Assessment Report

Yuba Community College District

YC - Sociology Program Recommendations

Year of Review: 2013-2014

Type of Review: Self-Study (4-year review)

Executive Summary (Include a list of team members): The sociology program continues to prepare students for transfer. In addition the program has demonstrated some very innovative approaches to improve student learning, student success and student engagement. Marysville has the strongest program since Lake Campus only offers an introductory course each semester. The FTES of over 100 for the past two years generates over half of a million dollars with 1.2 FTEF contract and .90 in adjunct offerings. Sociology is currently only one out of two programs that has an approved Associates Degree for Transfer (ADT) within the District. Sociology offers the following courses: Soc 1,2,5,6,8,10 and 30.

Program Description : A1. Do students have access to curriculum-specific and/or program-specific support services? If so, describe this service(s). If not, explain why.

Yes, most semesters there is a sociology tutor available in the Student Success Center . Some semesters, though, it has been difficult to find a student who is not only able to serve as a tutor, but willing to take on the work.

A2. If services are available, how do they demonstrate an increase in student success?

The sociology department has not previously broken out student success data by individual student, so we do not have quantitative data on whether students who utilize tutor services have increased success relative to students who do not use the tutor. Such a comparison would not be valid, since students who go to tutoring are a self-selected sample who likely are less able to succeed in their classes than students who do not elect to seek tutoring services. We do not currently have a way to answer this question quantitatively. But qualitatively, students have reported informally that services were helpful, and individual instructors report that students who were struggling, and were advised to visit the Success Center, have generally gone from failing grades on exams to passing ones. This anecdotal/qualitative data strongly suggests that more data should be collected that compares struggling students who get tutoring to struggling students who do not get tutoring. If such data are compellingly in favor of tutoring, the sociology department should consider *requiring* tutoring for students who fail one or more exams/assignments. Perhaps the College or District has or will have resources available for the collection and analysis of this quantitative data on student success.
B3. How is current and previous program review data used to refine and improve program or department practices?
Each program review for the last six years has entailed review of previous reviews, and progress toward previous goals has been assessed and reported on. For example, early program reviews identified a need for multimedia resources to be available to sociology students, since instructors increasingly offer or require assignments utilizing such resources (e.g., videos, recorded interviews, blogs, photographic essays, etc.). Such resources were requested under “equipment requests” (e.g., a multimedia workstation). An Imac loaded with Final Cut and other multimedia applications was purchased by the Social Science Dean. The use of (and challenges of using) this equipment has been documented in subsequent program reviews.

[Previous--2012--program annual update follows below]
The sociology program continues its healthy levels of enrollment, and is keeping pace with changes in the college, the community, and the California Community College system. It offers a range of classes that prepare students for transfer to university, as well as providing them tools for self-development, critical thinking, and civic engagement.

Industry Trends and Program Data Analysis : How do program or department goals align with the education, diversity, demographic, and workforce needs of local communities?
Sociology is what some call an “evergreen” discipline, meaning that it is almost always in demand by students. This is in part because introductory sociology courses are required in quite a few other disciplines, such as nursing, so there is always a “market” for such courses. But sociology is also perennially in demand by students because it deals with issues that concern most human beings (e.g., social life, social groups, social change, political conflict, social problems), whatever their career path might be. Indeed, since “sociologist” is an occupation held by only a tiny number of people (the term mainly applies to professors of sociology), most students who take sociology are not doing so in order to prepare directly for a career.
So while there is probably very little industry need for “sociologists” in the Yuba-Sutter area, there IS a strong need for nurses, police officers, emergency medical personnel, lawyers, business owners, etc. to have an understanding of American society. Sociology courses also fulfill GE requirements, so transfer students also make up a large part of the “market” for the Sociology Program at Yuba College. As long as 4-year colleges and CTE programs continue to require sociology courses, there is a need for Yuba College to offer a full range of them.
But it is also our contention that the Yuba-Sutter area has an especially strong need for adults with a grasp of basic sociological issues. For example, the high rates of drug abuse, teen pregnancy, crime, unemployment, and other social problems in this community mean that there is a need for adults who understand how to interpret data about these issues, are able to evaluate policies designed to address them, and have the intellectual tools to respond to social problems directly. So, as long as Yuba-Sutter continues to experience social problems, especially at such high rates, there will be a need for students—no matter what their occupation—to understand the basic concepts, tools, and theories presented in the Sociology Program’s courses.
Thus, a central goal of our department is to engage students directly in the community through mechanisms like service learning, experiential learning, community partnerships, etc. The College’s surrounding neighborhood of Linda faces many social challenges, so there is clearly a need in this community for energetic scholars to learn about social processes while serving their community through activities like after school mentoring, community clean ups, refurbishing of local parks, efforts to increase pedestrian safety and walkability, etc. These are all activities in which Yuba College sociology students have been and continue to be engaged.

The local community is also highly diverse in terms of race, ethnicity, nationality, etc. and our sociology classes both reflect this (our students reflect the full range of diversity of the campus), and contribute to the diversity of the community (i.e., because the sociology curriculum includes classes devoted to understanding racial and cultural diversity, and the challenges of living in a diverse, multicultural society).

How is your program or department direction driven by empirical data?
Aside from basic enrollment data which lets us know which courses are filling or not, and our student/faculty ratio, we keep track of trends in higher education (e.g., growth in sociology majors in regional 4-year colleges), and this helps drive our decisions about course revisions, new courses, and course inactivation. Our record of successful articulation of courses with the UC and Cal State systems is one indication of the success of this approach.

We also keep track of social trends in this community (e.g., rates of drug abuse, teen pregnancy, unemployment, and other social problems). As discussed above, our role is not only to help transfer students, and students in CTE programs like nursing, but to enhance the community itself, by graduating students who understand how to evaluate their social environment from a sociological perspective. So empirical data on local social problems helps drive our curriculum and our approach.

We also make use of secondary analyses based on empirical data. For example, the American Sociological Association and the Chronicle of Higher Education regularly release studies and reports that suggest that students, especially male ones, benefit from “experiential” modes of education, such as service learning. We have made service learning and experiential education a centerpiece of our program, and try to incorporate it into as many courses as possible (though individual adjunct instructors of course have great freedom to design their courses and assignments as they see fit).

Curriculum & SLO Assessment Summary :

D6. What has your program or department done to improve completion of degrees, certificates, or transfers? What are your future plans?
Since our last program review, our main accomplishment in this area is the establishment of a Sociology Transfer Degree. In fact, Sociology was among the first Programs in the District to establish a "Transfer Model Curriculum", allowing students automatic transfer to the CSU as juniors upon completion of the degree. In line with this new transfer degree, we have begun the process of offering Sociology 8—Social Science Research Methods—on a regular basis. It was only offered infrequently before, but will now be offered at least one semester each Academic Year.

D7. Do you have any courses, certificates, or degrees that should be in-activated or expanded? If yes, please identify and justify your recommendations with data.
We believe it is time to inactivate the "Women's Studies" piece here at Yuba College. "Women's Studies" is an outdated name for a program, and in fact, such courses have not really been active for some time. A few years ago, "Women in Society" underwent major revision to become "Sociology of Sex and Gender", for several reasons: 1. "Women in Society" seems to limit the appeal of this course (enrollment was dropping, especially among males), and 2. Sociology, as a field, has embraced the study of gender as socially constructed for both men and women, and thus a class focused solely on women seems outdated and intellectually suspect. There may well still be a need for specific courses like "women in art", but we do not see a need for a "Women's Studies" program or program piece here at Yuba College. The study of gender is and should be a central piece of most sociology courses.

Women 35 actually should already be inactivated. We believe this may be an error in the catalog. It certainly has not been offered for several years, and we recall submitting inactivation paperwork several years ago (it is possible that CLC objected to the inactivation, so it remained on the books. We do not believe the course has been offered at CLC either, however). The other courses listed under "Women's Studies" may or may not be offered by other programs (e.g., the Fine Art Department may well still be teaching courses titled, "Women in Art" and English may offer "Women's Voices").

So we believe that Women's Studies is not an active program in fact, and it should be cleared from the books. We are not, at the moment, completely clear on how to accomplish that (i.e., it is unclear if Women's Studies is a stand-alone program, and if so, who has the authority to discontinue it).

D8. Do all of your courses have current CORs? If not, what steps are you taking to ensure compliance?
Yes, all of our active courses have CORs.

D9. If applicable, how are teaching methodologies in your program or department assessed?

The Sociology Department has a strong commitment to academic freedom, and we strive to give our instructors maximal flexibility in teaching their courses. Thus, we are careful not to impose teaching methodologies, but give instructors the authority and autonomy to teach the course according to their own training and proclivities, provided that they achieve course objectives and are focused on the SLOs for their courses. Indeed, even our SLO processes give instructors leeway in how they achieve and measure SLOs.

That said, the Sociology department also strives for maximal teaching quality, and we try to maintain "quality control" via the following means: 1. We try only to hire highly qualified instructors. Our full-time professor, for example, has a doctoral degree, and had several years' experience teaching at the 4-year and graduate level before coming to Yuba College. One of our adjuncts also has a PhD and is a college Dean. 2. We regularly evaluate instructors, using both student evaluations and classroom observations.

Generating data on SLOs in courses taught mainly by adjunct instructors has proved somewhat problematic. Ideally, we encourage regular consultations between faculty members, and regular assessment of SLOs and discussion/dialogue about the data generated from SLO assessment. We believe teaching is best when best practices are identified, discussed, and emulated. But at present, adjunct faculty have little incentive or professional necessity to complete SLO assessment work, and thus we are having some trouble amassing it. We believe this is a College-wide issue, and that a possible remedy would be regular “in service” or “mandatory flex” days were faculty can come together to work on SLOs, set goals, analyze data, etc.

D10. If applicable, how are the results of the assessment used to support, improve, and/or expand your current teaching methodologies?
As just discussed, the SLO assessment data from courses taught by adjuncts is less available than that which is generated in courses taught by our full-time faculty member. The full-time faculty member uses SLO assessment data to improve and expand his own teaching approach (for example, Sociology 2 is undergoing major improvements) based on assessment from previous semesters. But we are frankly missing assessment data from several courses taught mainly by adjuncts. This is perhaps an indication that Sociology is in need of more full-time faculty members, and less reliance on part-time instructors.

However, we do not see a need for a formal request for a new full-time position at this time. We will monitor the SLO situation, and attempt to remedy it, and hope that the College adopts a solution. But if the situation does not improve, we may well need to request another full-time faculty member in the near future.

D11. If your program or department uses a DE modality to support instruction, how are you evaluating the effectiveness of that instruction?
There is only one regularly taught on-line class in the sociology department, and, since it is taught be an adjunct, SLO assessment data has been lacking (see above). However, it is the Social Science Dean, with a PhD in sociology, who is the adjunct who teaches this class, so we are confident that the instruction is effective.

Our one ITV course is taught by our full-timer, and effectiveness is evaluated by comparing SLO achievement of “TV land” students to that of the “live students”. The ITV course is like a natural experiment, in that the lectures received by both groups of students (live and in “TV Land”) are identical, so the only difference is modality (live versus televised/recorded). So far, it appears that the SLO achievement (and other measures, like test scores and final grades) are higher for “TV Land” students than for live ones, but we suspect this reflects self-selection bias (i.e., students at home may just be generally better students), rather than differences in content delivery.

D12. If your department offers DE courses, what support services does it provide for DE students? What can be done to improve support services for these students?
Students have faced many challenges with the technology (i.e., Blackboard and the Portal; Quicktime and compatibility of video recordings, etc.). Hopefully the transition to Canvas will smooth out some of the many technology challenges DE students, faculty, and staff have faced over the last few years.

The District offers many test sites for ITV students, but we have had some delays in getting tests back from far-flung test centers at CLC and WCC. There should be a more expedient way to get students’ tests back to their instructor (e.g., messenger?).

D13. How is your program or department applying sound principles of learning and teaching theory to its curriculum?

We make sure to hire only highly qualified instructors and we regularly evaluate them using the College's evaluation processes. The Chair stays up to date on the latest research and analysis regarding the teaching of sociology by staying involved in professional associations such as the Pacific Sociological Association, and reading its publications, including "Teaching Sociology". The Chair also has a personal interest in "experiential" learning modalities, like service-learning, community entrepreneurship, and learning communities, and regularly attends workshops and conferences in relation to this. He also regularly peruses the websites of the National Community College Center for Civic Engagement and the Center for Community College Student Engagement. Our record of involving students in learning communities, service-learning, and community entrepreneurship shows that we are applying the best principles and practices of these learning modalities.

D14. Which CSLOs (course student learning outcomes) and PLOs (Program learning outcomes) were assessed within the last year?
In the last year, all courses taught by the Chair had their SLOs assessed—i.e., Sociology 1 (both ITV and live sections), Sociology 2, and Sociology 10. We have not yet developed a means of assessing our Program SLOs. Our Program SLOs, under the guidance of the SLO Coordinator, were chosen from a pre-set list of Institutional SLOs. Yuba College has, since that time, reconsidered the wisdom of creating PSLOs in this manner. Among other problems, it was difficult for Programs to develop effective assessments for such PSLOs. So, the sociology department is currently in the process of re-thinking its PSLOs, and developing ways to assess them. A complicating factor, which was mentioned above, is that adjunct instructors are the primary teachers of several sociology courses, and need to be included in the design and assessment of PSLOs, but such personnel are not adequately compensated for such work, so it has been slow going.

D15. For each of the above, how did the assessment data influence program, department and/or course improvement?
The SLO data for Sociology 2—Social Problems has so far been the most problematic. Accordingly, the course syllabus (not the COR) has been revised to try to make the course more effective for students. At first, the course was a "cafeteria" style course that took a brief look at many different social problems. SLO assessment data led the instructor to redefine the course as focused on the social construction of social problems, and assignments have been re-designed to allow more local focus, with attention paid to the local construction of social problems. This change has proved somewhat effective, but the greater depth of focus seems to have detracted a bit from the breadth of material covered. So, we are currently in the process of designing the delivery of the course so that student gain both an in-depth understanding of the social problems construction process, as well as exposure to a wide breadth of data and analysis on contemporary problems in U.S. society.

[2012 annual update follows] At least one SLO has been developed for all active sociology courses. SLOs have been assessed for Sociology 1, and Sociology 10. Sociology 5, which is taught by an adjunct instructor, has a developed SLO, but it has not yet been assessed.

Future Goals and Program Direction: Based on Program Review, what are your plans for future department/program improvements?

--We are planning to offer Socil 8 on a yearly basis, in order to support our Sociology Transfer Degree

--We are planning to overhaul Sociology 2, possibly to include a revised COR

--We are planning to work more closely with the WLDC and the Student Success Center to increase the pass rate in Sociology 1

--We would like to create better contact and collaboration between adjuncts and full-timers. We feel the College can help with this by adopting policies that encourage faculty dialogue and collaboration regarding SLOs

--We are planning to take the lead in involving the College in more service-learning and experiential learning projects. We intend to build on the partnerships we have established, and develop new ones. We have in mind some interdisciplinary service projects that would require inter-Divisional collaboration at Yuba College. Unfortuantely, this new planning process does not seem to have room for planning projects that require programs to work together and share resources. We hope this Program Review Template and other processes can be amended to make collaborative projects and programs more possible.

[2012 annual update follows]The sociology program has consistently involved itself in innovative approaches to improving student success and engagement, both on campus and in the community. We have taken part in such initiatives as Service Learning, Learning Communities, and Experiential Learning. The program hopes to consolidate and build on these activities by developing courses and opportunities around "community entrepreneurship" and by creating community-based research opportunities.

Course Content and Statistical Analysis: I do not know what this field is for. The PDF titled "Procedures for Adding Program Review to TracDat for 2013-14 does not contain any information on this field. The document goes from "Future Goals and Program Direction" to "Are You Ready to Submit your Final Program Review?" with no guidelines for filling out the "Course Content and Statistical Analysis" field. This field was not used in previous years, either. So we are not sure what to put here...

Are you ready to submit your final program review?: Yes

Feedback (Validation Team Use ONLY) : It is my understanding that all fields need to have content in order for TracDat to function properly. So that is why there is text in this field...

Goal	Recommendations	Plan of Action & Budgetary Impact / Tasks	Status	Feedback & Follow-Up
Develop a course on "community entrepreneurship". The sociology department has been heavily involved with a local community-based organization, and it has become evident that the ideal way to build on this collaboration between the school and the nonprofit is to establish a "community entrepreneurship" course where students will gain knowledge and experience operating actual businesses whose mission is to support nonprofit community work.				

Goal	Recommendations	Plan of Action & Budgetary Impact / Tasks	Status	Feedback & Follow-Up
Encourage students to successfully complete the Transfer Model Curriculum for Sociology.				

Goal	Recommendations	Plan of Action & Budgetary Impact / Tasks	Status	Feedback & Follow-Up

Goal	Recommendations	Plan of Action & Budgetary Impact / Tasks	Status	Feedback & Follow-Up
Find space for the "media workstation": The sociology department was able to purchase a media workstation with Division funds, but currently there is no space on campus to house the equipment. Ideally, we need a space that is accessible to students, including during evenings, so social science students can use the media workstation for class projects involving video and/or audio production and editing.				

Goal	Recommendations	Plan of Action & Budgetary Impact / Tasks	Status	Feedback & Follow-Up
We need to collaborate with others in the Social Science Division to develop and begin regularly offering our Sociology 8 course--Social Science Research Methods. This is especially important, given the "TMCs" now offered by Sociology, Psych, History, and soon, Political Science. Our COR has already been approved for this purpose, but we need to assign an instructor(s), and we ought to find ways to involve students in research efforts here on campus and in the local community.				

Goal	Recommendations	Plan of Action & Budgetary Impact / Tasks	Status	Feedback & Follow-Up
Create opportunities for community-based research, in order to make Socil 8/Psych 8 a modern social science research methods course.				

Goal	Recommendations	Plan of Action & Budgetary Impact / Tasks	Status	Feedback & Follow-Up
YC Goal 1 - E16. How do program or department goals align with stated Yuba College goals?				

Goal	Recommendations	Plan of Action & Budgetary Impact / Tasks	Status	Feedback & Follow-Up
Since this “program review template” was approved by the College based on the stated goals it already asks about many of the goals, and how our department is helping to achieve them (i.e., questions about using evidence to improve the program; and about modes of delivery; and about SLOs and being evidence-based; etc). So our answer on most of those goals is: see above But we do note that two goals listed on the Yuba College Goals document, goals # 8 and #9, are not really asked about anywhere else on this template. It so happens that community partnerships and community engagement have long been two central goals of the Sociology Department (even before they were articulated in the Yuba College Goals document), and we have a recognized (e.g., in newspaper articles and grant awards) track record in creating such partnerships and of involving students in the community via such partnerships. Here is a partial list of community partnerships established by the Sociology Department at Yuba College: Harmony Health Family Resource Center; Teichert Construction; North Yuba Grown; Sutter Buttes Olive Oil; Butte View Olive Company; Berkeley Olive Grove; Yuba Sutter Regional Arts Council; California Council for the Humanities; Sierra Health Foundation; South Yuba River Citizens League; The Eating Well Café; Recology; Here is a partial list of community projects in which the Sociology Department, working with its partners,				

Goal	Recommendations	Plan of Action & Budgetary Impact / Tasks	Status	Feedback & Follow-Up
has placed Yuba College students: --River Stories (a California Story Fund project supported by a $10000 grant from the California Council for the Humanities and matching funds from Sierra Health Foundation. Yuba students worked with local H.S. students to collect oral histories of the flooding of local rivers; a YC conference was held to present their work) --Make a Difference Day Projects (for several years, Yuba College students have worked with Harmony Health FRC on "M				

Goal	Recommendations	Plan of Action & Budgetary Impact / Tasks	Status	Feedback & Follow-Up
YCCD VS 1 - E17. How does the program support the YCCD District Vision Statement? Specifically, how does the program meets the needs of our students and communities? The Yuba-Sutter region is plagued with sociological problems, from high unemployment, to ethnic/racial tension, to gangs, to teen pregnancy, to drug abuse, and a range of pathologies related to poverty. Yuba College is situated very close to the epicenters of many of these problems (i.e., Linda/North Beale Road), and we in the Sociology Department consider the surrounding community to be a sociological "laboratory", where students can get hands-on understanding of social problems and the sociological concepts and tools for addressing them. The community partnerships we establish are designed precisely to get students involved in the				

Goal	Recommendations	Plan of Action & Budgetary Impact / Tasks	Status	Feedback & Follow-Up
community, learning about and helping to solve many of these sociological problems (please see above regarding Yuba College goals). The Yuba-Sutter community clearly needs more educated, energetic people working on the community's problems, and Yuba College students need the sociological training and expertise to be able to effectively address problems in their community. Our work has been recognized by the community, for example in articles in the Appeal Democrat, Territorial Dispatch, and Prospector newspapers, and by awards and letters of appreciation from partners like the California Council for the Humanities, the Chamber of Commerce, the Yuba Sutter Regional Arts Council, Harmony Health Family Resource Center, the California Olive Oil Council, and North Yuba Grown. Our program and the recognition it has received supports nearly all the points mentioned in the Vision Statement; that is, our work is: innovative; responsive to student and community needs; efficient in terms of resource utilization; creates trust and collaboration between the District and the community; helps promote civic engagement, economic and social development, and enriches the culture of this community and				