) reviewers. Because of the shared office space,

T/TT and adjunct faculty rotate days on campus, contributing to decreased collegiality and professional growth opportunities within and outside the department.

Finally, the reviewers note the importance of mentoring faculty from underrepresented communities (immigrant and faculty of color born in the US) within the department, particularly given the demands on these faculty to mentor students from similarly marginalized background. We have long understood how this is same is true for LGBTQ faculty in our department. We have experienced, firsthand, the lack of university resources for faculty of color and, in particular, immigrant faculty, who may need specific resources regarding work status and employment. We hope the newly established Office for Equity and Community Inclusion will provide assistance to university faculty who occupy these statuses and assist mentorship practices throughout Colleges and the University further support the retention and promotion of these faculty at San Francisco State University.