Preparing for Program Review: Making the Process More Manageable and Useful

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Agenda

• Background information on Academic Program Review
• Elements of program review (on most campuses)
• Suggestions for organizing the review: maximizing the positive and minimizing the negative
• Focus throughout on resources from ASA
• Questions/Comments
Background information

- Academic program review (APR) is widespread throughout the U.S.
- Usually an administrative process under “local” control
- Usually done on a cycle of 5-7 years
- Highly regarded by regional accrediting associations as a mechanism for quality control
- Linked on some campuses to strategic planning, budget decisions, program enhancement or elimination, curricular reform, assessment
Taking ownership of program review

• Program review can sometimes be seen as an outside, threatening, and unwanted interruption of our daily worthwhile activities.

• Alternative view:
  ➢ An opportunity to involve faculty, staff, and students in developing and implementing an on-going process that becomes a “normal” activity promoting improved programs and better student learning.
  ➢ Something departments make their own. (Kain and Strand)
  ➢ Opportunity to receive outside support for the department.
What program review should not be...

- A way of making personnel decisions (e.g., denying tenure to Prof. X, rewarding Prof. Y)
- A way of providing counselors for those needing .... well, counselors
- A zero-sum operation to help ensure that one departmental factions wins at the expense of another

- ALTHOUGH an external reviewer can sometimes help put personnel issues and conflicts into perspective.
Elements of program review

- Self Study based on criteria
- Review by respected peers based on criteria
- Summary statements (perhaps a SWOT analysis)
- Recommendations and action plan and Administrative response
- Follow-up
Timeline of tasks

- Self-studies may take up to six months to complete
- Set up itinerary for reviewers six months before visit (takes longer than you think)
- Send materials to reviewer one month before visit, if possible.
- Give reviewer one month for writing report
- Set up department meetings to discuss reviewers’ report and write reactions, if necessary
- May involve some kind of concluding analysis (e.g., a SWOT analysis [Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats])
Beginning the process

• Find previous review.
• Be clear about the data that you need for the self-study and try to compile on an on-going basis.
• Check in with your institutional research office to see the extent to which they can help secure data you need.
• Use your students to help compile data (e.g., research methods class project, on-campus internship, independent study).
How to make this useful to you

• Ask questions YOU want to ask (regardless of administrative mandate).
• Be realistic about what can be accomplished.
• Consult ASA webpage for useful resources

- Reviewing department curriculum?
- Thinking about how to improve employment outcomes for majors?
- Looking for advice about the department's online offerings?

The ASA's newest guidance for SA programs in sociology is now available. The Sociology Major in the Changing Landscape of Higher Education: Curriculum, Careers, and Online Education outlines recommended practices for sustaining high quality and comprehensive sociology programs for undergraduates. These recommendations form the basis of many of our members' programs.

Available as a free download here.
### About this site

This site provides easy access to a broad collection of sociology assessment resources. Many faculty and department leaders do not have the time or experience with assessment to independently create effective assessment tools. Looking at models from other departments can provide a starting point for assessment development and spark creativity. It can also create the opportunity to compare programs and policies across institutions.

Dr. Mary Senter, Sociology Faculty, proposed this website and reviews the content. This site was developed by Rui Wang, Social Sciences Librarian, at Central Michigan University.

### Collection

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### Guiding Documents (by date)


  [http://www.asanet.org/teaching-learning/department-leaders/department-leaders-toolbox](http://www.asanet.org/teaching-learning/department-leaders/department-leaders-toolbox)

  [https://www.ets.org/mft/about/content/sociology](https://www.ets.org/mft/about/content/sociology). Consists of 140 multiple-choice questions. Most of
This section contains tables and graphs on several aspects of the sociology discipline and profession, including data on the following (Microsoft Excel versions of the supporting/underlying data are also available to download, where indicated):

- ASA Membership
- Degrees Awarded
- Employment
- Faculty Salaries
- Gender
- Graduate Enrollments
- Race and Ethnicity
- Sociology Programs

GET INVOLVED

Volunteer
ASA needs you to serve the discipline

Join a Section
Explore ASA’s community of specialists

Join ASA
Join or renew your membership
RESEARCH BRIEFS

ASA research reports and presentations cover careers for sociology degree-holders at all levels, faculty salaries in sociology and other disciplines, diversity among faculty and students, resources for sociology departments, facts about the ASA membership, and much more. Narrow your search for reports on a particular topic or from a particular year by using the filters to the right.

SEARCH

TRENDS IN ACADEMIC HIRING THROUGH 2015

September 2016
Research report describing the number and types of academic sociology positions advertised in the ASA Job Bank and other sources during 2015, as well results of a follow-up survey of searches to fill those positions.
Read more

FACULTY SALARIES IN SOCIOLOGY AND OTHER DISCIPLINES, 2016 UPDATE

August 2016
Update to ASA's 2015 research report on faculty salaries in sociology and other social science disciplines.
Read more

INDIVIDUAL SALARY IS NOT ENOUGH

August 2016
Individual Salary is Not Enough: Measuring the Well-Being of Recent College Graduates in Sociology examines the outcomes of a baccalaureate degree in sociology. The authors find that income, the most widely-used degree

FILTER BY RELEASE DATE:

- 2016 (6)
- 2015 (5)
- 2014 (4)
A collection of resources from ASA and other relevant sources to support department success.

**Fostering Vibrant Departments**

ASA Resources and Initiatives for Department Chairs (2016)
A primer on resources ASA offers to department leaders.

Family Friendly Departmental Practices (December 2015, Video)
In this webinar Jennifer Glass, a leader in the field of work and gender issues, shares her advice and insights on facilitating a family friendly sociology department. She addresses how she created a departmental environment where those with dependent care responsibilities had their care work honored without burdening their colleagues or generating perceptions of unfairness.

When Sociology is on the Chopping Block (2015, PDF)
Our current higher education environment is one in which threats to degree programs come in myriad forms and from unexpected sources. It is critical to be appropriately responsive to the source of the threat (e.g., legislators, board members, community leaders, media, administrators) and always with attention to the institutional context.

**Curriculum and Assessment**

The Sociology Major in the Changing Landscape of Higher Education: Curriculum, Careers, and Online Learning (2017) ASA’s most recent recommendations for sociology at the BA level. Bound copies coming soon to the ASA bookstore.

Creating an Effective Assessment Plan for the Sociology Major (2005)
Concise, clear advice on assessment, plus a large number of examples of assessment plans from sociology programs around the country. Also available as a booklet.

Sociology Assessment Resources
The self study

- Usually a lot of work! Outline often mandated by the administration
- Focus on “input” metrics such as the curriculum, number of majors, student credit hours, faculty lines, library resources, available technology, and physical space
- Focus on “output” metrics such as evidence of student learning (outcomes assessment), student employment after graduation, graduate school acceptance, student publications, faculty publications
- Quantitative emphasis, but add your narrative to put data in context, elaborate, explain, etc.
Breaking down the task

- Think about how best to organize the work so that one person is not “stuck” with the entire task.
  - Make sure not to over-burden your untenured colleagues
- Keep all faculty in the loop so that there are no surprises and so that consensus can develop
  - Program review can (re)open old wounds—try to avoid that
- Ask questions YOU want to ask (regardless of administrative mandate)
Selection of evaluators

• Usually an external reviewer(s); may also include an internal faculty review team

• Who should be external reviewer?
  ➢ Want reviewers who bring some level of expertise to the task, generally, AND someone who can address the issues important to YOUR DEPARTMENT
  ➢ Want reviewers who have the time to complete the review
  ➢ Want reviewers who understand your type of program & your type of institution
  ➢ Check around about previously-completed reviews
  ➢ ASA supports DRG reviewers
DEPARTMENT RESOURCE GROUP

Mission Statement
The Department Resource Group (DRG) advances the discipline of sociology by offering empirically grounded peer review and consulting expertise to academic departments regarding effective practices for pedagogy, curriculum and organizational structures in support of teaching and learning and the production of sociological knowledge.

Purpose
DRG consultants are available to assist departments with program review, curriculum development, assessment, department retreats, and teaching workshops. In addition, the DRG offers a mentoring program for sociologists who have taken on a leadership role within their department, such as department chair, division coordinator, or graduate studies director. DRG consultants receive training at each ASA Annual Meeting and are in regular communication throughout the year about trends, data, and new resources that can help build strong departments. DRG consultants are dedicated to empowering department chairs and faculty during periods of self-reflection, external review, or general department revitalization.

Learn more
• DRG Consultants
• DRG Site Visits
• DRG Off-Site Consultations
• DRG Mentors Program
• DRG Member Area

GET INVOLVED
Setting up the review

• Arrangements with reviewer(s)
  ➢ Dates (1.5 to 2 days on campus)
  ➢ Expenses (travel, hotel, meals)
  ➢ Honorarium
  ➢ Need written contract, clarifying monies and due dates
  ➢ Clarity about who does what if more than one reviewer

• View this as a collegial exchange
Preparation for site visit

• Materials to send
  ➢ Department’s expectations/hopes/concerns (perhaps a phone call)
  ➢ Self-study
  ➢ Format for external report (if format mandated by your administration)
  ➢ Faculty vitae if not in self-study
  ➢ Recent syllabi if not in self-study
  ➢ Previous self-study
  ➢ Other material that the reviewer wants (within limits)
Organization of the visit: 
Make this an enjoyable experience

- Opening session (ideally with department chair)
- Individual interviews with all faculty and with department staff
- Interviews with key administrators (perhaps other department chairs)
- Meetings with department majors [preferably in class(es)]
- Visit physical facilities (offices/labs/centers)
- Breaks/Meals
- Closing session with (entire) department
Action plan and Administrative response

- Departments may be asked to commit to making specific changes by a specific point in time
- Administrators provide some kind of summary and commit to/accept some kind of action plan.
- Hold administrators accountable, too.
- Periodic updating of administration on the extent to which action plan is being implemented
- Next program review in 5-7 years
Discussion

• The discussion with the reviewers and after the report received may prove to be the most valuable aspects of program review
Comments? Questions?

• And thank you!