2019 - 2020 Program Review

Program Review - Sociology

2019 - 2020

1. Department Goals - Current Progress: Goal #1: Initiate the Social Justice Studies AA-T:

   This goal is on its way to being met. The AA-T and the required degree course "Introduction to Social Justice Studies" (SJS 300) are currently making their way through FLC's curriculum process.

Goal #2: Develop an internship program:

   The work experience course (Soc 498) has gone through the curriculum process and we now have another mechanism to connect students with internships and other work experience opportunities.

Goal #3: Keep working with other campus departments, committees, and units to implement the college's Equity Statement and accompanying questions.

   This continues to be an aspiration. There does not seem to be almost any visible or intentional use of the document at our college, except as implemented in the Soc 379 course, Making Social Change and possibly the Distance Education plan.

Goal #4: Continue developing a department resource Canvas page.

   This is an ongoing activity.

Goal #5: Assess what kinds of experiences our students are having that may be impacting their success. This data will help us serve our students better. For example, this data could help us understand the benefits or challenges to our students of different modalities at the various sites. The hybrid courses at RCC have seemed to have lower success rates. A survey of sociology course students could help us understand why this is.

   OIR created an excellent survey for our program by major. We would also like to develop an additional survey for any students taking Soc classes, as many more students use Soc classes to meet GE requirements.

Goal #6: Work with the OEI rubric to get our Soc 300 online course ready.

   This is in process. We will also reach out to the new OEI coordinator to get assistance.

Goal #7: Keep working on accessibility for all of our course materials.

   This is still also in process.

2. Department Goals - Future: (Not necessarily in order of importance)

Future Goal #1: Keep working with other campus departments, committees, and units to implement the college's Equity Statement and accompanying questions.

While the statement itself is visible on our website and other locations, if we are not overtly building the ideas of the equity statement into our practices and decisions, it's just a nice looking. If we are not designing equity into the fabric of our college with "intentionality" (Carlson, 2015, p.40) and action, we are making sure it stays out.
Future Goal #2: Expand the Social Justice Studies program to include a Student Scholars internship/Work Experience program, as well as develop a community organizing certificate.

Future Goal #3: Inmate Education @ Folsom Prison and Mule Creek. The sociology department would like to add courses at either Folsom Prison or Mule Creek or both.

Future Goal #4: New Faculty for Sociology and Social Justice Studies.

Future Goal #5: Survey students taking sociology classes, regardless of major, especially and including those who have dropped or failed classes.

Future Goal #6: We would also like to add a research methods course to the sociology offerings so that the Sociology AA-T is not dependent on other departments - even if related - for this

3. Special or Long Term Projects: Long term projects relate to expanding the Social Justice Studies program and SJS student scholars internship/work experience program. We will also eventually work on a community organizing certificate.

We are also looking to add sociology courses to the Inmate Education program.

4. Department/Discipline Plans - Curriculum and Course Sequencing: We continue to offer multiple modalities and are trying different formats at different campuses to see how they work best for students. We have shifted evening courses to the 6-9 time slot. We have considered shifting some Fall only classes (such as Soc 341) to Spring or adding them additionally to Spring, but we have not actually done this yet.

5. Program Development & Revision: Social Justice Studies ADT is moving through the curriculum process and will become an extended part of the sociology program - although SJS is meant to be interdisciplinary and we will be collaborating with other departments to launch and support the program.

We will also be working on the Social Justice Studies Scholars Program to support students doing specific social justice related community work through internships and other work experience opportunities.

6. Percent of SLOs assessed: We have 6 program SLOs. If we use the Graduate Exit Survey data then all of the sociology PSLOs have been assessed.

80% of the course SLOS have been assessed. We began the Soc 379 course Fall 2017 (and it’s only offered in the Fall) and at this point 5 of 7 SLOs have been assessed. Soc 341 was new Fall 2018 and is also only offered in Fall and thus far only taught by adjunct faculty. We are working with that adjunct to get the 4 SLOs assessed.

7. Course SLOs - Synopsis: Overall, the Course SLOs are being met. The only significant finding for the new set of SLO assessments is in relation to the SLO for Soc 301: "Evaluate racism as a system and determine its particular relationship to other structural inequalities and social problems.." Even though the SLO is technically met (82%), it still seems lower than it ought to be.

8. Course SLOs - Strategies for Improvement/Maintenance: In relation to the SLO for Soc 301, the department should consider additional curricular materials in all of the courses that address institutional inequality issues that develop a more thorough understanding of intersectionality. Continue to find ways to encourage reading and incorporating that into their discussion responses.

9. Program SLOs - Synopsis: The Graduate Exit Survey indicates that we are meeting our Program SLOs. The mean responses to each SLO are all above 4. The highest (@4.44) is for the PSLO: Integrate sociological principles and concepts in analyses of social life, social structures, and socio-economic, political, and cultural institutions. The lowest (@4.06) is for "Compare and contrast the major theoretical perspectives in sociology."

Sociology graduates appreciate the faculty in our department:
"X has been truly inspiring during this program. I am now transferring to a UC as a sociology major."

"If it weren't for the amazing sociology and English professors I had I probably wouldn't have continued [at FLC]."
10. Program SLOs - Strategies for Improvement/Maintenance: Our department sociology resource space on Canvas may help us plan better collectively for how to improve (and mostly maintain) our SLO success rates.

We will also revisit the Course SLO for Soc 300 which covers the PSLO for the comparing and contrasting the major theoretical perspectives in society to make sure all Soc 300 courses are addressing this on the individual course level.

11. Improving Course and Program Success Rates - Data Analysis: From the FLC Efficiency Measures data: overall (from Fall 2014 to Spring 2019) program success rate is 69.7% compared to the overall FLC rate of 73.6.1%. Spring 2019 itself was at 76.1% (compared to FLC overall 76.5%), which is indicative of the improving success rate over previous 6 semester and the highest success rate sociology courses have had in 10 semesters.

Our overall online/hybrid course success rates have varied wildly by semester in the past but are currently trending up, even if still lower on average, 62.9.9%, compared to FLC overall online/hybrid 70.9%. F18 and Sp19 success rates (76.9% and 74%), however, show this is moving in a positive direction.

Looking at Student Success and Equity Data: Indigenous students have the highest overall success rate for all sociology course modalities at 76.7% (compared to 65.3% for Indigenous students overall at FLC). African American students' needs are being least met for all Soc modalities at 56.9% compared to an FLC (all modalities) at 59.5%. However, the overall Soc average for online/hybrid for African Americans may be low at 55.6%, but is nevertheless higher than the overall for FLC at 52.1%. Another interesting bit of data is that in fully online sociology courses, African American students are doing better than average online students at 62.5% compared to 61.7%. In Spring 19, African American Students were .8 of a percent % higher (76.9%) than the overall sociology success rate (76.1%) for that semester. Soc success average for Latinx students varies quite a bit, but the overall number is comparable to the FLC Latinx success rate (67.2% to 69.7%). This is a significant shift from previous years (from a low of 60.4% in Spring 2016 compared to 67.4%) and another positive indicator of improving success rates. Our data for BOG fee waiver folks seems to be mostly trending up. One thing that is inexplicably missing from the Success and Equity Data is that 25% of the Soc 379 students for Fall 2018 were African American and highly successful in the class, but this is not reflected in the Equity Data. Help me understand.

One thing that remains frustrating about presenting this data is the same thing we have said repeatedly every year is that looking at snapshots of data don’t tell us much detail about what is happening for students. We are expected to identify student needs without deep or connected data to their experiences. How are we to “improve course and program success rates” without actually collecting data that tells us what is happening for students and why things are happening the way they are? How can we respond to an outcome without sufficient understanding of the cause? If we are going to use this kind of data, it would be nice to see more in-depth statistical analysis that helps us see the more complicated patterns of students' experiences. For example, I would like to know how many online and hybrid students who don’t complete a course actually had computers or internet access at home. Making guesses about what to do to improve success rates without sufficiently detailed information is not data driven decision making and may not address what students actually need.

"Please describe any evidence you have of barriers to success. Examples include lack of access to student support services/labs, infrequent or poorly located or timed offerings, outside challenges, other." I have previously reported that I collect qualitative evidence about issues impacting students, especially those who drop my classes, by emailing them to ask them. I also gather data about barriers when asking students in their formal self-reflections to consider sharing challenges they are experiencing but I do not have the time or support to collect that into a data set and to be able to examine how that relates to the data presented above.

One helpful thing: based on previous ADP requests, OIR graciously surveyed a wide range of students Spring 2019 in several SBSH disciplines and we were able to gain some information about potential barriers to student success. The survey had a smallish set of sociology major respondents from which to analyze barriers, but we were still able to see some potential issues to consider:

- Almost a quarter (23.8%) reported rarely to [only] sometimes having access to healthy food
- 14.2% indicated they [only] sometimes have access to enough food.
- 16.6% of students themselves indicated that having to work was a barrier to their academic goals, as are health issues (12.5%), and childcare (10%).
- 19% of respondents indicated that they [only] sometimes have access to reliable transportation.
- 19% also indicated they [only] sometimes have access to medical care when needed.

40% of the respondents were students of color and 1/3 of them were first generation students.

We are always looking for ways to improve our teaching and our students’ experiences in our classes. All of the faculty members
in our department spend much time in and outside the classroom as researchers and activists on social justice issues and work to bring that understanding into our classrooms and online environments. The only thing (and it’s a big thing) that seems to be missing is a diverse set of faculty.

**12. Improving Course and Program Success Rates - Strategies and Resources Needed:** As knowledgeable and active as our faculty are, we need more faculty of color. It is not sufficient to have excellent instructors who are strong in our field if we are also not more representative of the students we serve. We know that students’ opportunities to see themselves in faculty, especially for marginalized students, enhances excitement for learning, engagement with the college, and mentoring opportunities, and particularly when coalesced with a robust equity infused college culture and institutional practices, are positively related to student success.

Please, much more computer, Canvas, internet support and orientation for students. If there can be a much more thorough orientation as part of student registration and then have on-going online support especially at RCC that would help some.

Our department regularly uses multiple methods and modes of instruction which includes collaborative learning through group work and peer connections.

***We continue to advocate for free laptops for students and guaranteed access to wifi - especially for students at RCC. There is limited time for students to use the computer lab at RCC and many students do not have computers at home or wifi. We need to find out what students need at home to succeed. Our department asks for FLC to look for ways to support students having both computers and internet access at their homes so they can do their work (e.g.,) when their kids are sleeping or when they come home from work.

The department is also requesting Folsom Lake College to hire an Accessibility Specialist. We are interested in improving the experiences and the scores of our DSPS students in our on-ground, online, and partially online classes. Because of the vast and complex accessibility requirements, we believe that hiring an Accessibility Specialist will help us to be more knowledgeable about coursework that meets the needs of our DSPS students, while removing barriers that may impede their success.

**13. Suggestions for Improving the ADP/PR process:**

1. As mentioned above, it is not so simple to look at a snapshot of data that doesn’t tell us very much about what is happening for students and then be expected to identify student needs based on that. If we are going to use this kind of data, it would be nice to see more in-depth statistical analysis that helps us see the more complicated patterns. It would also be helpful to also have a deeper set of data that cover bigger picture issues that impact success to get a sense of (e.g.) how many students have transportation or childcare needs that are not being met. Our OIR student survey data indicates that these may very well be issues. Making guesses based on comparing success rates may not address what students actually need.

2. We would like to see a question on the ADP and Program Review forms that asks departments and units to be specific in how they are considering FLC’s Equity Statement in their curriculum, programming, and decision making - perhaps using the questions that accompany the statement itself. Departments could be asked to specifically show how what they do in their curriculum and classrooms supports the statement and how they make use of the various equity and social justice resources on campus.

**14. Is your ADP complete and ready for review by the Dean and Vice President?**

N/A - Completing Program Review

Program Review Questions (skip if not completing program review)

**15. Mission Statement:**

The FLC Sociology Department is dedicated to the full realization of FLC’s Equity Statement and to advancing social justice at our college, in the communities we serve, and in the larger world. In this context, the department introduces students to the sociological imagination, connecting their individual lives to the social world around them, while building a comprehensive foundation for understanding sociological concepts and theories. Through excellent and innovative teaching, the sociology department enhances critical analytical, research, writing, and communication skills which students use to evaluate the historic, economic, cultural, and political contexts of social phenomena, issues, and problems. Students are encouraged to push their comfort boundaries, challenge structural and institutional inequalities, and to become active shapers of society - ready to engage in an increasingly complex and diverse world.

**16. Pre-Requisite and Co-Requisite Validation:**

N/A

**17. Maintaining Program Currency:**

The FLC Sociology department continues to expand course offerings even with little growth in FTE.

The joint Sociology/FLC Makerspace course, Making Social Change (Soc 379), is indicative of the innovative, creative, and collaborative work being done in our department. This course connects making, technology, and tools to the seemingly disparate world of sociology and expands the possibilities for interdisciplinary curriculum development and hands-on teaching and learning. We initiated this course in the Fall of 2017 and it has received enthusiastic attention from the founder of the
Maker Faire, as well as from the Faculty Association of California Community Colleges and other faculty around the state. While it is unique in the world, it is also a transferable course making it not only innovative, but practical as well.

The department also added Soc 341 (Sex and Gender in the U.S.) to the line-up in Fall 2018 to not only fill in a standard lower division sociology offering, but also to fulfill requirements for Social Justice Studies transfer degree.

The development of the Social Justice Studies degree is also a reasonable part of maintaining program currency by connecting sociology to other fundamentally important contemporary issues relating to equity and social justice.

Almost half (8/19 or 42%) of our sections in a calendar year are online or hybrid, providing additional opportunities for students to connect to sociology courses and fit them into their schedules. While this is a decent offering of online options, we should still consider if the hybrid versions of our courses are being appropriately located based on student need.

18. Evidence of Program Relevancy: As long as equity and social justice issues continue to have significant impacts on the students and communities FLC and other colleges serve, sociology and its accompanying critical, analytic, and applied social change frameworks and skills will be relevant for every college.

Finally, since the first sociology AA-T degree was awarded in 2016 we have seen increases in awards each year and a doubling of awarded degrees from 2017-18 to 2018-19.