

**Revised Assessment Plan  
Sociology Department  
November, 2004**

**WSU Mission Statement**

Wichita State University is committed to providing comprehensive educational opportunities in an urban setting. Through teaching, scholarship, and public service, the University seeks to equip both students and the larger community with the educational and cultural tools they need to thrive in a complex world, and to achieve both individual responsibility in their own lives and effective citizenship in the local, national, and global community.

High quality teaching and learning are fundamental goals in all undergraduate, graduate, and continuing education programs. Building on a strong tradition in the arts and sciences, the University offers programs in business, education, engineering, fine arts, and health professions, as well as in the liberal arts and sciences. Degree programs range from the associate to the doctoral level and encompass 75 fields of study; non-degree programs are designed to meet the specialized educational and training needs of individuals and organizations in south central Kansas.

Scholarship, including research, creative activity, and artistic performance, is designed to advance the University's goals of providing high quality instruction, making original contributions to knowledge and human understanding, and serving as an agent of community service. This activity is a basic expectation of all faculty members at Wichita State University.

Public and community service activities seek to foster the cultural, economic, and social development of a diverse metropolitan community and of the state of Kansas. The University's service constituency includes artistic and cultural agencies, business and industry, and community educational, governmental, health, and labor organizations. Wichita State University pursues its mission utilizing the human diversity of Wichita, the state's largest metropolitan community, and its many cultural, economic, and social resources. The University faculty and professional staff are committed to the highest ideals of teaching, scholarship, and public service, as the University strives to be a comprehensive, metropolitan university of national stature.

**Sociology's Role in the University Mission**

The Department of Sociology contributes in several ways in accomplishing the University Mission. First, as a social science discipline in the liberal arts, sociology intends to aid the university and its students in the development of the "educational and cultural tools" needed to survive in a complex/diverse world. Second, sociology has an active faculty who individually and collectively contribute to strong teaching, scholarship, and service. Third, the Department of Sociology works in the community to improve opportunities for our students and to improve the quality of life in Wichita and South Central Kansas. Finally, the Department of Sociology combines community and professional service with teaching and scholarship to benefit our faculty, students, and numerous constituencies in the profession and the region.

**Program Mission**

The Department of Sociology has as its mission the development of understanding and skills among our students while serving the needs of our faculty and institution. As a

science, sociology is particularly interested in the development of research skills that can be translated into employment opportunities for our BA and MA students. Specifically, this means our students must be aware of the theoretical, methodological, and statistical dimensions of the research enterprise. Sociology as a discipline which identifies and studies the effects of structural issues in society, i.e. race/ethnicity, economic inequality, age, gender, etc., and works to develop insights in our students about the effects of these structures on their personal lives and in their communities. Finally, the Department of Sociology intends that our students be employable with the BA and MA degrees and use University and community resources to make the transitions to work more successful.

### **Program Goals/Learner Outcomes**

**Goal One:** The understanding and acquisition of skills in social research.

**Learner Outcome 1:** Sociology majors will be able to differentiate between the fundamental theoretical perspectives of the discipline.

**Learner Outcome 2:** Sociology majors will be able to apply their understanding of the scientific method by carrying out an empirical project that answers a specific research question.

**Goal Two:** Understanding structural issues in society as they relate to social class, gender, race/ethnicity, and age.

**Learner Outcome 3:** Sociology majors will be able to describe the consequences of social issues in contemporary society.

**Goal Three:** Effective preparation of sociology undergraduate and graduate majors for internships and employment.

**Learner Outcome 4:** Sociology majors will possess the skills to successfully complete internships and find employment.

### **Assessment of Program Goals**

The assessment of our program goals and learner outcomes will be done through the collection of papers and written assignments from certain classes in the curriculum. Papers required in the theory class, SOC 545, and methods, SOC 512, will be used to assess whether the department is meeting its program goal one, above. The second goal will be measured by the collection and critical reading of papers from classes that examine social/structural issues; Goal 2, above. Additionally, evaluative questions placed in an exit survey given to all students enrolling in their last methods course in sociology (SOC 512) will aid in the overall assessment of the quality of teaching and the value of the sociology curriculum. Finally, regularly collected data from the Cooperative Education program which has student and employer ratings of the internship experience, along with their annual survey of graduates, will allow for evaluation of Goal 3, above.

The collection of these papers will be done one semester in every two years, and the survey will be given each time SOC 512 is offered. The data collection from Cooperative

Education is done each semester (employer and student evaluations) and year (survey of recent graduates) and will be kept for compilation and analysis every two years.

The entire departmental faculty will be involved in these activities at one point or another, through the collection of papers from a variety of classes. However, there will be a standing committee on assessment in the department that will regularly come into action as measurements need to be made. The chair of the department will be responsible for initiating the assessment activities and maintaining the papers and data needed for report writing.

### **Assessment of Learner Outcomes**

Learner Outcome 1: Sociology majors will be able to differentiate between the fundamental theoretical perspectives of the discipline. *Target is 80 percent.*

Papers will be collected from the SOC 545 class, Sociological Theory, to assess whether students can meet this outcome. *Target is 80 percent.*

Learner Outcome 2: Sociology majors will be able to apply their understanding of the scientific method by carrying out an empirical project that answers a specific research question.

Papers will be collected from the SOC 512 class, Measurement and Analysis, to assess whether students meet this outcome. *Target is 80 percent.*

Learner Outcome 3: Sociology majors will be able to describe the consequences of social issues in contemporary society.

Short papers and assignments will be given in several of the 300 level courses in our curriculum and used to measure whether students can “describe the consequences of social issues.” *Target is 80 percent.*

Learner Outcome 4: Sociology majors will possess the skills to successfully complete internships and find employment.

Student evaluations of their internship experiences and employer evaluations of the intern’s performance are carried out for each Cooperative Education placement and given to the department at the end of each semester. These data allow for the measurement of “successfully complete internships”. *Student and employers ratings will exceed 75 percent satisfaction.* Secondly, annual Recent Graduate Surveys are conducted by Cooperative Education and a significant proportion of these surveys go to sociology majors. Results from this survey will be analyzed for sociology majors and assess whether the students are finding employment in their field. *Targets are: 1) 90 percent will be employed and 2) 60 percent will be employed in a job related to their major.*

**Results**

The first round of assessment results will be available once data are collected in the spring of 2005.

**Feedback Loop**

At the end of every two year cycle, the data will be compiled and analyzed to see whether the target levels are met. All measures will be collected and compiled in the spring semester of the assessment year. Analysis of the data will occur over the summer. One September faculty meeting, following the assessment year data compilation and analysis, will be devoted to a discussion and interpretation of the results and decisions made regarding student performance on the standards set.