Renee A. Monson, PhD  
Statement of program review and consulting approach  
revised February 2021

I see my role as helping to advance the discipline by supporting sociology programs’ efforts to revitalize their curricula, foster their students’ success, and strengthen their position within their home institutions. I aim to adopt a growth mindset in all aspects of my work as a reviewer. I look for ways that a program’s current strengths and past experiences can be leveraged to accomplish future growth. I listen carefully to the perspectives of faculty, students, and staff in order to understand a particular program’s culture, history, and aspirations.

My experience serving on the ASA’s 2015-17 Task Force on Liberal Learning (and the Employment Outcomes sub-committee) and co-authoring its 2017 report (Pike at al., The Sociology Major in the Changing Landscape of Higher Education: Curriculum, Careers, and Online Learning) gives me a deep understanding of the national trends currently shaping sociology programs’ structure and curricula. I am especially attuned to the issues involved in linking sociology programs with other disciplines, based on my several years of experience chairing a joint Anthropology-Sociology department, a stand-alone Sociology program, and a Public Policy Studies program.

Programs that are re-examining how to meet the needs of students who are increasingly focused on their prospects for employment, and are increasingly drawn to interdisciplinary or applied fields of study, may be well served by my background in these areas. I have co-led several workshops and co-authored an article on designing curricula to prepare sociology majors for careers (Ciabattari et al. 2018, “Linking Sociology Majors to Labor Market Success”), which grew out of the work of the ASA Task Force. I also have co-authored an article on designing curricula for interdisciplinary majors (Monson and Kenyon 2018, “Beyond Scavenger Hunts and Guided Expeditions: Rethinking Interdisciplinary Majors and 21st Century Liberal Education”), which stemmed from nearly two decades of participation in an interdisciplinary program.

My work as a program reviewer also is informed by my more than 20 years of teaching experience at all levels of a traditional sociology curriculum. In addition, I have developed a variety of innovative courses that have helped to raise the profile of Sociology within my institution, including: a first-year seminar for the general curriculum that also serves as an introductory course for Sociology; a bi-disciplinary course (co-taught with a biologist) and a required core course for Public Policy Studies, each of which also count as an intermediate Sociology elective; and a half-credit Sociology course in which students revise and extend original research projects into presentations at professional sociological conferences. The latter course grew out of a Mellon grant I co-directed for integrating student research across the curriculum. I have published several articles on collaborative and small-group pedagogy and have served three years on the Editorial Board of Teaching Sociology.

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