My consulting approach is guided by the assumption that all departments have strengths and those strengths can be used for positive change. A skilled consultant helps department identify and capitalize on those strengths. Departments must have a common set of goals or at least some overlapping goals and it would be the very rare department that did not share some similar desired outcomes. A skilled consultant is able to help departments identify and capitalize on common goals. Faculty members do not all have to have the same skill set but each has to find a way to contribute to the common good and each needs to be appreciated for their unique contributions. A skilled consultant can help departments develop an appreciation for individual strengths.

I have spent my entire career at a large research extensive university in a department with a well-established sociology PhD program, an Anthropology master’s program and several undergraduate majors in sociology and anthropology. I specialize in the scholarship of teaching and learning, a specialty that requires knowledge of higher education in order to appreciate the context within which teaching, research, and professional service takes place. I have served both as department head and associate head and have also directed a university program, chaired several university committees, and worked in several other university programs. My experience includes assessment and curriculum development at both the graduate and undergraduate level.

Currently I teach a required graduate teaching seminar for our sociology Ph.D. candidates and serve as the teaching mentor for numerous students. My book, In the Trenches: Teaching and Learning Sociology (with Kathleen Lowney) is the only “how to teach” text explicitly designed for sociologists of which I am aware. At the undergraduate level I specialize in teaching the introductory sociology courses and have recently published an introductory text (with Kathleen Korgen) Sociology in Action (Sage) and we are currently both finishing the second edition of Sociology in Action and a social problems text, Social Problems in Action (Sage, with Mary Nell Trautner). My experience teaching graduate students to teach and working on these undergraduate texts provide me with a broad background and appreciation for a variety of disciplinary specialties.

While I always advocate for the departments that I review, I clearly understand that in the days of limited budgets, simply asking for more resources from the administration is not always in the best interests of departments. The first step in gaining more resources is often to find ways to better use the resources at hand. One of my top priorities is exactly that, helping departments make the most of their existing resources.