PREPARING FOR A PROGRAM REVIEW
(Workshop Leaders’ Notes)

1) Introduction

2) Elements of program review
   a) Self study based on criteria
   b) Review by respected peers based on criteria
   c) Recommendations
   d) Follow-up

3) Taking ownership of program review
   a) Program review as an opportunity

4) 
      (Handout A)

5) Description: Translates AAC&U’s national study of college majors into guidelines for
   program review. The handbook describes key elements of effective major programs, provides
   a protocol for departmental self-study, and recommends ways of including outcomes
   assessment in program review.
      (Handout A)
   b) Assumptions: Advancing the Discipline; Department as Key Unit; Assets-based
      approach (identified strengths of a department/program become starting-points for
      improvement)

6) What Are Some Resources from the ASA That Can Assist You with Program Review?
   a) Academic and Professional Affairs Program
      i) Liberal Learning and the Sociology Major Updated You can download this from the
         ASA website at: http://www.asanet.org/galleries/default-file/Lib_Learning_FINAL.pdf
      ii) Creating an Effective Assessment Plan for the Sociology Major (2005). This can also
          be downloaded:
            http://www.asanet.org/galleries/APAP/Assessment%20Final%20Copy%202005.pdf
   b) Department Resources Group (DRG)

7) What Is the Process of Having an External Department Reviewer Visit Your Campus?
   a) Pre-visit Activities
      i) Fill out the on-line DRG Initial Client Survey at:
         http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=Pm2wTe4bfVaM2ykwbQR5_2fA_3d_3d
         Or contact ASA and request a list of Potential Reviewers (202 383 9005 x323).
      ii) Identify the Parameters of the Visit:
          (1) Meet with All Department Members to Talk about the Review-Generate
              Goals/Concerns, Etc.;
(2) Ask Department Members to Generate Statements for the External Reviewer (See Handout B);
(3) Meet with Relevant Administrators to Talk about the Goals and Process of the Review;
(4) Meet with Any Other Key People Who Might Be Involved–Library, Related Departments/ Programs, ITS, Staff
iii) Gather Data from Department That Will Be Needed by the External Reviewer(s) (Handout B)
(1) Organize the Data and Determine Foci of the Self Study and Program Review (Handout C)
iv) Contact Reviewer(s)
   (1) Clarify All Conditions of the Visit with the Reviewer(s) (Handout D)
   (2) Write a Formal Letter Outlining All of the Conditions; the Goals–Formative Vs. Summative;
   (3) Contents and Dissemination of the Report; Confirmation of what the Department Is Paying for
   (4) Make All Necessary Arrangements for the Visit
v) Write Memo to Department with Agenda and a Brief Statement of the Purpose of the Visit
b) Visit Activities (See Handout D)
c) Post-visit Activities
   i) Department Discussion of Recommendations
   ii) Department Response to Recommendations
   iii) Implementing Recommendations and Linking Them to Assessment Plans
   iv) Taking Stock of Progress Each Year as Part of the Annual Assessment Plan
   v) Mid-way to the next review–what Has Been Accomplished and What Remains?

8) Do You Have Any Questions?

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Handout A: “Criteria for Review”
Two documents that can help guide department discussions

These two documents can help guide department discussions of strategic planning and/or program review.

Program Review and Educational Quality in the Major (1992)
Association of American Colleges and Universities (www.aacu.org). This report identifies the elements of strong programs. It suggests that evaluation of departments be built around these elements. Strong undergraduate programs must have:

1) statements of clear and explicit goals which can be understood by students in the program. (AAC&U, 1992: 3).
2) methods for helping students focus upon inquiry and analysis (4).
3) an approach which develops in students a critical approach which enables them to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of different perspectives (4).
4) a connection with student needs (5).
5) links with scholarly inquiry which reflect the current state of the field (6).
6) a major which reflects a coherent plan and not just a collection of unrelated courses (6).
7) linkages with other fields and disciplines and departments on campus (7).
8) connections with issues of liberal learning, including ethics, and social and political concerns (7).
9) a supportive community which encourages students to grow and develop (8).
10) a commitment to inclusiveness on a range of issues, including race, class, gender, and age (8).
11) a clear commitment of the faculty to careful advising of students (10).
12) systematic and careful evaluation and assessment of students (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 (11).

An additional resource worth reviewing:

- High Impact Educational Practices: What they are, who has access to them, and why they matter (2008) Association of American Colleges and Universities (www.aacu.org). This report is based on data from the National Survey of Student Engagement and summarizes key findings about educational practices that are most effective in increasing student engagement and success.

1These points are directly quoted from the AAC&U document as noted in the page numbers which are cited.
ASA RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE UNDERGRADUATE SOCIOLOGY MAJOR

The second document that is very helpful in program review is *Liberal Learning and the Sociology Major Updated: Meeting the Challenge of Teaching Sociology in the Twenty-First Century* by Kathleen McKinney, Carla B. Howery, Kerry J. Strand, Edward L. Kain, and Catherine White Berheide. This Report of the ASA Task Force on the Undergraduate Major was published in 2004. An earlier report, adopted by ASA Council in 1990, included 13 recommendations. Most of these were retained in the new report, though some have been combined within broader recommendations in this new edition of the report. The recommendations are:

**Recommendation 1:** Departments should develop a mission statement, goals, and learning objectives for their sociology program and make them public, especially to students.

**Recommendation 2:** Departments should gauge the needs and interests of their students, and department goals and practices should, in part, reflect and respond to these needs and interests as well as to the mission of the institution.

**Recommendation 3:** Departments should require introductory sociology and a capstone course in sociology as well as coursework in sociological theory, research methods, and statistics for the sociology major.

**Recommendation 4:** Departments should infuse the empirical base of sociology throughout the curriculum, giving students exposure to research opportunities across several methodological traditions, providing repeated experiences in posing sociological questions, developing theoretical explanations, and bringing data to bear on them.

**Recommendation 5:** Departments should structure the curriculum of required major courses and substantive elective courses to have at least four levels with appropriate prerequisites. At each succeeding level, courses should increase in both depth and integration in the major while providing multiple opportunities for students to develop higher order thinking skills and to improve their written and oral communication skills.

**Recommendation 6:** Within the four-level model, departments should also structure the curriculum to include one (or more) content area or substantive sequences which cut across two or more levels of the curriculum. Departments should design sequences to develop students’ skills in empirical and theoretical analysis along with their knowledge about one or more specialty areas within sociology.

**Recommendation 7:** Departments should structure the curriculum to develop students’ sociological literacy by ensuring that they take substantive courses at the heart of the discipline as well as across the breadth of the field.

**Recommendation 8:** Departments should structure the curriculum to underscore the centrality of race, class, and gender in society and in sociological analysis.
**Recommendation 9:** Departments should structure the curriculum to increase students’ exposure to multicultural, cross-cultural, and cross-national content relevant to sociology.

**Recommendation 10:** Departments should structure the curriculum to recognize explicitly the intellectual connections between sociology and other fields by designing activities to help students integrate their educational experiences across disciplines.

**Recommendation 11:** Departments should encourage diverse pedagogies, including active learning experiences, to increase student engagement in the discipline.

**Recommendation 12:** Departments should offer community and classroom-based learning experiences that develop students’ critical thinking skills and prepare them for lives of civic engagement.

**Recommendation 13:** Departments should offer and encourage student involvement in out-of-class (co- and extra-curricular) learning opportunities.

**Recommendation 14:** Departments should develop effective advising and mentoring programs for majors.

**Recommendation 15:** Departments should promote faculty development and an institutional culture that rewards scholarly teaching and the scholarship of teaching and learning.

**Recommendation 16:** Departments should assess the sociology program on a regular basis using multiple sources of data, including data on student learning.”
For any strategic planning process or program review, you will need the following:

A copy of the department self-study as well as any self study that may have preceded that

A copy of the college catalog (the reviewer[s] can typically access this via CollegeSource)

A copy of university guidelines for external reviews of departments/programs

Copies of syllabi from the department

Copies of all faculty vitae

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

Department budgets

Library journal holdings and evaluation of the book collection

Written statements of concerns from the department as a whole as well as from individual faculty; This can be done via e-mail—it is 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) outline the purpose of the upcoming visit, and 2) ask each faculty member to send the reviewers(s) a brief e-mail. One possible format is: “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 the reviewer(s) needs to consider while doing the review.”

A copy of the assessment plan for the department/program  A helpful document for working on an assessment plan is *Creating an Effective Assessment Plan for the Sociology Major* by Janet Huber Lowry, Carla B. Howery, John P. Myers, Harry Perlstadt, Caroline Hodges Persell, Diane Pike, Charles H. Powers, Shirley A. Scrutchfield, Cynthia M. Siemsen, Barbara Trepagnier, Judith Ann Warner, and Gregory L. Weiss. This can be downloaded at: [http://www.asanet.org/galleries/APAP/Assessment%20Final%20Copy%202005.pdf](http://www.asanet.org/galleries/APAP/Assessment%20Final%20Copy%202005.pdf)

In addition, the following documents may be useful:

A copy of the department handbook

Department meetings minutes

Results of any studies on such topics as faculty, student, and alumni/ae satisfaction with the program
Institution mission statements (this is likely in the college catalog)

Information on student clubs

Newsletters

Collective bargaining agreements

This builds upon material found in *Departmental Evaluation Visits Manual*, Teaching Resources Group, American Sociological Association, 1994. Edited by Edward L. Kain and Charles S. Green, III.
Handout C

SOME POSSIBLE ISSUES FOR A REVIEW

Curriculum
  Structure
  Content

Personnel
  Faculty
  Administrative Support
  Student Help
  Computer
  Other

Dept. Governance and Collegiality

Faculty Effectiveness-Teaching, Research, Service

Facilities and Resources

Role and Effectiveness of Department in Relation to Other Departments and the Institutional Mission
i. **HANDOUT D**

**CONDITIONS OF THE VISIT**

b) Opening Session with Everyone

c) The Visitor Will Likely Ask for Interviews With:
   i) Each Department Faculty Member
   ii) Administration
   iii) Students (Over Food Perhaps, but Without Faculty)
   iv) Chairs of Departments/Programs. With Important Relationships with Sociology
   v) Representative From Computer Center
   vi) Library Representative
   vii) Dept. Staff/secretaries, Etc.
   viii) Exit Interviews with Department And Administration

14) III..Allow Free Time in the Schedule for the Visitor(s)

a) Lodging and Transportation
   i) Hotel or Motel--not Faculty Home
   ii) Transportation Issues

b) Compensation
   i) Guidance from Carla Howery at the ASA Office
   ii) More, If Written Report Is Required

c) Formal Letter Outlining All of the Visit Parameters
   i) Goals--formative Vs. Summative
   ii) All Issues Listed above
   iii) Contents and Dissemination of the Report(s)
   iv) Confirmation of What the Department Is Paying for

d) Chair Should Write a Memo to the Department with the Agenda and a Brief Statement of the Purpose of the Visit

e) These Materials Are Drawn Directly From: *Departmental Evaluation Visits Manual*, Teaching Resources Group, American Sociological Association, 1994, Edited by Edward L. Kain and Charles S. Green, III.