University of Colorado **Boulder**

2020 Program Review

Department of Sociology

Academic Review and Planning
Advisory Committee Report

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Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs | Date

Contents

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Process Overview

The Academic Review and Planning Advisory Committee (ARPAC) review of the Department of Sociology was conducted in accordance with the 2020 program review guidelines. Self-study responses were prepared by the unit and checked by an internal review committee composed of two University of Colorado Boulder (CU Boulder) faculty members outside of the unit. The internal reviewers submitted a summary of findings derived from the self-study and from interviews and surveys with faculty, staff, and student unit members. An external review committee, consisting of two experts from outside of the CU Boulder, submitted a report based upon review of relevant documents and interviews with faculty, staff, and student unit members and university administrators. Owing to the COVID-19 emergency, ARPAC staff facilitated the external review as a remote visit over April 9 and 10, 2020, using web conferencing tools. Internal and external reviewer comments and recommendations are shared when relevant throughout this report.

Unit Overview

The campus' standardized description of the Department of Sociology is available on the website of the Office of Data Analytics (ODA). ODA updates the unit data profile annually in the fall semester. This report cites data posted in October 2019, reflecting the state of the Department of Sociology as of the academic year (AY) 2018-2019.

Disciplinary Context

The Department of Sociology is one of several units within the College of Arts and Sciences devoted to social science research and education. This department focuses on understanding and explaining the social, humanitarian, and technological challenges facing society, using theory and empirical research to generate new insight with the potential to positively impact humanity and guide innovative change. The department is consistently ranked as one of the top 50 sociology departments in the country, reflecting its strength in both teaching and research. When compared to 36 peers of the Association of American Universities (AAU), the research productivity of the department's faculty is exceptionally strong, consistently ranking in the top ten in terms of articles per author and citations per article. At the university level, a 2014 academic prioritization assessment rated the Department of Sociology as first among

social science departments and one of six CU Boulder academic units to earn a "highly effective" score. A follow-up prioritization exercise conducted in 2018 ranked Sociology fourth out of five units to earn a "highly effective" score.

Research and Scholarship

Sociology faculty members provide expertise in 11 areas of the discipline including criminology and criminal justice; culture; environment, hazards, and disasters; gender; health and medicine; life course, aging, and youth; migration/immigration; political economy; population; race and ethnicity; social psychology and emotions. This list is deliberately expansive: several years ago, the department opted to move away from defined specialty areas (or research "concentrations"), as they did not adequately represent faculty interests or the department's changing composition. The self-study reports that the department has three topical foci that are supported through a series of corresponding research workshops focused on "Culture, Power and Inequality", "Population and Health", and "Criminology".

Since the department's 2013 review, Sociology faculty members have demonstrated commendable research productivity and success across several scholarship measures. Faculty members have averaged 2.37 articles or chapters, seven books, and five edited volumes or revised editions, per faculty member. Additionally, since 2012, Sociology faculty members have served as grant principal investigators 135 times and as co-principal investigators 75 times. Three Sociology faculty members are also members of the National Academy of Sciences.

According to Academic Analytics, CU Boulder's sociology department ranks third among 36 Association of American Universities' (AAU) peer departments for articles per author (2018-2019) and first for citations per article (2014-2018). In 2017, U.S. News and World Report ranked the department 42nd out of 102 U.S. sociology departments (down from 39th in 2013-2014).

Sociology faculty members have served as principal investigators (PIs) and/or directors for several major, externally-funded research centers during this review period, including a National Science Foundation (NSF) funded center, "CONVERGE," dedicated to bringing together interdisciplinary teams that include engineers and social scientists, to reduce hazards

losses and improve social well-being. Sociology faculty members also serve in administrative and research leadership positions at the University of Colorado Population Center (CUPC). These centers provide CU Boulder with significant research infrastructure and resources. A professor of Sociology directs both CONVERGE and the CU Boulder Natural Hazards Center. That faculty member was also the PI for the CUPC in 2015-2020. Another notable award secured by a Sociology faculty member from the National Institute of Aging, funds a graduate and postdoctoral training program in demography and genetics.

Collaborations

Within CU Boulder, the department collaborates extensively with the Institute of Behavioral Science (IBS). This connection facilitates the research and external funding success of several Sociology faculty members. The department's faculty members also collaborate on research projects with partners elsewhere at CU Boulder and with colleagues nationally and internationally. Looked at together, these partnerships reveal a pattern of interdisciplinary research accomplishments.

Campus Context

Sociology compares favorably to other departments within the College of Arts and Sciences' social science division. Its U.S. News and World Report ranking is comparable to those of the Department of Political Science and the Department of Economics. To the extent that publication metrics are important, Sociology has the most grant expenditures, the second most refereed publications per tenure-track faculty member, and the fifth most conference presentations out of the ten social science units being reviewed.

Sixty-eight percent of the department's student credit hours (SCH) are taken by non-majors, showing how significantly the department contributes to general education across the College of Arts and Sciences. The department also supports interdisciplinary education through the provision of several undergraduate certificates, and the participation of its graduate students in interdisciplinary certificates offered by other units. Finally, in collaboration with the Division of Continuing Education, Sociology facilitates multiple core courses online that permit former degree-seeking students to complete their degrees remotely via the CU Complete Program. CU Complete is a service designed to help former degree-seeking students learn about their options to finish their degree.

Sociology faculty enjoy robust grant funding per tenure-track faculty member, in part stemming from their close ties with the Institute of Behavioral Science (IBS). Four Sociology faculty members, including the department chair, serve in significant leadership roles at the institute, including as the interim IBS director, the Health and Society Program director, and the Natural Hazards Center director.

Faculty and Research Personnel

According to the AY 2018-2019 ODA unit profile, the department employs 18 tenured and tenure-track faculty members and four instructor-track faculty. This is a lower count than in 2013 when the unit had 23 tenure-stream faculty members. Per the ODA unit data profile, faculty member salaries at the assistant and associate professor ranks compare favorably to those offered by peer departments of the Association of American Universities (AAU) at 100% and 105%, respectively; however, full professor salaries lag behind the AAU average at 94%.

The self-study outlines the department's primary resource wish as a request for more faculty personnel. Sociology would like to employ 28 faculty members by 2026 and offers a two-fold rationale for this request. First, the department argues that national rankings that compare Sociology to its AAU peers are driven in part by faculty size and CU Boulder's Sociology faculty contingent is relatively modest. Second, the department posits that more faculty hires would enable the department to improve its graduate training through more consistent provision of core courses and expanded electives.

Staff

According to the AY 2018-2019 ODA unit profile, Sociology employs one university staff member, two state classified staff members, and four hourly student employees. The department requests an additional half-time staff position for front desk management and to help build identity and improve community engagement. The internal reviewers note that this additional level of staffing would bring Sociology in line with other large CU Boulder social science departments.

Undergraduate Education

Sociology offers an undergraduate major, a minor, and undergraduate certificates that are closely tied to community-based internship programs: the Certificate on Animals and Society;

the Certificate in Care, Health, and Resilience; and most recently, the Certificate in Social Innovation. The AY 2018-2019 ODA unit profile reports that Sociology has 613 majors and 267 minors, with 156 bachelor's degrees awarded in FY 2018-2019. The number of majors has declined 2% in the past five years, hitting a peak of 728 in 2012 and a low of 618 in 2016. The minor was newly introduced since the last review in 2013 and is proving to be a popular option with students. Approximately 8% of all majors participate in the unit's honors program.

Sociology taught 19,319 undergraduate student credit hours (SCH) in FY 2018-2019, with 68% of these hours being taken by non-majors. As stated in their self-study, this represents a 31% decline in total SCH from 2011, which the department attributes to having fewer faculty members. In 2018, the unit's standard tenure-stream faculty member teaching requirement dropped from a 2:2 course load (two courses each semester) to a 2:1 load, mirroring changes taking place across the social sciences division. This change is part of a five-year pilot effort within the College of Arts and Sciences. The external reviewers recommend making this reduced teaching load permanent. According to the AY 2018-2019 ODA unit profile, 31% of the department's undergraduate credit hours were taught by tenure-stream faculty members, 41% by senior instructors, 23% by graduate student instructors or teaching assistants, and 5% by others.

As noted, Sociology's undergraduate certificates include internships as components of the curriculum. Over the prior year, 29 students participated in internships. The department also partners with a wide variety of community organizations to offer internships and these have involved over 45 students per year since 2015. The self-study emphasizes a desire among the faculty to expand the internships. Doing so would require additional resources (e.g., faculty and staff support) focused on coordinating networks of community organizations and student placements. The unit also provides its students with research opportunities through CU Boulder's Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program (UROP), with a special emphasis on encouraging honors students to participate. Nearly half of Sociology faculty members (nine) have sponsored UROP students.

Since the 2013 review, Sociology has developed a new course on qualitative and quantitative research methods, rebooted its once dormant Sociology Club, and introduced the aforementioned minor. The unit has also made strides to support the general education of College of Arts and Sciences students by adding five courses that fulfill the college's diversity

requirement. Looking ahead, Sociology plans to continue to develop new courses and certificates and to improve student recruitment and retention. The self-study argues that increased course popularity, as occurred following the introduction of the minor, cannot be countered without additional resources, especially to support added teaching.

In 2019, the department worked with the Office of Data Analytics (ODA) to develop learning outcomes assessment procedures. At this point, it appears that Sociology has defined learning objectives for its major. According to the self-study, the next step is to develop a three-year plan for conducting future learning outcomes assessments. The department plans to produce a brief report in August 2023 that summarizes its assessment process and findings.

A January 2020 undergraduate survey conducted by the internal reviewers received 214 responses, approximately 25% of these from non-majors participating in the minor program, certificates, and Sociology courses. The internal reviewers state that the "undergraduate program meets with considerable student satisfaction," noting that 93% of respondents were "satisfied" or "very satisfied" with their overall experiences in Sociology. Over 90% of respondents agreed that the department encourages a tolerant climate and respect for diversity. According to a spring 2016 senior survey administered by ODA, students report strong satisfaction with the undergraduate program though the overall response rates to that survey was low. Eighty-two percent of students reported satisfaction with the major as a whole, and 83% with the "effectiveness of courses in providing a general good education." Of potential concern is the students' relatively low satisfaction with advising (only 73% reported satisfaction with course advising; 53% with career advising), and lower ratings on effectiveness of preparation for employment or for graduate/professional school (59% for Sociology's course effectiveness, and 60% for CU Boulder courses more generally).

Graduate Education

At the graduate level, the department confers the PhD degree. Students enrolled in the doctoral program, and who leave the program before advancing, can receive a master's degree (MA). In FY 2018-2019, the unit graduated nine PhDs and four students left early with the MA. According to the AY 2018-2019 ODA unit profile, the Sociology PhD program enrolls 56 students, representing a five-year 16% decline. The self-study describes difficulties with

recruiting and "yields," noting that only six out of 15 students accepted offers in the current academic year.

The department requires its PhD students to pass a series of milestones. By their third year, students must complete written evidence of their work and sit for a comprehensive exam a year later. Once a student passes the exam, they are expected to submit a dissertation proposal and then successfully complete and defend their dissertation. In the past few years, Sociology has taken steps to make this timeline more flexible. For one, the department introduced earlier deadlines for the third-year paper requirement, enabling students who want to complete this milestone sooner to do so. The department also modified the comprehensive exam format to allow students an entire week to complete the exam, rather than just 72 hours.

The median time-to-degree is 6.72 years, with only 19% of students completing their PhD within six years, 61% within eight years, and 72% within 10 years. The self-study reports that 70% of the students who enroll in the graduate program eventually graduate with a PhD. The self-study does not describe the minimum requirements needed to attain the master's degree should students withdraw from the PhD program; nor does it provide information on how many of the 30% of students who do withdraw receive the MA.

Sociology graduate students can earn interdisciplinary certificates offered by other units, such as the Certificate in College Teaching, the Certificate in Quantitative Methods, the Certificate in Women and Gender Studies. They also have opportunities to participate in seminars and workshops offered through the Interdisciplinary Training in the Social Sciences Program (ITSSP), the Center for Advanced Training in the Social Sciences (CARTSS), or the Institute of Behavioral Science (IBS).

According to the chair, the department guarantees its incoming PhD students six years of funding, and 50% appointments. The self-study states that students are funded as teaching assistants, graduate student instructors, and graduate research assistants, with most students gaining teaching assistantships in the early years of the program. The department reports that it has difficulty filling all of its available teaching assistantships and must recruit graduate students from other departments.

Access to coveted research assistantships appears to vary widely, usually depending upon whether a student's faculty advisor is affiliated with IBS. While all Sociology graduate students are invited to participate in the ITSSP, CARTSS, and IBS research workshops noted above, students with IBS-affiliated advisors are more likely to participate in sponsored research and to receive research assistantships. This discrepancy has resulted in tensions pointed out by both the internal and external reviewers. The tensions arise from real and perceived differences in access to research opportunities, advanced research training, graduate research assistantships, and the necessary resources with which to conduct research.

In recognition of this dynamic, the department is exploring options to provide all of its graduate students with at least a one-semester research assistantship. Additionally, the department has revised its faculty merit review criteria to weigh co-authoring with graduate students the same as other types of co-authorship. The self-study provides no data on the prevalence of graduate student co-authorship during this reporting period.

Average faculty course questionnaire (FCQ) ratings from the AY 2018-2019 ODA unit profile show that 87% of Sociology graduate students approve of their coursework, and 97% approve of their instructors. Sociology's approach to assessing graduate program outcomes involves an annual spring semester check of graduation rates and job placements. Since 2010, 70% of Sociology graduate students have completed a PhD. The self-study reports that 30% of the department's graduates go into "non-academic" jobs, though no detail is provided on what these jobs might be. Based on data collected since 2016, the department estimates that 33% of its graduates begin tenure-track appointments upon graduating, while 15% become postdoctoral scholars.

The internal reviewers provide additional information about student satisfaction with the Sociology graduate program. According to a survey conducted by the internal reviewers in January 2020 that received responses from 34 Sociology graduate students, 74% of respondents indicated that they were "satisfied" or "very satisfied" with the program. The 26% who were "dissatisfied" or "very dissatisfied" frequently cited limited availability of graduate elective courses, difficulty identifying a faculty advisor, uneven faculty advising quality, limited opportunities to present papers and attend conferences, and inadequate financial support. Interviews with students also brought to light concerns over faculty departures in key areas and the lack of faculty of color who could guide their research.

Meanwhile, the self-study describes six core challenges facing the Sociology graduate program: recruitment, advising, mentoring, diversity, resources, and departmental culture. These challenges are interrelated: the department feels that improving its advising and mentoring capacity is essential to its recruitment and diversity goals. The department also calls out high university fees as a barrier to recruitment.

The self-study also acknowledges that graduate students' trust in the department has been "strained" by two separate investigations into faculty members undertaken by the Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance (OIEC) over this last reporting period. The self-study cites data from two different climate surveys to argue that graduate student trust is slowly being reestablished: in 2014-2015, 78%-85% of respondents reported being extremely or very concerned about retaliation from faculty for reporting sexual harassment or discrimination. By 2018-2019, this number dropped to 51%. The self-study describes a series of steps the department is taking to improve faculty advising, build trust between faculty and graduate students, and add transparency to teaching assignments. Sociology believes these steps are critical to restoring students' faith in the department.

The bylaws indicate that there is no graduate student representation on the executive committee, and the two student representatives on the graduate committee do not have voting rights.

Postdoctoral Training

The ODA unit profile lists no postdoctoral scholars as Sociology affiliates. However, according to the self-study, two of the department's faculty members received the 2019 Outstanding Postdoctoral Mentor Award from CU Boulder.

Budget

While the department receives the majority of its budget from the university general fund (based on an algorithm by the College of Arts and Sciences tied to the number of faculty and student credit hours taught), it also earns revenues from its CU Complete partnership with the Division of Continuing Education (CE). The self-study notes that the department's operating budget has declined by 17%, from $69,000 in 2015 to $57,000 in 2019. This decline is tied to a decrease in student credit hour generation during this period. Additionally, the self-study

explains that the decline is driven by a combination of actions at the college and departmental levels: due to a lack of consistency in how the department managed its CE revenues, the College of Arts and Sciences decreased annual allocations whenever Sociology gave the appearance of a budget surplus. Operating budget funds are critical for everything from materials and supplies, to visiting speaker support, undergraduate field trips, and graduate student recruitment.

The Graduate School provides Sociology with a third funding stream, including $10,000 for student recruitment, $40,000 in general graduate student support, and nearly $42,000 in 2019 for fellowship funding. The department also receives departmental administration indirect costs recovery (DAICR) revenue, averaging $15,000 per year. Finally, the department draws from five gift accounts totaling approximately $75,000, which it uses to fund undergraduate and graduate scholarships and awards.

Sociology would like to work more actively with the University of Colorado Foundation on fundraising. The self-study identifies several areas where additional funds are needed, including more resources for graduate fellowships and an increase in associate chair stipends, which are currently set at 2.5% by the College of Arts and Sciences. The self-study also expresses concerns about potential changes to the CE business model that might reduce the department's revenues and complicate strategic planning.

The budget is administered by the chair, in consultation with the executive committee and a financial services accountant. Sociology aspires to a "values-based" approach whereby expenditures are aligned with the department's mission and needs.

Space and Infrastructure

The department's faculty members have offices in the Ketchum Building and the Institute for Behavioral Science (IBS) Building. Ketchum was remodeled in 2015 and the self-study notes that this has substantially improved Sociology's classroom, conference, and graduate student spaces.

While the department is pleased to have gained remodeled space, the self-study identifies ongoing space concerns. First, the Ketchum remodel did not provide equitable access for

people with disabilities. Second, the department still does not have enough office space to accommodate its instructor-track faculty members. Finally, the self-study notes negative consequences in having faculty and staff split across the Ketchum and IBS buildings, such as reduced opportunities for informal interactions and the logistical challenge of moving between the spaces. To help address these challenges, Sociology provides IBS-assigned faculty and students with access to shared offices or drop-in spaces in Ketchum. The self-study calls for a Ketchum space audit to ensure that all departments there adhere to a shared office policy, and it asks for classroom infrastructure to be upgraded to support new pedagogies. The self-study does not specify the requested infrastructure or the pedagogies it hopes to support.

Support

The department lacks personnel designated to support grant preparation or post-award administration. Providing these services in a manner compliant with federal and private funding sources requirements would mean committing staff members to extensive and ongoing training. As a result, only faculty members affiliated with the Institute of Behavioral Science have access to grant management help. The department has also explored support services offered by the Office of Contracts and Grants (OCG), but it is not clear how helpful that connection has proved.

Governance

The department's bylaws describe the roles and responsibilities of its elected officers and standing committees, governance structures and processes, and voting rights, with other policies—describing mentoring, course banking, and undergraduate independent studies—included as appendices. Faculty meetings are the primary locale for governance and decision-making, where a sufficient quorum is defined as "those voting members present." Five standing committees support department governance and policy implementation: an executive committee, an undergraduate committee, a graduate committee, a diversity committee, and a social committee.

The department last updated its bylaws 15 years ago. As such, the bylaws no longer reflect contemporary practices in several areas:

- Voting rights: Only tenured and tenure-track faculty members are enfranchised. Instructors do not have any voting rights.
- Proxy votes: The department requires that all ballots be cast in person and outlines an elaborate process and set of conditions as to when a faculty member can ask someone to vote on their behalf.
- Research faculty: The bylaws state that those involved in the instructional program will be given a title in the research professor series. This contradicts campus guidelines for these positions, which are designed to provide a career path for research faculty. Federal guidelines prohibit faculty whose salaries are entirely funded through grants from providing instructional services while drawing salary from federal sources.
- Representation on the executive committee: This committee does not have any representation from instructors or graduate students.
- Graduate student representation on the graduate committee: The bylaws allow for two student members, but they are not allowed to vote.
- Grievance procedures: These are not included in the bylaws. They exist as two standalone policies—one for students and one for faculty members—that have not been updated since February 2005.

The annual faculty merit evaluation policy has not been updated since February 2005. The policy explicitly states that information from the annual Faculty Report of Professional Activities (FRPA) will not be used in merit review and details an extensive list of other data sources that faculty should provide to the executive committee, which is charged with carrying out the review process.

Guidelines for reappointment, promotion, and tenure were last updated in February 2004.

Inclusive Excellence

Of the 18 tenure-stream faculty members counted in the AY 2018-2019 ODA unit profile, 48% identify as women and 5% identify as belonging to an underrepresented minority population (i.e., African American, Hispanic/Latino, Native American, Pacific Islander).

Of the 613 undergraduate majors, 70% identify as women, 2% as international students, and 28% identify as belonging to a minority population (i.e., Asian American, African American,

Hispanic/Latino, Native American, Pacific Islander); with 22% identifying as belonging to an underrepresented minority population. Over the past five years, the percentage of international undergraduate students has increased by 79% while the percentage of students identifying as belonging to a minority population and underrepresented minority population has increased by 19% and 11%, respectively.

Of the 56 graduate students, 71% identify as women, 7% are international students, and 26% identify as belonging to a minority population; with 20% identifying as belonging to an underrepresented minority population. Over the past five years, the percentage of international graduate students has decreased by 20%, while the percentage of students identifying as belonging to a minority population and underrepresented minority population has increased by 8% and 16%, respectively.

The self-study identifies several issues around inclusive excellence with which the department is grappling. Some graduate students report dissatisfaction with their choice of advisors given a lack of faculty of color. The department describes a struggle to recruit graduate students from underrepresented minority populations, and suggests that a lack of incentives and high fees may be deterrents, as well as the general lack of diversity among current faculty and students.

Unit Culture

During this reporting period, the department experienced two instances of allegations against faculty members of unprofessional conduct and/or sexual harassment. The self-study describes how these events emerged from a dysfunctional department culture and that the allegations have profoundly strained relationships, especially between faculty members and graduate students.

The 2019 Campus and Workplace Culture (CWC) Survey administered by the Office of Data Analytics (ODA) and addressed to Sociology students, faculty, and staff members culture generated responses from 93% of the department's faculty and staff members, and 70% of its graduate students. Both groups had nearly equal participation among men and women, which is not representative of the graduate student body which comprises nearly 70% women.

More than three-quarters of faculty and staff respondents answered "agree" or "strongly agree" that Sociology's workplace culture is positive (81%), that they feel welcome in the department (81%), that they are treated with respect (76%), and that they have not experienced identity-related bias.

Among the department's graduate students, more than three-quarters "agree" or "strongly agree" that they have strong relationships with their advisor, that their comments and ideas are taken seriously (95%), that they feel comfortable bringing up areas of concern (75%), and that their identity does not influence their advisor's opinions about their abilities (89%).

Less positive signs appear, too, particularly involving the department's social norms as well as indicators of harmful behavior. For instance, about half of all faculty and staff at least "somewhat agree" that senior faculty, supervisors, and department leaders humiliate or intimidate others (52%), and that colleagues and coworkers humiliate or intimidate others (50%). Strikingly, only 58% "agree" that rude behavior is not tolerated, while nearly a quarter of faculty and staff "disagree" that angry outbursts are not tolerated (23%), and that senior faculty, supervisors, and department leaders are effectively addressing problematic behaviors (27%).

Worryingly, high proportions of graduate student survey respondents perceive the academic and workplace culture of Sociology as disrespectful, antagonistic, and lacking a sense of community. Among Sociology graduate student survey respondents, fewer than half "agree" or "strongly agree" that they experience a sense of community in the department (49%), that they are respected by faculty and other students (46%), that the climate is positive (41%), that everyone is treated with dignity (43%), that rude behavior is discouraged (46%), and that resources are allocated transparently (43%). Furthermore, more than half at least "somewhat agree" that faculty (51%) and other graduate students (56%) say things or behave in ways that humiliate or intimidate people. Graduate students' experiences related to identity are also fairly negative, with more than a third feeling that their identity influences other graduate students' opinions about their abilities (35%). More than half report hearing others express identity-based stereotypes. Likewise, more than half report hearing negative indirect comments related to their identity/identities (51%). Perhaps unsurprisingly, then, graduate students are not strongly committed to the university. Nearly half of graduate students have seriously

considered leaving CU Boulder (49%), and less than half "agree" or "strongly agree" that they would choose to attend CU Boulder again if given the chance (46%).

The self-study describes actions that the department is taking to change these dynamics, such as to encourage faculty member education (e.g., attendance at the Crucial Conversations, Managing Microaggressions in Your Unit, and Effective Bystander Intervention Skills training), more frequent and transparent communications, a focus on shared values, and implementing protocols to report concerning behaviors. In the self-study, one particular challenge noted by the department is that there is lack of internal agreement as to what constitutes "diversity," which makes it difficult for faculty members to reach consensus on policies and mechanisms to enhance inclusive excellence.

The external reviewers note a sense of positive climate among faculty, but say that real or perceived resource gaps exist between IBS-affiliated and non-affiliated faculty and students. The internal reviewers state that the department has implemented a three-pronged strategy that appears "to be working" based on their observations and discussions with faculty, staff and students. This strategy includes improving mentoring, building trust, and improving decision-making transparency.

Past Reviews

The department has made significant progress on recommendations arising from the 2013 ARPAC review, including to institute a colloquium series, plan for a Ketchum building renovation (completed in 2015), increase honors program participation, and remedy inequitable teaching loads and course buyouts. Sociology has also addressed previously raised concerns about DAICR inequities by confirming that the department was indeed receiving the correct amount in cost recovery from the Institute of Behavioral Science.

At the same time, several issues from the 2013 review remain outstanding, including:

- The unit has not updated its bylaws and other related policies to bring them into alignment with contemporary university practices. An update supplied by Sociology in 2017 indicated that a revised merit review process was "approved and implemented," but the 2020 self-study included only a procedure dated to 2005. Likewise, other policies appended in the 2020 self-study are dated between 2001–2006, with the exception of the Procedures for Promotion to Senior Instructor, dated January 2019.
- The previous review noted concerns (and made attendant recommendations) regarding the difference in access to research resources and grant support between IBS-affiliated and non-affiliated faculty and students. This remains a prevailing issue noted by internal and external reviewers during this year's review.
- ARPAC advised Sociology to pursue diversity-focused faculty hiring strategies and emphasized the importance of gaining faculty members who identify as belonging to underrepresented populations.
- The committee advised Sociology to cultivate a thoughtful and respectful dialogue among faculty members about how to determine a hiring strategy. The 2020 self-study asks for eight additional faculty lines but provides no guidance on how these proposed positions will reflect research priorities or disciplinary trends.

Additionally, Sociology appears to have seen little progress in gaining new benefactors or in securing grant-writing support for non-institute-affiliated faculty members. As noted earlier, the 2020 self-study describes how the department is trying to leverage the grant administration services of the Office of Contracts and Grants. The dean of the College of Arts and Sciences has a provisional plan for providing dedicated staff to support faculty across a number of units

in grant preparation and post-award processing, based on the successful implementation of this model in the Geography and Geological Sciences departments.

The dean of the College of Arts and Sciences has supported several recommendations made in 2013: provisionally changing the standard teaching load of tenure-stream faculty members from 2:2 (two courses per semester) to 2:1, updating course buyout policies, and enabling greater utilization of graduate student teaching assistants.

The principal recommendation addressed to the provost—supporting the Ketchum building remodel—has been accomplished.

Analysis

The Sociology self-study and the internal and external review reports paint a picture of a department that has been through a challenging period, particularly with respect to its culture and inclusive excellence, but appears to have turned the corner and is heading towards a more positive future. These sources also outline substantial challenges ahead for the department. These include undertaking meaningful strategic planning, revitalizing the PhD program, and strengthening Sociology's relationship with the Institute for Behavioral Science (IBS), with which it has had productive collaborations for more than 60 years. Not only do Sociology personnel comprise over 30% of the institute's tenure-track faculty affiliates, but it is also the only unit with multiple faculty members serving in IBS leadership roles. Despite this successful history, serious concerns have arisen, particularly among Sociology graduate students, that this collaboration favors the department's various research endeavors unequally.

Strategic Vision and Planning

Both the internal and external reviewers identify a need for Sociology to undertake strategic planning as one of the department's top priorities. It is noteworthy that the self-study does not include a strategic plan, but instead describes a series of "information-gathering" activities that may someday inform a planning process. The external reviewers urge the department to pursue a more systematic planning approach, scheduled to unfold over a defined timeframe, and supported by an external facilitator, if possible.

This year's review generated calls for clarity regarding Sociology's thematic foci, with the external reviewers asking for a "consolidation" of the department's 11 research areas and the internal reviewers recognizing a need for the unit's hiring plan to take a stance about "breadth versus depth." The self-study describes consolidation as a difficult discussion that might lead some faculty members to feel excluded. Promisingly, the three research workshops described earlier—"Culture, Power and Inequality", "Population and Health", and "Criminology"—are proving both popular and enduring, and the department could use these as a starting point for further discussions.

Another option is to shift the planning conversation from an internal focus on departmental identity to an external focus on branding and messaging directed at prospective students and

faculty. This could reduce tensions and address another weakness in the self-study: there is no discussion of the disciplinary and interdisciplinary trends that might influence the department's trajectory over the next reporting period. For instance, what impact might the emerging field of computational social science—driven by vast data in the form of social media, for example—have on research and education?

The only strategic goal identified in the self-study is directed toward faculty growth: the unit requests eight additional faculty lines over the next reporting period. The stated rationale for requesting these hires is based on the assertion that national rankings favor large departments and that increasing the faculty size will raise the department's national ranking. There is no specific discussion of how these faculty lines might enhance the department's research and teaching profiles. The two faculty searches that were described as underway or imminent in the self-study have been cancelled due to COVID-related budget constraints.

Undergraduate Education

There is ample evidence that CU Boulder's undergraduates are interested in studying sociology. The department's newly introduced minor has already enrolled 267 students. The department's general education courses are popular and well-received, and its online courses aid and promote timely degree completion. The department has introduced and expanded an innovative series of certificate programs that allow its majors to pursue internships with local organizations. Students in these programs are challenged to integrate work and learning and to develop a coherent body of knowledge and experiences, all the while gaining an understanding of possible career options. As the department plans its future, it should consider ways to scale these certificates to make it possible for high percentages of its majors to participate.

Despite these successes, the 22% drop in student credit hours taught over the past five years is concerning, particularly as the department heads into a new era with tenure-stream faculty assigned 2:1 teaching course loads, coupled with a college revenue model that is based on overall student credit hour generation. The department should consider how it can build on the undergraduate program's existing strengths to grow the major and minor and to recruit a more diverse student body. Highlighting Sociology's innovative certificate programs and exciting internship opportunities could support both of these goals, as well as address student dissatisfaction with career support. The self-study does not describe how Sociology works

with, or recruits from, the Program in Exploratory Studies, but pursuing this path could prove fruitful for reaching additional students.

Graduate Education

The Sociology graduate program faces a confluence of daunting issues: strained relationships between graduate students and faculty members stemming from past faculty misconduct and sexual harassment allegations, strained relationships between graduate students with research funding and those without, an extended time-to-degree period with only 19% of students finishing their PhDs within six years (the extent of the provided funding at admission), and a lack of obvious support or training for students pursuing non-academic careers. It is perhaps not surprising that the department self-study notes that graduate admissions are lower than desired and that the program has difficulty attracting diverse students.

The strained relationships noted by this review must be carefully attended to. Policies governing departmental decision-making must be updated to empower graduate students.

Sociology graduate students must also be involved in rethinking and revamping the PhD program. Their input will be valuable in resolving many of the program's problematic arrangements. For one, students involved in funded research have a team of other students, postdoctoral scholars, and faculty members to help them stay on track, along with grant-related structures and milestones that can provide a safety net. What might be analogous structures and supports for those not involved in funded research? The department also must contend with the reality of a lack of meaningful opportunities for students to engage in research prior to their third year, which is currently the program's first milestone. Especially for students not connected with funded research, the first two years can be consumed with taking classes and teaching. What are the consequences of postponing comprehensive exams until a student's fourth year? The existing timeline can have the effect of pushing students' research proposals into their fifth year, with funding only guaranteed for one more year. Also, if someone fails the comprehensive exam, do they leave with a master's (MA) degree after four years? Ideally, the program could be structured so that students who fail the comprehensive exam can leave with an MA within the first two or three years. Other aspects of the PhD program should also be rethought: what experiences and scholarly pursuits more closely resemble actual sociological practice, either within academia or outside? What tools and methodologies

do graduate students need to prepare for non-academic work? The department also may want to reexamine its commitment to focusing its graduate education efforts exclusively toward a PhD program; for example, a career-focused standalone MA program might prove both popular and a logical pathway for recruiting more diverse students into a revamped PhD.

Budget

ARPAC is concerned by the decline in Sociology's operating budget over the past five years, a decline that appears to be driven by reductions in the department's faculty numbers and in its generation of student credit hours. Might the shift to 2:1 course loads accelerate the downward trend and can it be reversed? Adding to the uncertainty, recent proposed changes to the Continuing Education revenue model may affect Sociology in a negative way, as the department contributes to Continuing Education through online teaching. Such changes might mean less income, further deteriorating the department's long-term viability.

Space, Infrastructure, and Support Needs

The self-study draws attention to the Ketchum building remodel in 2015 to point out that changes to Sociology's space there did not remedy a faculty office shortage. ARPAC recognizes that the department's space needs will become more acute with possible future growth.

A lack of pre- and post-award grant support for Sociology faculty members who are not IBS affiliates was a focus of the department's self-study and of the 2013 ARPAC review as well. What remains unclear is the scope of the demand: are there a small number of faculty members who want these services or is the demand broader? If there is limited demand, it could make sense for Sociology to approach IBS about providing grant support to these faculty as an outsourced service. If the demand is broader, then the department should consider formalizing a partnership with the Office of Contracts and Grants to develop and support grant preparation processes. In addition, the department should develop onboarding protocols for new faculty members and other associated researchers who are not IBS affiliates. Finally, the department should work with the appropriate College of Arts and Sciences divisional dean to identify resources to support outstanding faculty member needs for post-award support and processing.

Governance

Sociology has not updated the majority of its governance documents in the last 15 years. The 2013 ARPAC review recommended that the department do so, but this did not happen. It is not clear the degree to which Sociology follows its outdated policies, but ARPAC is left to ask if the department's delay may be contributing to ongoing climate and culture issues. As is, the department's policies disenfranchise graduate students and instructors; these populations are either excluded from committee participation or allowed to participate without voting rights. Does the department intend to keep its graduate students and instructors out of departmental governance, and if so, why? The bylaws also define a voting quorum to be "whoever is present," which has the potential to negatively impact transparency if important votes are taken when faculty members are not present. Electronic voting would enfranchise more people to participate and possibly benefit voting transparency.

Inclusive Excellence

While the unit has made progress towards student inclusive excellence—individuals who identify as belonging to an underrepresented minority population now represent 25%-30% of the undergraduate and graduate student populations—Sociology's faculty contingent remains less representative. Only one faculty member identifies as belonging to an underrepresented minority group and graduate students report that this lack of faculty diversity can be a barrier to effective advising. Notably, the unit made no mention of furthering inclusive excellence in its request for eight additional faculty lines. ARPAC finds this unacceptable. The faculty must prioritize momentum toward inclusive excellence as part of their strategic planning for Sociology's future.

Unit Culture

Sociology must also prioritize work culture improvements. It should consider leveraging mission-critical projects—for instance, strategic planning and policy updates—as opportunities to bring people together in constructive ways. Additionally, policies governing department decision-making must be updated to empower graduate students.

Recommendations

The members of the Academic Review and Planning Advisory Committee address the following recommendations to the Department of Sociology and to the offices of responsible administrators. ARPAC notes that some of its recommendations require resources, and the committee wishes to acknowledge that this report is being written during the COVID-19 pandemic when CU Boulder's financial outlook is uncertain. Committee members understand that recommendations requiring monetary resources might not be actionable in the near term. However, it is a part of ARPAC's responsibility to record these recommendations in its report in order to describe and document the department's needs at the point of its 2020 academic review.

To the Unit:

1. Develop a strategic plan that aligns the department's mission, vision, and major research and education thematic areas with emerging disciplinary trends. The department's plan should outline the rationale for hiring priorities, including the number of proposed faculty hires, whether to target junior- or senior-level hires, their expected research areas, and how these priorities might extend Sociology's growth and status, in both research and undergraduate/graduate education. This plan must reflect the department's inclusive excellence goals for the student body and faculty members. The strategic plan should discuss how the department will balance potentially competing priorities when considering the best use of their limited resources.

2. Continue to invest in and improve the department's exemplary and innovative undergraduate internship and certificate programs. Develop additional faculty capacity to support the ongoing operation and expansion of these programs, and to ensure program continuity during leadership changes.

3. Develop teaching plans that ensure that tenure-track faculty increase their overall share of student credit hour production.

4. Develop plans to actively and systematically recruit new majors and minors from the Program in Exploratory Studies. Develop first-year seminars to support this activity. Track the degree to which these recruiting efforts are successful.

5. Overhaul the PhD program to focus on student success, both for those who complete the program and those who do not.
   a. Build on recent positive changes in mentoring and advising practices for PhD students.
   b. Outline how new processes and procedures will enable all students to engage in research earlier in their studies (ideally in their first year), complete their PhD degrees in a timelier manner, and be well-trained for research, teaching and/or non-academic jobs.
   c. Consider switching to a five-year funding model that engages students at a much earlier point in research that allows them to start their own dissertation.
   d. Investigate how other departments have repurposed existing funding to provide their students with graduate research assistantships.
   e. Consider how a shortened time-to-degree commitment, and other aspects of a revamped PhD program, can serve as useful marketing and recruiting tools.
   f. Outline clear pathways for students who cannot complete the PhD with a timely master's degree.

6. Consider establishing a standalone master's program. Think about the various tracks such a program will need to offer, such as career preparation versus academic-track preparation, whether this might supplement the department's revenue, and the degree to which this can serve as a useful recruiting ground for future PhD students.

7. Provide undergraduate and graduate students with better career and post-graduation placement advising, including concrete information on the types of non-academic jobs available that draw on their education, experiences and training. Work with advisors in the College of Arts and Sciences to improve course advising.

8. Collaborate with other units in the social science division to develop shared processes and infrastructure for tracking alumni placements. Establish clear outcomes for measuring and understanding where Sociology alumni are going.

9. Review, update, and re-approve all governance documents and departmental policies dated prior to 2015. Care should be taken to ensure that all policies reflect contemporary standards and recommendations of the university, the College of Arts and Sciences, and the Research and Innovation Office. Develop mechanisms for including and enfranchising instructors as per campus guidelines. Consider including and enfranchising graduate students as appropriate in departmental governance.

    This set of tasks should be completed prior to the first follow-up report to the ARPAC due in 2022.

10. Revise merit review policies to reflect new strategic goals and opportunities, including new expectations for teaching and education with the recently instituted 2:1 teaching load for tenure-stream faculty.

11. Employ the department's committee structure to develop and implement concrete plans for improving inclusive excellence among Sociology's undergraduate and graduate student populations, and among faculty members.

12. Implement strategies and practices designed to improve the department's workplace culture, with specific attention paid to reducing incivilities and building mutual respect:

    a. Share the Campus and Workplace Culture (CWC) Survey report with all department members.

    b. Hold open forums to discuss the results and next steps.

    c. Build on the department's current efforts to improve mentoring, trust, and decision-making transparency to establish two to three goals and a timeline for implementing improvements with a re-measurement of outcomes in 2022 (after the CWC Survey has been administered again).

    d. The chair and other senior faculty should engage faculty relations personnel in the Office of Faculty Affairs to provide ongoing support and coaching.

    e. Work with the Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance (OIEC) and the Ombuds Office to deliver ongoing workplace/academic environment improvement training, and if appropriate, to offer separate tracks for faculty/staff and graduate students. Specific trainings to consider include departmental norm reset, workplace bystander skills, managing difficult conversations, and expanded training on discrimination, harassment, and sexual misconduct.

13. Ensure that the 2.5% associate chair stipend is commensurate with the scope, scale, and time demands of the position, recognizing that changes in this stipend would likely need to be covered by the department.

To the Divisional Dean for Social Sciences and the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences:

14. Ensure that the department engages in strategic planning activities as a precursor to additional faculty line requests; provide support and facilitation as appropriate.

15. Recognize workplace culture-related challenges facing Sociology and allocate resources to assist with overcoming these. Help the department to set benchmarks for assessing workplace culture improvements and for monitoring ongoing progress.

16. Assist the department as they work to improve course and career advising support for their undergraduates.

17. Develop and implement a strategy for providing faculty and other researchers who are not affiliated with an institute with pre- and post-award administrative support.

18. The self-study draws attention to a shortage of offices for faculty that was not addressed in the Ketchum remodel. This will need to be addressed to accommodate future growth.

19. Commit to increasing the diversity of Sociology faculty members, and undergraduate, and graduate students, through outreach, fundraising, and targeted resource allocations.

To the Dean of the Graduate School:

20. Assist the department in revamping its PhD program.

21. Assist the department with considering the introduction of a standalone MA program.

To the Vice Chancellor for Research and Innovation and the Dean of the Institutes:

22. Recognize that there are ongoing tensions between IBS-affiliated and unaffiliated Sociology faculty and students and work with the Sociology chair and IBS director to develop a plan for reducing tensions and for long-term healing.

To the Provost:

23. Support the divisional dean for social sciences and the dean of the College of Arts and Sciences as they assist Sociology to improve its culture and climate and to increase the diversity of Sociology faculty members, and undergraduate, and graduate students.

Required Follow-Up

The chair of the Department of Sociology shall report annually on the first of April for a period of three years following the year of the receipt of this report (i.e., April 1st of 2022, 2023, and 2024) to the divisional dean for social sciences and the dean of the College of Arts and Sciences and to the provost on the implementation of these recommendations. Likewise, the dean of the College of Arts and Sciences shall report annually on the first of May to the provost on the implementation of recommendations addressed to the program.