



CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, FULLERTON

Department of Sociology
P.O. Box 6846, Fullerton, CA 92834

March 26, 2014

Response to External Reviewer's Report, Sociology PPR 2006-2013

To: Dr. Sheryl Fontaine, Interim Dean, Humanities and Social Sciences

From: Dr. Carter Rakovski, Acting Department Chair, Sociology

The department appreciates the time and effort spent by the external reviewers. They thoughtfully and seriously listened to the various stakeholders of the Sociology department. Their experience and expertise is evident in their report. The Sociology department has many strengths, which the reviewers enumerate, but we also face challenges.

As the reviewers indicate, we would benefit from stable leadership and support for newly promoted faculty who engage in heavy loads of service and graduate student mentorship. An area of support that could be improved, as indicated in the report, is staff. Faculty do not feel supported by staff. Staff are not feeling utilized or appreciated and have different priorities. I have been interim Chair for about two months, and I have heard mistrust resulting in low morale coming from multiple parties. Communication can be improved by having a Chair, Vice Chair, and other leaders in the department that are supported by staff and stay in their positions long enough to learn the ropes of administration and be able to see through initiatives and build relationships with PT faculty.

Consistency of rigor and standards across SOCI GE courses is something the department is trying to address. Aided by support from the Dean's office, we have been improving our evaluation of PT faculty. We are conducting more frequent classroom visits, including syllabi and assignments in our evaluations, and starting to look at grade inflation. We are also pilot testing and developing a new SOQ instrument. The recommendations about the graduate program (sequencing of courses, content of SOCI 585) will be addressed by the graduate committee.

Each of these initiatives requires more service from our already burdened, small group of FT faculty, some of whom are retiring, have assigned time in other departments, and are leaving (or have left recently) for other universities. We need to hire dedicated teachers and scholars in FT faculty positions and will request searches over the next two academic years.

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Finally, in order to meet our student learning goals, more access to instructional computer labs is needed, preferably a dedicated lab for sociology students.

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