



The Sociology Club Guide:

Ideas for Generating Student
Involvement in Departments
of Sociology

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Introduction

Most of the people who read this booklet will already have a strong interest in sociology. They will be reading the book because they are searching for effective ways to introduce and involve students who are new to the field. Likely readers are sociology professors, graduate students, or perhaps sociology majors who want to start a club in their department. Among those readers, some will remember first entering a college sociology department while furtively scanning the door signs and bulletin boards, eyes working overtime, trying to decipher the hidden code and figure out--what is this discipline and profession really about? Others will remember stumbling into their first sociology course by chance and quickly becoming 'hooked on sociology,' but not knowing exactly what to do with their new-found passion and excitement.

This booklet describes ways that departments can help students become involved with sociology, tap into students' enthusiasm and energy, and create results that are rewarding for the students themselves, the department, and even the larger community. Research conducted by the ASA shows that sociology students who participate in extracurricular activities related to sociology increase their social and cultural capital, allowing them to enhance their post-baccalaureate sociology career (Spalter-Roth, Van Vooren, and Senter 2009).

The Sociology Student Club Guide: Ideas for Generating Student Involvement in Departments of Sociology is the product of an extensive revision and expansion of the ASA publication, *The Sociology Student Club Tool Kit*. The original booklet (1992), written by Stephen S. Steele, was a collection of ideas contributed by sociology clubs from a wide array of campuses. Its contents included specific descriptions of club activities, actual flyers used by a particular club, and a short reflective essay by a club's faculty advisor. In 1999, the original booklet was edited by Steve Hoffman into a more concise collection of promising ideas departments had used for generating student involvement via their student organization or club.

For this edition, we decided to add information on how sociology departments and sociology clubs are using 21st century technology (such as social networking sites) to create outreach. We also chose to broaden the

scope of the publication so that its contents addressed the issue of increasing student engagement within the department as a whole, in addition to providing useful information on how to establish a sociology club.

The *Sociology Student Club Guide: Ideas for Generating Student Involvement in Departments of Sociology* is organized in three parts. Part 1 focuses on methods that sociology departments can use to acquaint prospective and incoming majors with the department and program. This section discusses the use of student handbooks and new major orientation meetings as central tools for getting the “student involvement ball” rolling.

Part 2 discusses how to establish a sociology club. It emphasizes the benefits of having a sociology club in the department, ways of starting a new club and ensuring its vitality, various structures and approaches for acquiring funding, and the fine art of holding fundraisers. Sociology clubs provide a foundation for the growth of community in a sociology department and a serve as natural vehicle for organizing extra-curricular activities and developing student leaders. Clubs will have different forms and conduct different kinds activities depending on each department’s strengths, resources, and level of commitment. Part 2 also discusses various communication tools a club can use--such as student club newsletters, listservs, and social networking sites--to promote the club, announce upcoming activities, and keep all members (including professors and alums) informed of what is happening in the department.

The third section of the booklet outlines effective club activities and “internal” programs that sociology departments can administer. The ideas included in this section have been recommended by sociology clubs across the country. An acknowledgement of contributors can be found on the last page of this book.

The American Sociological Association is always on the lookout for new resources and ideas for strengthening departments and engaging students. If the sociology department at your institution implements any of the ideas listed in this book, or sponsors events and activities not yet listed here, we would be delighted to learn about them. You can contact us at:

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Part1: Providing a Road Map

Student Handbook

A student handbook can be an excellent way to orient new students to the department and provide on-going assistance to majors and minors as they progress through the program. Having complete information on the department and the program in one place can be a boon for overwhelmed undergraduates, and allows students to be kept abreast of department policies and procedures. In essence, a handbook is a road map of the department and program designed to help students reach their destination—completion of a degree in sociology. Handbooks will differ widely based on the size and structure of the department. Compiling one need not be seen as a huge effort; everything can generally be covered in no more than 20-30 pages. It is important to keep the audience in mind when writing a student handbook. The style should be clear and direct, written in an accessible but not condescending fashion. Some things to include in the student handbooks are listed below.

Introduction to the Department

- **What is sociology? Why study Sociology?** Provide a brief description and definition of the field of sociology. List careers that sociology majors have attained and maybe some famous sociology majors. Some useful resources for developing this section include the brochure “Sociology: A 21st Century Major,” and the booklet “21st Century Careers with an Undergraduate Degree in Sociology” (both available through the ASA online bookstore). The ASA Bachelors and Beyond Research Briefs can also be useful resources that are available as free downloads from the ASA website.
- **Departmental goals and outcomes for students:** What are the goals of the program? What specific knowledge, skills and abilities will students come away with, after fulfilling the degree requirements?
- **Requirements and descriptions of the major and minor:** This section should lay out the basic degree requirements, including breadth, core courses, minor programs, unique programs of study, whether or not

comprehensive exams are administered, whether a capstone course is required, etc. Course descriptions, frequency of course offering (every semester, spring or fall only, etc), and information of dual major options can also be included here. Some handbooks provide useful “Checklists” for students to reference as they complete their major.

- **What is the organizational outline of the department?** The handbook should provide students with a guide to the structure of the department. Who are the key departmental players they will intersect with, such as the chair, undergraduate advisor, sociology club advisor, and department assistants? It is also useful to list all department faculty, along with a brief biography, primary area of interest, and contact information.

Student Resources

- **Student Awards and Recognition:** It’s never too early to get students thinking about enrolling in an Honors Program or introduce them to department award opportunities. Just a few examples of department awards include: “Distinguished Service to the Department and Discipline,” “Outstanding Practice of Public Sociology in an Internship,” “Student Paper of the Year,” and “Outstanding Freshman Paper.” No doubt the possibilities here are endless. Awards help build students’ sense of connection to the major, and bolster their chances of success on the job market.
- **Student opportunities within the department:** This section should include details on how to join the Sociology Club, Internship Programs, on- and off-campus research opportunities, student government or caucus opportunities, colloquia and symposia, and any other arena or activity in which the department welcomes student participation.
- **Reference tools:** A brief listing of related journals, databases, and useful datasets; helpful websites such as jstor.org; library research information. Also include information about writing sociology papers and the ASA citation style. Often this section offers references and tips for good writing practices, including citation format, descriptions of the difference between empirical research papers and loose essays,

Ideas for Generating Student Involvement in Departments of Sociology

- reference tools, and sociology journals and periodicals of note (list which journals are available in the school library).
- **Post-graduation information:** What can sociology students do with a major in sociology? Information on possible careers and graduate study. Providing this sort of information can be extremely helpful to students who are fascinated by sociology, but unsure about their future employment goals. The department might consider distributing the booklet "21st Century Careers with a Bachelors Degree in Sociology" along with the department handbook.
 - **Joining Professional Associations:** This would be a good place to discuss the benefits of joining the discipline's regional association as well as the ASA. Have a list of each regional association with website information and membership fees. Include specific information on opportunities for students to submit papers to undergraduate and graduate paper competitions, or to present at meetings in either regular sessions or roundtables. Encourage students to do this as part of their professional development and preparation for graduate school or the job market.

If students go to national or regional meetings and present at poster sessions or even at regular sessions they gain valuable experience to include on their resumes and graduate school applications. A list of some national and regional sociological associations is listed below. In addition, many states have sociological associations as well.

Regional and National Sociological Associations

American Sociological Association (www.asanet.org)	North Central Sociological Association (www.ncsanet.org)
Association of Applied and Clinical Sociology (www.aacsnet.org)	Pacific Sociological Association (www.pacificsoc.org)
Association of Black Sociologists (www.blacksociologists.org)	Sociologists for Women in Society (www.socwomen.org)
Mid-South Sociological Association (www.midsouthsoc.org)	Southern Sociological Society (www.southernsociologicalsociety.org)
Eastern Sociological Society (www.essnet.org)	Midwest Sociological Society (www.themss.org)
Rural Sociological Society (www.ruralsociology.org)	Society for the Study of Social Problems (www.sssp1.org)
New England Sociological Association (www.nesaonline.org)	Southwestern Sociological Society (www.sssaonline.org/sociology.html)

American Sociological Association Student Programs

- **ASA Student Forum:** The ASA Student Forum provides resources for graduate and undergraduate sociology students, helps develop networks among student members, and facilitates student participation in the ASA by encouraging professional development and service. Individuals who join the American Sociological Association as student members automatically become members of the Student Forum, receive all mailings and electronic communications, and have access to Student Forum programming. There are no additional fees associated with membership in the Student Forum.

Each year, ASA Council allocates the Student Forum with funds for the Student Forum Travel Award. This award is meant to help defray the costs of attending the ASA Annual Meeting. The Student Forum Advisory Board grants approximately 25 travel awards in the amount of \$225 each. All applicants are encouraged to seek additional sources of funding to cover expenses associated with attending the Annual

Meeting. More information can be found by contacting ASA or visiting www.asanet.org.

- **ASA Honors Program** provides undergraduate sociology students with a rich introduction to the professional life of the discipline. Exceptional sociology students from throughout the country and the world come together for four days and experience all facets of the ASA Annual Meetings. By participating in the Honors Program, students develop long-lasting networks with other aspiring sociologists while their sponsoring departments have a chance to “showcase” their own quality programs and their most outstanding students. Applications to participate in the Honors Program are available on the ASA website (www.asanet.org). Deadline to apply is February 1.

International Honor Societies

Sociology Honor Societies provide an opportunity for students to become involved on a more academic level. Chapters at each school offer their own activities. There are currently two sociology-related honor societies - Alpha Kappa Delta: The International Sociology Honor Society, and Pi Gamma Mu: The National Honor Society for the Social Sciences. Describing these societies and their requirements in your student handbook means that students can set the goal of joining an honors society early and pay particular attention to their GPA and course loads. When students join honor societies it helps them become connected and professionally involved with other high-achieving students with similar interests. It also looks great on a resume, a graduate school application, and can even lead to a higher starting salary upon graduation.

Alpha Kappa Delta

Alpha Kappa Delta was founded in 1920 at the University of Southern California. The purpose of this society is to promote an interest in the study of sociology, research of social problems, and other intellectual activities leading to the improvement in the human condition. To be members, students must have a GPA of 3.0, be declared sociology majors or minors (having taken four courses prior to initiation), and pay the membership fee. Requirements for admission are the same at all colleges, but the lifetime

membership fee may vary. Benefits to membership include a subscription to *Sociological Inquiry*, AKD's official journal, as well as the opportunity to make contacts with others in sociology.

In addition to the academic distinction and the recognition that AKD membership provides students, the honor society also supports student activity and involvement in the larger discipline. AKD offers three funding programs to active AKD chapters (an active chapter is defined as having a chapter representative - at least one full-time faculty member - who has paid her/his dues for the current year).

- **Speaker Honoraria**. AKD offers up to \$500 to active local chapters, to pay an honorarium to speakers who speak at the chapter's induction ceremony.
- **Student Travel**. AKD offers direct support to active local chapters for students to travel to regional sociology meetings (e.g., ESS, SSS, PSA, etc. For a complete list of eligible professional associations, see the ASA webpage containing a list of regional sociology organizations.) For example, chapter may apply for up to \$300 per student, but no more than \$1,000 in travel assistance for the chapter for that year.
- **Research Symposia**. ADK offers up to \$1000 in support to active local chapters that wish to mount sociological research symposia and workshops sponsored by a local AKD chapter.

More information on all of these programs is available on the AKD webpage, <http://sites.google.com/site/alphakappadeltainternational/>.

Pi Gamma Mu

Pi Gamma Mu, which was founded in 1924, seeks to foster excellence in the social sciences and to promote cooperation among them. Its primary objectives are to encourage the study of the social sciences among students and faculty members throughout the world and to recognize their outstanding achievement. In addition to sociology, members are also from disciplines such as anthropology, economics, international relations, criminal justice, social work, social psychology, social philosophy, and cultural geography. Membership qualifications are the same as those of AKD. Benefits include a subscription to *International Social Science*

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Review. Pi Gamma Mu also offers scholarships. More information on Pi Gamma Mu can be found at www.pigammamu.org.

In addition to the specific benefits offered by each of these honor societies, membership in honor societies increases the civil service pay scale at which a person enters federal service. The United States Office of Personnel Management's Operating Manual, under "Qualification Standards for General Schedule Positions," states that to be eligible for a GS-5 position a person must have "4 academic years above high school leading to a bachelor's degree, or bachelor's degree." A GS-7 position requires "bachelor's degree with superior academic achievement for two-grade interval positions, or one academic year of graduate education (or law school, as specified in qualification standards or individual occupational requirements)." One means of certifying "superior academic achievement" is membership in a national scholastic honor society.

This means that a recent college graduate who got a job with the Federal Government and was a member of an honor society (such as AKD or Pi Gamma Mu), they would receive the equivalent of a permanent pay increase of approximately \$5,000 per year for the rest of their federal career.

The following is the Table of Contents from James Madison University and that shows the range of topics one university chose to include in their student handbook.

Of course, departments can add to this list or streamline it, based on program needs, but it is important to update the handbook regularly to keep contact information accurate.

James Madison University
The Sociology Student's Guide
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Sociology: What is it?
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Goals and Objectives
Requirements, Advising, and Concentrations
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Teaching Certificates
Special Opportunities in Sociology
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 Independent Study, Field Practicum, internship, and
 Honors
 Alpha Kappa Delta
 Student Research Symposium
 Participation at the Professional Meetings
 Awards and Scholarship

Finding more information:
 Bulletin Boards, Department Homepage, Sociology Library, American
Sociological Association

Faculty Directory
Suggested Readings in Sociology
Goals and Objectives for the three paradigms

Orientation Meetings

Orientation meetings can serve many useful purposes. They provide an opportunity for students to meet each other and to meet department faculty

and to begin to feel welcomed as a new member of the department community. Orientation meetings also provide an opportunity to go over department resources, program requirements, and opportunities for student involvement. In this way, new major orientation meetings can lay the groundwork for developing an engaged student body within the department, while also reducing the chances of pre-graduation crises with students who did not fully understand program requirements.

Undergraduates can declare their majors—and change them—at almost any time between their freshman and junior years. This can make establishing a cohesive orientation system difficult, but not impossible. New technologies help here. An e-mail LISTSERV can be established for each yearly cohort of new majors, and attendance at an orientation meeting can be mandated within a certain time frame beyond declaration. Generally 2-3 meetings a year are enough to provide an orientation for all incoming students.

Invite all department faculty to attend new major orientations, and encourage them to attend. Faculty involvement and interest is critical for creating student involvement and engagement. Here is a quick checklist of topics to cover in an orientation meeting:

- Introduction to the department - its programs and faculty. Invite faculty and students to meet and mingle for a little while before moving on with the orientation meeting.
- Provide insights into faculty areas of interest, research projects, and potential opportunities for student assistants.
- Pass out the Student Handbook and go through it with students. Invite them to raise questions as they look through the material.
- Reiterate the specific requirements for acquiring a degree in sociology.
- Invite incoming students to enroll on a department LISTSERV and to exchange contact information with one another.
- Introduce students to their Sociology Club representatives and orient them to club activities, events, and ways of getting involved.

Part 2: Creating an Engaged Sociology Club

Providing a clear and comprehensive student handbook and a good orientation meeting for incoming majors will link students to their peers and to the institutional layout of the department and campus. It is also a prime vehicle for making students aware of their sociology club and the ways they can become involved in the academic life of the department.

This section of the booklet concentrates on student sociology clubs--the benefits to the department and the students, their basic structure, obtaining financial support, crafting a club constitution and recruiting new members.

Establishing a Club

It seems clear that establishing a sociology club is a worthwhile endeavor for both the department and its students. The following section outlines the essential steps for establishing a sociology club. A great way to jump-start student involvement is by soliciting student feedback on general support for the club, what type of structure and activities they would appreciate, and even getting student leaders involved in the drafting of the proposal for funds. It will be easier to get support from administrators and student government if the club has a clear mission statement that is congruent with the missions of the institution and department. This usually requires some forethought regarding the structure and activities of the club.

Benefits to the Department

A lively and imaginative sociology club is both a benefit to the students in the department and the department itself. First and foremost, a student club can help build cohesion among the various "constituencies" that make up a department. The club is more than simply a forum for undergraduate students. It is also an organizational medium through which faculty, staff, department and school administrators, graduate students, researchers, campus organizational leaders (such as librarians and interdisciplinary program heads), neighborhood organizations, and undergraduate students can interact on a

meaningful level. By inviting participation from a wide range of potential stakeholders, sociology clubs can contribute to a greater sense of departmental community, social involvement, and institutional cohesion.

In addition, a student club fosters student leadership and student leaders on campus. By watching the organizational and intellectual energy of the students who participate in the club, the department will quickly be able to identify student leaders and prime “representatives” of the discipline among its student body. Club leaders can then become a link between students in the department and departmental governance structures. For example, it is common for club leaders to become student members of boards of trustees, student representatives on governing committees, and even to participate--when appropriate--on job search committees and planning committees. In this way, the club and its leaders can facilitate communication between students, faculty, and staff in the department. Often these same club leaders become the next generation of alumni and community leaders. What an asset for the department to have a way of recognizing and tapping this potential!

Structure and Staff Positions

What organizational structures are typical for student clubs? Although they can be organized any number of ways, a straightforward committee structure is most commonly used. This would consist of a President, Vice-President, Treasurer, and Secretary. Duties for each of these positions usually include:

- **President:** Facilitates activities, delegates responsibilities to the rest of the officers and club members, and presides over meetings.
- **Vice-President:** Assists the President and fills in his/her duties if and when s/he is unavailable.
- **Treasurer:** Tracks the club’s budget and ensures solvency.
- **Secretary:** Responsible for the logistical aspects of administering the club, often collecting material for the newsletter or LISTSERV. Also responsible for taking notes or minutes at each meeting and getting approval for those minutes at the start of the next meeting.
- **Faculty Advisor:** Serves as counsel to the club, as well as a formal intermediary between the club officers, members, and the department itself. Most institutions require that all student-run clubs and organizations have a faculty advisor. It is important to select a faculty advisor who has shown a true commitment to teaching and student

enfranchisement. The sociology club should be student run and governed, and not the brainchild or vehicle for a particular faculty member's departmental agenda.

Some clubs also have more specific officer roles, such as a Fundraiser, a Public Relations representative, Ad Hoc Activity Chairs, or a Newsletter Editor. In practice, as the number of roles increases the chances of the distribution of responsibilities becoming unclear also increases. For this reason, it is useful to lay out roles and basic responsibilities early on so that club officers and members do not feel betrayed by either too much or too little club work.

It is also useful establish a schedule for the election (or appointment) of new club officers in a way that creates overlapping terms. In this way, new officers begin to assume their responsibilities with the assistance of the incumbent officers. For example, the incoming officers' terms might begin the quarter before their full responsibilities begin. This provides a training mechanism for officers and helps maintain continuity of activities within the club.

Developing a Constitution

In addition to the club mission statement, a club constitution is a useful document that defines the formal duties of the officers and advisor(s). A club constitution, even if it is modified frequently, saves time and energy while making sure the club stays true to its founding mission and goals.

The Constitution should: define the respective duties of club officers; identify how officers are to be elected or appointed (which can be sticky - electing officers via member vote may result in frustratingly low voter turnout while appointments by previous officers or faculty can lead to flagrant favoritism); provide explicit guidelines for the transition from one set of officers to the next; and outline membership dues and how a student applies for membership.

The constitution can also incorporate the mission statement, including defining the club's purpose, its goals, and its core activities. The constitution should also mention how often a club will have a meeting, how a meeting time will be selected each year, and where the meetings will be held.

While never easy to craft, the process of writing a constitution can help students and departments clarify and organize their thoughts regarding what

the ideal club should look like, the purpose of the club within the department it serves, and how the club will persist through the years. A well-written constitution will be a useful document for years and many successive officers to come.

An example of a constitution created by the Sociology Club at the University of Ohio—Akron is included below.

**CONSTITUTION OF THE SOCIOLOGY CLUB AT
THE UNIVERSITY OF AKRON**

Article I (Name)

The official name of the organization shall be The Sociology Club of the University of Akron.

Article II (Purpose)

The purpose of this organization shall be:

- 1. To stimulate activity and a feeling of fellowship among sociology students.*
- 2. To explore the issues in and the application of the field of sociology.*
- 3. To make contacts with other collegiate academic clubs and outstanding workers in the field.*

Article III (Membership)

Those eligible for membership are:

- 1. Any student enrolled in day or evening classes may become an active member upon payment of dues.*
- 2. Former sociology club members, now alumni, may become non-voting members.*
- 3. The secretary-treasurer shall be in charge of all membership applications and the officers shall decide on questions of eligibility, suspension, and reinstatement of members.*
- 4. Membership will consist of any student, graduate student, or faculty member at the University of Akron, either in a full-time or part-time basis, and is in good standing with the aforementioned University shall be eligible for membership.*
- 5. Membership will be revoked by the organization under the following conditions:*

- a. *Non-payment of dues.*
- b. *Voluntary withdrawal from the University.*

Article IV (Officers)

Officer positions of the organization shall be:

1. *President*
2. *Vice-President*
3. *Secretary-Treasurer*
4. *ASG (Akron Student Government) Representative*

Powers and duties of officers shall be:

1. *President. To preside over all meetings, to establish and oversee committees, and all other activities of the club.*
2. *Vice-President. To assist the President in all club endeavors and to assume the duties of the President in his or her absence.*
3. *Secretary-Treasurer. To keep a running log of all club meetings, to handle correspondence, to keep an active membership file, and to handle and disburse club monies.*
4. *ASG Representative. To attend all meetings that are required by the ASG.*

Election of Officers:

1. *To qualify for officership one must be a major in the sociology department.*
2. *Nominations will be by any active club member.*
3. *Elections will be held on the last scheduled meeting of the spring semester. At this time the votes will be counted. The results will be posted the following day on the Sociology Club billboard.*
4. *The terms of office shall be no less than one year, but no more than three consecutive years.*
5. *If a vacancy occurs among the officers during the year, the President shall call a special election at the next meeting of the club.*
6. *Impeachment proceedings will be brought against any officer for the following reasons:*
 - a. *Failure to carry out the aforementioned prescribed duties of the office.*
 - b. *Failure to act in the best interests of the club.*

Impeachment procedure will consist of

1. *A written and signed proposal of impeachment must be submitted to any club officer or advisor.*
2. *The proposal will be read at the next scheduled meeting and voted upon.*

3. *A majority vote will be necessary and if so received, impeachment will be effective immediately.*

Article V (Organizational Structure)

The executive committee shall consist of the following persons:

1. *There shall be an executive committee consisting of the President, the Vice-President, the Secretary-Treasurer, and the faculty advisor whose duty it shall be to arrange programs for each scheduled semester.*
2. *The executive committee's duties shall be to plan programs to include films, speakers, and other social events.*

Other committees of the organization and their duties will be:

1. *The membership committee*
2. *The publicity committee*
3. *Their duties will consist of:*
 - a. *Recruitment of new members*
 - b. *Advertising events*

Article VI (Advisor(s))

In order to qualify for the advisorship, the individual(s) must be:

1. *A full-time sociology faculty member.*

Advisor(s) will be selected by the department head. The length of the term for an advisor will be one year. Re-appointment is permissible.

Article VII (Rules of Procedures)

1. *Attendance policy for members will be that members must attend more than one-half of the scheduled meetings.*
2. *Organizational meetings will be held twice a month.*
3. *A quorum will consist of those members who are present at the meeting.*
4. *Minutes of organizational proceedings will be the responsibility of the Secretary-Treasurer.*
5. *In the event of conflict concerning proper rules of procedure, ROBERTS RULES FOR ORDER will serve at the recognized authority.*

Article VIII (Finance)

1. *Dues for membership in the organization will be determined by the officers each year.*

2. *Other sources of organizational funding shall be fundraisers that may be proposed at later dates, and ASG.*
3. *The Sociology Club will manage its own finances, but in accordance with the rules and regulations prescribed by the University of Akron.*

Article IX (Non-campus Affiliation)

1. *This organization has no non-campus affiliations.*

Article X (Amendments)

1. *All amendments to this constitution must be approved by active club members.*
2. *This constitution may be amended at any time by a majority vote of all regular members.*

A copy of our current constitution shall always be kept in the Office of Student Development.

Funding

Most college and university campuses provide some measure of monetary support for student organizations. Obviously, a wise department and club should tap into as many of these sources as possible.

If a department does not have a club already established, writing the proposal to the pertinent administrative office or student government body is a good time to think about the type of club the department envisions for itself. In some cases (especially if there has been a student club in the past) there may be a budget set aside for a student club within the department itself.

Often clubs are required to have a constitution prior to being chartered as an organization on their campus. Attaining this level of organization may ensure that the student government or appropriate administrative office will provide funding for a sociology club. It may also be possible to obtain outside funding to support establishing a sociology club.

Fundraising

Many clubs actively seek financial support through fundraising activities. Fundraisers can be utilized to augment the operating budget of the club, to pay for expenses associated with its activities, or to support outside agencies of the club's choice. Some examples of ideas for fundraising activities include:

Food Booth: A weekly food booth that sells snacks and treats.

Raffles: For example, a Valentine's Day raffle, in which campus members buy raffle tickets in the hopes of winning free dinner certificates, roses, movie tickets, and gifts (all of which are donated to the club by local businesses).

Getting the Word Out

First and foremost, sociology clubs need to get the word out that they exist and are an active organization. A club can fairly easily take advantage of many of the university or college communication channels that already exist and are often made available by the campus Office of Student Activities or Student Affairs.

Student Club Fair

Many schools have special events for showcasing student clubs. If one does not already exist at your school, suggest it to the Office of Student Activities. A 'Student Club Fair,' with booths and display materials from all the extracurricular organizations and clubs on campus is a perfect place to recruit new members and inform students from across the campus of the clubs' activities and how they too can get involved. Some schools have campus clubs set up tables around campus during 'Accepted Student Days' so they can speak to incoming students about the range of organizations available on campus for them to join. These events are effective because they attach a human face to the clubs and tend to make prospective members more comfortable about attending their first club meeting.

Advertise in Print

Nearly every campus has a newspaper or newsletter that is disseminated to the entire campus community on a regular basis. The sociology club can announce events or take out an advertisement in the newspaper. In addition, most college campuses allow student clubs to post flyers that announce general activities or simply call attention to the club's existence. Flyers and banners can be posted on community bulletin boards as well as on designated walls and sidewalks around campus. Clubs are well advised to post flyers where students most frequently congregate, such as lunch eatery areas, on-campus housing, and student recreational rooms. If your sociology department has a bulletin board, post announcements of club activities and meeting times there to keep all majors and minors informed of what the club is doing and how they can participate.

Websites and Listservs

Student Clubs should also utilize whatever technological infrastructure is available to help get the word out. Virtually all sociology departments now have a web page where club news and events can be posted quickly and easily. The club may also be able to set up their own homepage. Once membership for the semester has been set, the president may want to set up an on-campus phone message listserv, an email listserv, or an online group (such as a Yahoo! Group) to communicate with club members. At the very least, most individual e-mail accounts have the capability to set up "personal distribution lists" that can be utilized to disseminate information via e-mail. In addition, the department may grant the club access to mailing lists or possibly allow the club to establish a LISTSERV to connect and announce activities to the larger student body.

Weekly to monthly broadcasts that ask for student input and involvement can help students feel like they are a part of the department community, and alert them to interesting events. Discussion forums and listservs can also stimulate group discussions and improve students' sense of the availability of faculty and staff for answering questions. Because students and faculty vary in their

preferred modes of communication, providing a variety of communication options is generally the wisest course.

Social Networking Sites

Social networking sites have changed how organizations recruit and organize members, and how they plan events. Many social networking sites, such as *Facebook*, allow members to create official pages for their groups and organizations. Once the group is created, you can add members, post pictures, send messages to members, post topics for discussions and post video clips. The benefit of social networking sites is that they are usually free, simple to create, and user friendly for members.

Grassroots

Lastly, there is always the “grassroots” strategy. Club officers should “go out to the community” or campus to solicit interest among the student body through routine recruitment. Advisors and faculty members can be involved as well by taking advantage of department channels and organizational networks. Faculty advisors can call club activities to the attention of the entire faculty body. Faculty and instructors are usually quite willing to announce club events at the beginning or end of a class, and may even distribute flyers to their interested students.

Any combination of the outreach methods listed can be useful for building sociology club membership, but the grassroots strategy will more than likely always be a part of your outreach efforts.

Part 3: Events and Activities

Once the club is established and new members have been recruited, the next step is to begin implementing club events and activities. These activities are what will make the club a fun, educational, and productive organization—an organization that new students will be enthusiastic about joining and alumni members will want to support and even continue their participation.

1. Department Field Trips

This idea may seem unrealistic due to financial constraints, however off-campus field trips can be an exciting way to unite and involve sociology students. Departments can organize trips that range from a homeless shelter in a nearby city, a sociological site in the surrounding community, or a sociological association meeting. These events can be organized with or without an official club to sponsor them. Any faculty member who has a particular interest or expertise could organize a trip. Carpooling and public transportation can be used to minimize costs. Departments that organize outside events, like field trips, demonstrate to their students their own involvement and willingness to get students involved.

Visiting Social Service Agencies

Organize a trip to a local correctional facility, the department of housing, or a local organization that works with immigrant rights. The department at Jacksonville State University has found this kind of trip an effective way to get students into contact with people who have first hand knowledge of the social problems they are studying in the classroom. Moreover, if a series of these fieldtrips are held, they can also help majors start thinking about potential internship sites and places to apply for employment after graduation.

Museums, Monuments, and Historical Sites

Locate national, regional, or local sites of important socio-historical events and organize a tour of that area. In addition to museums and

monuments, field trip destinations could also include sites of protests, factories that were the sites of significant labor movements, or even areas of town where the economic crisis has hit particularly hard.

Participant Observations

The department at Hanover College suggests going to a mall or local park. How do people interact in these spaces? Is it possible to observe differences in interaction patterns for different genders, cultures, and racial groups? While usually not systematic enough to be considered scientifically sound data collection, field trip observations can be used to help students connect sociological theory to everyday life.

Theater Performances

Check the Arts and Entertainment sections of your local paper. There are often performances scheduled that provide an interesting and sociological perspective on issues of race, class, or gender. Community theaters frequently offer performances related to on social problems such as homelessness or how a community is divided by class. You will want to organize a discussion to follow the performance. You should try to view the play or performance before hand so that you can assure its quality.

Sociological Association Meetings

The sociology department at State University of New York—Cortland recommends bringing students to regional or national sociological association meetings to expose them to professional sociology. Dates for these meetings are usually posted at least a year in advance, allowing for ample time for departments to organize and raise money

2. Book Discussion Groups

Book discussion groups are popular across the country. Sociology departments can take advantage of this trend by sponsoring a discussion of a sociology-related book—either as a one-time event or an on-going series. Books can be chosen by the club officers, members, or faculty advisors. Depending

on interest, a group can be established at both the undergraduate and graduate level. To get a group going, at least one faculty member needs to be responsible for it, including getting the word out. All students in sociology classes can be encouraged to participate, whether or not they are majors or minors.

It is best to choose books that address sociological issues but are not overly theoretical. Students who are already engaged in heavy reading for their classes might be reluctant to pick up another book. However, a book that is of moderate length, an “easy read,” and still relevant to the field can draw students. The titles should also readily available through local bookstores, online, or from the campus library. The department might also purchase a few copies to loan to students.

Another twist on a book group activity is to have an “Author Meets Student Critics” event based on a book written by a local writer (or a sociologist on campus). To help get the conversation going, it may be a good idea to establish a panel of students who agree in advance to comment on the book. Alternatively, a series of book discussions could be led by the students in pertinent courses who choose the title of the book for the discussion they will lead. Whatever the specifics, a book discussion group is a great opportunity to engage sociology students and create a collegial atmosphere in the department.

3. Department Newsletter

A department newsletter is another effective mechanism for getting the word out about the department and involving students. Through a newsletter, information can be relayed, feedback can be sought, announcements can be made, and articles written by students and of interest to students and alumni can be included. Newsletters often include essays relating to campus and student life, career possibilities and resources, information about graduate school, on-campus research and teaching opportunities, and general announcements of department activities and student accomplishments. Newsletters often also include updates on alumni, which exposes current students to the opportunities available with a background in sociology.

Thematic Newsletters

The Greensboro College Sociology Club newsletter “Sociogram” often picks a substantive theme to explore in a single issue. Their issues have taken on controversial issues such as marijuana legalization, with articles both for and against. The final page of their newsletter includes a cut-away survey that asks for the respondents’ demographic identity, religious affiliation, and a number of substantive questions. The results are published in the following issue.

Such “thematic” newsletters have the advantage of involving readers in the substance of the newsletter and generating interest in the next issue. Along the way, the reader can be presented with a number of announcements that detail upcoming activities. Usually the work required to produce a newsletter is not too time-consuming. Sometimes a staff member, such as the department secretary, produces the newsletter with student assistance. One newsletter a quarter, season, or semester should be sufficient.

The Student Sociologist

The ASA produces *The Student Sociologist*, a bi-monthly newsletter for student members of the association. This newsletter contains useful information for sociology students such as what the ASA Executive Office and the Student Forum are planning for students at the next Annual Meeting, opportunities for funding, call for papers, meeting announcements, and award opportunities. Student members of the ASA are encouraged to write articles of interest for the newsletter and submit announcements. Departments can use this as a starting point for their own newsletters!

4. Career and Degree Planning Events

Students are often thinking about what they are going to do with their lives, regardless of their major. One way sociology departments can generate student involvement outside the classroom is to sponsor career events, including having a career day. Sociology, like many other liberal arts majors, does not prepare students for one particular career, but rather fosters

knowledge and skills that can be applied in many different employment sectors. Sociology majors find work in the government, nonprofit organizations, for-profit businesses, social service agencies, and the criminal justice system. Career events specifically geared towards sociology majors can help students see the range of employment possibilities available.

Departmental Alumni Night or Career Night

Departments can invite alumni (as well as other professional sociologists) to come back and discuss how they use their sociology background in their present careers. This has been done effectively at Merrimack College. Useful formats include panel discussion, workshops, and seminars. These events can also be co-sponsored with your school's career placement office. If possible, invite alumni who are at various stages in their careers and from various occupational settings. Ask speakers to describe how they prepared for their current position, including internships, research programs, and formal educational experiences. In addition, ask the speakers to describe the knowledge and skills expected of applicants for entry-level positions in their current places of employment. These events help students set career goals, begin planning steps to achieve those goals, and develop network ties that can help them land their dream job.

Sociology Alumni Association

The University of Washington has established their own Sociology Alumni Association, which provides career guidance to current students. An alumni association can also become a source for internship opportunities and even employment referrals.

The earlier students learn of career options, the more prepared they will be once they enter the real world. Departments can get students more involved by helping them see their major or minor beyond the classroom. The ASA online bookstore has many relevant resources including the career booklet *21st Century Careers with an Undergraduate Degree in Sociology* (see www.asanet.org for more details).

5. Film Screenings

Similar to having a book discussion group, films offer another way to incorporate sociological perspectives into a popular activity. The department or sociology club can sponsor a film screening, and then invite a faculty member, or even students, to facilitate a sociological discussion of the film and its impact.

For logistical purposes, the movie should not be longer than two hours and the following discussion not longer than 30 minutes. A once-a-month film series could become an attraction for students from across the campus, not just sociology students.

Showing documentaries is also a good idea. Many documentary distribution companies rent out their films for teaching purposes. A few documentary film companies that rent films are listed below. Providing popcorn and beverages will help ensure a good turnout!

A Small Selection of Documentary Film Companies that Rent Films

Women Make Movies:	www.wmm.com
Bullfrog Films:	www.newsreel.org
California Newsreel:	www.bullfrogfilms.com
Media Education Foundation:	www.mediaed.org

6. Colloquiums, Talks, and Lectures

A lecture series where guests from the surrounding community are invited to speak on topics related to current or historical events, social issues, community initiatives, leadership development, or research projects can give students yet another opportunity to make real-world connections to what they learn in class. It is good idea to have these talks either during the lunch hour or in the early evening to maximize attendance. Whenever they are held, be sure to offer light refreshments and allow time for mingling between faculty,

students, and the speakers. Providing time for questions and answers at the end of the talk makes students feel that they can contribute. There is no need to make these events too formal.

Faculty Featured Brown-bag Lecture

Ask a department faculty member to present on his or her current research or a topic relevant to current events. For example, a professor knowledgeable in immigration issues might discuss current immigration trends throughout the country. Faculty from other departments can be invited as well. Brown bag lecture series often take place once a month.

Community Speakers

Bring in employees of governmental agencies (such as state law enforcement or Department of Social Services representatives), as well as from non-profit organizations. Pierce College has organized talks on a variety of topics including, "What to do with a college degree" and "The Relationship between the Prison Budget and the Education Budget in California."

Regional Sociology Associations

Another good idea is to bring in representatives of the regional sociology associations who can speak to students about participating in regional meetings and upon the wider disciplinary work of professional associations.

Themed lecture series

Carroll College's sociology club, in conjunction with other groups, has dedicated February to Social Justice and sponsors a series of guest speakers presenting on social justice issues.

Collaborative Lectures:

Sociology clubs can co-sponsor campus wide lectures with other organizations to raise awareness and bring a sociological perspective to Hispanic Heritage Month, Black History Month, Women's History Month, American Indian Heritage Month, etc. Pierce College teamed up with

their Black Student Union and organized a lecture on how to maintain one's cultural identity while navigating college.

7. Research Fairs and Symposiums

Research fairs and symposiums are another opportunity to involve students outside the classroom and help them become more comfortable with presenting their work in a more formal setting. Students can either elect to participate, or have faculty nominate their papers for submission. Consider a range of formats. Try inviting only student peers one time, then invite all students and faculty another time. See what works best for your department and listen to the feedback of attendees.

“Student Research Day”

Departments can organize a “Student Research Day” where sociology students of all years can present their class papers. Peer feedback on current research is a great way to generate constructive dialogue on student or faculty projects and discussants have the invaluable opportunity to delve constructively into the research of faculty and researchers in their department. Having a research fair can also lead to faculty and students collaborating on research projects in areas of mutual interest. Students may also be inspired to develop research interests outside of the classroom and become more familiar with their department and its faculty in the process.

The graduate program at New York University has developed a workshop series for its graduate students. These regular workshops provide constructive criticism regarding faculty and graduate students' current research projects. While NYU conducts this workshop for its graduate students, it is easy to envision this as an undergraduate activity as well.

Presentation at Regional Meetings

Many departments also sponsor trips to regional sociological association meetings where students can have the opportunity to present their papers. Professors also can organize a session at one of these meetings and allow their students to present their research in this forum.

End of the Year Symposium

Holding a Student Research symposium at the end of the year in conjunction with a department honors program, capstone course, or senior thesis deadline works well because students will have just completed thoughtful projects and conducted original research. Also, an end of the year symposium can give students who plan to attend a sociological association meeting an opportunity to practice their presentations. Discussing a paper in front of a group of peers can ease anxieties about presenting in front of strangers.

8. Department Awards and Competitions

Receiving awards gives students an opportunity to feel pride in their work and accomplishments, and also to build competitive resumes and graduate school applications. Many sociological associations and honor societies sponsor undergraduate paper competitions. Departmental student awards can run the gamut from "Student Paper of the Year," "Best Paper Prepared for an Introduction to Sociology Course," "Collaborative Student Project of the Year," "Best Student Paper on [a given] Subject," "Outstanding Application of Sociological Practice in an Internship," and more.

Along with a plaque or certificate, departments may offer award winners a monetary benefit, a gift certificate for a bookstore, a classic sociological text, or registration at a regional or national sociological meeting. Award money can be collected through the fundraising efforts of the department or the department's sociology club.

Award Ceremonies

Award ceremonies serve as an opportunity for the department to showcase its faculty and students

Sociological Trivia Contest

Competitions need not be large or formal. For example, every quarter the department at James Madison University announces a new trivia contest that asks a number of questions such as: "What early sociologist born in Great Barrington, Massachusetts edited a journal called *Crisis*? (*answer: W.E.B. Dubois*). Questions can be sent out on the department or sociology club listserv, and winners can be randomly selected from

the pool of students who answer correctly before a specific deadline. A competition of this kind can be held weekly, or at random times through a semester. Simple and fun events of this kind can add to a sense of community and help keep students engaged.

ASA Departmental Prize

The American Sociological Association also has a departmental prize program in which departments can purchase a student membership to ASA on behalf of the student receiving the award. In addition to membership, the student or students will also receive an award certificate signed by the ASA Executive Officer. More information about the ASA's departmental prize can be found at www.asanet.org or by e-mailing membership@asanet.org.

9. Volunteering and Community Service Events

An exciting way to involve students is to forge connections with the community through volunteering and community service. Faculty members can sponsor volunteering activities that expose sociology students to the world outside of their campus. Such activities can vary in time commitment from a one-day service event, to an ongoing project. According to Professor Emily LaBeff, Michigan State University, "Faculty find that these kinds of activities bring greater involvement and learning than traditional lectures or presentations. Sociological theories concerning poverty, inequality, family, and education become much more real and applicable." Examples of projects that departments and clubs have undertaken include:

- Working in community gardens or local park beautification projects.
- Food, book and clothing drives.
- Parties to raise money for a battered women and children shelters.
- Rape Awareness week events.
- Volunteering with a local Boys and Girls Club or youth program in which students mentor or tutor children in need.

Community service activities work well with undergraduates who are often eager to volunteer. Departments can poll students once a year about the kinds of community service activities that interest them the most. While time commitments vary depending upon the service activity, it is best to choose an

activity that involves learning rather than just doing work. A park beautification project can be combined with the study of broken window theory. Or serving food at a soup kitchen can be linked to learning about trends in homelessness in the United States. When faculty leaders' areas of research are related to the service project, the links between sociological theory and practice become all the more apparent to students. Volunteering activities are a great way to involve students, link what is learned in the classroom to the community, and embody the social justice ethos of the discipline.

10. Faculty and Student Socials

Informal social events that include students and faculty can build a sense of community and help students feel included and welcomed in the department.

Department Meet and Greet

This event generally takes place at the beginning of the academic year. Serve food as a way to entice students to come. The department should encourage all faculty members to attend. Information on the department can be made available, including the student handbook and information on ways for students to be involved. This event can be like an open house, which allows people to enter and leave as they please.

Semester Socials

Departments can also have end-of-the quarter or semester socials, as a way to wind down before exams. At these events, faculty members should try to interact with students that they do not already know and get to know the names of as many students as possible.

Lunch with a Faculty Member

The University of California—Irvine sponsors lunches where students share a meal with a faculty member to discuss the faculty member's area of interest or background, the students' aspirations and future plans, and anything else that may come up. Events like this are particularly effective at larger institutions where such interactions are not always easy to come by.

Dinner at a professor's house

This may be difficult for logistical reasons, but it could be used for students who win a departmental award or who graduate with honors. The sociology department at Gallaudet University held a series of year-end cookouts at a professor's house, and helped coordinate carpooling to assure all interested students could get there. Different social events work for different departments depending upon the size and characteristics. Whatever sort of social event the department decides to host, it will make a big difference in generating student involvement and making them feel included in the department.

11. Internal Departmental Programs

While many of these activities could be considered internal 'programs,' the following two ideas are represent on-going activities that focus on developing students as peer leaders.

Peer Mentor Program

At the University of California—Irvine, a volunteer "Peer Mentor" is assigned to each new major to help answer questions about the department, degree completion, or student life in general. The program promotes responsibility, leadership, and helps the advanced student reflect constructively upon their educational experiences.

Study Groups

Department sponsored study groups can be popular (and effective) because they allow students to share their thoughts and difficulties on certain courses and assignments with their peers. Study groups not only provide assistance to students with course work, they also help build community within the department.

Conclusion

All of these ideas are designed to encourage students to see the sociology department as more than a bureaucratic office. When students feel engaged they make better grades and are more likely to persist in their studies (Kuh et

al 2008). They may also be more likely to graduate and remain active alumni. Getting students involved in the department beyond the confines of the classroom may not be easy, but the rewards are many.

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