



SOCIOLOGY PROGRAM REVIEW

A PROCESS FOR SELF-EVALUATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

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PROGRAM: Sociology

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PERIOD OF YEARS BEING REVIEWED: 2013 – 2017

OVERVIEW

The Department of Social Sciences at Bergen Community College (BCC) offers a wide variety of in-person and online courses in sociology that are part of degree-granting programs. Most are utilized to satisfy requirements for general education. Students at BCC have the opportunity to select from an ample list of sociology courses:

- SOC-101 Sociology
- SOC-102 Introduction to Human Services
- SOC-103 Sociology of the Family
- SOC-104 Introduction to Social Work
- SOC-113 Social Problems
- SOC-115 Introduction to Substance Abuse
- SOC-116 Substance Abuse Counseling
- SOC-120 Sociology of Gender Roles
- SOC-121 The Changing Roles of Women
- SOC-222 Ethnic-Minority Group Relations
- SOC-291 Co-Op Work Experience [Sociology]
- SOC-292 Co-Op Work Experience [Sociology]
- SOC-293 Co-Op Work Experience [Sociology]

The Associate in Arts (AA) Degree Program in Sociology is designed to be a transfer program and to give students a general foundation in sociological theories and research methods as related to the study of society, social behavior, and contemporary social issues.

Program goals include providing a variety of social and behavioral scientific paradigms for students to utilize as tools for analyzing the complexities of individual, group, community, and societal relationships and issues within a global arena. By stimulating intellectual curiosity and critical thinking, students can gain a valuable foundation for personal growth and application towards further study and, ultimately, a rewarding career.

Program Learning Outcomes

Students who complete courses in the Sociology Program will be able to:

- Demonstrate the ability to apply the three major sociological perspectives (i.e., structural functionalism, conflict theory and symbolic interactionism) to social phenomena presented in each of their elective courses.
- Demonstrate their knowledge of cultural diversity and be able to apply the perspective of cultural relativism when viewing the complex social world in which in we all live.
- Utilize the scientific method and the unique quantitative and qualitative tools developed by sociologists to objectively analyze social environments.
- Evaluate and utilize materials found on the internet and other sources.
- Use critical thinking skills to analyze and evaluate the ways in which sociologists examine the social world.
- State and support their own views on social issues addressed in their courses, both orally and in writing, with logical rigor and clarity.

SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENTS SINCE LAST PROGRAM REVIEW

This is the first formal program review of the Liberal Arts Degree program's sociology option.

FOCUS ON STUDENTS

Demographics

Data acquired from the Center for Institutional Effectiveness (CIE) for each fall semester, 2013 - 2016, show the number of students enrolled in the Sociology program. There were reportedly 179 students enrolled in the Sociology Program during the time period reflected by these data.

Table 1 – Enrollment data by ethnicity during the Fall 2013- 2016.

Race/Ethnicity	Fall 2013		Fall 2014		Fall 2015		Fall 2016	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Am.Indian/Alaska Native	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Asian	4	8	0	0	1	3	1	3
Black/African American	6	12	5	9	4	12	6	16
Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	0
Hispanic, all races	19	38	19	36	14	38	8	22
Two or more races	0	0	1	2	2	6	0	0
White	12	24	15	28	12	33	12	32
Total Known Race	41		41		33		27	
Non-Resident Alien	4	8	3	6	0	0	2	5
Unknown	5	10	9	17	3	8	8	22
Total Fall Enrollment	50	100	53	100	36	100	37	100

Student Satisfaction

During the academic years (2013-2015), twenty-six students graduated BCC with Sociology as their declared program option. A 2013 graduates' follow-up survey conducted by The Center for Institution Effectiveness (CIE) included questions and responses pertinent to this review.

“How well did the courses you completed at BCC prepare you for further education?”

“How well has the program helped your performance on the job?”

“How is your current job related to the Sociology program?”

Unfortunately, there was insufficient data to draw any conclusions from this survey on the specific utility of the sociology program.

Students who completed the Sociology option most frequently transferred to Montclair State University, Thomas Edison State College and William Paterson University.

Learning Outcomes Assessments

1. Program Learning Goal(s) or Outcome(s) to be assessed (from the above section):

Learning goals (PLG) for the sociology program are strongly reflected in an on-going Outcomes Assessment Project (OAP). The project was conceived as a consequence of the college's most recent MSCHE evaluation report which cited college-wide assessment efforts on program and course levels among the positive changes then taking place. Supportive of practices which enhance teaching and learning, sociology faculty became and remains fully engaged in maintaining a continuous cycle of assessment of both program and course learning outcomes.

The Outcomes Assessment project has four stated goals and it builds upon the Outcomes Assessment Project conducted by the Sociology faculty during the 2015-2017 Assessment Cycle.

- a. Students are assessed in four target courses to determine whether they have learned the components of the major sociological perspectives (the building blocks of a sociology education).
- b. Students are assessed to determine whether they have developed the necessary skills to use each of the sociological perspectives to examine issues of diversity that should be discussed in all sections of these diversity courses.
- c. Students are assessed to determine whether they have acquired the requisite skills for communicating their knowledge of and ability to use the sociological perspectives in a written format.
- d. Students are assessed to determine whether they understand the roots and consequences of social diversity and why it is a concern of sociologists.

2. Means of Assessment:

The assessment was conducted as a graded activity that can be administered at home or in the classroom. The assignment was administered in all on-campus and online sections of SOC 113 (Social Problems), SOC120 (Sociology of Gender Roles), SOC121 (Changing Roles of Women),

and SOC222 (Ethnic and Minority Group Relations). SOC101 (Sociology) and SOC103 (Sociology of the Family), have just been approved as diversity courses and have just recently been the subject of assessment projects. Thus, these two courses will be part of the next assessment of diversity in Sociology courses.

Efforts have been made to administer the essay to all registered students, but the assessment does not require the participation of all students. The faculty have been expected to submit all completed essays by the indicated deadline (the last day of the Fall 2016 semester), whether or not all students have completed the activity. The assessment was conducted in all sections of the four targeted courses given during the day and the evening, on the Paramus and Lyndhurst campuses, as well as online. A random sample of 30% of the submitted essays constituted the basis for the analysis and grading of this activity.

The essays were written on a coded and standardized sheet that had to be used by all students, which would protect the identity of the student and the professor. The identity of students taking the assessment and instructors and professors administering the assessment is irrelevant for the purposes of this study and thus will not be available to any of the assessors.

3. Collecting and Analyzing Data:

Faculty members gave their students a two page essay assignment that asked the students to explain one sociological perspective presented in their course and to use that perspective to analyze some aspect of diversity in our society. The essays were completed and submitted in the latter portion of the Fall 2016 semester, including the last class and faculty were asked to submit their students essays by the end of the semester or upon their return to the college after the winter holiday break.

The assessment device should indicate how well students:

- know the selected sociological perspective,
- were able to use that perspective,
- understand the concept of cultural diversity,
- developed the ability to examine diversity from a sociological perspective, and
- can communicate in written form to indicate their knowledge of the previous goals of this project.

As the project has progressed, changes have been made in some of the earlier documents. We limited the use of sociological perspectives to one, rather than several, as our primary concern is diversity. We updated and modified portions of the grading rubric and we made minor changes to the requirements of the essay response.

4. Summary of results:

The assessment of sociology diversity courses was completed during the fall 2016 semester. In the first place, for the purposes of this study, we focused on 4 of our 6 diversity offerings: Social Problems (SOC113), Sociology of Gender Roles (SOC120), The Changing Roles of Women (121), and Ethnic and Minority Group Relations (SOC222). The following adjunct and full time professors taught these diversity courses and submitted diversity essays for evaluation: V. Smith Jungblut, M. Sloan, J. Behn, D. Fitzgerald, R. Faines, A. Berringer, R. Saldarini, and C. Lataianu. Some of these faculty submitted essays in two or more sections (e.g., D. Behn, who taught 3 diversity courses).

The evaluation of the essays was conducted by the following full-time faculty: J. Behn, A. Benjamin, M. Ellis-Davis, M. Kassop, C. Lataianu, R. Saldarini, and T. Solomon. As a result of the cooperation of these faculty members, 124 diversity essay submissions were assessed in this project.

Over the years our sociology program has evolved. We have offered courses that appeal to most college students and we have offered courses that only interest a narrower band of students. A course that we offered on Death and Dying and another related course on Children and Death only appealed to a very narrow segment of our student population. Students did not take these courses just to fulfill a general education requirement. They took the courses because they were genuinely interested in the content of the courses that assisted workers in funeral homes, nursing students, school teachers and others who needed up-to-date knowledge about death and dying. Similarly, although one could say that we all should be interested in matters of diversity, students often take these courses because they have a special interest in the content of several of our diversity courses. (SOC120, SOC121, and SOC222) in particular). Thus, they are a self-selected group of students and we often find that they earn better grades and have better writing skills. The findings of the just completed diversity assessment project support the skewed results of this study. When future studies include Sociology (SOC101) and Sociology of the Family (SOC103), the skewed findings will probably vanish.

Data Packets: Six full-time faculty members were asked to assess a packet of essays with 20+ essays per packet. As this assessment focuses on the success of our diversity courses, and it is NOT an assessment of either our faculty or our students, all names have been deleted from the final copy of our tables and that information is no longer available. Thus, there is a packet that is the basis for each faculty member's scores that is presented in a nameless fashion. These individual packet scores have been combined into a final, combined set of statistics, which is the basis for our apparent success in our diversity classes.

In particular, most of us were quite surprised at the good writing skills that were demonstrated by our students when we indicated to them that "writing skills do count." However, the scores of these students were relatively high in most of the packets given to the fall-time faculty assessors. For that matter, the scores on each of the components of the assessment were relatively high. Students scored 4.64 points for writing skills with a possible high grade of 5.00. Similarly, they had an average of 20.37 on "Knowledge of Sociological Perspective" with a possible high grade of 24, which is a score that is slightly higher than a B. They had an average score of 26.60 for "Understanding Cultural Diversity" with a possible high grade of 30, which is also a B average,

and they had an average score of 33.10 for “Ability to Apply a Sociological Perspective” with a possible high score of 40 which is a B- average. Finally, they had an average score of 84.73 as a combined average of all of the indicators, which produced an 84.73 average of a B grade.

It has been our habit since the assessment of sociology activities began several cycles ago to find some area in the results of our assessments to tweak our program to improve the work that we are doing in our classrooms. However, it does not appear to be a tweak that is necessary in this cycle. It is our expectation that when we include Sociology (SOC101) and Sociology of the Family (SOC103) to the assessment of Sociology diversity courses, that we may have to take some corrective steps as the scores will probably dip when the 101 and 103 cohorts are included.

Data Needs

Overall, Sociology graduates at BCC transfer to a variety of colleges and report a positive educational experience from their time as students at BCC. In the future, larger sample sizes of survey data for graduates would be helpful to evaluate strengths and weaknesses of the Sociology degree program.

FOCUS ON FACULTY AND STAFF

The Sociology Department includes 7 full-time tenured faculty and 17 adjunct faculty. A questionnaire was distributed to all Sociology faculty during Fall 2016 to assess demographics, satisfaction with the Sociology Department, and support for teaching. An additional questionnaire was distributed to all Sociology full-time tenured faculty during Fall 2016 assessing professional affiliations, service to the college, awards/honors, special projects, grants, publications, presentations, and conference attendance (see Appendix A). The following tables and discussion are based on responses from the 17 faculty members who participated in the survey.

Demographics

The Sociology Department at BCC has a good distribution of both male and female faculty. It would be helpful to increase recruitment efforts to hire faculty that are racially/ethnically diverse and reflect the student body at BCC, which is currently not the case. 82% of faculty respondents identify as White compared to 32% of the student body.

Faculty Status	N	%
Part-time/Adjunct Faculty	10	59%
Full-time Faculty	7	41%
Gender		
Male	7	41%
Female	10	59%
Race/Ethnicity		
Asian	0	0%
Black	2	12%
Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	0	0%
Hispanic	1	6%
White	14	82%

Highest Degree Earned		
Doctoral Degree	3	18%
Master's Degree	14	82%

Professional Activities

A large number of the Sociology faculty have extensive teaching experience. 70% of all Sociology faculty have been teaching more than 10 years. The full-time faculty have a median of 35 years of college level teaching experience with a range of 10 years to 46 years. Besides their extensive teaching experience, the Sociology Department full-time faculty are engaged scholars and participate significantly in the life of BCC and the community. The full-time faculty have a variety of Professional Affiliations within the field of sociology including:

- American Educational Research Association
- American Sociological Association
- Eastern Sociological Association,
- National Association of Social Workers
- New Jersey Higher Education Association
- Romanian Sociological Association

Years of College Teaching Experience	%
15 or more years	47%
10-15 years	23%
5-10 years	12%
0-5 years	18%

Full-time faculty serve on a variety of college-wide committees including:

Black History Month Committee	Learning Assessment Committee
College-Wide Promotion Committee	Library Committee
College-Wide Sabbatical Leave Committee	Search Committees
Curriculum Committee	Self-Study-Middle States
Faculty Senate	Suburban Studies Group
General Education Committee	Women's History Month Committee
Learning Community Committee	

Sociology Department full-time faculty are involved in a variety of additional activities that benefit the college. Some of the projects and activities include:

Academic Department Chair

Advisor, Violence Intervention Prevention Center

Behavioral Intervention Team

Co-chairs, Sociology Program Review Team

Co-organizer, BCC Tri-State Best Practices Conference

Co-organizer, Annual Transgender Awareness Day

Core Faculty, Achieving the Dream

Director, Social Work Degree Program

ENACTUS National Exposition
Paired Course Development

Facilitator, Student-Faculty Roundtable Discussions

Facilitator/Advisor, International Model United Nations Conference

Fellow, Center for Institutional Effectiveness

Liaison, Dominican Republic College and University

Strategic Planning, Team Member

Violence Intervention Prevention Center
Annual Transgender Awareness Day

Full-time faculty have been recipients of numerous awards, honors and grants including:

- Hispanic Institute Distinguished Award (2016)
- Instructional Technology Council Distinguished eLearning Educator Award (2015)
- New Jersey Center for Student Success Grant (2016)
- National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development (NISOD) Excellence Award, Princeton Fellowship
- Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Fellowship (SOTL) (2015).
- Department of Justice Office on Violence Against Women 2014 Campus Grant (\$300,000) Distinguished Professor
- Dominican American National Award

Full-time faculty regularly complete a variety of professional presentations such as:

- Achieving the Dream, Annual Conference
- Drexel University Conference on Assessment
- Governor's Task Force on Campus Sexual Assault
- Latinos in Higher Education Conference in New Jersey at Rutgers University
- League for Innovation in Community Colleges, The Learning Summit
- New Jersey Council of County Colleges
- Two Year College Association North East Conference

Additionally, full-time faculty attend a variety of conferences including:

- American Sociological Association Annual Conference
- East Coast Colleges Social Science Association
- New Jersey Council on County Colleges
- Middle States Commission on Higher Education
- Rutgers University Latinos in Higher Education
- United Nations Institute for Training and Research.

Overall, the full-time faculty are active in the discipline of Sociology and demonstrate a commitment to serving both the college and the larger community through consistent engagement in a multitude of activities. The awards, grants and recognitions that Sociology full-time faculty receives demonstrate their success in this arena.

The Sociology Department faculty were also polled about their satisfaction with various aspects of the department. The following tables and discussion are based on the responses from the 17 faculty members who participated in the survey.

A majority of members of the Sociology Department is very satisfied with the leadership and administration of the department. According to survey results, a majority of the department (70%), are not satisfied with the economic support available for advanced education. The Sociology Department is accessing a variety of supports in their teaching. The entire Sociology Department uses technology and a significant amount (82%) uses Moodle. Since many course offerings are web-enhanced, many faculty have attended Center for Innovation in Teaching and Learning (CITL) workshops on Moodle. Also noteworthy is the usage of the Tutoring Center and the Office of Specialized Services by 41% of the faculty.

Question	Responses in Percentages		
	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Not satisfied
How satisfied are you with the leadership of the Sociology Department?	82%	18%	0%
How satisfied are you with the Administration Office of the Department (including access to the office)?	82%	18%	0%
How satisfied are you with the academic offerings in the Sociology Department?	47%	41%	12%
How satisfied are you with the facilities and technology available for teaching in the Sociology Department?	47%	53%	0%
How satisfied are you with the economic support available for advanced education?	18%	12%	70%

Which of the following do you use for support in your teaching?	Percentage
Library Services	24%
Computer Lab	6%
Writing Lab	12%
Technology	100%
Tutoring Center	41%
Office of Specialized Services	41%
Moodle	82%
Center for Innovation in Teaching & Learning	41%
Center for Student Success	12%
Retention Alert (Pipeline)	12%

Adjunct Faculty

The Department Chair coordinates adjunct hiring in accordance with department program needs. Adjunct hiring is ultimately approved by the Divisional Dean and Academic Vice President in keeping with budget constraints. Our ten (10) adjunct instructors are observed every 2-3 years by the Department Chair or a tenured full-time faculty member as part of our on-going efforts to ensure consistency in course content delivery to students. The current number of part-time/adjunct instructors is currently 10, representing just under two-thirds (58.8%) of our program teaching faculty.

Support Staff

The department is supported by one full-time secretary who handles all secretarial and clerical duties for the Social Science Department, which includes Sociology.

Data Needs

Seventy-one percent of the Sociology Department teaching faculty participated in the survey, including all full-time faculty. A greater rate of response from the adjuncts would have generated more robust data.

FOCUS ON CURRICULUM

Summary of Program Curriculum: The Sociology Option

Sociology is characterized as the systematic study of postindustrial human societies. It utilizes the tools of scientific inquiry to examine the social lives of people throughout the life course in both formal and informal settings. Through this social science option, students are helped to draw upon critical thinking skills as they are introduced to some sociological theories and discover how the perspective contributes to our general understandings of real world issues allowing us to address them in meaningful ways.

The Sociology option consists of successful completion of twelve (12) credits in Sociology, including Introduction to Sociology and an additional three sociology courses, nine (9) elective course credits, from Sociology offerings.

Curriculum map:

The most current curriculum map for the Sociology program at BCC is accessed using the following link.

http://bergen.edu/wp-content/uploads/CIE-FA14_Sociology_AA.LA_.SOC_.pdf

Liberal Arts AA – Sociology Option

(AA.LA.SOC)

CIP Code 24.0101

Sociology remains an option within the college's general Liberal Arts program and leads to an Associate in Arts degree. The Associate in Arts (AA) Degree Program in Sociology is designed to be a transfer program and to give students a general foundation in sociological theories and research methods as related to the study of society, social behavior, and contemporary social issues. Five Sociology courses allow students to meet the college's liberal arts requirement: *Introduction to Sociology, Sociology of the Family, Social Problems, Gender Roles, Ethnic Minority Group Relations*.

Course Offerings

Sociology courses are offered in the fall and spring semesters during both day and evening hours. In addition, Introduction to Sociology, Sociology of Family and Social Problems are also offered during summer and Wintrim sessions. All courses are offered in three formats: traditional face-to-face, online, and hybrid. Course offerings are outlined below and, along with links to each course syllabus, is described in Appendix A.

Course Offerings in Sociology

Course Code	Course Title	Course Credits
SOC 101	Introduction to Sociology	3
SOC 102	Introduction to Human Services	3
SOC 103	Sociology of the Family	3
SOC 104	Introduction to Social Work	3
SOC 113	Social Problems	3
SOC 115	Introduction to Substance Abuse	3
SOC 116	Substance Abuse Counseling	3
SOC 120	Gender Roles	3
SOC 121	The Changing Roles of Women	3
SOC 222	Ethnic Minority Group Relations	3
SOC 291	Co-Op Work Experience [Sociology]	3
SOC 292	Co-Op Work Experience [Sociology]	3
SOC 293	Co-Op Work Experience [Sociology]	3

Program Learning Outcomes

- Demonstrate the ability to apply the three major sociological perspectives (i.e., structural functionalism, conflict theory and symbolic interactionism) to social phenomena presented in each of their elective courses.
- Demonstrate their knowledge of cultural diversity and be able to apply the perspective of cultural relativism when viewing the complex social world in which in we all live.
- Utilize the scientific method and the unique quantitative and qualitative tools developed by sociologists to objectively analyze social environments
- Evaluate and utilize materials found on the internet and other sources.
- Use critical thinking skills to analyze and evaluate the ways in which sociologists examine their social world.

- State and support their own views on sociological issues addressed in their courses, both orally and in writing, with logical rigor and clarity.

Recommended Semester Sequence for Students Completing the Sociology Program Option

First Semester		
	Humanities Elective**	3
MAT	Mathematics Elective*~	3-4
SOC 101	Sociology	3
COM 100	Speech Communication OR	3
COM 102	Public Speaking	3
WRT 101	English Composition I	3
Total Credit Hours		15-16

Second Semester		
HIS	History Elective*	3
MAT/CIS/INF	Mathematics or Computer Science or Information Technology Elective*~ OR Free Elective~	3-4
	Humanities Elective**	3
	Diversity Elective++	3
PSY 101	General Psychology	3
WRT 201	English Composition II	3
Total Credit Hours		18-19

Third Semester		
SOC	Sociology Electives	6
HIS	History Elective*	3
	Humanities Elective**	3
	Natural Science Elective*	4
Total Credit Hours		16

Fourth Semester		
SOC	Sociology Elective	3
	Humanities Electives***	6
	Natural Science Elective*	4
	Free Electives++++	2-4
Total Credit Hours		15-17

General Education Requirements

Communication		
COM 100	Speech Communication	3
	OR	
COM 102	Public Speaking	3
WRT 101	English Composition I	3
WRT 201	English Composition II	3
Total Credit Hours		9

History Electives*

Total Credit Hours 6

Humanities Electives** Three general education courses selected from the following fields, with no more than two courses in any one field: Arts (Art [ART], Music [MUS], Theatre Arts

[THR], Cinema Studies [CIN]); Literature (LIT); Philosophy and Religion (PHR); World Languages and Cultures (LAN).

Total Credit Hours

9

Social Sciences		
SOC 101	Introduction to Sociology	3
PSY 101	General Psychology	3
Total Credit Hours		6

Mathematics, Natural Sciences, and Technology		
	Mathematics*	3-4
	Mathematics or Computer Science or Information Technology*	0-3
	Natural Science Electives*	8
Total Credit Hours		12-14

Diversity Elective‡	
Total Credit Hours	3

Total Credit Hours

45-47

Program Requirements

Sociology Electives	9
Humanities Electives – two courses to be selected from the following fields: Arts (Art [ART], Music [MUS], Theatre Arts [THR], Cinema Studies [CIN]); History (HIS); Literature (LIT); Philosophy and Religion (PHR); World Languages and Cultures (LAN).	6
Credit Hours	Total 15

Free Electives††

Total Credit Hours: 2-6

Total Credit Hours: 64-66

Specific Program Notes

*General Education Elective(s).

**General Education Electives in Arts (ART, MUS, THR, CIN); Literature (LIT); Philosophy & Religion (PHR); or World Languages & Cultures (LAN).

***Electives in Arts (ART, MUS, THR, CIN); History (HIS); Literature (LIT); Philosophy & Religion (PHR); or World Languages & Cultures (LAN).

†If a student's first-semester Mathematics elective is a 3-credit course, then s/he is required to select a second 3- or 4-credit elective in the second semester in Mathematics or Computer Science or Information Technology; and if a student's first-semester Mathematics elective is a 4-credit course, then s/he is required to take a 3-credit Free Elective in the second semester (which may be a second Mathematics elective).

†General Education Diversity Course Elective. Recommended: SOC-120; SOC-121; SOC-122; ANT-100; ANT-101; PSY-110; PSY-207.

††Recommended: IST-123 Success 101 or another Sociology course.

Curricular Issues

The newest addition to Sociology course offerings is Introduction to Social Work. This course, however, also serves a dual purpose of creating a set of courses which together create a new program for the department: a two-year introduction to the field of Social Work.

Presently, there are no articulation agreements in place for the Sociology option. Identifying viable avenues for program expansion is one of the program's current goals.

Program Enhancements and Course Development

A new course, *Introduction to Social Work*, is now part of our regular Sociology course offerings. This addition has created a path through which students can prepare for transfer to four year programs in social work. The first course in what is now a set, *Introduction to Human Services*, has been part of the department's repertoire for 17 years. Included in the 4-course configuration are: *Introduction to Human Services*; *Introduction to Social Work*; *Introduction to Substance Abuse*; *Substance Abuse Counseling*.

Each of the existing course offerings in Sociology has been reimagined and updated by various full-time and part-time department faculty in the last five years. Almost all full-time and most part-time faculty have web-enhanced their courses using Moodle. Most courses are now

available each semester across three teaching platforms, face-to-face, hybrid, online. This variation in format means that a student is often able to select a course they need that is taught in a format they prefer, with an instructor they desire.

Four Sociology courses are regularly offered as Honors courses, part of the Judith K. Winn School of Honors Program; namely, *Introduction to Sociology*, *Sociology of the Family*, *Social Problems* and *Changing Roles of Women*. In addition, *Introduction to Sociology* has been paired with reading courses and added to the Colleges' initiative to build Learning Communities.

Two sociology courses, *Introduction to Sociology* and *Ethnic Minority Groups*, are required courses in the College's Liberal Arts weekend program currently based on the Meadowlands Campus.

Lead-in Courses

Four 200 level courses are offered through the Sociology option, one is a content course, the others are applied/experiential. Introduction to Sociology is prerequisite for each.

Follow-up Courses

The Sociology Option at BCC does not offer sequential courses at the present time.

Assessment

Department faculty support the college's commitment to continuous assessment and improvement in teaching and learning outcomes. Both full and part time faculty are active participants in on-going assessment efforts. Some faculty have amended assignments and examinations utilizing feedback from two program assessment cycle reports. One example of this change is more systematic attention being given to aligning course and program learning outcomes as assignments are developed.

Innovations or Changes in Last Five Years

Sociology course offerings, both online and as hybrid sections, have steadily increased in the last five years. More faculty have web enhanced their courses, added interactive activities to their class sessions, and continued to strengthen their own skills through participation in the college's CITL course offerings.

One section of Introduction to Sociology has also been added to the developing offerings in our campus Learning Community Program where it is paired with a reading course for students in the American Language Program. (see course description in Appendix B)

FOCUS ON SUPPORT

Technology:

The Department of Social Sciences provides to BCC students a wide variety of sociology courses that are offered in web-enhanced format, online or hybrid. Both full-time and part-time faculty members regularly attend workshops and webinars organized by the Center for Innovation in Teaching and Learning (CITL) to both maintain and enhance their skills, using various forms of technology.

Teaching online and in hybrid format is conditioned by successful completion of The Online Professor Program (TOPP) courses. The faculty members enrolled in TOPP courses benefit from both in-group classes, as well as, one-on-one support from the CITL staff. This on-going assistance is not only for designing their online or hybrid courses, but also for web-enhancing their traditional face-to-face sections.

Numerous faculty members use Moodle in their traditional courses for grading, making the syllabus and the Powerpoint notes available to registered students, keeping track of attendance, informing students about potential changes in regular schedules, reminding students of due dates for assignments, exams, etc.

Those teaching Introduction to Sociology who use the R. Schaefer textbook *Sociology in Modules*, also utilize *Connect*, a digital teaching and learning platform provided by McGraw Hill with an adaptation for use in Moodle.

Facilities and Equipment:

BCC supports learning activities by providing smart classrooms to students and faculty. Smart classrooms are equipped with computers connected to Internet, projectors, touch screens, etc. BCC Media Department offers portable equipment (PET stations) for use in classrooms that are not fully equipped with needed technology. The college's Help Desk and Media Department staff maintain the equipment.

Full-time faculty are assigned office space equipped with an individual/single-person desk and computer, book case and file cabinet. Offices are shared among 2-3 colleagues, generally from the department of Social Sciences. There is only one office with two computers for all adjunct faculty members of the department. There is, however, an Adjunct Office and Lounge, maintained by the college, for all college adjunct/part-time faculty which our part-time evening faculty sometimes utilize.

Learning Resources:

Meeting the needs of a diverse student population, BCC offers a wide range of learning support services that are available to the whole community and, also, to specific categories of students and faculty members.

In an effort to expand inter-departmental learning activities, in 2014 the Sociology Program has developed a learning community in collaboration with the American Language Program (ALP) in which the Introduction to Sociology course is paired with Reading III (ALP). Both courses share the same class of international students, with the purpose of helping them to improve their English language skills and to accelerate, and make easier, their process of acculturation into the American society, while preparing them for academic courses. Students also benefit from having a dedicated tutor, assigned to this learning community by the Tutoring Center. The tutor attends both courses and is available for one-on-one support or group-study, depending on student needs. Faculty members involved in the learning community collaborate in order to integrate topics of discussion, assignments and students' evaluation. Both maintain close communication with the assigned tutor, referring to her/him those students who need support.

Both the Tutoring Center, and the Writing Center offer their services free of charge to all those who need it, not only to those in Learning Communities.

Students who complete sociology courses have course delivery options, a traditional class or in digital format (online or hybrid). Distance Learning Office staff attend students and faculty members whenever Moodle related problems emerge.

Faculty members in collaboration with the Office of Special Services provide accommodation to students with visual and learning impairments, as well as, to those with learning disabilities. Depending on their specific needs, students benefit from services such as a note taker, extended time for completing the exams, interpreter of sign language, etc.

The library's large collection of books, journals and documentaries help students who study sociology widen their understanding of society and social problems. Students have free access to the library databases of *Proquest* and *Academic Search Premier* in order to find relevant articles for completing their assignments. Library staff encourages faculty members to bring their classes in for instruction on library resources and research methods, as well as, on academic honesty, proper citation, and plagiarism. All these services contribute to improving the students' information literacy skills, which are essential not only for their academic success, but are also useful in their daily life.

Recruitment Efforts:

Faculty members regularly attend Academic Open House events, distributing the Sociology program's brochure and answering questions of prospective students. Our flyer was revised in 2015. Useful information about degree programs offered by our department, as well as, a complete list of faculty members who teach sociology can be found on the departmental website

using the links below. Also, the BCC catalog includes the full list of available sociology courses, along with their description and requirements.

General Education, Sociology Option: <http://bergen.smartcatalogiq.com/en/2016-2017/Catalog/Academic-Programs/AA-Degree-Programs-in-Liberal-Arts/Liberal-Arts-AA-Sociology>

Social Science full-time faculty: <http://bergen.edu/academics/academic-divisions-departments/social-sciences/our-faculty/>

Support Services:

BCC provides advising, counseling, internship and service learning opportunities for students.

Full-time faculty members are expected to complete 14 hours of academic advising every semester. This contractual obligation can be fulfilled in several ways. They can either advise students in the Student Center throughout the calendar year or they can serve as advisors of academic clubs on campus or select the option of advising a cohort such as Veterans, a sports team, etc. as an option. Online advising is also available.

Students are encouraged to participate in the Service Learning Program in order to gain practical experience in the field of their future profession. To earn academic credit, they must complete 10-20 hours of an internship at an organization/ institution specializing in the field of their major. The Service Learning Program helps students to identify those institutions where they can volunteer in order to acquire and develop their professional skills. The sociology program offers three courses through which a student can participate in experiential learning.

The Academic Early Alert / Pipeline is another important program, designed for identifying and supporting those students at risk of dropping their studies due to poor skills in reading, writing, critical thinking and math, as well as those with personal and behavioral issues. The quick and effective intervention is essential and, therefore, faculty members are expected to report immediately the students at-risk.

Resources/Budget:

Faculty members represent the main resource of our department in offering high quality education to BCC students. The Social Sciences department has been understaffed for several years now. We have lost two full-time faculty members and two lecturers who were teaching sociology. In order to cover the needs of the department, some courses of sociology are taught by faculty members of adjacent fields, such as social work, criminal justice and business, which is not acceptable. Currently the department counts with seven tenured faculty and 17 part-time/adjunct faculty. This put a burden on the full time faculty as part-time members of our department are not required to advise students, participate in different department and college-wide committees, attend open houses, coordinate academic clubs, update curricula, get involved

in program reviews, assessment, evaluations, and other administrative tasks. While the diversity in views and experiences may in some ways enhance learning experiences for some students, it also works against efforts to grow the program.

Another important issue that needs to be addressed is represented by the limited resources available for participation of our faculty to conferences and other events that would give them opportunities of professional development, participating actively to the scientific life of the American society and also, bringing visibility to Bergen Community College. Such professional experiences contribute at enhancing the quality of our teaching in the benefit of our students.

FOCUS ON COMMUNITY

Internal Environment

The environment at BCC offers Sociology students a variety of community activities that relate to the study of Sociology. Below is a description of campus resources for students. The Model United Nations is advised by Sociology faculty. Active Minds Club is not directly advised by Sociology faculty but it involves topics related in some way to the discipline of Sociology.

Model United Nations:

Advisors: Camelia-Manuela Lataianu, Associate Professor of Sociology at BCC & Richard Laird, Adjunct Professor of Social and Political Science at BCC.

If at most universities Model United Nations (Model UN) is offered as a course within the Political Sciences Programs, at Bergen Community College, Model UN is a club. We intend to select the best students among those who are interested to represent our institution at one of the most prestigious international conferences for undergraduates that is organized annually in New York City. Every spring more than 5,000 college/university delegates (more than half from outside the United States) meet to discuss current global issues on twenty simulated UN committees.

During our weekly club meetings and also while participating at the conference students learn about international politics, the structure and history of the United Nations Organization, the assigned committee and country they represent. They practice their skills in negotiation and cooperation, writing, public speaking, critical thinking, and advocacy. The efforts and dedication of our team was rewarded with the Honorable Delegation Mention at the Model UN conference in 2016, as well as, with the Outstanding Delegation Award and Outstanding Position Paper Award in 2017.

External Environment

The Sociology faculty at BCC are involved in a variety of endeavors that make contributions to the community at large. Listed below are some of the activities that BCC Sociology faculty members have been engaged in the community.

- Directing the Violence Intervention Prevention Center. VIP's mission is to educate the community (on and off campus) regarding sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence and stalking through culturally-affirmative supportive services and prevention programs.
- Volunteering with girls' empowerment group in Passaic County-*Sparkling Jewels*.

- Working to raise funds for Sagrada Tierra- NGO in Peten, Guatemala for a clean water project.
- Actively participating and member of Board of Directors of the Mahwah Environmental Volunteer Organization.
- Volunteering as a leader in a Boy Scout Troop, Bronx, NY, designated for special needs youth (Autism Spectrum Disorders).
- Volunteering with Astor Little League, Challenger Division (special needs youth).
- Volunteering at *Aquabilities* -- a swim program for people with special needs.
- Participating in the Mental Health Summit.
- Moderating panel discussions on African American Women in suburbia. The 2014 panel discussion received mention at a roundtable discussion session for *City & Community* section during the annual meetings of the American Sociological Association in the same year.
- Presenter at the seminar: *The Dark Side of Suburbia: A Pop Culture View*.
- Workshop facilitator-- Archdiocese of Brooklyn, NY: *Critical Thinking Begins in Pre-K*.
- Presented as a Keynote speaker for conference sponsored by ALICE in Lynhurst, NJ: *Poverty in Suburbia: Community Partners Responding*.
- Speaker: The History of Race and Diversity in Suburbia: Police and Community Working Together.

SUMMARY

Program Achievements, Progress Made Since Last Review

This is the first formal program review for Sociology at Bergen Community College. As such, we are establishing our baseline for future evaluation. In this review we hope to provide an objective self-assessment that delineates our program strengths as well as weaknesses along with our vision for moving forward.

In general, Sociology at Bergen Community College is a viable discipline with much room for growth and expansion. At this juncture it is not possible to determine progress made. However, there are measurable indicators of expansion and growth.

A single new course offering resulted in the launch this academic year of a new program for the department; social work, an allied field of sociology. Our society's mounting emphasis on experiential learning and workforce readiness positions our program offerings well as we offer three opportunities for students to apply sociology to problem-solving in community settings. In essence, we can shape our program to be more "applied sociology" than theoretical. Plans are currently underway to increase the number and variety of paired courses on two, if not all three, campuses, the Meadowlands, Hackensack and Paramus.

Mission/Goals/Objectives

The goals of the Department of Social Sciences include providing a variety of social and behavioral scientific paradigms for students to analyze the complexities of individual, group, community, and societal relationships and issues within a global arena. By stimulating intellectual curiosity and critical thinking, students can gain a valuable foundation for personal growth and application towards further study and ultimately a rewarding career.

The sociology program currently meets program mission goals and objectives. This is evidenced in two successive assessment reports covering four consecutive years. Our dynamic faculty members systematically demonstrate real-world value of analytic and problem-solving skills afforded by this discipline, not simply in the classroom, but in numerous community settings and activities with a variety of non-academic groups.

Strengths

Our Sociology faculty is our greatest resource and greatest strength. Both full-time and part-time faculty are self-motivated and interested growing the program.

Our program has an extremely dedicated and active faculty that brings real world accomplishments to the classroom. This is presently our greatest strength. Our courses remain current and are applicable to concentrations in Liberal Arts and Applied Sciences, in addition to being an important independent field of knowledge.

Some full-time as well as part-time faculty are interested, and have become engaged, in activities that will lead to course pairings, greater opportunities for experiential learning, and new course offerings.

Challenges

As a program, our greatest challenge stems from our small faculty. Though some may argue “quality not quantity,” numbers do matter. All full-time and most part-time faculty are interested in several activities that would help the program grow, however, there are not enough different people to do the work involved. There is no assurance that new courses added to the program would be taught by a sociologist nor that the work that would go in to development of a course for a Learning Community would be rewarded with its addition to course offerings.

Celebration and Recognition

Full-time faculty have been recipients of numerous awards, honors and grants including:

- National Model United Nations – Outstanding Delegation Award (2017), Outstanding Position Paper Award (2017), Honorable Delegation Award (2016).
- Hispanic Institute Distinguished Award (2016)
- Instructional Technology Council Distinguished eLearning Educator Award (2015)
- New Jersey Center for Student Success Grant (2016)
- National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development (NISOD) Excellence Award, Princeton Fellowship
- Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Fellowship (SOTL) (2015).
- Department of Justice Office on Violence Against Women 2014 Campus Grant (\$300,000) Distinguished Professor
- Dominican American National Award

ACTION PLAN

Recommendations made by the external reviewer were comprehensive and clearly developed with growing sociology from course offerings to a cohesive department as an end goal. Although the latter may become a topic for serious consideration at some future point, it is not feasible within the near future. Building on several observations and suggestions made throughout the report (see Appendix C), department faculty have developed the following five action items as short range goals to improve Sociology as course offerings at Bergen Community College.

- 1) **Goal:** Increase total number of tenure-track/ tenured faculty in sociology in light of significant and growing number of students who take sociology courses per academic year as an integral part of the General Education Program. Strive to increase diversity of tenure-track faculty to reflect ethnic/racial diversity of student body.
 - i) **Objective(s):** Conduct tenure-track search(es) in sociology.
 - ii) **Timeframe:** During 2017-2018 academic year.
 - iii) **Responsible Party(ies):** Divisional Dean, VPAA, BCC President.
 - iv) **Resource Implications:** College budget to fund more tenure-track faculty members, and to advertise positions widely.

- 2) **Goal:** Continue to improve retention rates of students taking sociology courses.
 - i) **Objective(s):** Continue to offer a variety of courses in Sociology in multiple delivery options and on a flexible schedule in order to meet the students' needs.
 - ii) **Timeframe:** Over next 2-3 academic years.
 - iii) **Responsible Party(ies):** Sociology faculty, Student Services (e.g. Academic Counseling; Advising; & Learning Assistance Center).
 - iv) **Resource Implications:** NA.

- 3) **Goal:** Continue the assessment efforts with aim of improving the sociology degree program.
 - i) **Objective(s):** Identify "Assessment Liaison for Sociology" to commence relevant work.

ii) **Timeframe:** During 2017-2019

iii) **Responsible Party(ies):** Sociology faculty

iv) **Resource Implications:** Release time for participating faculty.

4) **Goal:** Restore the Sociology Club that existed until 2013.

i) **Objective(s):** Identify faculty to coordinate the club's activity.

ii) **Timeframe:** During 2017-2018.

iii) **Responsible Party(ies):** Sociology faculty.

iv) **Resource Implications:** Release time for participating faculty.

5) **Goal:** Continue the efforts to promote the service learning opportunities for students.

i) **Objective(s):** Work closely with the Service Learning Department to place students.

ii) **Timeframe:** During 2017-2019

iii) **Responsible Party(ies):** Sociology faculty, Service Learning Department

iv) **Resource Implications:** NA.

Appendix A

Course Descriptions and links to Course Syllabi

SOC-101 Sociology

This course is an examination of the culture and structure of human societies. The course focuses on social groups and institutions, their norms and controls, and how and why they change. Topics of discussion covered include the family, education, deviance, race and ethnicity, gender roles, social change, and social inequalities. General Education Course. Lecture

Credits 3 **Prerequisite** – none [Syllabus](#) for this course.

SOC-102 Introduction to Human Services

This course is an analysis of social service systems in the United States. The course provides an overview of educational, mental health, child care, and recreational social service agencies. Through group participation, lectures, role-playing, and field trips, students learn to recognize the common aspects of helping within the broad field of human services. Lecture

Credits 3 **Prerequisite** – none [Syllabus](#) for this course.

SOC-103 Sociology of the Family

This course is a study of the oldest and most fundamental social institution. This course analyzes various types of courtship, parenting, human sexuality, marital breakup, and family patterns. Family life is viewed from the perspective of society and of the individual. Students are encouraged to examine their own family patterns in relation to the broad range of possibilities that are discussed. General Education Course. Lecture

Credits 3 **Prerequisite** – none [Syllabus](#) for this course.

SOC-104 Intro to Social Work

This course is an analysis of the goals, ethics and values of social worker's, agency structure, how social workers can advocate for change across client role that advocacy and a strengths-based perspective plays in the role of a social worker. Though lectures and group participation, student's learn perspectives, definitions, dynamic, current issues, and social work roles while working within a multicultural society. Lecture

Credits 3 **Prerequisite** – none [Syllabus](#) for this course.

SOC-113 Social Problems

This course is the study of contemporary social issues and problems in the United States. Various theoretical perspectives are utilized in an effort to understand why particular issues become defined as problems, to determine the origin of social problems, and to critically assess proposed solutions to these perceived problems. Topics of discussion can include: crime and delinquency, poverty, family violence, overpopulation, war, AIDS, sexual assault, mental illness, racism, sexism, and classism [social inequality]. General Education Course. Lecture

Credits 3 **Prerequisite** – none [Syllabus](#) for this course.

SOC-115 Introduction to Substance Abuse

This course presents an introductory systems-oriented approach to addressing alcohol and other drug problems. Providing an overview of chemical dependency and addiction services, the course examines causal theories, models, and definitions. In addition, intervention and prevention strategies, as well as public policy issues will be explored. Special attention will be given to the family systems perspective in theory, research, and treatment. Lecture

Credits 3 **Prerequisite** – none [Syllabus](#) for this course.

SOC-116 Substance Abuse Counseling

This course offers an introduction to the field of substance abuse counseling, and examines the impact of substance abuse on individuals, families and society. Specific techniques for counseling the alcoholic and the problem drinker are presented. Additionally this course will address the etiology of substance abuse, intervention tactics, and primary/relapse prevention strategies will be discussed. Special attention will be given to substance abuse problems in diverse populations. Lecture

Credits 3 **Prerequisite** – none [Syllabus](#) for this course.

SOC-120 Sociology of Gender Roles

This course is a study of the changing roles of men and women in contemporary society. Topics of discussion covered include the biological bases for differentiation in gender roles, male and female roles in a cross-cultural perspective, changing expectations for men and women in work and sports, the sexual revolution, and the consequences of gender role change. >General Education Course >Diversity Course.

Credits 3 **Prerequisite** – none [Syllabus](#) for this course.

SOC-121 The Changing Roles of Women

This course is an introductory, interdisciplinary study of the changing roles of women today. Topics of discussion include women's roles in a cross-cultural and historical perspective, the influence of biology, sexuality, and psychology on the roles of women, women in the work force, and women as portrayed in literature, the impact of religious beliefs on women, women's changing family roles, and traditional and present-day feminism. >Diversity Course. Lecture

Credits 3 **Prerequisite** – none [Syllabus](#) for this course.

SOC-222 Ethnic-Minor Group Relations

This course is a study of the diverse ethnic and multicultural structure of the United States. Particular attention is given to Native Americans, Hispanic Americans, Asian Americans, African Americans, Italian Americans, Irish Americans, and Jewish Americans. Topics taught include social, economic, and familial structures of various ethnic groups, the dislocation of new immigrants, prejudice and discrimination, and the life styles of various minority groups.

>General Education Course. >Diversity Course. Lecture

Credits 3 **Prerequisite** SOC-101 Syllabus for this course.

SOC-291 Co-Op Work Experience [Sociology]

This course provides a student with the opportunity to gain human relations work experience in social institutions that relate to his/her career goals. This program is under professional guidance in a college approved work environment. Students are supervised by a faculty member, and job placement assistance is available through the Co-Op Office. Lecture [1.00], Cooperative [3.00].

Credits 1 **Prerequisite** SOC-101 Syllabus for this course.

SOC-292 Co-Op Work Experience [Sociology]

This course provides a student with the opportunity to gain human relations work experience in social institutions that relate to his/her career goals. This program is under professional guidance in a college approved work environment. Students are supervised by a faculty member, and job placement assistance is available through the Co-Op Office. Lecture [1.00], Cooperative [8.00].

Credits 2 **Prerequisite** SOC-101 Syllabus for this course.

SOC-293 Co-Op Work Experience [Sociology]

This course provides a student with the opportunity to gain human relations work experience in social institutions that relate to his/her career goals. This program is under professional guidance in a college approved work environment. Students are supervised by a faculty member, and job placement assistance is available through the Co-Op Office. Lecture [1.00], Cooperative [12.00].

Credits 3 **Prerequisite** SOC-101 Syllabus for this course.

Appendix B

Intro to Sociology SOC 101P & Reading ALP 064P

This learning community emphasizes reading for content, making inferences, distinguishing main and subordinate points, and evaluating ideas. Students will discuss and present reading material on topics related to social processes, problems, and phenomena (3 college credits).

Sociology Program

**Bergen Community College
New Jersey**

External Review Report

Submitted by

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**Professor of Sociology
Hudson County Community College
New Jersey**

May 2017

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Executive Summary

This **External Review Report** is a culmination of examination of data, interviews, and analysis. It highlights the features of the sociology program at Bergen Community College and includes a number of recommendations that, if implemented, would achieve the following objectives:

1. Elevate the sociology program to the level of an academic department
2. Empower the faculty to advance the academic interest of the discipline and department
3. Enrich the curriculum/program requirements with more scientific rigor and intellectual inquiry
4. Provide a clear path for students majoring in sociology
5. Distinguish between sociology and social work programs and strengthen each independently
6. Empower students with added rigor in research, analytical, creative, and critical thinking skills
7. Revise the current program to set the student on a clear path in sociology
8. Place the department of sociology in the proper administrative and academic structure at the college
9. Entrench the program's legitimacy in the college's culture and beyond

The work on this review was guided by three principles: A vision for academic integrity and progress, a sociological imagination of empowerment, and an emphasis on student success. Placing students at the core of this review also calls for recognition of the faculty, staff and administration for their role in enhancing student learning, for maintaining high standards of excellence, and for their dedication to the program, to the discipline, and above all to their students. It is in this light, therefore, that the recommendations of this review are intended to build on this long standing tradition with the hope that they may help advance it one step forward.

The Review Process: Purpose and the Charge

Consistent with the department's request to provide an "honest" assessment of the program, data from the following sources were gathered and thoroughly analyzed and examined.

1. Sociology Program Review: A Process for Self-Evaluation and Continuous Improvement, 2017
2. Meeting in person with the Dean of Business, Arts and Social Sciences, with the Chair of the Division of Social Sciences, with a number of faculty, with a group of students, and with the Vice-President of Academic Affairs.
3. Class observation
4. Bergen Community College website
5. And, when more information or clarity were needed, I followed up with questions with the Chair and Faculty

This **External Review Report** includes findings and recommendations, and is organized into a number of areas that stood out the most and could benefit from the department's attention. The areas relate to both structures and processes of functions that have a direct impact on the status of sociology as a discipline and a program in the college environment, and also on program curriculum and pedagogy. The areas are:

1. Sociology and the Liberal Arts
2. Sociology at Bergen Community College
3. Administrative Structure: Division and Department
4. Sociology Program: Curriculum, Faculty, and Students

Specific recommendations and rationale are listed at the end of each area, and a list of all recommendations and their rationale appears at the end of this report. At this juncture, it is important to clarify the following:

1. The term "Program" is used in college documents and in this report to describe the current status of sociology in the Division of Social Sciences. This term, however, may be conflated with "Department". Although both terms are used interchangeably, this review makes the case for consistency and for elevating the program status to an academic department.
2. While a distinction between suggestions and recommendations can be made, it is equally important to note that in respect to the department and the college's position and vision for the sociology program, the task of doing so is deferred to their discretion.

Sociology and the Liberal Arts

Sociology as a Social Science

Sociology is the scientific study of the sociocultural world of human behavior and social arrangements and is intended for its holder to acquire a clearer view of social reality and reveal the complexity of cause and effect in human affairs. Grounded in the scientific methods of research, sociology offers empirical evidence and a theoretical context to critically examine social reality and also debunk it.

According to the American Sociological Association, <http://www.asanet.org>, sociology is the study of social life, social change, and the social causes and consequences of human behavior. Sociologists investigate the structure of groups, organizations, and societies, and how people interact within these contexts.

While the humanities and the arts also frequently examine and reflect on the social world, sociology is distinct because it is a social science. It uses theoretical frameworks and scientific methods of research to investigate the social world and test hypotheses with empirical data. Sociological methods include systematic observation, in-depth interviews, and ethnography, content analysis of both written and visual documents, survey research, and statistical analysis. The results of sociological investigations help in the development of new theories and inform social policy, programs, and laws.

Sociology Program at Bergen Community College

Given that the *Sociology Program Review: A Process for Self-Evaluation and Continuous Improvement, 2017* does not address the spirit of sociology, and does not provide a rationale or a justification for the continued existence of the sociology program, the following list might be relevant as it may illuminate the nature of the discipline of sociology and its relevance in academia and beyond:

1. The overarching goal of educating students in the liberal arts in general and sociology in particular, whether majors or not, is to teach them to comprehend the rapid changes taking place in contemporary society, particularly in knowledge so they can live more engaged, productive and meaningful lives. Students in the field of sociology embark on a critical path of intellectual exploration of social reality and their place in it.
2. Transferability: Courses in sociology and anthropology are accepted in four-year colleges nationwide.
3. Flexibility of major selection – a degree in sociology opens the door for a wide range of major options such as sociology, political science, law, criminal justice, social work, education, journalism and more.
4. Employment: According to a 2008 and 2012 study conducted by the American Sociological Association, employment opportunities for graduates holding a bachelor's degree in sociology include careers within: criminal justice, business and industry, research and planning, social agencies, government, education, advocacy and communications. Graduates in sociology can pursue careers in public relations, human resources, social services, public administration, counseling, criminal justice related fields, law, medicine, urban planning, homeland security and much more. Sociologists become high school teachers or faculty in colleges and universities, advising students, conducting research, and publishing their work. Sociologists enter the

corporate, non-profit, and government worlds as directors of research, policy analysts, consultants, human resource managers, and program managers. Practicing sociologists with advanced degrees may be called research analysts, survey researchers, gerontologists, statisticians, urban planners, community developers, criminologists, or demographers.

5. Research and Writing: Sociology students acquire writing and research skills that would enhance their employability and transfer.
6. Sociology as a discipline of study aims at advancing a professional/scientific endeavor in the field and enhancing students' skills in identifying social problems and advocating for social policy and action.
7. History: Courses in sociology have been offered to the community since at least 1972. It started with one instructor and now, the program has grown to accommodate a total of 6 full time faculty and 18 adjunct instructors. This history is a testimony for the need of sociology program to continue on its path of growth.

Recommendations:

1. Explain the rationale and provide a justification for the need of the sociology program at Bergen Community College. Use the statements above.
2. Align program curriculum with the spirit of sociology and liberal arts education
3. Examine and align program requirements and course content with the latest trends in the discipline

Rationale:

Strengthen the scientific and theoretical foundation of sociology on campus and make the work that is done in the classroom more visible to the college community.

Sociology at Bergen Community College

Bergen Community College offers classes at three locations: Paramus, Hackensack, and Meadowlands. It is accredited by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education, and is guided by the following vision, mission and values.

Vision: Bergen Community College will be a dynamic partner by bridging potential with opportunities for educational, professional and personal growth.

Mission: To inspire our community to realize a better future.

Values: To fulfill the vision and mission of Bergen Community College, the following core values will guide its daily endeavors: Learning, Excellence, Integrity, Respect, and Creativity

Examination of sources available for review revealed the following observation:

No evidence was available to demonstrate the correlation between the sociology program, the division of social sciences, and the college.

Recommendations:

1. Develop and articulate a clear mission for the division of social sciences
2. Align division mission with the college mission, vision, goals and values
3. Align sociology program goals with both missions

Rationale:

1. Establish a stronger and visible link between the program and the college.
2. Strengthen future accreditation by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education

Administrative Structure: Division and Department

The Division of Social Sciences is one of eight divisions under the administrative leadership of the Dean of Business, Arts and Social Sciences. The dean reports directly to the Vice-President of Academic Affairs. Each division is headed by either a chair or a director, and may include more than one program.

The Chair of the Division of Social Sciences is responsible for the following degree program:

1. Early Childhood Education – AS Degree Curriculum
2. Economics – AA Degree Curriculum
3. Education – AS Degree Curriculum
4. Liberal Arts AA – Political Science Option
5. Liberal Arts AA – Psychology Option
6. Liberal Arts AA – Sociology Option
7. Liberal Arts AA – Women's Studies Option
8. Social Work – AS Degree Curriculum

Examination of this structure revealed the following:

1. Management of all these programs rests on the shoulders of the Chair and the Dean.
2. The lines of communication and the division of labor between the Dean and the Chair appears to be clear to them but may not be clear to others
3. With the exception of textbook selection, which is left in the hands of faculty, all other tasks including faculty observation, schedules and staffing, hiring of adjunct instructors and more are left in the hands of the Dean and the Chair
4. None of these programs is managed by faculty.
5. The Chair is a faculty member who, through release time or overload, assumes the administrative duties of the division
6. The current structure appears to exclude faculty from managerial positions and lacks the academic autonomy and sovereignty of each academic program
7. It appears that sociology instructors lack an organizational structure through which they can examine and work to enhance the academic nature of their discipline including program requirements and course revisions

Recommendations:

1. Change the current title of the chair position to a full-time assistant dean
2. Appoint/elect a chair/coordinator to each program area (Faculty with release time or overload)
3. Change the nomenclature and elevate the status of the program to department of sociology

Rationale:

1. Establish a clear division of labor between the administrative and academic functions
2. Empower faculty and enhance their role and contribution to the academic functions of the department. Faculty empowerment is essential for advancing the intellectual life at the college in general, and the teaching and learning culture in particular
3. Empower and elevate the current position of chair and provide more resources to each of the programs under her supervision

Sociology Program: Curriculum, Faculty, and Students

This area highlights an examination of and recommendations in the following categories: Curriculum, Faculty, and Students

Program Requirements/Curriculum:

The following courses are designated as sociology

1. SOC-101 Sociology
2. SOC-102 Introduction to Human Services
3. SOC-103 Sociology of the Family
4. SOC-104 Introduction to Social Work
5. SOC-113 Social Problems
6. SOC-115 Introduction to Substance Abuse
7. SOC-116 Substance Abuse Counseling
8. SOC-120 Sociology of Gender Roles
9. SOC-121 The Changing Roles of Women
10. SOC-222 Ethnic-Minority Group Relations
11. SOC-291 Co-Op Work Experience [Sociology]
12. SOC-292 Co-Op Work Experience [Sociology]
13. SOC-293 Co-Op Work Experience [Sociology]

Examination of this list and the *Program Review* document revealed the following:

1. Sociology and social work classes are merged and blended into one category
2. The number of "pure" courses in sociology is very small
3. A great attention is given to issues of diversity and practice
4. More attention should be given to theories and research

Recommendations:

The following recommendations are intended to strengthen the sociology program, and also the social work program:

1. Make a clear distinction between sociology and social work. Keep in mind that while sociology is a discipline of study, social work is a profession. Therefore, change the designation of the following courses to social work (SOW):
 - SOC-102 Introduction to Human Services
 - SOC-104 Introduction to Social Work
 - SOC-115 Introduction to Substance Abuse
 - SOC-116 Substance Abuse Counseling
2. Distinguish Between sociology and social work Co-Op Work Experience. Identify specific field placement agencies, and clarify expectations for each
3. Develop a new course in social research methods and make it a requirement
4. Make Anthropology 101 a required course in sociology
5. Change the course title of SOC-222 Ethnic-Minority Group Relations. The current title is not inclusive of majority group. Recommend: Race and Ethnic Relations.

6. Expand the current focus on diversity to also include the study of intersectionality, theories and research

Rationale:

1. Create two independent academic departments
2. Eliminate or minimize confusion about sociology and social work
3. Streamline courses by discipline
4. Enrich course requirements with theories and research

Faculty

Courses in sociology are taught by 6 full-time and 18 adjunct instructors. A number of these instructors teach in both sociology and social work programs. According to satisfaction survey, most members of the faculty are satisfied. (*Sociology Program Review: A Process for Self-Evaluation and Continuous Improvement, 2017*).

Recommendation:

1. Hire a tenure-track full-time instructor to teach both sociology and anthropology.

Rationale:

1. Strengthen the sociology department by adding a course in anthropology to program requirements
2. Strengthen the sociology department by adding to the total number of full-time faculty

Students

The sociology program offers classes to two sets of students: Majors and non-majors. The number of non-majors taking sociology classes add up, according to the Chair, to “thousands” but the number of majors is small. The following table provides enrollment, graduation and transfer data of student majoring in sociology

Table 1: Enrollment, graduation and transfer data for sociology majors 2012 – 2016

	Fall 2012	Fall 2013	Fall 2014	Fall 2015	Fall 2016
Enrollment	59	50	53	36	27
Graduates	8	4	4	6	3
Transfers	8	12	4	6	6

Data Source: Data Boxes for Program Enrollment Graduates and Transfers 2012 2016.pdf

It is obvious that while the number of non-majors is in thousands, the number of majors is very small, which is typical of the discipline. Other institutions have similar patterns that may point out to the fact that sociology is not a vocation oriented discipline, and that its career path may not be as clear to many

students. Causes notwithstanding, it is important to note that low enrollment data should not be conflated with the program value in the tradition of Liberal Arts education.

The meeting held with the students revealed the following observations:

1. They are very satisfied with their instructors and the general milieu at the college and sociology in particular.
2. They were unclear about the difference between sociology and social work
3. In addition to class lectures, they would appreciate doing research themselves

Recommendation:

1. Revise course requirements to include research activities such as small scale surveys, field observations, and interviews
2. See recommendation (page 9) in reference to adding a new course in social research methods

Rationale:

1. Strengthen the scientific foundation of the sociology program
2. Strengthen students' skills in gathering and analyzing data
3. Enhance students' ability to think critically and creatively
4. Skills acquired in this course are useful in all fields of employment.
5. Skills acquired in this course are useful for students transferring to four-year institutions of higher education

Recommendations and Rationale

Area	Recommendations	Rationale
Sociology and the Liberal Arts	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Explain the rationale and provide a justification for the need of the sociology program at Bergen Community College 2. Align program curriculum with the spirit of sociology and liberal arts education 3. Examine and align program requirements and course content with the latest trends in the discipline 	Strengthen the scientific and theoretical foundation of sociology on campus and make the work that is done in the classroom more visible to the college community.
Sociology at Bergen Community College	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop and articulate a clear mission for the division of social sciences 2. Align division mission with the college mission, vision, goals and values 3. Align sociology program goals with both missions 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Establish a stronger and visible link between the program and the college. 2. Strengthen future accreditation by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education
Administrative Structure	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Change the current title of the chair position to a full-time assistant dean 2. Appoint/elect a chair/coordinator to each program area (Faculty with release time or overload) 3. Change the nomenclature and elevate the status of the sociology program to department of sociology 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Establish a clear division of labor between the administrative and academic functions 2. Empower faculty and enhance their role and contribution to the academic functions of the department. Faculty empowerment is essential for advancing the intellectual life at the college in general, and the teaching and learning culture in particular 3. Empower and elevate the current position of chair and provide more resources to each of the programs under her supervision

Area	Recommendations	Rationale
Sociology Program: Curriculum, Faculty and Students	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Make a clear distinction between sociology and social work. Keep in mind that while sociology is a discipline of study, social work is a profession. Therefore, change the designation of the following courses to social work (SOW): 2. SOC-102 Introduction to Human Services 3. SOC-104 Introduction to Social Work 4. SOC-115 Introduction to Substance Abuse 5. SOC-116 Substance Abuse Counseling 6. Distinguish Between sociology and social work Co-Op Work Experience. Identify specific field placement agencies, and clarify expectations for each 7. Develop a new course in social research methods and make it a requirement 8. Make Anthropology 101 a required course in sociology 9. Change the course title of SOC-222 Ethnic-Minority Group Relations. The current title is not inclusive of majority group. Recommend: Race and Ethnic Relations. 10. Expand the current focus on diversity to also include the study of intersectionality, theories and research 11. Hire a tenure-track full-time instructor to teach both sociology and anthropology. 12. Revise course requirements to include research activities such as small scale surveys, field observations, and interviews. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Create two independent academic departments 2. Eliminate or minimize confusion about sociology and social work 3. Streamline courses by discipline 4. Enrich course requirements with theories and research 5. Strengthen the sociology department by adding a course in anthropology to program requirements 6. Strengthen the sociology department by adding to the total number of full-time faculty 7. Strengthen the scientific foundation of the sociology program 8. Strengthen students' skills in gathering and analyzing data 9. Enhance students' ability to think critically and creatively. 10. Skills acquired in this course are useful in all fields of employment 11. Skills acquired in this course are useful for students transferring to four-year institutions of higher education