

## I. Basic Facts and Description of the Unit

### a. *Mission and Goals*

The Sociology Department offers the only joint Sociology doctoral program in the country (with KSU), as well as a strong, experiential, criminology-focused undergraduate program. The mission of the Department of Sociology is to produce, disseminate, and apply sociological knowledge. For faculty, enacting this mission is reflected in scholarly research, quality teaching, active involvement in the profession, external funding, and by publications in refereed journals, scholarly books and monographs.

For the administrative staff, enacting this mission is represented by the clear, timely and transparent communication, analysis, and other skills relevant to supporting faculty and students. These include an understanding of, and capacity to navigate efficiently and effectively within, university processes and procedures, as well as competence operating within university information and technologies systems.

The Department of Sociology plays a significant role in the delivery of a high-quality and engaging doctoral program, undergraduate major, as well as contributing to a general education curriculum designed to boost retention and student learning. The department also plays a major role in the advancement of experiential and online learning in collaboration with community partners and in support of multiple interdisciplinary programs on campus, including Biomedical Sciences, the Active Research Methods Lab, EXL, Women's Studies, the Center for Conflict Management, and more.

The breadth and depth of these activities creates higher expectations for staff and other support functions than a more traditional, and less innovative, department might reasonably expect.

### b. *Services*

#### • Critical Partners

Administrative staff maintain critical partnerships with college and university advisors, the EXL Center, and the BCAS Office of the Dean. Staff rely on obtaining timely and accurate information from such other partners as the registrar, financial aid, graduate school, and computer support. Outside of UA, our most critical partner is the administrative staff of KSU's Department of Sociology, with whom we offer a joint doctoral degree. Sociology is a contributing department in the new joint Criminology & Criminal Justice and Criminal Intelligence Analysis majors.

Rob Peralta is a member of the Pre-Health Committee at UA. This fall Juan Xi will work with the Residence Life & Housing to conduct research on meditation, mental health and academic performance among UA students. Last year, Dr. Xi's research methods class did data collection and analysis for Project Ujima, a local non-profit. Rob Peralta is partnering with North Star Neighborhood Reentry Resource Center in Cleveland for data collection purposes.

Below is a list of agencies where we place our undergraduate interns.

Summit County Battered Women’s Shelter	Victim Assistance Program
Cuyahoga County Adult Probation	Waite Hill Police
North Royalton Police Department	Pathway Caring for Children
United States Marshals Service	Summit County Probation
Summit County Juvenile Court	Stow Municipal Court
Summit County Prosecutor’s Office	Ohio Army National Guard
Clerk of Courts—Stow Municipal Ct.	Oriana House, INC
Youngstown Police Department	Ohio Civil Rights Commission

- Customers or End-Users of Your Services

The primary and most critically important customers for the Department of Sociology are the students who either enroll in our courses or pursue one of our programs, or both. Our administrative support staff play a crucial role in our efforts to serve these customers.

- Key Performance Analysis

While the unit is evaluated on the basis of numerous criteria (enrollment, course and program completions, publications, grant funding, etc.), the administrative staff are evaluated annually as a part of the performance review process established by HR. Over the most recent three years we lost one long-serving administrative assistant, went through a many month period without any staff support, and recently hired a new administrative assistant whose performance evaluations have been good. To our knowledge, HR does not compare these results to peer institutions.

- Brief Assessment

The most important trend to note is the instability of administrative support, since high-quality support develops over time as a staff colleague comes to more fully understand the department’s programs and culture. This creates additional challenges for tasks that are highly demanding and often time sensitive.

c. *Resources*

- Personnel

Administrative support in Sociology for the coming year will include an interim department chair (from the Dean’s Office), administrative assistant, faculty adviser, and student assistants (on workstudy).

- Financials

5-year administrative trends (see summary at top of attached spreadsheet) show the department Supplies & Services allocation has dropped 53% (-11,939), Travel & Hospitality allocation has also dropped 53% (-10,716) and Full Time Staff allocation has dropped 33% (-14,555).

Actual expenditures over these five years very close map onto budget allocations (see tables in attached spreadsheet pasted from Peoplesoft). Over the period the unit has been frugal with Supplies & Service and Travel & Hospitality: giving back to the university a 5-year total of \$17,597 in unspent Supplies & Services and \$16,861 in unspent Travel & Hospitality.

The key takeaway is that the unit has been financially responsible, finding ways to do more with less in support of the university's efforts to recover from overspending on non-academic activities.

- **Equipment and Technology**  
The department jointly supervises the Active Research Methods Lab as well as the usual assortment of printers, copiers, and equipment required to conduct research in the discipline.
- **Space**  
Sociology is located on the second floor of Olin Hall. Their main hallway includes rooms 247-266. They also occupy 259, 270, 275, 277 and share both 276 (conference room) and 273 (ARM Lab) with other units.

## **II. Future Plans**

### *a. Potential Changes*

Sociology has been finding innovative ways to support our doctoral program despite declining institutional support for many years now. One change we hope to see is a commitment by the institution to reverse this trend and support the program. In terms of administrative support, this would specifically mean increasing GA allocations to ensure our stipend offers are competitive enough to secure the high-quality student who are already attracted to our program on the basis of our strong faculty.

Hiring a full time chair from within our discipline is perhaps the most important potential change we anticipate making a difference. Without such a chair it becomes even more difficult to craft innovative responses to the challenges we face.

### *b. Trends*

UA can build (in part) on our strengths to turn the new joint Criminology & Criminal Justice and Criminal Intelligence Analysis degrees into destination majors, because these are unique, innovative and interdisciplinary degrees in a growing occupational field. Our strengths in health and medicine can also contribute to UA capturing an increasing share of an area that includes ten of the fastest twenty growing occupations today. We are also well-positioned to contribute significantly to the newly emerging Global Studies degree.

At the graduate level, there is high demand for doctorates in Sociology, particularly since three of our four specialty areas are those with the highest demand in academic and nonacademic job markets. Developing a 4+1 degree will further enhance this competitive advantage.

In terms of administrative support, responding to these trends will require increasing our GA funding, operational budget (professional travel in particular), and hiring an innovative and dynamic chair from within our discipline.