Statement of Consulting Approach
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Experience with Multi-disciplinary Departments and University Governance

Since 1997, I have been Professor of Sociology at Central Michigan University (CMU), chairing the Department of Sociology, Anthropology, and Social Work from 2002-08. Within Sociology, we house a stand-alone Sociology major, a Sociology major with a Social and Criminal Justice concentration, and a Sociology major with a Youth Studies concentration. I also have moved from a senior administrative position (Interim Vice Provost) to that of elected President of our faculty union and Chair of our Academic Senate. I think that I have a very good understanding of both the organization of universities and of the dilemmas faculty face as we attempt to resist efforts to minimize the faculty role in governance. I feel that I could make contributions to departments on topics related to preparing for a successful program review, positioning sociology well within university/college structures, developing multiple curricula drawing on faculty strengths, and “managing” a multidisciplinary department.

Experience with the Assessment of Sociology Programs

I was an author of my institution’s first assessment plan, back in the 1990’s, and currently serve as my college’s Assessment Coordinator. I have been a consultant to programs on my campus and to faculty at other institutions who either need or want to assess student learning. I have a very pragmatic approach to assessment, with a focus on making it manageable, meaningful, and under faculty control and could make a contribution to sociology departments developing or implementing assessment plans.

Linking the Sociology Major to Students’ Career Interests

I have worked with Roberta Spalter-Roth on the two Bachelor’s and Beyond projects that have followed samples of sociology graduates from their senior year into their first years of post-baccalaureate life. I have written and presented on ways of linking the major to students’ career interests, without reducing the rigor of the major or “reducing” sociology faculty to career counselors. I think that I could assist departments in developing strategies to recruit students and to enhance their employment prospects by highlighting their sociological knowledge and skills.

Integrating Application and Research into the Undergraduate Sociology Curriculum

Since 2002, I have directed the Center for Applied Research and Rural Studies at CMU, completing numerous projects for non-profit organizations and governmental units, as well as for university offices. I have won two diversity awards at CMU, awards that stem primarily from efforts to collect and analyze data on the “climate for diversity” at my institution. I am especially interested in efforts to engage students actively in “real” research projects as part of their course experiences and also think that students and departments can benefit from having students play an active role in assessing their programs as “junior researchers.” I feel that I could assist departments interested in revising their curricula and making courses relevant to students with more applied interests.