Application for Editorship of Teaching Sociology
Editor: Michele Lee Kozimor, Ph.D. (Elizabethtown College)

Background and Vision Statement

I can still remember the first issue of Teaching Sociology that arrived in my mailbox in Oswald Tower at The Pennsylvania State University in January 1996. Shortly before the start of the spring semester, after years of anxiously waiting, I was finally given the green light to assume full responsibility for an introductory course. I decided to renew my American Sociological Association annual membership and checked the box on the paper form to receive Teaching Sociology. I distinctly recall ripping off the plastic wrapping of the journal searching for some tool beyond the typical textbook. I skimmed the pages and excitedly found exactly what I was looking for – an invitation to consider the use of nontraditional teaching materials. Reading “Science Fiction and Introductory Sociology: The Handmaid in the Classroom” by Cheryl Laz had a transformative effect on me. This one article changed the way I approached course preparation, ignited my interest in innovative pedagogy, and inspired me to become a scholarly teacher. I have maintained a subscription to Teaching Sociology ever since that 1996 issue. More importantly, my desire to contribute to the journal in some significant way was born in my cubicle on that snowy January day. Furthermore, after recently rereading Laz’s article, I am astounded by how relevant the suggestions are for using science fiction, such as The Handmaid’s Tale by Margaret Atwood, in contemporary sociology classrooms.

My vision for Teaching Sociology has been influenced by more than just that one poignant 1996 article. I am grateful to have been mentored by two previous editors of the journal - Dr. Stephen Sweet and Dr. Jeffrey Chin. They have both provided me with significant editorial experiences from which I have crafted my vision. My vision for Teaching Sociology is to (1) produce a journal that combines the invitation to use nontraditional (innovative) teaching materials and techniques with a tradition of academic excellence established by previous editors of Teaching Sociology; and (2) increase and elevate the public presence of the journal both within sociology and the scholarship of teaching and learning. Below, I list these visions as goals in greater detail.

Goal 1: Continue to encourage and inspire innovation in the classroom and maintain the tradition of excellence established by previous editors.
Under the stewardship of Dr. Sweet (and his predecessors), the journal has continued to inspire innovation in teaching, maintained high standards, excelled at efficiency of the review process, and developed a strong relationship with TRAILS. My first goal is to maintain these strengths. My objectives for this goal would be to:

- Continue to assess topical areas represented in the journal.
  I will continue to undertake a routine assessment of the content areas being published with the goal of expanding the scope of topics included in the journal. For example, the most recent index compiled by Dr. Sweet and his editorial assistant showed that primary content areas of most of the recent articles and notes included inequalities and stratification with the least number of articles and notes on areas including social control, law, crime, and deviance. To increase the variety of content areas represented in
Teaching Sociology, I would actively recruit scholars (from conferences, ASA sections, social media, and TRAILS publications) from the least represented content areas to contribute articles, notes, and conversations.

- **Maintain the average length of manuscript response time.**
  In 2017, Teaching Sociology had the fastest average review time of the ASA journals (three weeks for all manuscripts and approximately six weeks for new manuscripts). I plan to continue this timetable established by previous editors Dr. Sweet and Dr. Lowney and anticipate feedback being returned to authors within three months of submission. In addition, as was established by Dr. Sweet, recruitment of reviewers will be initiated within three to four days of receipt of any submission and reviewers will be instructed to return critiques within three to four weeks. Three reviewers will still be requested for each submission. If a third reviewer is unable to be secured within the three month window, and a consensus is reached between the other two reviews and me, a decision may be reached on the basis of two reviews.

- **Identify and publish special issues.**
  Teaching Sociology has produced two issues dedicated to special topics over the past four years including “Incorporating Globalization in the Sociology Curriculum” and “Teaching Sociology in the Community College Context.” Consistent with other sociological journals, I plan to supply three special issues (one per year) during my editorship. The first issue would focus on the topic of “Infusing Career Development and Awareness into the Curriculum.” Few articles recently published in Teaching Sociology focus specifically on innovative ways to incorporate career development and awareness into the classroom. The sociology curriculum provides students with a multitude of transferrable skills that can prepare them for a wide variety of careers. However, the value of these skills is not always communicated effectively to students. Given the current economic climate, it has become vital for the continuance of our discipline within the academy to highlight these marketable skills to our students and employers. Publication of articles, notes, conversations, and reviews in Teaching Sociology would greatly enhance these efforts. The second special issue planned would be “Social Media Use in the Classroom.” As social media use has become ubiquitous, it is essential to have an issue focused on how to maximize this medium for teaching and learning sociology. Finally, given the relevance of Laz’s article on using science fiction to teach sociology and the growth in dystopian novels, films, and podcasts over the past 20 years, I intend to create a special issue devoted to “Teaching Sociology Using the Dystopian Genre.”

**Goal 2: Expand the footprint of the journal by increasing submissions, readership, citations, and public presence.**
  Teaching Sociology fills a unique niche within the discipline of sociology, but its recognition within the more general scholarship of teaching and learning could be improved. A quick scan of the number of citations of articles, notes, reviews, and conversations published over the last four years highlights a particular challenge of a journal dedicated to teaching pedagogy within a specific discipline. The majority of readers use material from Teaching Sociology to inform and improve scholarly teaching which means that focusing purely on citations to determine the footprint may not be reflective of the overall impact of the journal. Expanding the reach of
Teaching Sociology by increasing awareness of the journal among faculty developers (e.g., directors of teaching and learning centers) should lead to more submissions and citations. I believe there are significant gains to be made through the use of social media, workshops at regional conferences, and additions of new review types. Below are my objectives, and further justification, for this goal.

- **Increase the public presence of the journal through social media.**
  Twitter has a significant influence on dissemination and impact of research. Of the journals published by the American Sociological Association, five currently have a Twitter account (American Sociological Review, Contexts, Journal of Health and Social Behavior, Sociological Theory, and Socius). Teaching Sociology does not currently have a Twitter account associated with the journal. Ortega (2018) found that journals with their own Twitter account receive 46 percent more tweets and 34 percent more citations than journals without a Twitter account. The author concludes that the diffusion of research findings on Twitter will improve the number of citations academic outlets receive. As the current Deputy Editor of Teaching Sociology, I have piloted using my own Twitter account to recruit book and film reviewers and disseminate published reviews with success. Over the past year, posting a call for book and film reviewers on Twitter has resulted in at least 5-10 interested reviewers per post. Therefore, to increase the presence and impact of the journal I suggest:
  1. Establishing and using social media accounts (specifically Twitter) to publicize published journal articles, notes, conversations, and reviews.
  2. Making connections with educational developers and Centers for Excellence in Teaching and Learning through social media.
  3. Using social media to locate authors, publishers, and materials for review of the greatest pedagogical value.

- **Continue facilitating workshops at regional conferences and collaborating with Alpha Kappa Delta (AKD).**
  Previous editor, Dr. Sweet, previous TRAILS editor, Dr. Julie Pelton, and I have developed a workshop on publishing in Teaching Sociology and TRAILS. We have facilitated these workshops at ASA, ESS, PSA, MSS and in conjunction with AKD pre-conference teaching and learning workshops at PSA, ESS, and SSS. These workshops have been successful in increasing submissions of articles, notes, book, and film reviews from all academic ranks. Furthermore, we have received submissions and book and film reviews from individuals at all types and locations of institutions including community colleges, liberal arts colleges, research universities, and even from faculty outside of the United States. I plan to continue the partnership with TRAILS and AKD by facilitating workshops at regional meetings on publishing in Teaching Sociology and TRAILS.

- **Add new review category and re-evaluate film formats.**
  During this editorial term, the average number of reviews per issue has ranged between 8 and 12. Recently, as media format is changing, I have identified a need to revise the current format of film allocation and add podcast reviews as a publication category. For example, reviewing or purchasing films through DVD format is becoming significantly less common, while streaming videos and podcasts have become increasingly popular. I
suggest adding a new publication category within the reviews for podcasts and reevaluating how to review films based on the current use of Kanopy within institutions and the demise of DVD technology.

Editor Background Information

Editor
I am currently Associate Professor of Sociology at Elizabethtown College. I have a strong record of meritorious teaching and dedication to innovative instruction, mentoring, and professional development of students and faculty. I have demonstrated a longstanding dedication to the journal and prior editorial experiences. As eluded to earlier in this application, I have served as the Deputy Editor of *Teaching Sociology* since 2014. In this capacity, I have been in charge of soliciting materials (books and films) for reviews, contacting reviewers, and working with reviewers through the publication process from initial contact, to revision, and final publication. In addition to my editorial experience with *Teaching Sociology*, I co-edited the recently released volume *Learning from Each Other: Refining the Practice of Teaching in Higher Education* (published by the University of California Press in August 2018). As co-editor with Dr. Jeffrey Chin (a previous editor of *Teaching Sociology*) I helped to recruit, provide formative feedback to authors, and edit over 20 individual chapters for the book. I served as the Director of the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning at Elizabethtown College from 2014-2017 (there is currently no director). I am also active professionally within the discipline of sociology. I am the immediate Past-President of Alpha Kappa Delta and current President of the Pennsylvania Sociological Society. I am a member of the Cooperative Initiatives Committee for the ASA Section on Teaching and Learning. Within AKD, I also on the Executive Committee, Planning Committee, Teaching and Learning Workshop Committee, Centennial Committee, and Student Engagement Committee. One of my contributions to AKD has included co-planning and facilitating numerous teaching and learning workshops at national and regional conferences (including ASA, ESS, SSS, PSA, and AACS). These workshops have covered a breadth of topics including community-based research, using Twitter in the classroom, teaching research methods and statistical analysis, strengths-based teaching, and cell phone policies in syllabi. I have also previously held leadership positions with the Mid-Atlantic Council on Family Relations (President) and the Pennsylvania Sociological Society (Vice-President). Finally, I was awarded the McGraw-Hill Excellence in Teaching First Year Seminars Award, a national award that recognizes one exceptional teacher who has achieved great success in teaching first-year seminars and who inspires student learning, development, and success.

Deputy Editor
Dr. Barbara Prince is currently Assistant Professor of Sociology at Lebanon Valley College. Of most importance to this application is her record of dedication to and involvement within the scholarship of teaching and learning. Dr. Prince served as the Graduate Student Representative for the ASA Section on Teaching and Learning as well as the first Graduate Student Representative on the Alpha Kappa Delta (AKD) International Sociology Honor Society Executive Council. She has facilitated over 10 workshops nationwide on various teaching topics including community-based research, teaching with your strengths (using the Clifton Strengths inventory in the classroom), and using Twitter to increase student engagement. Dr. Prince has published 10 journal articles, chapters, reviews, and entries, either as sole author or with
colleagues. Her research on evaluating the simulation Start Power to teach social inequality was presented at ASA with Dr. Kozimor-King and later published in Teaching Sociology. She has also had numerous film reviews published in Teaching Sociology and has served as a reviewer for the journal. Dr. Prince and Dr. Kozimor-King co-authored a chapter focused on community-based research recently published in the edited volume Learning from Each Other: Refining the Practice of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education. Dr. Prince also serves on the undergraduate education committee for the Eastern Sociological Society and as a subject matter expert for Cengage.

I will rely on my Deputy Editor, Barbara Prince to manage book, film, and podcast reviews. Dr. Prince comes with considerable experience and we have worked as co-authors on multiple SoTL projects as well as serving as co-facilitators on numerous workshops for the past 10 years. Dr. Prince has assisted me in soliciting high quality book and film reviews during my tenure as Deputy Editor for Teaching Sociology. We share a common vision of maintaining high quality, contemporary reviews. In addition, Dr. Prince will provide career development opportunities and mentorship for undergraduate students at Lebanon Valley College in her role as Deputy Editor. She will train an undergraduate editorial assistant to identify and obtain potential books, films, and podcasts to be reviewed. Furthermore, the undergraduate editorial assistant will work with Dr. Prince to identify potential reviewers from conference presentations, ASA membership, self-nominations, and Twitter and assist with periodic assessments of content areas of reviews published. Dr. Prince will assist with expanding the social media presence of the journal. Calls for reviewers will be posted on Twitter at least once every other week and published reviews will be linked to tweets. As mentioned above, over the past year, posting a call for book and film reviewers on Twitter has resulted in at least 5-10 interested reviewers per post. We anticipate a higher response rate when posting from the official journal Twitter account.

**Institutional Support**

I have discussed the prospect of editorship with my department chair and Dean of Academic Affairs and Faculty Development (see letter of support provided). Both have shown strong support and have committed to securing release time through internal resources should I be chosen for the editorship. Dr. Prince has also received support from her institution.

Neither Elizabethtown College nor Lebanon Valley College have graduate programs in Sociology. As a result, neither Dr. Prince nor I will have access to graduate students. However, since Dr. Sweet has taken over editorship of the journal, the work typically done by graduate students has all been completed by the editors and two undergraduate editorial assistants. We plan to continue this arrangement with one undergraduate editorial assistant at Elizabethtown College and one editorial assistant at Lebanon Valley College. To enhance the quality of publications, a copy editor would need to be employed either through existing human resources at Sage or by a provision of funds that could be used to contract work out. Furthermore, the Deputy Editor will need funds to cover the expense of mailing books and films to reviewers.
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