Appendix D:

Sample Interview Questions for Campus Meetings

The majority of the questions found on these interview sheets were taken from a workshop done at a DRG (the name used before the name change) training session at the annual meetings of the ASA.
Meeting with the President/Provost/Dean

(In this space I include the name of the person, as well as any background information—their field of study, for example, and even something about their publications; when I have time, I try to read/skim at least one publication by each person with whom I am visiting.)

In preparation for this site visit, I’ve read through materials on the college and the department, including statements about institutional (and departmental) mission and goals. I’ll also talk a bit about the ASA Program Reviewers and Consultants, and our format for reviewing sociology programs. . . and I often give this person a copy of the most recent edition of Liberal Learning.

- What are your goals for the institution?
- What are your goals for the department in the context of these institutional goals?
- Most institutions make regular comparisons between themselves and other colleges/universities. What do you consider to be comparable schools to your institution? What are your aspirational schools?
- What is your image of the sociology and anthropology Department on campus? Because this is a joint department please elaborate in your comments about the department as a whole, as well as sociology in relation to anthropology.
- If you ranked departments into quartiles, into which quarter would the department fall? Why?
- What is the reputation of the department on campus regarding teaching, research, service?
- Are sociology and anthropology faculty viewed as participants in the college community?
- What is the contribution of sociology and anthropology to education in the liberal arts and sciences on campus?
- . . . (I also have questions here about their contribution to any special programs, like a First Year Seminar program.)
- What are the numbers of sociology and anthropology majors relative to other departments?
- Are the faculty adequate to meet student demand?
- What is your perception of the quality of faculty leadership in the sociology and anthropology department?
- How successful is the department in preparing its students for placement beyond graduation—i.e., graduate school and employment?
- What is your overall assessment of the sociology and anthropology department’s strengths and areas of needed improvement?
- Do you have any major concerns with the current status or future direction of the department, or areas upon which you’d specifically like me to focus during our visit?
- The American Sociological Association adopted a new set of policies regarding harassment in 2018. These are part of the professional Code of Ethics for the ASA. We now include discussion of this in all of our program reviews. “What are your university
policies related to harassment?” “How do you promote the professional codes of ethics in
different disciplines?” [If anyone in the meeting has a question about this, or if it seems
appropriate, volunteer to follow up with an e-mail providing a link to ASA advice for
chairs in relation to harassment:
https://www.asanet.org/sites/default/files/stopping_harassment_in_your_department_oct1
9.pdf
My typical procedure is to first send our report to the department chair to read it through
for any errors in fact or important omissions (not for other changes in our report and its
recommendations). This seems to match the policy outlined in (Name of Institution)=
“Academic Departmental Program Review” document. Is this procedure OK with you?
In virtually all cases, administrators not only agree to this, they heartily endorse it. In
rare occasions, however, the campus may have a policy that does not allow the
department/program to see any version of the report before it is sent to the Dean/Provost.
Do you have any questions for me?

E. Kain

Site Visit at [X College]

Potential Questions for Interviews with Faculty Members (Including the
Department/Program Chair)

Start by thanking them for participating, and thanking them for their carefully crafted written
comments in advance of the visit.

While you provided thoughtful comments in your written statements (IF THEY DID, INDEED
ALREADY RESPOND), I thought you might want to elaborate a little bit, so I’ll start with a few
similar questions.

- What do you see as some strengths of your department?
- What do you see as some places which could be strengthened in your department?
- What challenges would you identify for the department?
- [if it is a joint department] Could you please comment on the relationships between
  [discipline 1 and discipline 2..] in your department?
- What are your most important contributions to the department?
- What are your personal goals for professional growth and development?
- How do they link to department goals?
- Do you receive support to pursue your goals? From where?
- How easy is it to get that support?
- Where do you think the department should be heading in the next 3-5 years?
- How well do you think the undergraduate major is structured and sequenced? Please
  comment on both sociology and anthropology.
- Do you feel the department has clearly articulated learning goals for students in the
  major?
How successful is the department in preparing its students for placement beyond graduation—i.e., graduate school and employment?

If you are talking to the chair, then say something like: The American Sociological Association adopted a new set of policies regarding harassment in 2018. These are part of the professional Code of Ethics for the ASA. We now include discussion of this in all of our program reviews.

“What are your university/department policies related to harassment?”

“Do you think the University/College has done a good job of making faculty aware of these policies?”

“How do you make your department colleagues aware of these policies?” “How do you promote the ASA Codes of Ethics to your colleagues and students?”

If you are talking to other faculty members in the department, then say something like: The American Sociological Association adopted a new set of policies regarding harassment in 2018. These are part of the professional Code of Ethics for the ASA. We now include discussion of this in all of our program reviews.

“What are your university/department policies related to harassment?”

“Do you think the university has done a good job of making you aware of these policies?”

“Have you discussed these policies in the department?”

“How do you promote the ASA Codes of Ethics to your colleagues and students?”

Are there other things about which you’d like to comment?

Do you have any questions for me?
Potential Questions for Group Interview with Undergraduate Students

Again, these are only a beginning list of questions to think about. Start (and end) by thanking them for joining me, and talking a bit about the role of a department review in the life of a department. Also indicate that I am reviewing both, but I am a sociologist. Introduce myself, go around and have them introduce themselves, their class standing, etc.

- What do you see as some of the strengths of the [department name] and the program it offers?
- What do you see as some areas in the program that could be strengthened?
- Could you reflect upon the structure of the major—the required courses as well as how they are sequenced. Do you think this set of required courses is useful? How about the sequencing?
- Now, I’d like to do a mini-survey. In the context of your sociology (or sociology and anthropology) courses, how many of you have -

(NOTE: I keep a tally of their responses and typically refer to those numbers in my final report. If I am working with another reviewer, one of us will take notes and the other will lead the discussion—often we’ll switch off on these roles):

  - Studied overseas?
  - Done research within a class?
  - Made a class presentation on materials that other class members have not read?
  - Written a paper in which you compared or contrasted multiple theoretical traditions?
  - Written a research paper of a significant length—say 15 pages or longer?
  - Had a course that involved a significant amount of class discussion?
  - Worked one-on-one with a faculty member on a research project?
  - Volunteered in a community setting?
  - Participated in a service-learning course or project?

- Is there a physical space on campus where sociology student hang out or that you associate with sociology students?
- What do you plan to do once you have graduated[institution name]?
- Do you think the sociology or anthropology major has helped prepare you for your future career plans?
- In 2018 the ASA adopted new policies related to harassment and those are included in the Code of Ethics. In all reviews, we talk about this topic.
- Are there any places in the curriculum or in programming by the department that you have learned about the American Sociological Association Code of Ethics?
- Do you know what the University/College policies are related to harassment? Do you know the process you should follow if you or anyone you know has experienced harassment?
- Do you have any other comments you’d like to make about the program?
- Do you have any questions for me?
Potential Questions for Group Interview with Graduate Students

Again, these are only a beginning list of questions to think about. Start (and end) by thanking them for joining us, and talking a bit about the role of a department review in the life of a department. Introduce ourselves, go around and have them introduce themselves, their class standing, etc.

- What do you see as some of the strengths of the [department name] and the graduate program(s) it offers?
- What do you see as some areas in the program that could be strengthened?
- Could you reflect upon the structure of the graduate program you are in—the required courses as well as how they are sequenced. Do you think this set of required courses is useful for your planned career? How about the sequencing?
- Now, I’d like to do a mini-survey. In the context of your sociology courses, how many of you have -

  (NOTE: We keep a tally of their responses and typically refer to those numbers in our final report. If I am working with another reviewer, one of us will take notes and the other will lead the discussion—often we’ll switch off on these roles):

  o Done research within a class?
  o Made a class presentation on materials that other class members have not read?
  o Lead a class discussion on materials that other class members have read?
  o Written a paper in which you compared or contrasted multiple theoretical traditions?
  o Written a paper in which your critiqued one or more research methods?
  o Written a research paper of a significant length—say 15 pages or longer?
  o Discussed teaching?
  o Discussed alternative career paths?
  o Had a course that involved a significant amount of class discussion?
  o Worked with a faculty member on a research project?
  o Worked with other graduate students on a research project?

- What do you plan to do once you have graduated from [institution name]?
- Do you think your sociology graduate program helped prepare you for your future career plans?
- In 2018 the ASA adopted new policies related to harassment and those are included in the Code of Ethics. In all reviews, we talk about this topic.
- Are there any places in the curriculum or in programming by the department that you have learned about the American Sociological Association Code of Ethics?
- Do you know what the University/College policies are related to harassment? Do you know the process you should follow if you or anyone you know has experienced harassment?
If you are teaching your own class, do you know the process you should follow if a student is not attending class? Is disruptive to others in class? Appears to be in distress?

If you are teaching your own class, have you been adequately prepared? Do you have someone who can help you if you have a situation that you feel you cannot adequately handle?

Do you have any other comments you’d like to make about the program?

Do you have any questions for us?

---

E. Kain

Site Visit at [X College]

Potential Questions for Interviews with the Representative from ITS and the Library

(There are fewer questions here; typically this meeting is for a shorter time than the other interviews)

**ITS**

(again, I try to look something up about this person—or get some inside information from the department chair)

- Could you give a brief overview of the activities and goals of ITS at X College?
- Do sociology and anthropology department members make use of the services from ITS?
- Compared to other departments, where would you place sociology and anthropology in their implementation of information technology?
- Do you have any questions for me?

**Library**

(I write the name of the person and any personal details I know)

- Could you describe the process of how faculty members participate in collection development in sociology and anthropology?
- Are there special funds available for collection development when a new faculty member arrives on campus?
- Does the department regularly use its allotted library budget?
- What types of library instruction program do you have available? Is it used effectively by members of the department?
- What is your assessment of the adequacy of the library collection in terms of teaching and learning in sociology?
- What is your assessment of the adequacy of the library collection for faculty research and professional activity?
• What is the relative balance between hard copy subscriptions of academic journals and electronic access to those journals?
• What are the central electronic journal collections related to sociology and anthropology to which you subscribe?
• Do faculty and students have off-campus access to using your electronic resources such as JSTOR and Academic Search Complete?
• Could you talk about any efforts at addressing student learning outcomes related to information literacy in sociology? (Mention the ACRL/ANSS Information Literacy program materials. Mention the ASA document on assessment of library collections in sociology.)
• Do you have any questions for me?

E. Kain

Site Visit at [X College]

Potential Questions for Interview with non-department Faculty and Chairs

(I list the names in order, while going around the table and having them introduce themselves)

• What is your image of the [department name] on campus? (Remind them that we’re focusing upon the sociology program.)
• If you ranked departments into quartiles, into which quarter would the department fall? Why?
• What is the reputation of the department on campus regarding teaching, research, service?
• Are sociology faculty viewed as participants in the college community?
• What is the contribution of sociology to education in the liberal arts and sciences on campus?
• What is the number of sociology majors relative to other departments?
• Are the faculty adequate to meet student demand?
• What is your perception of the quality of faculty leadership in the sociology department?
• How successful is the department in preparing its students for placement beyond graduation—i.e., graduate school and employment?
• What is your overall assessment of the sociology department’s strengths and areas of needed improvement?