Conducting Effective Program Reviews:
A Training Manual for ASA Program Reviewers and Consultants
2018 Edition
Updated July 2019 and March 2020
THE AMERICAN SOCIOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION ("ASA") PROVIDES THE LIST OF REVIEWERS/CONSULTANTS FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES ONLY. APPEARANCE ON THE LIST DOES NOT CONSTITUTE AN ENDORSEMENT OF ANY REVIEWER/CONSULTANT BY ASA. DETERMINATION OF WHETHER AND/OR HOW TO USE ALL OR ANY PORTION OF THIS LIST OR ANY REVIEWER/CONSULTANT THEREON IS TO BE MADE IN THE USERS' SOLE AND ABSOLUTE DISCRETION. ASA DOES NOT MAKE ANY REPRESENTATIONS OR WARRANTIES WITH RESPECT TO THIS LIST OR THE SERVICES OF ANY REVIEWER/CONSULTANT THEREON. THESE REVIEWERS/CONSULTANTS ARE NOT REPRESENTATIVES, AGENTS OR CONTRACTORS OF ASA AND ASA IS NOT LIABLE OR RESPONSIBLE FOR THEIR PERFORMANCE, ACTS OR OMISSIONS.
This training manual is the product of many people’s efforts and has evolved over time. Much of its original outline and content emerged from a workshop at a 1985 Wingspread Conference. Edward L. Kain and Charles S. Green, III originally compiled and edited the manual in 1994. It sought to codify the operating principles for the ASA Teaching Resources Group members who undertook program reviews.

The name of this group of program reviewers has changed over time. Emerging from the Teaching Projects of the ASA, it was originally called the Teaching Resources Group, paralleling the name of the Teaching Resources Center at the ASA which produced teaching materials, including collections of syllabi sets, organized teaching workshops, and worked to increase the focus upon teaching within the discipline. As the purview of this group evolved, the name was changed to the Department Resources Group. In 2019 the most recent name change (to the ASA Program Reviewers and Consultants) occurred, reflecting what members of the group most typically do. (For further information on the history of teaching within the ASA, and the TRG/DRG/PRC, see Mauksch and Howery 1986; McKinney and Howery 2006; Weiss 2007; and Kain 2019.)

Under the direction of Carla Howery (then Director of the Academic and Professional Affairs Program of the ASA) a second edition of this manual [2005] aimed to include information pertinent to reviews of graduate departments. This work was done by Jeanne Ballantine, Tom Van Valey, Maxine Atkinson, and Denzel Benson. The 2005 manual updated the original, using new resources, and insights from veteran DRG members. The DRG Advisory Board did significant reviewing and revising, particularly Kathleen McKinney, Ed Kain, Jay Howard, Jeanne Ballantine, and Gregory Weiss.

The third edition in 2018 was again updated. It included material from the new national guidelines for the undergraduate Sociology major found in *The Sociology Major in the Changing Landscape of Higher Education: Curriculum, Careers, and Online Learning* (Pike et al. 2017), as well as information about the Sociological Literacy Framework (Ferguson 2016; Ferguson and Carbonaro 2016). Ed Kain coordinated the revisions and additions in this edition, and edited multiple drafts, along with Teresa Ciabattari, Tom Van Valey, and Margaret Vitullo. This edition also included a number of new sections suggested by members of the DRG, as well as sample e-mails, letters, and documents that can be used throughout the process of doing a department/program review. Contributors of new material include Maxine Atkinson, Michelle Camacho, Susan Ferguson, Jan Fritz, Laura Kramer, Diane Pike, Lissa Yogan, and John Zipp. At this point the decision was made that the *Manual* would be treated as a living and changing electronic document, with regular revisions and updates made as needed. Two sets of revisions and updates were completed by Teresa Ciabattari and Ed Kain in 2019 and 2020.

As noted earlier, in 2019 the name of the group was changed to the ASA Program Reviewers and Consultants (PRC). This “living document” will continuously be updated as we learn more about the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) and how it shapes our skills as PRC reviewers. A survey of members during the half-day training at the 2017 ASA annual
meetings in Montreal found a relatively balanced split between having this new edition of the manual in electronic format only (7) or both electronic and print (10). Because a hard copy can easily be produced on demand, this document is available in both formats. The Appendices (which include samples of e-mails, letters, written reports, etc.) are also available as separate downloads on the PRC Members Only portal on the ASA website.

An abridged version of this document, edited by Thomas Van Valey and Thomas Calhoun, is available for use by non-PRC program reviewers working in teams with members of the PRC.
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INTRODUCTION

This Program Review Training Manual is designed to provide guidance to ASA Program Reviewers and Consultants (PRC) who are doing departmental evaluation visits. This is not an exhaustive training manual, and there are points about which various evaluators may reasonably disagree. We have tried to build discussion of some of these points into the manual.

This manual is only one of many resources for PRC members. Reviewers of departments should be fully conversant with the literature on department evaluation. In particular, they should be familiar with The Sociology Major in the Changing Landscape of Higher Education: Curriculum, Careers, and Online Learning (2017), the report from the ASA Task Force on Assessment (Creating an Effective Assessment Plan for the Sociology Major [2005]), and How Does Your Department Compare? (2007). These reports can be very useful in evaluating departments and shaping the recommendations that are made to the department.

Another useful document is the brief and informative Program Review and Educational Quality of the Major, published in 1992 by the Association of American Colleges & Universities (AAC&U).1 Although it is over 25 years old, this document remains relevant and is discussed more fully later in this manual. Appendices G and H to this manual includes a longer list of resources organized by topic, which can be useful to an external reviewer for a sociology program. Some of the resources are organized around the recommendations found in The Sociology Major in the Changing Landscape of Higher Education. These may be particularly useful as suggested resources for departments/programs that are reviewed. The remainder of the resources are grouped by topic.

Finally, reviewers must have substantial knowledge about teaching, learning, and curricula, in Sociology and in higher education more generally. This includes work published in Teaching Sociology, as well as work by authors writing on these topics across disciplines. These resources may be read and used by PRC reviewers, but could also be suggested as readings to members of the department under review.

Most visits that have been facilitated through ASA are to undergraduate programs, but graduate program reviews are equally important. Sometimes a department/program chooses to have its undergraduate and graduate programs reviewed at separate times. Alternatively, some programs bring in a team of reviewers simultaneously. It is not unusual for some of the reviewers to focus upon the graduate program, and others to concentrate on the undergraduate program. Sections of this manual specific to graduate programs are in italics. In particular, material specifically related to graduate programs is found on pp. 7-8, 10, 14, 17, and 21, and in several Appendices, including pp. 36, 38, 45, 85 – 87.

This manual is divided into three sections. Part I reviews some basic assumptions and principles of program review, both as originally developed by the group at the Wingspread Conference (1985) and as outlined in the aforementioned program review document from the AAC&U. The guidelines serve as best practices, always tempered by the complexities and realities that exist in any department. Part II goes through the process of program review from beginning to end, outlining issues and guidelines and clarifying the role of the department.

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1 At the time, the AAC&U was called the Association of American Colleges (AAC).
evaluator. Part III of the manual is a set of appendices that provides further resources for the
department reviewer, including strategies for working on a review team, details on the
sociological literacy framework, a list of general resources, outline of typical reports, sample
reports, and other useful documents. As noted earlier, these documents are available individually
for download at the PRC Members Only portal on the ASA website.
PART I. ASSUMPTIONS AND PRINCIPLES OF PROGRAM EVALUATION: A SET OF BEST PRACTICES

The AAC&U and Program Review

A key assumption of the AAC&U (1992) guide to program evaluation is that we must focus on key elements of strong programs. If we can identify the key elements of strong undergraduate programs, then through systematic program review we can help build strong programs in a variety of settings.

The Program Review and Educational Quality in the Major (1992) report identifies thirteen elements of strong programs, and suggests that evaluations be built around these elements. Strong undergraduate degree programs must have:

1. Statements of clear and explicit goals, which can be understood by students in the program (p. 3).
2. Methods for helping students focus upon inquiry and analysis (p. 4).
3. A critical approach enabling students to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of different perspectives (p. 4).
4. A connection with students’ needs (p. 5).
5. Links with scholarly inquiry, which reflect the current state of the field (p. 6).
6. A major which reflects a coherent plan and not just a collection of unrelated courses (p. 6).
7. Linkages with other fields and disciplines and departments on campus (p. 7).
8. Connections with issues of liberal learning, including ethics and social and political concerns (p. 7).
9. A supportive community which encourages students to grow and develop (p. 8).
10. A commitment to inclusiveness on a range of issues, including race, class, gender, and age (p. 8).
11. A clear commitment of the faculty to careful advising of students (p. 10).
12. Systematic and careful evaluation and assessment of students (p. 10).
13. Rewards, recognition, and support from the administration for the whole range of faculty activities—advising, teaching, research, curriculum development, and evaluation and assessment (p. 11).

The Program Review document goes on to outline an exhaustive series of questions to be asked in any program review based upon these assumptions. As noted above, it is a very useful document for PRC visitors serving as external evaluators of Sociology programs.

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2 These points are drawn directly from the Program Review document, as noted in the page numbers cited.
ASA Guidelines for the Undergraduate Major

The ASA’s *The Sociology Major in the Changing Landscape of Higher Education: Curriculum, Careers, and Online Learning* is the most recent iteration of ASA’s long history of providing guidance to departments in terms of structuring and strengthening the undergraduate major. In 1990, and revised and updated in 2004, *Liberal Learning and the Sociology Major* applied the recommendations of the AAC&U report to the Sociology major. The first report contained 13 recommendations, the second report had 16, and the most recent report reduced that to 12.

These recommendations serve as a primary guide for ASA program reviewers when they visit departments. The sample reports in Appendix F (which is available online via the ASA Program Reviewers and Consultants Portal) illustrate how the recommendations can structure a report. Because the most recent guidelines were endorsed by the ASA Council in 2017 and thus are very recent, some of the sample reports use the 2004 guidelines and several more use the most recent recommendations. These will be updated over time as reviews are completed using the newest recommendations.

While there is no accrediting mechanism in sociology and these recommendations are advisory, they have been written by an ASA Task Force and vetted and approved by the ASA Council. Therefore, they provide a useful place to start a conversation with a department. Even when a department intentionally rejects, or more likely, modifies, one of these goals, they are working as a collectivity to make intentional decisions about their program.

**Recommendations from *The Sociology Major in the Changing Landscape of Higher Education* (2017)**

**Recommendation 1:** Develop distinct mission statements, specific program goals, and measurable learning outcomes that are made public, especially to students.

**Recommendation 2:** Within the sociology major, include required and elective courses that incorporate essential sociological concepts and competencies, as exemplified in the Sociological Literacy Framework (SLF). (See Appendix B for an expanded description of the SLF)

**Recommendation 3:** Include required courses in: introductory-level sociology, sociological theory, research methods, statistical analysis, substantive topic areas, and a capstone experience within the sociology major.

**Recommendation 4:** Integrate progressive learning structures within the curriculum via course prerequisites that systematically guide students to engage with increasingly advanced content and activities.

**Recommendation 5:** Provide multiple opportunities within the curriculum for students to engage in empirical inquiry that includes research design, data collection, and qualitative and quantitative analysis.

**Recommendation 6:** Underscore, at all levels of the curriculum, inequality and difference in local, national, and global contexts.
**Recommendation 7:** Provide curricular and co-curricular structures to help students gain knowledge and apply skills that support them in their post-baccalaureate careers.

**Recommendation 8:** Structure the curriculum to recognize explicitly the points of intellectual convergence and divergence between sociology and other fields of inquiry.

**Recommendation 9:** Incorporate multiple pedagogies across the curriculum, including those that support active learning within and beyond the classroom.

**Recommendation 10:** Develop and maintain advising and mentoring processes that support students' decision making in achieving their educational goals, engage students in career planning, and offer guidance on further study in sociology and related fields.

**Recommendation 11:** Support faculty engagement in disciplinary research, the scholarship of teaching and learning, pedagogical innovation, and relevant service.

**Recommendation 12:** Systematically assess program goals and student learning outcomes, choosing assessment tools that respond to institutional context and specific programmatic needs.

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**Elements of Strong Graduate Programs**

Almost all departments with graduate programs also offer undergraduate degrees. Moreover, many graduate programs recruit new students both internally and externally. Therefore, the above recommendations for undergraduate programs also apply to departments with graduate programs. Some additional elements on which graduate programs can be reviewed) are as follows:

1. *Articulation with the department’s undergraduate program should be clear, and should establish consistent expectations for students from other institutions.*

2. *The curriculum should be explicit and clearly laid out, with expectations for each level of graduate work, including course requirements and recommendations, research and teaching expectations, and criteria for an acceptable thesis or dissertation topic and end product.*

3. *A graduate manual should be accessible to students and prospective students, preferably online. This should cover the institution’s requirements as well as the department’s expectations for graduate education, plus other information necessary to both entering and continuing graduate students.*

4. *Research and teaching should be part of the program and expectations laid out for students. A teaching program patterned after Preparing Future Faculty (PFF) or one developed by the institution should be a part of the curriculum of PhD students. Time commitments for departmental research and teaching assistants should be explicit and monitored.*

5. *Time to degree expected should be reasonable and laid out clearly, and candidates’ progress monitored.*

6. *Goals for the percentage of students to be funded should be laid out, along with possible sources for funding.*

7. *The percentage of students funded and sources of funding should be on record.*
8. **Truth in advertising** should guide what prospective students are told about funding, program requirements, time to graduation, and job prospects. In addition, only specialty areas for which the department has adequate staff should be advertised.

9. **Regular advising** should be a required part of each student’s experience. Early and continual feedback on student progress from student advisor or the graduate advisor should be required. It is strongly recommended that the department do an annual review of progress of all students and communicate those assessments, in writing, to each student and adviser. Departments should also consider developing systematic mentoring programs, including clear guidance for students as they reach the job market.

10. **Expected skills to graduate** should be explicitly stated and typically include data analysis skills and teaching skills.

11. **Job placement of graduates** should be monitored, and data maintained for assessment; this information should be made available to incoming and prospective students.

12. **Diversity in the graduate student population** should be a goal, including diversity among those students who are accepted, funded, retained, and graduated.

### Some Assumptions and Principles of Evaluation

The working group at the Wingspread Conference (1985) outlined a number of basic assumptions and principles to guide department evaluation. These build upon what the AAC&U report talks about and can be helpful in guiding the department reviewer.

#### Some Basic Assumptions of Evaluation

1. The task of any departmental review is to advance the discipline, including student learning. The basic questions are: Do departments have clear goals? Are departments meeting their goals? Are they effective? Do departments have a clear sense of their strengths and how best to use them? If the answer to each of these questions is yes, then departments will inherently advance the discipline of Sociology.

2. The department or program is the key unit in advancing the mission of both disciplines and colleges or universities. Consequently, evaluation of this unit is of enormous significance.

#### Some Principles of Evaluation

1. It is important to know **who the client is**—and we need to make clear for whom the report is primarily written. This is an issue about which members of the PRC reasonably disagree. Some feel that in all cases the department is the client. Others say that this is not always the case. If a report is for the dean, it is good policy to ask that it be sent to the department as well. If the dean says no, the reviewer needs to evaluate if he/she wants to do the department evaluation. Some members of the PRC feel that all concerned parties must have full and open access to all written reports of the reviewer. If/when the client is a dean, this may not be possible.

2. The role of reviewers is to evaluate the Sociology program and to contribute in every possible way to the improvement of the department/program. **However, ASA program**
reviewers do not make promotion and tenure recommendations, nor do we evaluate individual faculty members. Nonetheless, particularly in small departments, writing the report can sometimes be difficult. For example, in a three-person department where Professor X always teaches theory, and students complain about theory and assessments show poor results in theory, it is hard not to speak about Professor X. We do routinely make recommendations about what specializations to look for in future hires. We also note overall faculty strengths. However, the foregoing is not meant to imply that the reviewer must ignore troublesome personnel issues such as negligence or incompetence in the performance of duties. Rather the visitor’s obligation is to find and suggest constructive solutions for such problems. PRC members use an assets-based approach to identify existing resources and areas of strength in programs and help department leaders, faculty, and administrators find ways to creatively leverage those strengths to sustain and support programs and their further development and improvement.

3. While we are sociologists and are trying to assist the sociology program or department, program reviewers are not solely advocates. We are independent evaluators, not the mouthpiece of the department. Every department has strengths and weaknesses. Some have many weaknesses, but carefully worded, feasible, recommendations can go a long way in helping a department. What a department feels it needs, especially in terms of resources, may or may not be what we recommend. That said, a program review is an important occasion for getting the department some attention, and hopefully favorable attention to its strengths and needs.

4. Departments are not isolated units. Departments operate in a turbulent and complicated context which includes the number of students, students’ needs and aspirations, alumni/ae, and the goals and resources of other departments and of the entire institution, professional associations and unions, accrediting agencies, government, foundations, other colleges and universities, and citizen interest groups. The impact of this context on a department must be taken fully into account by the reviewer.

5. Site visitors must pay attention not only to the obvious features of departments and what people tell them but also to hidden agendas that people might have and to covert phenomena such as factions and coalitions, personal animosities and professional jealousies, empire building, and battles over academic “turf.” In addition, a department must be understood as the product of a history of events in which causes were won or lost, ambitions realized or frustrated, resentments harbored or alleviated. Nonetheless, it is important to remember that such issues will not necessarily trip up the visitor if he/she knows what he/she is doing. This manual is designed to help plan and prepare for a thorough and professional review of a department and its program.

In addition to attending to past and present internal department politics, reviewers must be sensitive to the consequences for the department of the evaluation visit and the evaluation report. It is particularly important to be aware of key events in the past (e.g., a joint department that split, changes in curriculum that resulted from previous program reviews, key retirements in the department, or the addition of other majors or programs at the college/university that had an impact upon sociology), major changes in administration, the priorities of the administration, or patterns of change in the department (such as the number of faculty or majors that has gone up or down markedly).
Asset-Based Evaluation

Asset-based evaluation is predicated on the belief that all groups have both strengths and weaknesses. John McKnight and John P. Kretzmann (1993) were among the first to advocate for the use of asset-based inquiry. Years later, Flora, Flora, and Fey (2012) expanded their basic list of three types of assets to a list of seven types which include assets related to people and to place. Organizations and systems that utilize all seven kinds of assets are more likely to have sustained success and social well-being (Emery, Fey, & Flora, 2006).

A brief list of the seven types of assets appears on the University of Memphis website: http://www.memphis.edu/ess/module4/page4.php.

Their asset framework includes:

**People**
1. Human assets are the skills and abilities of each individual within a community.
2. Social assets are the networks, organizations, and institutions, including norms of reciprocity and the mutual trust that exist among and within groups and communities.
3. Political assets refer to the ability of a group to influence the distribution of resources, financial and otherwise.
4. Financial assets refer to money or other investments that can be used for wealth accumulation rather than consumption.

**Place**
1. Cultural assets are the values and approaches to life that have both economic and non-economic benefits.
2. Built assets refer to anything physically made by humans, include housing, factories, schools, roads, community centers, power systems, water and sewer systems, telecommunications infrastructure, recreation facilities, transportation systems, etc.
3. Natural assets include the landscape, air, water, wind, soil, and biodiversity of plants and animals.

If departments or organizations have a *weakness-based culture*, they tend to focus on eliminating their biggest problems. They make take pride in ‘tough love’ or penalizing people who do not perform well. This is often tough on the employees. While the punitive system is often seen by the department or organization as helping people develop their weaknesses, it often results in people trying hard to avoid mistakes rather than emphasizing what they do well and working for growth (Dvorak and Pendell 2018).
Principles of Graduate Program Reviews

Although many of the guidelines for undergraduate reviews are applicable to graduate reviews, some specific areas are of particular importance in graduate reviews. In addition, areas like assessment are very pertinent to undergraduate program reviews.

1. **Assessment**: This should be an ongoing activity of graduate programs and should include some or all of the following:
   - Does the program have clearly laid out goals? Are they well publicized?
   - Does the department pay attention to the curriculum, and how it is related to changes in the field?
   - Has it adjusted its program over time to include new trends in the field, or faculty turnover?
   - Does the program do periodic but regular reviews of its program and procedures?
   - Does the program collect data for the purpose of assessment (re: student recruitment, performance of students, placement after graduation)?
   - Does the department use data collected to evaluate and revise the program? What is the process or procedure for doing this?

2. **Resource Allocation** refers to infrastructure – space, facilities, equipment, staff and budget. Are computing facilities and software up to date and updated regularly? Are library holdings in each graduate specialization updated regularly and is there adequate budget for it? Are there adequate staff to offer courses and advise graduate students? Are graduate students supported both normatively and financially in professional development such as attending conferences?

3. **Faculty-student relationships** are crucial to graduate program success. Do faculty members spend time advising and mentoring graduate students? Are students regarded as professionals in training, apprentices, employees, or are they ignored to fend for themselves? Are students represented on appropriate departmental committees? Is the advising load distributed across appropriate faculty? Are faculty members providing the necessary training for all students in teaching and research skill development?

4. **Articulation with undergraduate programs** in the institution needs to be clearly laid out. Are courses dual listed as graduate and undergraduate? If so, are graduate students getting enough graduate level education? Is credit given for courses taken elsewhere at the undergraduate or graduate level? Is this policy clearly articulated?

5. **Recruitment of new graduate students**: are the procedures for accepting and rejecting students laid out clearly? How does the program promote itself? Does the program actually offer all that it promises so that students can complete the program as advertised?

6. **Accreditation or certification**: Are there guidelines for the graduate program and is the program following these?

7. **Teacher preparation**: Is this part of the curriculum and experience provided by the program? How is this done and what are the expectations for students? Is it developmental, evaluated and documented?
Accreditation and Certification

The ASA does not accredit sociology programs or certify sociology practitioners. Rather, ASA program reviewers and consultants provide guidance and strategies for strengthening sociology programs within the context of regularly scheduled self-studies and external program reviews. We do this in a variety of ways, many of which include materials produced by Task Forces and Working Groups of the ASA. This includes guidance on assessment (Lowry et al. 2005), focusing upon the linkages between sociology and general education (Keith et al. 2007), sociology located within joint departments/programs (Kain, Wagenaar, and Howery 2006; MacDonald et al. 2010), and implementing the national guidelines for the undergraduate major in sociology (Pike et al. 2017). These materials all reflect professional consensus on best practices in teaching and learning in sociology.

Many sociology programs are located within joint departments with other disciplines, some of which do involve accreditation. The most common of these is social work. Social work programs, both at the undergraduate and graduate levels, may be accredited by The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE). As of October 2018, 541 baccalaureate programs and 287 Masters programs were accredited in the U.S. The accreditation applies only to the social work program, even in a joint department.

A small number of sociology programs have a clinical or applied track accredited by the Commission on the Accreditation of Programs in Applied and Clinical Sociology (CAPACS). As of October 2018, four undergraduate programs and two graduate programs have been accredited by CAPACS. In addition, the Association for Applied and Clinical Sociology offers certification for sociology practitioners.

More information on clinical, applied, and engaged public sociology can be found in the references on page 93 of this manual.
PART II: THE PROCESS OF SERVING AS AN EXTERNAL DEPARTMENT REVIEWER

The guidelines provided in this section of the manual are organized in terms of a typical temporal sequence which reflects the various phases of evaluation activities: the pre-visit phase, the visit phase, and the post-visit phase. Within each phase, major issues are identified first, then specific guidelines for the reviewer’s role are presented.

Pre-Visit Activities

1. Major Issues

1.1. Who is the client?
Identify the client. This may be obvious depending on whether you are contacted by a department chair or the office of the dean. Either way, let the ASA Research, Professional Development, and Academic Affairs Department know if you receive an inquiry about a possible review. Then follow up and let the office know once a final agreement for a visit has been established. Send a quick email to rpa@asanet.org with the name of the institution, the contact person, and the (anticipated) date of the review. The ASA keeps a record of all PRC visits and can give you up-to-date information about materials which may be of use to you in your review.

1.2. What is the purpose of the review? How will it be used?
Determine the purpose of the review. Is the visit for an evaluation, internal or external, for a workshop, or for some combination of the two. If for evaluation, why was the evaluation request made? Is it part of a routine, on-going process? Does it represent the first time the department has ever been reviewed? The client may need help in clarifying the goals of the visit.

1.3. What should be the scope of the evaluation activity?
Identify the major aspects of the program to be evaluated. For example, will you be expected to evaluate only the undergraduate major program or both graduate and undergraduate? Most PRC members focus on undergraduate programs. This is not a “rule” but rather reflects the majority of the requests and our strengths. Also identify the specific areas for evaluation that typically include some or all of the following:

1) Curriculum and major (s) (undergraduate and/or graduate)
2) Facilities and resources: faculty, offices, classrooms, computer labs and computer support, telephone and copying, library holdings, support staff, etc.
3) Departmental governance and collegiality
4) Role and effectiveness of the department in relation to other departments and programs and to the institution’s mission
5) Adequacy of administrative support (i.e. budget) essential to departmental productivity and quality
6) Faculty effectiveness—teaching, research, service
7) The department assessment plan addressing student learning, development, career or other outcomes and achievements.

**1.4. What are and should be the conditions of the review?**

It is important to know as much as possible about the situation into which you will be immersed. This includes the timing, arrangements for transportation and housing, the logistics of the review (and what level of input you have), remuneration, and expectations (including the report). If it is available, obtain a copy of the institutional policy on program review. This varies considerably from institution to institution. Some campuses have no written policy whatsoever, though this is becoming less and less frequent. At the other end of the spectrum are campuses with explicit policies about everything involved in the review, including the structure and content of the department self-study, required participants in the on-campus visit, remuneration, time allowed before the final report is to be delivered, and length and structure of the external report.

**1.5. What materials or information are available or can be requested before the visit?**

Review the department’s mission statement, learning goals and objectives for students, and annual assessment process. The clarity of these materials, the department’s commitment to achieving them, and the adequacy of organizational skills and resources needed to realize them represent a major focus of each review.

Learn as much as possible about the department, the institution, and in the broader sense the context or environment in which the department operates. Much can be learned about the department and institution in advance of your visit by going to the institutional website. The department homepage and individual faculty homepages should also provide useful information. Request information in advance, and review it for clues and concerns the following:

1) Copies of any current or past self-study(ies). In most cases, departments have this, as well as most other materials, available in electronic format. Be explicit with your contact person about how you prefer to receive materials—in electronic or hard-copy format.

2) A copy of the department’s assessment plan, including its mission statement and learning goals and objectives for students, and reports addressing the plan’s goals. Ideally you should receive multiple years of this plan to see how well it has been implemented and if the department/program has used data from the assessment plan to strengthen the program.

3) A copy of the college catalog (Catalogs for virtually all institutions are available online at the institution’s website.)

4) Copies of syllabi from the department [at least for core courses].

5) Copies of all faculty vitae.

6) Course enrollments and number of majors (past 3 to 5 years).

7) Courses offered in the past 3 to 5 years.
8) Department budgets for at least the past two years.

9) Information about the number/proportion and use of contingent faculty.

10) Any available documentation on efforts to address issues of diversity and gender equity in the department (both for students and among faculty)/relevant policy goals.

11) Any documentation on efforts to engage in community-based/community-outreach programming (both for students and among faculty)/relevant policy.

12) Library journal holdings and evaluation of the book collection (Most institutions have a library liaison for each department/program on campus. This person is typically responsible for preparing a document on journal holdings and the book collection when an external program review is taking place.) It is not unusual for a department chair to be unaware of this resource they can use during the self-study and program review, particularly on campuses where the written policy about program reviews is minimal. Note that tools for assessing the quality of library collections are available in the Department Leaders Toolbox on the ASA website.

13) Written statements of strengths and concerns from the department as a whole as well as from individual faculty. You may find it useful to send an e-mail to department members in advance of the visit.

14) Other documents may or may not be relevant and/or available, such as:
   - handbooks about the program(s).
   - minutes of department meetings of significance.
   - results of any studies (such as focus groups) on faculty, student, and alumni/ae.
   - satisfaction with the program.
   - institution and/or college mission statements.
   - newsletters.
   - collective bargaining agreements.
   - information on student clubs.
   - department bylaws information on committee structure.

The relevant documents from the lists above should also be requested for graduate department reviews. Note any self-study inclusion with graduate program foci or comments on support for graduate students. Graduate catalogs are also available online via at most institution’s websites. Other documents for graduate program reviews include:
   - documents that contain goals for the program (statement of purpose);
   - who is training for what;
   - program requirements;
   - number of students;
   - funding patterns;
   - teaching assignments of graduate students and relevant evaluation information;
   - placement/alumni data and other key contents.

Appendix C provides sample e-mails/letters that you can use as models for requesting these materials from the department/program chair. You may find that your contact person is a
2. Guidelines for Pre-Visit Activities

2.1 Review all materials well before the visit so you have time to request any missing materials or seek clarification of issues not addressed by the materials received. In addition, read the materials carefully, noting such things as:

- inconsistencies or contradictions,
- the proportion of attention given to various topics or subjects,
- whether the language used in some sections is overly cautious or opaque,
- how well documented are self-evaluations of the program and the level of resources and support given to it.

Based on the sorts of materials provided and your reading of them, formulate some questions to ask and very tentative hypotheses about the program to be explored during the visit.

2.2 Determine the conditions of the visit. These include:

1) Your itinerary:
   i) Schedule an opening session with all parties involved in the review.
   ii) Ask to interview:
      (1) each department member individually (including the chair, part-time and adjunct faculty if possible) On most campuses there is great reluctance to ask contingent faculty to be involved because they are not compensated for it—and often they are not on campus—they might be there one day a week, or might be teaching online courses. One potential solution is to ask them to answer questions via e-mail, if they are willing to do so, but still places a demand upon their time.
      (2) relevant members of the administration (division head, dean, provost if relevant, graduate dean)
      (3) students (preferably with food but not with faculty present) Hold separate meetings with undergraduate and graduate students.
      (4) chairs of departments with important relationships with sociology
      (5) Graduate Advisor or Director of Graduate Studies
      (6) someone from the computer center
      (7) someone from the library, ideally the department liaison
      (8) department staff—secretaries, professional advisor, etc.
   iii) Schedule exit interviews with department and with administration

Be sure to allow free time within the visit schedule to collect thoughts, for other team members (if any) to consult with one another, to tour the department facilities, to explore the campus unaccompanied, and to deal with unexpected contingencies. It is useful to have a room on campus where you can keep materials and go during breaks. Reviewers should be assertive in requesting some free time periodically throughout the campus visit in order to accomplish these activities.
2) Lodging and transportation:
   i) It is important to have lodging at a hotel or motel and not in a faculty member’s home. This allows privacy and time to work on reading additional materials, organizing your observations, and thinking about a draft of your notes/report. Try to bring a laptop computer and get started with writing the report while details are still fresh!

   ii) It is useful to have your own transportation to allow flexibility and time away from people at the institution you are reviewing, but this is not always possible (or housing may be walking distance).

3) Compensation:
   i) When program reviewers make site visits their travel expenses are covered by the college or university they visit, and they also receive an honorarium to compensate for pre-visit preparation, the actual site visit, as well as time spent writing the final report (if required). Thus, a program review might require 2.5 to 3.5 days of a consultant’s time, including a half day of preparation and document review, at least one full day for the site visit, and at least one day for report development.

   ii) Individual consultants negotiate their own fees with each institution.

   In an e-mail following negotiations over such matters, establish the conditions of the visit. These conditions will include: goals of the visit (whether a summative or formative evaluation, etc.); travel itinerary; lodging; who is to be seen during the visit; consultation fees; contents and dissemination of the report(s) to be written; whether you are the only reviewer or working as part of a team. Be certain that this e-mail gives a confirmation list of what the department is paying for—curriculum evaluation, workshop, written report, etc.

   Ask the contact person (typically the chair of the department) to distribute a memo to the department (faculty, staff, and students) with the agenda and a brief written statement covering the purpose and expectations of the visit. This may help minimize the number of people who do not understand the purpose of the visit or do not trust what is taking place. Send some biographical information about yourself, your professional interests and experiences, and your involvement as a program reviewer.

Visit Activities

1. Major Issues:
   1.1 How should the visit activities be organized?

   It is ideal if you can have an opening/orienting session. One suggestion is to have a noon opening session over lunch. The client (chair or dean) could make a public statement about what the visitor is doing and why. The program reviewer should do the same. This helps set the tone for the visit and orients the people who will be interviewed later during the process.
Some of the people you meet may have only the vaguest idea of why you are there and what your role is—and accordingly will be suspicious (if not actually frightened) of you. While it is ideal to have the opening/orienting session, sometimes such meetings cannot be arranged—and even when they are, not everyone may attend. Therefore, it is imperative to explain your purpose for being there and what your role is to everyone with whom you meet.

1.2 What types of data should be collected? What are reasonable information gathering goals?

Gather a diverse array of data from multiple sources, for example:

1) Interview department faculty, administrators, faculty from outside the department (especially the chairs of other departments related to sociology through cross-listed courses, service courses, interdisciplinary majors, or minors), and students to determine the “insider” view of the department’s strengths and weaknesses and its role and status within the institution. Be sure to interview secretaries and other support staff—they are too often overlooked in evaluation visits, yet they are often the most knowledgeable about a department’s budget, its history, where some of its skeletons are buried, and how it really functions.

2) Be sure to find out how adjunct or part-time faculty and teaching assistants are used. Determine how many are either current or former graduate students. Interview as many of them as possible.

3) Graduate departments should have clear responsibilities concerning who is training for what, requirements for graduate students regarding teaching assignments (both as an assistant to a faculty member or as the instructor of record), comprehensive examinations, support for students, and other expectations.

4) Conduct qualitative interviews through open-ended questions. Probe for the good features, the strengths of the department, as well as its faults and weaknesses. LISTEN CAREFULLY. Don’t hesitate to make notes during the interviews. In your interviews with faculty, several questions which might prove useful are:

   “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 support?”

   “What do you see as some strengths of your department?”

   “What do you see as some places which could be strengthened in your department?”

   “Where do you think the department should be heading in the next 3-5 years?”

Appendix D includes a document listing potential questions that can be asked to various people with whom you will be meeting during your on-campus interviews, including faculty, administrators, students, and representatives of the library and IT.
5) Obtain spontaneous observations. To do this you might:

i. Wander around the department and campus to inquire about the department’s use of library and computer facilities and its reputation; note the physical location and the condition of the department (is it in the basement of the oldest building or in a prime location in the newest building?) Do department members have adequate computer facilities, software, and support? Does the library have recent sociology books and e-books and easy access to the most important journals? Does the library provide access to basic research engines and databases such as JSTOR, Academic Search Premier, SocINDEX with full text and others? Do department courses have adequate access to electronic classrooms with full computer projection and web capabilities? What are the physical conditions of classrooms? Are they crowded? Can chairs be arranged for work other than lecture? Do students and faculty have easy access to SPSS or STATA? What about space for informal interactions among students or students and faculty such as lounges?

ii. Notice such things as: What is on department and faculty bulletin boards? Are there student clubs or associations? What materials are available for prospective majors? Do faculty members talk about the department, institutional politics, or disciplinary issues such as teaching and research? Do they have brown bag or regular presentations/discussions on topics in research and/or teaching? Is there a formal speaker series? How many faculty and students attend?

1.3 What are some ways to maintain your perspective and objectivity during the visit?

a. Be skeptical as a validity check on any information you have been given (especially verbally): check information with several sources; notice when information you have asked for has not been given or has been answered evasively.

b. If you are part of a team of reviewers, compare notes, observations, hypotheses, and hunches with each other during this visit. Be sure that the schedule includes some BREAKS not only for the obvious reasons, but so you can check your impressions with one another.

1.4 How can the reviewer handle unexpected requests, conflicts, etc.?

Unexpected requests, not surprisingly, need to be evaluated on a case-by-case basis in context. That said, a modicum of flexibility balanced with firmness about what you are able to accommodate is key. If a reasonable rationale for changes last minute or in situ is made by the administration or faculty, the changes are worth consideration.

When this happens, there are a series of questions you should ask yourself: Will the change advance your understanding of how you can be helpful or is it more likely tertiary to the goals of the visit? Who is requesting the unexpected change (the Dean or a junior faculty member? Feel free to say “not possible at this time” to all status levels).
If you can identify alternatives to the requested change, propose them. It may be best to deflect the request during the campus visit with the commitment to follow-up at a later time (and then do so). One of the best guidelines is for both the reviewers and the clients to only make significant adjustments when they are deemed critical. We should only rarely be asking for changes that are substantive, and of course, barring family emergencies, we should honor our commitments to the clients. (Many people at the site have arranged schedules, done major preparatory work, and set aside the time.) If your hosts are requesting significant, unexpected changes, that request itself might be a data point as well.

Conflicts come up with some regularity during site visits. Faculty are made up of human beings and genuine differences, grudges (petty and justified), attitudes, histories, and behaviors all play a significant role in department or program dynamics. One approach is to help identify or reframe conflicts within groups and individuals, but to be clear that our role and charge is not to resolve them. (This position can sometimes be difficult for those of us who are “problem-solvers”.) Often the best strategy when these conflicts arise during the site visit is to listen with affirmation (not agreement) and to remember that each narrative is only one version. Active listening, taking good notes, asking for “evidence” or support for the individual’s concerns, and being cautious about how one shares or does not share the information learned is critical.

While visiting a campus, if you become aware of issues of harassment, and useful link for advice for chairs in relation to harassment is: (https://www.asanet.org/sites/default/files/stopping_harassment_in_your_department_oct19.pdf)

If issues related to contingent faculty arise during your visit, these guidelines from ASA Task Force on Contingent Faculty may be useful: https://www.asanet.org/sites/default/files/appendix_c_recommended_practices.pdf

The most critical aspect of departmental conflict is the impact on students. Finally, when identifying strained situations or problems rooted in conflict that are having an impact on the functioning of the department, or even worse, the student experience, try as much as possible to refer to issues rather than persons or personal comments.

1.5 How can the reviewer make sure the feedback to the department is consistent with the original evaluation contract with respect to such matters as the scope and objectives of evaluation and to whom the report is submitted?

One way to help minimize getting distracted by issues not directly related to the original understanding is to organize your site visit notes and observations by the goals. It may not be the way the final written report is organized (there the focus is equally on access and utility to readers), but it will help ensure that the original goals are not lost.
At the outset it is useful to have a succinct list of the goals and scope of the report. Developing this list should be based upon: 1) the campus guidelines and requirements for an external review and written report, 2) ASA guidelines found in The Sociology Major in the Changing Landscape of Higher Education, and 3) written communications between you, as the reviewer, and the Dean, Provost, and Department/Program chair.

Staying on track depends on how clearly the original contract is identified and this can vary wildly. Before you ever visit campus, you can minimize these problems by tightening and clarifying the understanding about your client (1.1 in Pre-Visit Activities), the purpose and scope of the evaluation, including what should be covered in the final report (1.2 and 1.3 in Pre-Visit Activities). Make certain that it is absolutely clear to whom the final report goes. A loose “contract” or set of expectations can make a helpful and valid report less likely. To the extent possible, attend to the institutional requirements fully and also contribute to the agreement based on your own expertise and review experience. Make sure you understand what the scope and objectives are well in advance and ask for clarification as needed. A Dean may not want you to look at student satisfaction or experience, but most reviewers know that an evaluation that does not include student input is likely incomplete. Keep in mind that the readers are in different roles and think through “How will this read to the Dean? The Chair? Individuals on the faculty?” It is not just about what you want to say, but about what users need to know.

1.6 How does the reviewer handle a de-briefing and exit interview?

1. Having a debriefing/exit interview is important for “closure” on the visit (since your report won’t be coming for a few weeks), to check some facts and get initial reactions, and to “seize the moment” where you have the attention of the department and administration. Try to take notes for the debriefing as you go along, such as a separate piece of paper where you record “big ideas” and “tentative conclusions” so you do not have to flip through your entire set of notes from every conversation to find some of the main points you plan to make in the report. It is hard to prepare for a debriefing when you have a very full schedule and little time to assemble a cogent “presentation.” If possible, keep a block of time open immediately prior to the debriefing/exit interview.

2. Debrief before the close of the visit with the dean, the department chair, and if possible, with the whole sociology faculty, each in separate sessions.

3. Debriefing serves to check and refine your perceptions and conclusions. If there is something you can’t make sense of, or if the members of a visitation team disagree on interpretations, use the debriefing to obtain clarification. You can also provide a final opportunity here for any additional comments department members or administrators wish to tell you.

4. A central goal of the debriefing sessions is not to surprise anyone with recommendations that will be in the report. During the debriefing, it is typically useful to review some of the major strengths of the department/program as well as places that need strengthening. Also talk about several of the major recommendations that will be in the report. There is typically a debrief session with members of the administration, and another with the full department.
5. The debriefing should include your sense of what the outline of the final report will be like and should provide a preview of major conclusions and recommendations. Some ideas follow:
   a. Departments typically need reassurance that they really are doing some things effectively—and that “if it ain’t broke, don’t fix it.” Moreover, departments may need to be sensitized to strengths they may not have perceived and to the ways those strengths might be capitalized on to make their program even stronger. (These statements need to be included in the written report as well.)
   b. Administrators may need to be informed of the effectiveness of a program which has been taken for granted and possibly not adequately rewarded. (Again, this applies to the written report as well.)
   c. You may offer suggestions or alternatives that have been used by other departments, but don’t dictate solutions. One way to do this is to frame recommendations using language like “The Department should consider...” Ideally, you should restrict your role to that of a catalyst or facilitator rather than that of an expert. For example, try to get the faculty themselves to generate a list of ways they can use their strengths to affect positive change. That way they will have ownership over these solutions and thereby the commitment to follow through in implementing them. Yet, you can help in this process via both facilitation and offering resources or information from the national or international levels.
   d. One important part you can play as an outsider, especially if the departmental faculty have not been involved at the national level in the discipline, is to help them search for a focus and identity. Often, you can accomplish this by sensitizing them as to where they fit into national trends in the discipline. You can also help build morale by noting how they look compared with other departments in similar institutions. You may want to recommend particular areas or foci within the department that can serve as a foundation for growth in the near future. Similarly, you may need to point out possible misallocations of resources (inconsistency between department goals and the resources available to achieve them) that need to be addressed. This latter point is more often the case in graduate departments. Indeed, it may be a point of conflict over undergraduate versus graduate programs.
POST-VISIT ACTIVITIES

1. Major Issues

1.1 What should be included in the report? How and when should the report be developed, written and submitted?

The report should be submitted **one to four weeks after your visit**.
A timely report is a key part of a reviewer’s responsibility.

As a general guideline, pull out all the sociological stops: analyze the institutional constraints; look at the political/social context; incorporate the positions and statuses of individuals in your analyses; examine the taken-for-granted assumptions of actors at each level; examine structural impediments to change; assess the department as a group. Encourage department members to assist you in doing this as well.

Try to ascertain, from the information you have been given and from what you have observed, what the power structure is like, where the lines of cleavage lie: Who is doing the teaching—just junior faculty or TA’s or all faculty? Who serves on important committees? Who has the department chairperson’s ear? Is the chair really powerful? Who doesn’t speak with whom? Who lunches with whom? The information may help you make recommendations that are more likely to work in that context.

Over time, campus policies have become much more likely to give specific guidelines about how quickly a report is to be received. We repeat: The report should be submitted in a timely fashion (between one and four weeks after your visit), not only as a matter of courtesy and professional obligation but to assure that your recollections are still fresh. However:

1) Allow enough time to digest fully the information you have gathered, to “cool down” or “decompress” and to consult with other team members (if any), and to refer to relevant scholarly literature (if helpful).

2) Don’t be surprised if additional feedback from the department or others comes after you have left. Indeed, they may be precipitated by the debriefing at the end of the visit. These tidbits of information may provide invaluable insights.

3) Although the structure of the report may be relatively constant from one place to another, customize the content of the report to each individual institution. Avoid jargon and clichés!

4) Recommendations should be:
   i. Geared to local goals.
   ii. Supported by relevant data.
   iii. Succinct, yet detailed enough to be constructive.
   iv. Phrased positively and supportively; avoid words and phrases such as “faults” and “weaknesses” in favor of such terms as “areas for improvement,” “opportunities,” “challenges,” and “concerns.”
v. Based on observed or stated strengths of the department or institution with attention to the larger context.

5) When possible, try to indicate helpful ideas and leads that give people a few concrete steps if they accept the recommendations. For example, you might recommend a specific article in *Teaching Sociology* which talks about setting department goals, or a successful strategy that has been used in another department.

6) Some concerns or issues not anticipated in the original agreement may need to be addressed informally by telephone with the department and/or concerned parties rather than in the final written report.

7) The length of the report should be congruent with the length and scope of the visit. Several pages should be enough if the visit was a day or less in length, especially if the evaluation is summative rather than formative, and if you are not being compensated for a full-fledged report. For longer visits, for formative evaluations, and where you have contracted for a comprehensive and detailed report, ten to twenty-five pages (including appendices, charts, bibliography, etc.) is the norm. However, there is considerable variation in length among different PRC members. Clarify the department’s and institution’s (client’s) expectations about this early on.

8) Remember that the final report is also a vehicle for communication between the department and relevant administrators. The report must therefore be prepared with the differing, perhaps even conflicting, goals of these parties in mind. As mentioned previously, the ideal is that all written reports are to be fully shared with all concerned parties.

9) Issues which the department may not wish to share with administrators may have to be addressed by the site visitor in informal debriefing sessions during the visit or by e-mail, letter or telephone after the visit.

10) Reviewers must be cautious about buying into a department’s paranoia about administrators. Such paranoia is often misplaced. Moreover, perceptions of a lack of administrative support can constitute a “comfortable illusion”—a belief which legitimates inaction.

11) It is important to ensure the privacy of faculty while writing the report. Especially women and faculty of color might be in the minority and when talking about the issues they face in the department, it is important to protect their identities. This can definitely be a challenge, particularly in very small programs. While all interviews are confidential, there are clearly times when it is difficult to avoid making statements that identify particular people or groups in the department. If there is something that you think the chair or Provost should know, but it would clearly identify a person or set of people in the department, one option is--while visiting with the faculty member(s)---to explicitly ask them if they would like you to bring this up in a conversation--knowing that it would be clear the concern came from them.
12) If the members of a team of evaluators cannot agree on interpretations or recommendations, present the various alternatives in a draft report to the department acknowledging any uncertainties or disagreements.

13) Send a draft of the report to the department and ask them to identify any errors or areas of concern. A typical pattern is to send it to the chair and say something like "feel free to share this with some of your colleagues if that seems appropriate." Revise the report as appropriate based on their comments. Then submit the final version to the administration and department as agreed. Frankly, if the report has a lot of (constructive) critical suggestions, it might be wise to address “accuracy” by a phone call to the chair. Program reviewers cannot get boxed in with faculty/chair comments about the substance of the report, so make it clear that sending an advance report is for matters of factual accuracy only. (Please note that the norm is that department chairs provide very helpful corrections on factual information and do not typically request changes that are not reasonable.)

14) Be sure to append a thank you letter/e-mail to the final report. Remember that a lot of overload work went into preparing for your visit, hosting you, talking with you, and responding to your draft report!

15) Whether to submit a copy of the final report to ASA (with permission of the department which you reviewed) keeps coming up but has yet to be settled. It is an issue about which members of the PRC disagree. At this time, most PRC members do not send copies of their reports to ASA. ASA does send a short questionnaire to the department, asking how the consulting visit went.

1.2 What precisely should be the advocacy role of evaluation visitor?

Evaluators must always strive to be advocates of the discipline and of the department (within the limits of the problems/issues you observe). However, when there are personnel or other problems clearly evident to everyone, the evaluator can only lose credibility by glossing over these. Such problems must be addressed forthrightly, with constructive recommendations provided for solving them.

1) It is perfectly appropriate to suggest—not dictate—possible solutions (i.e. float trial balloons) in informal oral debriefing sessions during the visit and/or afterwards by telephone or e-mail.

2) It is important to remember that even sociologists can overlook the possibility that problems may have their origins in group processes rather than individual characteristics or predispositions. As an outsider, you may be better situated than department faculty to see the structural sources of problems. Of course, it is your obligation as an external reviewer to suggest such a possibility to them.

1.3 How can you coordinate with the ASA office in terms of follow-up and evaluation of the quality of the program review?

All ASA Program Reviewers are asked to email the Director of Research, Professional Development, and Academic Affairs at ASA the institutions, dates, and contact names for the program reviews that they complete. The ASA office sends follow-up evaluations at the end
of the academic year (typically in May) to all department contacts to get their feedback on their experience. Where appropriate, this feedback is shared with the reviewers.

1.4 What happens after the report is submitted?

1) Send an e-mail to the ASA saying you completed the visit, the location, and dates. If there are any generic issues that you wish to discuss, please indicate those to the Director of Research, Professional Development, and Academic Affairs at rpa@asanet.org.

2) Generally, ASA program reviewers invite departments they have visited to continue to consult with them whenever issues arise.

3) It is not only courteous but reasonable consulting practice to follow up on a visit. Some PRC members routinely contact a department a year later with an inquiry as to what progress the department has made and with a renewal of the offer to continue consulting.

*      *      *      *

Part III of the manual includes additional information which may be helpful to you as you prepare to visit a department, write your report, and continue contact with the department/institution. Among other documents, it includes sample e-mails for correspondence with the department, sample recommendations, sample reports, and a list of references.

REFERENCES


PART III: APPENDICES
Appendix A: Suggestions for Conducting Team Reviews

American Sociological Association Program Reviewers and Consultants (PRC) are highly accomplished teachers, scholars, and department leaders who are trained in best practices for program reviews. When serving as an external reviewer, they offer empirically-grounded support for sociology departments regarding pedagogy, curriculum, and organizational structures.

Program reviews are often conducted in teams. Sometimes, the team is made up of reviewers who are all trained PRC members. At other times, it includes both PRC members and non-members. In either case, being asked to conduct a department review or to work as a member of a review team is a role to be taken seriously. Team members typically have some shared perspectives and some differences that they bring to their collaboration. Therefore, members need to be attentive to political and procedural dynamics in order to enhance the review experience and the credibility of the report. Below are some recommendations to ensure productive team collaborations that will be of highest benefit to the departments and programs we serve.

Note: Some institutions invite multiple reviewers for a site visit, but ask the reviewers to work independently, not as a team. In that case, a detailed template is typically provided to each reviewer. The suggestions below are for cases where multiple reviewers are collaborating on a team, not acting as independent reviewers.

The Importance of Developing a Shared Agreement by Communicating Ahead of Time with Team Members

Team members may not know why they or other members of the team were selected to be reviewers. It is essential to develop an open and productive team working style before the review begins and to continue being intentional about teamwork throughout the review and writing process. Acting in a professionally respectful manner with each other, even when there are disagreements, is essential at all times.

Symbolically, it is important to act like a team from the beginning, with each other and with the client. Reviewers may need to deal with unexpected contingencies, both with on-site issues and with dynamics of the reviewer team. For example, interdisciplinary teams may have to tackle differences in members’ perspectives. Gender dynamics may affect assumptions about the division of labor, invisible labor, and “emotional labor.” To proactively minimize team disagreements, address beforehand how you would deal with critical/divergent perspectives between reviewers (especially in reviews of multi-disciplinary departments, or departments that lack national guidelines). Consider assigning a head reviewer in such a case or consider assigning the writing of particular sections of the report to the most appropriate team member.

Have a conversation with your review partner(s) about the division of labor for the preparation, the site visit, and the writing of the final report. An abridged version of a Manual for department reviews is available for use by non-PRC program reviewers working in teams with members of the PRC.
Below are some tips to foster positive team dynamics:

- When you learn who your team members are, send each reviewer a note of introduction if you have not worked together or a note of “glad to be with you” if you know each other.
- Describe your expectations and previous work as a reviewer. Some people have done many reviews, some are less experienced. It can also be useful to exchange CVs to understand one another’s academic background.
- If you have a template that you like to use in reviews, say so. Seasoned reviewers often follow the same template with each review and this can be helpful for not re-inventing the wheel. When two seasoned reviewers are working together, come to an agreement prior to the review on how the two approaches will be integrated.
- Many campuses have a required set of questions that must be answered in the review and/or an outline that needs to be followed for the written report. One member of the team (typically the team leader) can volunteer to integrate those questions and/or outline with the template(s) used by review team members.
- Determine if the team will have a head reviewer. Some new reviewers may appreciate learning from seasoned reviewers. Experienced reviewers may decide others have more or less time to be the lead. There are times professionally when we are swamped with projects, publications, and grants deadlines so we may not want to be the lead; other times we have reasons why we are an appropriate choice. This should not be left to chance. If there is no leader, then make sure to act with each other, and the participating department, so that everyone is equal in whatever transpires. Decide the division of labor for the entire review process. There are typically many documents to review, people to interview, data to analyze, meetings to attend, questions to ask, and writing to be done. While everyone on the team needs to be familiar with all the components, a fair and equal distribution of labor is important.
- One important part of deciding the division of labor is for each team member to communicate times when their schedule is more and less busy. While we all have many demands on our time, one member may know, for example, that s/he has a book manuscript due two weeks before the on-campus visit. S/he may then do less of the advance preparation, but take on a larger role in writing the report after the campus visit.
- If there is a significant difference in the level of work done by team members, you may consider different levels of compensation. This can often be a difficult issue to discuss. It should, however, be discussed in a transparent manner with the members of the review team as well as the Department/Program and College/University.

Communicating with the Department/University

All of the general guidelines from the Training Manual apply with team reviews, but extra layers are added to the process because of the need to work as a team. Some of the material here repeats what is in the full Manual but emphasizes the extra level of communication that is necessary.

- Some institutions invite multiple reviewers, but ask that the reviewers act independently, not as a team. It is important to understand what the institution is expecting and to act accordingly.
• When collaboration is expected, include all team members and university contacts on each email so that communication is clear and transparent.

• As noted in the Manual, from the earliest stages of your contact with a department, and long before the campus visit, find out what the department/program needs and wants. Having this in writing is useful to make sure everyone is on the same page.

• Decide as a team what materials you want the department/program to share ahead of time. Refer to the full list found in the Training Manual in the “pre-visit activities” section.

• Have a discussion about how to divide up the e-mail communications between review team members. Choosing one team member to communicate with the department regarding the requested materials can avoid duplicate requests, which can undermine the team dynamic (and may stretch the patience of department contacts). Alternatively, if one person is responsible for all of them, that may “flag” them as being the most important member of the team. It also may increase their workload compared to other team members. In most cases, all team members should be cc’ed on all email correspondence.

• It is very useful if the team member who communicates with the department/program first sends a draft of each e-mail to all team members for their feedback. This extra level of communication takes time; as a result, lead time needs to be built into the process. It is often useful to send the e-mail indicating that it is sent for feedback and editing, but if there is no reply by a certain date and time (5 p.m. on Sunday, for example), then the assumption will be that the e-mail is ready to send to the department/program.

• If there are questions about department dynamics or information, discuss these with your team members before sending them out to the department.

• Caucus together as a team ahead of time to come up with a plan for conducting the review and a timeline. Every team member should have the same information prior to the site visit and should be clear on the agenda, schedule of events, and timeline.

• One significant part of knowing what will happen during the on-campus visit is to develop interview questions for each interview or session. Team members can circulate the sample questions found in Appendix D of the Training Manual to decide which ones will be used, and if additional questions are necessary.

• If the campus guidelines for external reviews have a set of questions that must be addressed in the final report, one member of the team should take responsibility for going through the campus itinerary as well as the questions that will be used in on-campus interviews to make certain that data will be collected about all of the items that are to be addressed in the final report.

When Conducting the On-Site Visit

As noted earlier, all of the basic guidelines in the Training Manual apply to team reviews. Some of those are repeated and emphasized here.

• Our shared goal as reviewers is advocacy for the program/department so it can be the best department it can be. Be sure to have a discussion about the department’s alignment with institutional mission and vision.

• As was done in the leadup to the visit, it is useful to again ask the department chair whether there are particular issues s/he would like addressed, to best understand her/his sense of the purpose of the external review.
• Decide what questions are to be asked of who. Have a clear agenda of what you wish to accomplish or obtain in each meeting. This should all be determined well in advance of the visit.

• During meetings, decide ahead of time who is going to be the lead questioner. While everyone can and should ask questions, team members can trade-off who is going to take the lead in which meeting or there can be agreement that one team member is going to be take the lead in most situations. This will make the meetings flow more smoothly and avoid potentially awkward situations. One method that typically works is to alternate asking questions between reviewers. Meetings with the Dean, Provost, library representative, and department chairs from other departments are typically done with the full review team. Interviews with faculty members and administrative staff tend to be divided up and done by one reviewer. Gender and status should be kept in mind so that it is not always a male or a senior reviewer who asks the first question and/or the last question in an interview.

• Whether or not team members all go to all meetings varies by campus. Usually there are meetings that all team members attend—the Provost/Dean, the full department meetings at the beginning, the debriefing sessions at the end, IT and Librarians. Faculty interviews are typically one-on-one. Often the division of labor is obvious—in a joint department, for example, an anthropologist reviewer interviews the anthropologists, a sociologist interviews the sociologists, etc. In a department with graduate programs, some reviewers focus upon the undergraduate program (and thus do the meeting with undergraduate students), and some reviewers focus upon the graduate program. In larger departments logistics typically do demand that the reviewers separate. It is important, however, that they ask the same set of questions so that the information gathered is comparable.

• Ensure enough free time (breaks) and a space within the visit schedule to consult with one another—sharing thoughts, comparing notes and observations. If there is a last-minute cancellation with someone the team considers essential to speak with, schedule a phone conversation with that person within a few days of the visit. Divide the labor of touring department facilities, reviewing visible markers of the unit’s identity (departmental website, departmental bulletin boards, etc.) and exploring the campus without hosts.

• Make certain you have scheduled exit meetings with department and with administration. Use the debriefing to pursue clarifications, particularly if members of a team disagree on interpretations, and to solicit additional comments from department members and/or administrators. Allow enough time to digest fully the information you have gathered, to “cool down” or “decompress” and to consult with other team members and to refer to relevant scholarly literature where appropriate.

Writing the Report

The importance of maintaining team work continues in the report-writing stage of the process as well as during communications with the department/program/campus after the visit.

Balance: Consider offering a balance between affirming assets and addressing problem areas. When identifying problems, offer direction. Use caution to avoid exacerbating intra-departmental tensions when addressing internal departmental climate.
Length of report: Ensure that the report is value-added, not simply a duplication of information that is included in the self-study. When a report has been authored by multiple people, review the full draft to avoid repetition and insure a consistent “voice.”

Disagreements among reviewers: If the members of a team cannot agree on interpretations or recommendations, present the various alternatives in a draft report to the department acknowledging any uncertainties or disagreements.

When writing a co-authored report:

- As noted in the first section of this discussion of team reviews, it is typically useful to have an agreed-upon template for the final report and then have each team member take responsibility for the first draft of specific sections. When the first drafts of all sections are completed, they can be compiled and shared internally and informally with everyone to make edits until a final version is agreed upon.
- It may be easier if one person is identified as the lead in constructing the final document, especially if there are multiple team members.
- It is recommended that unless there is a clearly identified team leader, the authorship of the report is in alphabetical order.
- Do not share the report with the department or university members until there is reviewer agreement on the content of the report.
- When the report is shared, make sure it is clearly identified as authored by all team members. In the email to the department, include and acknowledge all team members. This can strengthen the department’s confidence in the report’s recommendations. In the case of multi-disciplinary departments and reviews, it is appropriate to note in the opening section of the report that recommendations for each discipline were written by reviewers from that discipline, but that the full team reviewed all of the report. If there is divergence in opinion about recommendations, that should be clearly and respectfully noted.
- There may be follow-up emails and correspondence with the university, so make sure to continue the team approach so that everyone is kept in the loop.
Appendix B:  

THE SOCIOLOGICAL LITERACY FRAMEWORK

The Sociological Literacy Framework (SLF) developed out of an extensive literature review by Ferguson and Carbonaro (2016) and discussions with the Measuring College Learning sociology faculty panel (Arum, Roksa, and Cook 2016). Ferguson and Carbonaro found sufficient overlap in various frameworks to enumerate a reasonable number of broad learning outcomes for the introductory sociology course and for the sociology major. Their synthesis of this material led them to create the Sociological Literacy Framework, which summarizes and describes a set of essential concepts and competencies for the sociology major. The framework has two broad categories that organize learning outcomes for sociology. The first category, labeled the Sociological Perspective, contains five essential concepts that are central to the discipline of sociology. They should be introduced in the introductory sociology course and then explored in depth as the student proceeds through the major. In addition to having an understanding of these essential sociological concepts, students also need to develop and apply disciplinary competencies. Thus, the second category, labeled the Sociological Toolbox, contains six essential competencies that sociology majors should master.

In addition to intersecting well with the U.S. literature on learning outcomes in sociology, the Sociological Literacy Framework dialogues well with the United Kingdom’s benchmark statement for sociology (QAA 2007), and the Australian Sociological Association’s threshold learning outcomes (TASA 2012). Although the concepts and competencies of the framework are presented separately, undergraduates should nevertheless learn them in a fully integrated fashion, with each supporting and augmenting the other. In Ferguson’s and Carbonaro’s view, what makes sociology exceptional is its perspective (i.e., the essential concepts that students learn), but what makes it valuable is the knowledge and skills that students gain and can integrate together. Accordingly, what makes sociology distinctive is the sui generis of the major or the combination of the items in the Sociological Literacy Framework, not the individual items on their own. Sociologists understand the social world by using both theory and evidence to pose and answer important questions about society. Concepts and competencies are used together in sociological research, and students should recognize this integration in their courses and in their knowledge and application of sociology outside of the classroom.

Table 1 offers a brief overview of the Sociological Literacy Framework. A longer description of each of the eleven SLF competencies follows.

**The Sociological Perspective: Five Essential Concepts**

The Sociological Perspective consists of five essential concepts that reflect larger organizing themes that lay the foundation of critical undergraduate knowledge in sociology. Each concept is a shorthand label or starting point for the overarching principles that underlie both the introductory sociology course and the sociology major. Taken together, these essential concepts and related themes provide an organizational model for what knowledge is expected in the

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college-level sociology curriculum. These essential concepts illustrate how sociologists view the social world and how sociology contributes to our understanding of the human experience.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1: Brief Overview of the Sociological Literacy Framework</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>The Sociological Perspective (Essential Concepts)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>The Sociological Eye: Sociology as a distinctive discipline</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social Structure: The impact of social structures on human action</td>
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<tr>
<td>Socialization: The relationship between the self and society</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stratification: The patterns and effects of social inequality</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social Change and Social Reproduction: How social phenomena replicate and change</td>
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1) **The Sociological Eye:**

The first essential concept in the sociological perspective is the sociological eye, a term adopted from Randall Collins (1998). Sociology students should be able to delineate the major theoretical frameworks and distinctive concepts and assumptions upon which our discipline is founded and that differentiates it from other social sciences. Topics related to this concept include: the founding theoretical traditions (Marx, Weber, Durkheim, and Mead); a critique of rational choice theory as the primary explanation of human behavior; and an introduction to the sociological imagination and to the social construction of everyday life, two constructs that facilitate understanding of how social forces affect individuals and how actions of individuals both constitute and are shaped by daily life.

2) **Social Structure:**

Students of sociology also should be able to describe social structure and how structural forces affect human action and social life at the micro, meso, and macro levels of society. More specifically, sociology students should be able to distinguish important social institutions in society that make up the social structure, and how they affect individuals and each other. In addition, students should be able to differentiate the processes through which social roles and statuses, relationships, social groups, formal organizations, and social networks influence human thought and action. Students should recognize how hierarchy, power, and authority operate across these structural contexts. Finally, students should be able to provide examples of these concepts related to social structure in multiple historical and cultural settings.

3) **Socialization:**
Students of sociology should be able to explicate the relationship between the self and society, particularly how the self is socially constructed and maintained at multiple levels of society. Relevant topics include processes and agents of socialization; the role of culture in shaping human thought and action; the operation of social norms, including the study of social control, anomie, and deviance; the power of the self-fulfilling prophesy; and the role of human agency in altering behavior. Finally, students should be able to explain concepts and theories that illustrate how the self and social interaction influence society and social structure.

4) **Stratification:**
The essential concept of stratification comprises the different forms of social inequality in human societies and the processes through which they are established and operate. Related critical topics include the theories of social stratification; the structures of inequalities of power, status, income, and wealth; the distinction between social and economic mobility and how ascriptive and meritocratic traits are related to each; and the impact of changes in the opportunity structure on inequality and social mobility. Additionally, students should be able to identify structural patterns of social inequality and their effects on groups and individuals, and explain the intersections of race, social class, gender, and other social factors at both the macro-level and micro-level of society.

5) **Social Change and Social Reproduction:**
Sociology students also should be able to identify the social processes underpinning social change and to describe how demographic and other types of social change affect individuals and social structures. More specifically, students should be able to explain how social structures change as a result of social forces including: the actions of social groups through social movements and collective action; the impact of macro-level economic and social changes such as industrialization, secularization, and globalization; and struggles over social institutions that are linked to social and economic development and mobility. A critical component of social change is *social reproduction*, which focuses on the basic processes of how social structures reproduce themselves from generation to generation in cultural, social, political, and economic terms.

**The Sociological Toolbox: Six Essential Competencies**
The six essential competencies in the Sociological Toolbox are the skills that we think sociology students should be able to demonstrate at different points in the sociology curriculum. For example, in introductory courses these skills should be introduced, in intermediate courses these skills are developed and applied, and in advanced courses they are particularly emphasized. By the time sociology majors graduate, they should have developed mastery of these skills.

1) **Apply Sociological Theories to Understand Social Phenomena**
Sociology students should be able to move beyond folk explanations of social phenomena and instead invoke evidence-based theories of sociological phenomena. Sociology students should be able to demonstrate how to apply sociological theories and concepts to the social world around them by doing the following: using the sociological imagination to analyze social problems in context and to generate and evaluate solutions; and by applying other sociological theories and concepts to social phenomena, both locally and globally.

2) **Critically Evaluate Explanations of Human Behavior and Social Phenomena**
Sociology students should be able to describe the role of theory in building sociological knowledge and evaluate the limitations of different theoretical frameworks. This essential competency provides students with the tools to critically evaluate claims about the social world by identifying and appraising assumptions underlying theory construction and social policy, deductively deriving theories from assumptions, inductively reasoning from evidence to theoretical conclusions, and effectively using sociological theories and evidence to suggest solutions to social problems.

3) **Apply Scientific Principles to Understand the Social World**

Sociology students should not only be able to describe the role of social research methods in building sociological knowledge, but be able to identify major methodological approaches and the design of doing research including sampling, measurement, and data collection. Students should learn to conduct and critique empirical research through the articulation of the effective use of evidence, the generation of research questions or hypotheses from sociological theories and concepts, and the recognition of the limits of the scientific method in understanding social behavior.

4) **Evaluate the Quality of Social Scientific Methods and Data**

Students should be able to critically assess the empirical sociological research of others and be able to identify the assumptions and limitations underlying particular research methodologies in sociology. The particular characteristics that sociologists use to evaluate the quality of research methods and data sources include: operationalizing concepts into measurable variables; learning the importance of precision, reliability, and validity of data sources; and understanding the distinctions between probability and non-probability samples.

5) **Rigorously Analyze Social Scientific Data**

Students should be able to articulate and apply disciplinary standards for data analysis and also delineate the differing goals, strengths, and limitations of different modes of analysis. These methodological skills should include an ability to fathom basic descriptive and inferential statistics and the importance of statistical and experimental controls for making causal claims when analyzing data. Students also should be able to evaluate multiple representations of data in public discourse. The ability to evaluate statistical information and analyses is central to the quantitative literacy of sociology students.

6) **Use Sociological Knowledge to Inform Policy Debates and Promote Public Understanding**

We want sociology students to be able to use all of these essential concepts and competencies of the Sociological Literacy Framework to engage with and have an impact upon the world in which they live and work. This last competency is not solely the ideal of using sociological education to develop better citizens, but in addition, it covers a broad range of abilities and potential applications for sociology students, including being able to express sociological ideas in a clear and coherent manner, in both written and oral communication, to the general public.

Sociology students also should be able to demonstrate informational, technological, and quantitative literacy. This essential competency suggests that sociology students should understand the kinds of work sociologists do, including an awareness of how sociology is used in clinical and applied settings, and the value of sociological knowledge and skills in the workplace. Additionally, students should be aware of public sociology and be able to use and understand the
value of sociological theories and knowledge when participating in public discourse and civic life. This essential competency effectively parallels one of the goals of LEAP, Liberal Education and America’s Promise, which argues that learning outcomes are essential for success in life, civil society, and work in the 21st century.  

4 LEAP promotes essential learning outcomes that include: “1) broad knowledge of culture, science and society, as well as competence in specific fields; 2) intellectual and practical skills, such as inquiry and analysis; critical and creative thinking; written and oral communication; quantitative literacy; information literacy; teamwork and problem solving; 3) studies and experiences related to democratic and global citizenship and intercultural competence; and 4) integrative, applied and adaptive learning” (LEAP 2015).
Appendix C: Sample E-Mails

This appendix includes several sample e-mails/letters that can be modified to fit your needs as you correspond with an institution. Included are emails requesting materials related to the review as well as general correspondence throughout the review process. These are also available for download at the PRC page on the ASA website.
Sometimes your initial contact with an institution contains little or no information. Other times it is very detailed. What you need to request from a department may be modified considerably by what they have already provided.

These e-mails letters were developed by Ed Kain. He notes: “With some department chairs, I send separate e-mails about visit arrangements, itinerary and materials that I need. In other cases, I combine it all into one e-mail. I can typically tell from the style of the chair’s initial e-mail whether she or he prefers one longer correspondence, or a series of shorter ones.”

**Example of an early e-mail with a sociology department chair clarifying details of the visit**

Dear (Contact Person’s Name):

(Date suggested for the visit) is perfect. I’ve already included it on my schedule. In this e-mail I have a series of questions to continue moving the process forward.

Before I send you a more detailed e-mail with information about things that should be included in my itinerary and the materials I’ll need to read before my visit, I had a few general questions about the review in (month of review).

First, what is the broad purpose of the review? Is this part of a regular cycle of external reviews for all programs on campus? Are there any particular issues that your department/program would like addressed?

Second, is there a particular format or set of issues that need to be addressed in the final written report? I often find it very helpful if one of the first documents I see is the written college/university policy for external reviews and the associated final reports.

Third, am I reviewing the program as a single reviewer, or am I part of a team of reviewers? If I am part of a team, please provide me with the contact information for other members of the review team so that I may begin working with them before coming to campus.

Fourth, to whom does the report ultimately go? On most campuses, this goes to a Dean, Provost, or Vice President. In any event, I always ask the department to look at it first before I send the final version to a Provost or Dean. My goal in serving as an external reviewer is to be an advocate for the department by providing guidance to help it be as strong a program as they can be.

Once I’ve heard back from you, I’ll send an e-mail with more specific details about things to include in the itinerary and materials that I’ll want to read before my arrival. I look forward to hearing from you.

Cheers,

Ed
Example of an early e-mail with a joint department chair clarifying details of the visit

Dear (Contact Person’s Name):

(Dates suggested for the visit) is perfect. I've already included it on my schedule. In this e-mail I have a series of questions to continue moving the process forward.

Before I send you a more detailed e-mail with information about things that should be included in my itinerary and the materials I’ll need to read before my visit, I had a few general questions about the review in (month of review).

First, what is the broad purpose of the review? Is this part of a regular cycle of external reviews for all programs on campus? Are there any particular issues that your department/program would like addressed?

Second, is there a particular format or set of issues that need to be addressed in the final written report? I often find it very helpful if one of the first documents I see is the written college/university policy for external reviews and the associated final reports.

Third, to whom does the report ultimately go? On most campuses, this goes to a Dean, Provost, or Vice President. In any event, I always ask the department to look at it first before I send the final version to a Provost or Dean. My goal in serving as an external reviewer is to be an advocate for the department by providing guidance to help them be as strong a program as they can be.

Fourth, am I reviewing only the sociology program? When I’ve visited joint departments there have been a wide range of situations. Sometimes it is truly a joint program, and I’ve been asked to review both anthropology and sociology. Sometimes it is a joint program and I’ve been paired with an anthropologist (or anthropologists) who has/have also flown in for the review. Sometimes it is a joint department but not really a joint program, and I’ve only reviewed the sociology program. Will I be serving as the sole reviewer, or am I part of a review team? If the latter is the case, please send me contact information for any other reviewers so that we can begin to coordinate our work before coming to campus.

I am a sociologist, and thus much less qualified to make recommendations about anthropology. I can, however, reflect on what I know about joint departments/programs. When I do a review, I use a set of national guidelines for the major from the American Sociological Association updated most recently in 2017. These were first developed in 1990 as part of a national project of the American Association of Colleges (now the AAC&U). They worked with a dozen national professional organizations, including the ASA, to develop statements on strong undergraduate majors in a variety of disciplines. Unfortunately, the AAA was not part of this project, and there is no anthropology document providing similar guidelines. On every review team where I’ve been paired with anthropologists, however, they have found the structure of that report very helpful in reflecting upon the anthropology curricula in those departments.

In addition, in 2006, with Theodore C. Wagenaar and Carla B. Howery I co-authored “Models and Best Practices for Joint Sociology-Anthropology Departments”. This was published by the ASA, and can be downloaded from the Department Leaders Toolbox on their website at http://www.asanet.org/teaching-learning/department-leaders/department-leaders-toolbox.
we developed this document, we interviewed both anthropologists and sociologists from a variety of joint departments across the country.

Once I’ve heard back from you, I’ll send an e-mail with more specific details about things to include in the itinerary and materials that I’ll want to read before my arrival. I look forward to hearing from you.

Cheers,

Ed

Example of an e-mail setting up the itinerary for the visit

Dear (Contact Person’s Name):

Thanks again for all of your hard work in preparation for this review. Having served as a department chair during multiple program reviews, I know how much work falls in the hands of the chair.

This e-mail focuses upon the itinerary for the visit. Your campus policies may require some other meetings as well, but here I’ll outline the meetings I’d like to have while I am on campus.

1. Ideally, it is good to have an opening/orienting session with the full department. This can orient everyone to the purpose of the visit. The most common structures for this are an opening dinner the evening before the review begins, or an early session on the first full day of the campus visit.

2. Early in the visit it is always good to meet with the Provost and/or Dean. It is also good if I can meet with you before the opening session as well as at the beginning of the second day. You can walk me through the itinerary and talk about any issues about which I should be aware. Through the lens of your role as department chair you can also talk with me about your goals for the external review, and highlight any issues about which you’d like me to pay particular attention.

3. Ideally, I’d like to meet with each faculty member in the department in an individual interview, including adjunct or part-time faculty.

4. If this includes a review of graduate programs, you’ll want to request a separate interview with the Director of Graduate Studies.

5. Similarly, I would like to interview chairs of any other departments/programs related to sociology through cross-listed courses, service courses, interdisciplinary majors, or minors. This can be a group meeting if you think that is appropriate.

6. A meeting with students is very important—my previous experience has indicated that meetings with students (particularly undergraduates) work well over lunch, though sometimes turnout can be limited. Another possibility would be for me to attend one of the courses required for majors, like theory or methods, and to interview students in that setting. That would take away, however, from whatever the professor has planned for that day.

7. If this includes a graduate program review, then there needs to be a separate meeting with graduate students.

8. I always want to interview someone from the library (ideally the department liaison, if you have one) as well as someone from the computer center/ITS.
9. I’d also like to interview department support staff/administrative assistants. Often these staff members are shared with other departments. They can sometimes provide important insights about a department/program.

10. The ideal schedule includes an exit interview with you, and another with appropriate members of the administration (such as the Provost or Dean). Ideally, it also includes a debriefing session with the full department.

11. Although it may seem impossible given all of these requests, it would be good to have a bit of open time built into the schedule so that I can walk around campus and do a bit of fieldwork. For example, I typically go to the library and do several searches to get a sense of the collection.

Thanks again for all of your work on this! In a few days, I’ll send you another note with an e-mail I’d like you to send to your colleagues shortly before the visit.

Sincerely,

Ed

Example of an e-mail requesting materials needed during the review

Dear (Contact Person’s Name):

As we move closer to your department review, I wanted to firm up some more of the details related to the campus visit. As I said in my response to your ___(Date)___ e-mail, I am already very impressed with ___(Name of Institution)___ [if possible, include a comment on any immediately positive element of the program/department].

Over the next few days I’ll be sending you several e-mails asking for materials that I’ll need for the review, outlining some things that need to be included in my itinerary while I’m on campus, and some information I’d like to obtain from everyone in the department. In this e-mail I’ll focus upon the first of those--the materials I would like you to send me as soon as they are available.

In preparation for the review, I would like copies of all of the following materials. If these are available electronically, that is ideal. In many cases it is good to have a hard copy available while I’m on campus, but I don’t need a hard copy for my preparation in advance or while I’m working on the written report. If I have any questions or comments about any of the items, I’ve noted that in bold print below.

I have looked at the College Catalog online, as well as your institution’s mission statement and description at the website. I have also looked at your department webpage and the information that it provides, In addition, please send me:

- your current self-study. If you have previous self-evaluations or self-studies, as well as copies of previous external reviews, I would like copies of those. This helps me see change and growth in the department and majors over time.
- Curriculum vitae of personnel. If you have any visiting/adjunct/part-time faculty members, I’d also like to see their c.v.’s.
- your annual plan for assessing student learning. It would be good to have several years of this plan, with the assessment results. With that information, I can get a sense of how
information gathered through your assessment process is used to evaluate and strengthen the program.

- course syllabi: As with the c.v’s, ideally I’d like these for all courses, including those taught by visiting/adjunct/part-time faculty members. Before the visit, I particularly want to see syllabi for all core/required courses for both majors—the major in sociology/anthropology with emphasis in anthropology and with emphasis in sociology. I can look at remaining syllabi when I arrive on campus. Because I’m coming in on Saturday I’ll have time to look at the full range upon my arrival.

- recent enrollment data: Don’t create extra work, but if the data are available for the time period since the last external review, that would be ideal. That will give me a sense of the regularity of course offerings and course enrollments.

- the number of majors and minors for the past 5-7 years.

- data on your use of contingent faculty.

- any available documentation on efforts to address issues of diversity and gender equity in the department (both for students and among faculty)/relevant policy goals.

- any documentation on efforts to engage in community-based/community-outreach programming (both for students and among faculty)/relevant policy.

- department budgets for the last 3-5 years.

- library journal holdings and evaluation of the book collection. If your department has a library liaison, s/he may be able to prepare this for you.

In addition, if the following documents are available (and apply to your program) they would be useful:

- A copy of the department handbook. (If this is online, the web address is perfect; indeed, these days very few departments have a separate handbook—it has morphed into their webpage.)

- Minutes from department meetings of significance.

- Department/Program Newsletters.

- Information on student clubs and honorary societies, including Lambda Alpha and Alpha Kappa Delta

- Department bylaws and information on committee structure.

- Collective bargaining agreements.

- Results of any studies on topics such as faculty, student or alumni satisfaction with the program.

- Other data collected for assessing student learning

- If this review includes graduate programs, you will also want to request
  
  - documents that contain goals for the program (statement of purpose);
  - who is training for what;
  - program requirements;
  - number of students;
• funding patterns;
• teaching assignments of graduate students and relevant evaluation information;
• placement/alumni data and other key contents.

Thanks. If you have any questions about any of these materials, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,
Ed

Example of an e-mail requesting information from department members

Dear (Contact Person’s Name):

As I’ve mentioned in our earlier conversations, I’d like to get a sense of any particular issues the department would like me to address in my review, as well as concerns of each individual in the department. It would be helpful if, as chair, you could provide me with a list of particular questions or concerns you would like me to address. These questions and concerns will help guide me as I do the site visit. In addition, it will be useful to have some brief statements from each of the faculty members in your department.

In the past, I have found it very useful for the department chair to send an e-mail to all department faculty members several weeks before the site visit. This e-mail should do two things: 1) briefly outline the purpose of the upcoming visit, and 2) ask each faculty member to send me a brief e-mail. One possible format would be:

Please reflect briefly (one or two sentences each) on: 1) what you see as the greatest strengths and achievements of the department/program, and 2) what you see as the areas needing the most attention. In addition, please feel free to indicate any personal concerns/issues you think I need to consider while doing the review.

Thanks for your help in putting these materials together. I know that preparing for the visit takes a great deal of time and energy. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Cheers,
Ed

Example of an e-mail to be sent shortly after the ASA sends a questionnaire asking for feedback on the program review:

Dear (Contact Person’s Name):

Recently you received a questionnaire from the ASA asking for your feedback on the external visit I did as part of your program review. Your feedback is important. I want my work to be as useful as possible as part of strengthening sociology programs. The ASA wants to insure that program reviews are the highest quality possible. Members of the PRC have annual training at the ASA meetings, and feedback from reviews are one source of information about how we can improve what we do in service to sociology departments/programs.
If you feel more comfortable talking directly with someone about your feedback, in addition to (or instead of) completing the survey, please feel free to contact Teresa Ciabattari, the Director of Research, Professional Development, and Academic Affairs at the ASA. Her number is 202.247.9840. Her e-mail address is tciabattari@asanet.org.

Thanks, in advance, for providing feedback that can be useful in strengthening the ASA’s program review process.

Sincerely,

Ed
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_oct19.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):

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

There are many different ways to structure a report and no one “right” way. This section lists several options. Appendix F (available via the ASA Program Reviewers and Consultants Portal) includes sample final reports.
Example A: Outline for a Final Report:

1. Optional: an executive summary preceding the body of the report.
2. Introduction
   a. Institutional setting in which program is located
      (1) Mission of the college or university
      (2) Essential program statistics (ie. Numbers of majors and faculty)
      (3) Role of sociology—actual or potential—in the institution
   b. Purpose of the visit
3. Strengths and Areas of Concern—back up your conclusions point by point with narratives of your findings, observations and quotations, omitting names as appropriate to preserve confidentiality.
4. Institutional and Departmental Needs
   a. These should be defined in terms of the major problems identified during the visit and in terms of the context in which the department is located.
   b. The needs identified serve as the basis for recommendations in such areas as curriculum, program focus or foci, department administration, additional resources required, etc.
5. Recommendations—these should be succinct, but clearly related to the needs identified.
6. Follow-up support which reviewer(s) may provide. NOTE: be sure to follow through with any promises made!
7. Appendices: Suggested items to include:
   a. Relevant statistical information (e.g. enrollments, majors, degrees granted) drawn upon in the report, unless these are readily available elsewhere—such as in a self-study.
   b. Course outlines and other resource materials, published or unpublished, which the visitor wishes to make directly available to the department.
   c. A bibliography of resource materials, including a link to the Departmental Leaders Toolbox on the ASA website. The reviewer recommends that the department consult these documents on its own.
   d. Materials which the visitor has prepared especially for the department’s use, e.g. statistical comparisons with sociology programs in other institutions similar in type to the one visited.

Example B: Outline for a Final Report:

1. Describe who you met with and what materials you reviewed.
2. Overview of Evaluation of Program
3. Major and Minors
   a. Learning Goals
   b. Major Requirements
   c. Curriculum
   d. Sequencing and Course Levels
   e. Minor Requirements
4. Students  
   a. Number  
   b. Perceptions  
5. Faculty  
   a. Evaluation  
   b. Development  
6. Other  
   a. Budget  
   b. Computers  
   c. Library  
   d. Other  

Example C: Outline for a Final Report

1. An executive summary that begins with a summary paragraph or two, followed by the recommendations that are included in the body of the report.
2. An introduction that describes:  
   a. when the visit occurred, who was interviewed during the visit, and any other activities that were done during the visit (such as visiting the library)  
   b. materials that were reviewed  
   c. particular goals/purposes of the visit  
3. Basic description of the department/program, including:  
   a. size and makeup  
   b. relationships with other departments/programs  
   c. course offerings and enrollments  
4. General discussion of strengths and weaknesses  
5. A set of recommendations, based upon 2, 3, and 4 above, and generally structured around the recommendations found in Changing Landscape of Higher Education. List each of the national recommendations, and then reflect upon the department/program in relation to those guidelines. Specific recommendations for the department are built upon the national guidelines.  
6. Appendices that include relevant data, resources, and reference materials.
Appendix F: Sample DRG/PRC Reports

Sample reports are available online in the ASA Program Reviewers and Consultants Portal. This will allow us to update the samples more easily while keeping this document a reasonable length.

Note that all sample reports are included with the permission of the departments involved. We have attempted to remove identifiers. These are samples only and are specific to the departments for which they were written.
Appendix G: Some Resources Related to the Recommendations from *The Sociology Major in the Changing Landscape of Higher Education* (this list will be updated as new materials are published)

**Recommendation 1:** Develop distinct mission statements, specific program goals, and measurable learning outcomes that are made public, especially to students.

**Recommendation 2:** Within the sociology major, include required and elective courses that incorporate essential sociological concepts and competencies, as exemplified in the Sociological Literacy Framework.


**Recommendation 3:** Include required courses in: introductory-level sociology, sociological theory, research methods, statistical analysis, substantive topic areas, and a capstone experience within the sociology major.


**Recommendation 4:** Integrate progressive learning structures within the curriculum via course prerequisites that systematically guide students to engage with increasingly advanced content and activities.


**Recommendation 5:** Provide multiple opportunities within the curriculum for students to engage in empirical inquiry that includes research design, data collection, and qualitative and quantitative analysis.


**Recommendation 6:** Underscore, at all levels of the curriculum, inequality and difference in local, national, and global contexts.


**Recommendation 7:** Provide curricular and co-curricular structures to help students gain knowledge and apply skills that support them in their post-baccalaureate careers.


National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE). Career Readiness Resources. [https://www.naceweb.org/career-readiness/competencies/career-readiness-resources/](https://www.naceweb.org/career-readiness/competencies/career-readiness-resources/)

**Recommendation 8:** Structure the curriculum to recognize explicitly the points of intellectual convergence and divergence between sociology and other fields of inquiry.


Recommendation 9: Incorporate multiple pedagogies across the curriculum, including those that support active learning within and beyond the classroom.


Recommendation 10: Develop and maintain advising and mentoring processes that support students' decision making in achieving their educational goals, engage students in career planning, and offer guidance on further study in sociology and related fields.


Recommendation 11: Support faculty engagement in disciplinary research, the scholarship of teaching and learning, pedagogical innovation, and relevant service.

Recommendation 12: Systematically assess program goals and student learning outcomes, choosing assessment tools that respond to institutional context and specific programmatic needs.

Appendix H: Selective List of Topical Resources

Workshops

Site Visits

Resources for Graduate Program Reviewers

\[5\] A special thanks to Maxine Atkinson who compiled the section on Resources for Graduate Program Reviewers, and Edward L. Kain who compiled the sections on teaching sociology.


Assessment

ASA Task Force on Assessing the Undergraduate Major. Web Site (forthcoming).


Keith, Bruce. (Guest Editor). 2002. Teaching Sociology With a Purpose: Issues in Curriculum Design and Assessment - Special Issue of Teaching Sociology 30:all.


Wagenaar, Theodore C. 2004. “Assessing Sociological Knowledge: A First Try.” Teaching Sociology. 32:232-238. (This is followed by two comments and a reply.)


**Asset-Based Evaluation**


Critical Thinking


Community Based/Experiential/Service Learning


Curriculum
The October 2002 issue of Teaching Sociology is dedicated to the topics of curriculum design and assessment. Among the many useful articles found in this issue is the lead article by Greg Weiss: (Weiss, Gregory L. 2002. “The Current Status of Assessment in Sociology Departments.” Teaching Sociology. 30:391-402.)


Wagenaar, Theodore C. 2004. “Is There a Core in Sociology? Results from a Survey.” Teaching Sociology. 32:1-18. (This is followed by 4 more articles/comments about the core in sociology.)


General References on Teaching and Learning


Learning in Sociology Courses


Race/Class/Gender/Diversity
The October, 2003 issue of Teaching Sociology focuses on issues of teaching about inequality. It includes a set of articles on “teaching sociology in historically black colleges and universities”.

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Scisney-Matlock, Margaret and John Matlock. 2001. “Promoting Understanding of Diversity through Mentoring Undergraduate Students.” New Directions for Teaching and Learning. 75-84.


Thomas, Jan and Annis Kukulan. 2004. “‘Why Don’t I Know about These Women?’: The Integration of Early Women Sociologists in Classical Theory Courses.” Teaching Sociology. 32:252-63.


Research Methods and Integrating Research Across the Curriculum


Scholarship of Teaching and Learning


Sociological Practice (Clinical, Applied and Engaged Public Sociology)
Association for Applied and Clinical Sociology (AACS). http://www.aacsnet.net/

Commission on the Accreditation of Programs in Applied and Clinical Sociology (CAPACS) http://www.sociologycommission.org/


Journals (selected list)

Teaching Sociology
Journal of Higher Education
Research in Higher Education
American Association of Higher Education Bulletin
Journal of Excellence in College Teaching
Chronicle of Higher Education
To Improve the Academy
Review of Research in Higher Education
Change
Black Issues in Higher Education

Newsletters (selected list)

The Teaching Professor, edited by Maryellen Weimer
http://www.teachingprofessor.com/

Spotlight on Teaching, University of Oklahoma
http://www.aarweb.org/publications/spotlight/default.asp

Teaching at Davis, University of California at Davis,

Teaching, Sonoma State University
http://www.sonoma.edu/ctpd/#Teaching

The Teaching Newsletter, California State University, Sacramento,
http://www.ctl.csus.edu/newsletter.htm


The Beacon, St. Norbert College
http://www.snc.edu/facdev/

The Teaching Network, Center for Teaching Effectiveness, University of Texas at Austin
http://www.utexas.edu/academic/cte/aboutcte.html

Teaching at UNL, University of Nebraska at Lincoln,
http://www.unl.edu/svcaa/teaching@unl/organizations.shtml

Teaching Excellence, POD Network in Higher Education,
Teaching and Learning Matters, ASA Section on Teaching and Learning in Sociology newsletter, http://www.asanet.org/sectionteach/join.html

Conferences

Lilly Conference on College Teaching and Lilly regional conferences
American Association of Colleges and Universities, annual meeting and specialty conferences
Professional Organizational Development, annual conference
Resources for Core Library Collections: