

Submission date: 2/7/2020

Program/s in this review: Sociology BA & BS

Specialized accrediting agency (if applicable): _____

Campuses where the program is delivered: Anchorage _____

Members of the program review committee:

- Zeynep Kilic, Professor & Chair, Anchorage
- Karl Pfeiffer, Professor, Anchorage
- Nelta Edwards, Professor, Anchorage
- Chad Farrell, Professor, Anchorage

1. Centrality of Program Mission and Supporting Role (700 words or less)

In 1953, anthropologist Margaret Lantis wrote an essay in the *American Sociological Review* lamenting the lack of sociologists in Alaska. She laid out an array of still-relevant opportunities for sociological inquiry in the state, including population growth and urbanization, rural-to-urban migration, immigration, and ethnic relations. Presciently, she mentioned the diversity of Anchorage schools as a particular area of sociological interest. Soon after her call, Anchorage Community College was offering sociology classes (first catalog year, 1957) and Sociology was one of the first disciplinary specialty areas--along with Psychology and Economics--to offer both BA and BS degrees at Anchorage Senior College in the early 1970s. In the present day, the UAA Sociology program imparts valuable skills necessary for the 21st century workplace, including those found in high-growth health fields. For example, the MCAT recently introduced major new sections on concepts from the behavioral and social sciences, targeting areas such as data-based and statistical reasoning, social inequality, sociocultural determinants of health, social attitudes and processes.

As the Sociology program prepares students to work collaboratively in complex and culturally diverse organizations, it contributes to other academic programs in the process. During the review period, Sociology faculty taught four seminars for the Honors College and Sociology offerings were cross listed with Health Sciences, Justice, Women's Studies, and Political Science. All International Studies BA students take two Sociology courses at minimum, with opportunities to take more as mastery courses or in the global social sciences track. Similarly, six Sociology courses appear in the social sciences track of the Environment and Society BS program and three Sociology courses count towards the Women's Studies minor. Six Sociology classes appear as Tier 2 GER courses and another six were included in the initial round of courses to fulfil the diversity and inclusion GER. Several other Sociology courses also align with these goals and help the university meet the goals of the Diversity Inclusion Action Plan.

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, employment opportunities for sociologists are expected to grow 9% between 2018-28, faster than the average for all occupations. Additionally, the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development projects that jobs related to Sociology (i.e., Social Scientists, Community and Social Services Occupations) will grow between 1.8% and 8.5% between 2016-26. Because 'sociologist' as a job title is generally limited to those with a post-baccalaureate degree it captures only a small amount of the labor market demand for sociological training. The skill-set sociology graduates acquire are applicable in the fastest growing occupations in health, management and business fields. Between 2013 and 2017 our graduates' job titles ranged from teacher, social worker, market research analyst, nurse practitioner, mental health counselor, to community

association manager, health education specialist, and database administrator, among others. Among the various employment categories our graduates occupy in the state, all but two are expected to increase in job openings until 2026, with over 100,000 additional positions projected overall. A broader set of occupation destinations provide flexibility to our graduates and hence facilitate agile responses to dynamic labor market needs, compared to more specialized degrees. According to AK Department of Labor, almost 75% of Sociology graduates are employed in Alaska one year after graduation and 54% after 5 years, which is a significant contribution to our state's economy and labor market. A sociology degree from UAA is valuable and accrues in earnings across many metrics.

Our faculty have collaborated with the Mayor's Office, ASD, Welcoming Anchorage, Anchorage Community Land Trust, Alaska Community Action on Toxics, Association of Alaska Housing Authorities, Alaska Housing Finance Corporation, Refugee Assistance and Immigration Services, APU, Anchorage Museum, Alaska Food Policy Council, Alaska World Affairs Council, Department of Corrections, People Mover, NeighborWorks Anchorage, and the Homelessness, Housing and Neighborhood Development Commission. Sociology faculty are very much integrated in their local communities. *(See video testimonials on our department's webpage to see how Sociology program impacts our city, majors and non-majors).*

Our department has also been proactive in exposing our students to nationally and internationally recognized scholars and creative works through organizing public events, as well as themselves being invited to present, which contribute to the commons and further establish our relevance on and off campus. *(694 words)*

2. Program Demand (including service to other programs), Efficiency, and Productivity (7 year trend; 1400 words or less)

Seven-year degree and/or certificate awards trend: The Sociology program has delivered 86 baccalaureate degrees over the review period, an average of 12 degrees per academic year. Over the past three years, the annual average has dipped slightly (11). However, the ratio of Sociology degrees to CAS degrees has actually increased over the past three years, indicating that the Sociology program is successful relative to peers in graduating its majors during a challenging period.

Credits Per Degree (Average Credits Earned): Sociology graduates have earned an average of 105 credits per degree during the review period. This compares favorably to the CAS average of 119 credits per degree, indicating that the Sociology program is successful at graduating its majors efficiently (see UAA 2020 Goal 3). Bolstering this conclusion, the 6-year graduation rate for UAA Sociology majors was 50% among the 2010-2014 cohorts of first-time, full-time, baccalaureate degree-seeking students. This is 18 percentage points higher than UAA CAS (32%), 22 points higher than UAA (28%), and 15 points higher than the UAA 2020 goal of 35%.

Seven-year majors or program enrollment trend: There was an annual average of 59 Sociology majors during the review period. The number of Sociology majors declined from 69 in 2013 to 45 in 2019, a trend coinciding with declines in majors across CAS. In response, the Sociology chair spearheaded a recruitment effort in collaboration with UAA Advancement. This resulted in outreach videos of students, alumni, faculty, community partners and members discussing the Sociology program and its accomplishments (can be found on the department webpage).

Course pass rates: Consistent with the UAA 2020 goal to "[i]ncrease the ratio of credits students earned to credits attempted by 5 percentage points by 2020," Sociology pass rates increased by 5.4 points between 2013 (76.6%) and 2019 (82.0%). The overall pass rate for lower-division Sociology courses was 80.4% during the review period, which slightly exceeds the aggregate pass rate of 78.9% for the other CAS social science baccalaureate programs

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(ANTH, ENVI/GEOG, PS, PSY). Similarly, the pass rate for upper-division Sociology courses was 86.1%, compared to 85.2% for the other CAS social sciences.

Internal demand: The Sociology program generates considerable demand from students outside the major. For lower-division Sociology courses, the highest enrollments originated primarily from CoH programs:

- Nursing Science (487)
- General Program (330)
- Psychology (292)
- Health Sciences (236)
- Dental Hygiene (193)
- Social Work (192)
- Justice (149)

For upper-division Sociology courses, the highest enrollments originated from programs in both CAS and CoH:

- Psychology (126)
- Environment and Society (118)
- Justice (116)
- International Studies (95)
- Health Sciences (46)
- Political Science (45)
- Nursing Science (32)

Seven-year Student Credit Hour (SCH) production trend: The Sociology program produced 3,709 SCH in 2013, which declined to 2,430 SCH by 2019. This downward trend is largely accounted for by an even steeper decline in FTE Sociology faculty during the review period. When comparing the ratio of Sociology SCH to CAS SCH, the Sociology program produced 28 SCH for every 1,000 CAS SCH in 2013. This dipped to 22 per 1,000 in 2015 but was back at or near 2013 levels (~28 per 1,000) in the past two years.

SCH/FTEF: The Sociology program has generated substantial SCH even relative to its workhorse CAS peers. It produced an annual average of 669 SCH/FTEF during the review period, 12% higher than the annual average for CAS FTEF (597) and 35% higher than the annual average for UAA FTEF (495).

Enrollment/Full Time Equivalent Faculty (FTEF): Consistent with its SCH/FTEF productivity, Sociology generates substantial enrollments. It produced an annual average of 222 enrollments per FTEF during the review period, 5% higher than the annual average enrollments for CAS FTEF (212) and 27% higher than the annual average enrollments for UAA FTEF (175).

FTEF/FTEF: The Sociology program has educated an annual average of 22 FTE students per FTE faculty during the review period, slightly higher than the average of 20 FTEF/FTEF in CAS and a great deal higher than the 16 FTEF/FTEF for UAA overall. To put this in perspective, in January 2019 Chancellor Sandeen announced a goal to “demonstrate progress toward peer levels of student/faculty ratio over a 3-year period.” According to the chancellor, our peer institutions have an average of 18 students per faculty member. Thus, the Sociology program

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had already well exceeded the chancellor's 3-year goal for student/faculty ratios in every year of the review period.

Class Size (Average Class Size): Average class sizes in the Sociology program ranged in the mid-20s (mean=24.6) over the review period, which compares favorably to both CAS (23.3) and UAA (19.1). Much of this advantage is due to lower-division Sociology classes (31.3) which, on average, attract roughly 3 more students per lower-division section than CAS (27.3) and 10 more students per lower-division section than UAA (20.6). Average upper-division Sociology class sizes (15.6) are roughly equivalent to upper-division class sizes in CAS (16.0) and UAA (16.1).

Cost/SCH: The average cost per Sociology SCH ranged from \$148-\$202 (mean=\$173). This is similar to CAS, which had a per SCH cost ranging from \$157-\$182 (mean=\$171) and is considerably lower than the per SCH cost university-wide, which ranged from \$192-\$208 (mean=\$200).

Tuition Revenue/SCH: Sociology tuition revenue (per SCH) has exceeded costs every year, which was also the case for CAS overall. It has not always been the case university-wide, however, as costs have exceeded revenue in three of the last five years. Furthermore, the ratio of revenue to costs is larger in the Sociology program than at the college or university level. In 2015, Sociology tuition revenue was 23% higher than per SCH costs; by 2019, Sociology tuition revenue was 29% higher than costs. The corresponding percentages for CAS were +15% (2015) and +23% (2019) and at the university level they were -7% (2015) and +10% (2019). In short, Sociology stands out as an efficient, productive, and cost-effective program whether you compare it to its home college or UAA overall.

External demand: Sociology alumni are employed in high-demand areas such as health, business, and management. Below find occupational areas with projected 2016-2026 growth rates appearing in parentheses (AK Department of Labor); job titles of selected Sociology alumni are matched to occupational areas using the U.S. Department of Labor's O*NET OnLine Occupation Search.

- Administrative Services Managers (+7.2%)
 - Administrative Manager
 - Office Manager and Senior Service Associate
- Chief Executives (+6.5%)
 - President/CEO
 - Principal & Managing Partner
- Community Health Workers (+17.1%)
 - Network Coordinator
 - Study Coordinator
- General and Operations Managers (+4.5%)
 - Policy Director
- Health Educators (+11.4%)
 - Health & Nutrition Specialist
 - Public Health Specialist
- Market Research Analysts and Marketing Specialists (+8.7%)
 - Brand Strategist
 - Local & National Sales
- Marketing Managers (+4.5%)
 - Sports Marketing Manager
- Public Relations and Fundraising Managers (+7.0%)
 - Communications/Outreach Manager

- Communications/Engagement Coordinator
- Community Relations Manager
- Public Relations Specialists (+4.2%)
 - Public Relations Specialist
- Social and Community Service Managers (+8.9%)
 - Direct Service Advocate
 - Program Manager

Alumni listed above work for Adidas Global Basketball, Alaska Division of Public Health, Alaska Magazine, Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium, Anchorage Community Land Trust, Boxelder Consulting, Bering Straits Regional Housing Authority, Cook Inlet Tribal Council, Demo Solutions, Element Agency, Kawerak, NAMI Anchorage, STAR, Office of Alaska State Senate Minority Leader Tom Begich, Oregon Health and Science University, Providence Health & Services, Southcentral Foundation, Stone Soup Group, Teck Alaska Incorporated, Strategic Prevention Solutions, The Boardroom.

As evidenced above, the Sociology program prepares students to work collaboratively in organizations characterized by complexity, rapid change and high levels of cultural diversity. A 2018 survey of business executives and hiring managers indicates that they prioritize skills that are central to our program: teamwork skills with diverse groups (87% rated as very important), critical thinking and analytic reasoning (84%), complex problem solving (75%), quantitative reasoning (55%), ethical judgement in decision making (87%), and applied knowledge in real-world settings (79%). High impact and applied learning practices are also central to hiring decisions such as internships (94% said more likely to hire), writing intensive education (82% rated more likely to hire), field-based projects in diverse communities (83%) and service learning with community organizations (78%). The ability to analyze and solve problems with people of different backgrounds and cultures has also increased in importance among employers in recent years. Our alumni honed these proficiencies as UAA Sociology students and now work in a variety of fields that utilize sociological skills. (1398 words)

3. Program Quality, Improvement and Student Success (1500 words or less)

Currency of the curriculum: Sociology BA requirements include four core and two research courses while Sociology BS has seven required core courses in addition to Diversity and Inequality courses for both degrees. Of these nine distinct courses, five have been extensively revised and updated since 2018. The remaining courses are currently in the process of curricular revisions to be updated in Spring 2020. Our Program has had an Educational Effectiveness Assessment Plan during the entire EPR period (2013-2020) which was most recently reviewed and approved by the Faculty Senate Academic Assessment Committee in 2018.

Innovative program design: The Sociology Program has always been committed to innovative program design. In response to changing priorities in higher education, data-driven evaluation of student success, and nationally identified (American Sociological Association) best-practices for Sociology Degree granting programs, UAA's Sociology program developed and initiated a Sociology Capstone Course (SociologyA488) required for all Sociology majors in 1994. This was a full decade before capstone courses were required by UAA as a general education requirement in 2004. As part of the Sociology Capstone course, Sociology majors have taken the nationally standardized Educational Testing Services (ETS) major field exam in sociology since 1999. The resulting 20 years of data has been used to inform ongoing evaluation and innovation for the Sociology Program, particularly with the incorporation of high-impact best practices: portfolios, community-based service-learning, student research, and student internships. In addition, Sociology BA, BS, and minor programs were most recently completely updated and revised in early 2019. Eight (of 11) of the High Impact Educational Practices are currently adapted in our program offerings (such as eportfolios, diversity/global learning, service-learning etc.). Our faculty's work with ewolf has been featured in USDE ROLL grant supported Trail Guides twice.

Availability and indications of quality of distance offerings: At the beginning of the review period (2013), the Sociology Program had 3 online/distance delivered courses available to students. Only one course, Introduction to Sociology (SociologyA101) was core to the major and minor programs. At present (2019), 4 of 7 core courses are available as online/distance delivered courses. The Sociology minor may be done entirely online. Three of 4 faculty offer online/distance delivered courses. Two of these faculty were awarded Technology Fellowships during the 2012-2013 academic year, specifically for the development of online/distance courses. A total of 8 courses (lower division - SociologyA101, SociologyA201; upper division - SociologyA307, SociologyA342, SociologyA343, SociologyA347, SociologyA361, SociologyA402) are now available distance/online.

Program Student Learning Outcomes assessment:

The following are Sociology Program Student Learning Outcomes and assessment indicators from the 2019 Sociology Program Educational Effectiveness Assessment Plan.

1. Demonstrate decision-making skills appropriate to evidence-based identification, understanding, and amelioration of social problems.
2. Demonstrate fundamental technical proficiency in social science research in preparation for graduate level training or direct employment in professional fields utilizing the methods and analytical skills of the social sciences.
3. Demonstrate ability to work collaboratively in preparation for work in organizations characterized by complexity, rapid change, and high levels of cultural diversity.

Indicator: ETS Scores – National institutional scoring norms for the ETS Major Field Test in Sociology for 2019 were developed from 142 institutions and 7,065 sociology students who took the test between 2012-2018. The UAA Sociology Program's institutional score during this time period averaged slightly above the 80th percentile, reaching 97th percentile in 2016. The data indicate that our students have strong disciplinary training that is competitive with comparable institutions, in preparation for graduate schools, professional schools, and employment.

Indicator: Student Research – Student research activities include work submitted for the Pacific Sociological Association (PSA) Regional Conferences, Student Showcase, the Undergraduate Research Symposium, ISER Policy Research Awards, EPSCoR Social Demography Internships, Second Bridge Scholarships, NIH/BUILD-EXITO, and research projects required as part of major coursework. Number of student projects have been consistently over 30 during the review period, with 100% of graduating majors participating in research in the last three years. Percentage of graduating majors participating in practica, internships and community service-learning projects have ranged from 28 to 75% over the course of the review period.

Indicator: Alumni Survey – The initial response rate was 36.22% (N=71). Results indicate:

- More than half already had jobs lined up by graduation and a majority found a job in less than 9 months.
- Most report using skills acquired in the Sociology major (analysis, collecting data, writing reports, etc.)
- Majority are satisfied with their jobs
- 44% pursued more education and certification after graduation
- Satisfaction with degree: majority of responses are in the A (agree) and SA (strongly agree) categories for Qs: I am satisfied with my degree, I would recommend UAA SOC, etc.
- Satisfaction with faculty: most agree that faculty were knowledgeable, fair, respectful, mentored students, etc.
- 61% carried out their own research while enrolled at UAA and 51% worked in the community
- Alumni feedback suggested improvements to university advising which we internally addressed by assigning one of our faculty to track and guide our majors/minors to graduation in a timely manner. This proactive approach has benefited students greatly as the faculty advisor was able to identify tailored pathways through petitions for students unaware of opportunities.

- Alumni feedback also suggests that our program has been successful in areas identified as drivers of student engagement by EAB (mentorship and personalized attention, research involvement, engaging professors, etc.).

Indicator: Reference Letters – An estimated 220 letters of reference were written for graduating Sociology Majors during the review period. These included letters for graduate school, law school, medical school, other professional programs, and employment. This demonstrates that the Sociology Program Faculty has a high degree of confidence in the training received by our graduates and that our graduates depend on us to facilitate their career advancement.

How well the program is doing on Student Success and what it is doing to facilitate it: The UAA Fall 2019 graduating class of Sociology Majors provides an example of the program’s commitment to Student Success. All five of our graduates were women (71% overall since 1999). Three out of five were non-traditional students with children or grandchildren. One student was African American. One was Alaska Native (10% overall since 1999). One was a veteran of the armed services. One was a student athlete. Four out of five had full-time jobs at some time while completing their college degrees. They collectively took at least 21 courses online. Their success is a positive reflection of the flexibility of the department, individualized academic advising by tenured faculty, the Sociology program’s emphasis on research, experiential learning, community-based service learning, a required capstone course, and active support for student development of applied skills with direct application to the job market. Students receive significant individual support and personal attention to successfully complete their degrees and professional goals.

Student accomplishments: In addition to student accomplishments noted above, over the review period our graduates went on to graduate school at Northwestern University, Colorado State University, the Ohio State University, University of Minnesota, University of Calgary, UAA, University of Arizona, Arizona State University, the University of North Dakota (School of Medicine and Health Sciences), and the University of Nebraska Medical Center, among others. *(1183 words)*

4. Program Duplication / Distinctiveness (300 words or less)

The UAA Sociology program is the only baccalaureate sociology program in the University of Alaska system (UAF offers a Sociology minor and UAS offers an interdisciplinary BA in Social Sciences). While there are no duplicate Sociology BA/BS programs, UAA Sociology has sought to collaborate across MAUs, working with UAF/UAS Sociology faculty to align lower-division GER Sociology courses. Additionally, UAA Sociology routinely advises students to strategically petition UAF/UAS Sociology courses for applicable areas of the major, especially if it can clear pathways to graduation. For example, one of our 2019 graduates successfully petitioned to apply a UAF Sociology course to the UAA Sociology Diversity and Inequality requirement.

In regard to distinctiveness, no other social science program in the state of Alaska provides our unique mix of research-oriented courses. While other social science programs often require students to take methods and statistics, only the UAA Sociology program trains students in demographic methods in addition to traditional quantitative courses. These analytical skills make our students competitive and employable, as illustrated by alumni feedback:

“My masters was relatively easy because of the solid research background I had.”

“Since UAA [I have been] hired as a researcher, worked on several projects, been featured on tv and radio regarding publications, and regarded as a knowledgeable researcher because of my skills from the UAA Sociology Department.”

“My undergrad at UAA in Soc really helped me in grad school even though I changed fields ... I feel that my soc degree was one of the best investments I have ever made.”

A UAA Sociology Alumni survey identified that our graduates use research skills at their current job; such as collecting data (61%), conducting quantitative (48%) and qualitative (47%) data analysis, developing a research design (33%), managing research projects (28%), and writing research reports (72%). *(296 words)*

5. Summary Analysis (500 words or less)

Our faculty research has been recognized internationally and directly contributed to our local community (e.g., Dr. Farrell's work on diversity, see video on Department webpage). Our department has contributed to both UAA and the state economy through branding activities such as international conferences (ASFS/AFHVS 2019, \$1 million+), award winning creative works (Tables of Istanbul, documentary), international fellowships (Fulbright) as well as external (Institute of Turkish Studies, Turkish Cultural Foundation) and internal grants (Innovate), and through serving on executive boards of professional associations (ASFS) and national research grant panels such as Fulbright and National Endowment for the Arts. Our faculty has also received teaching and mentorship recognition on campus such as the Professor of the Year, Chancellor's Awards for Excellence, and the Office of Undergraduate Research Faculty Exemplar Award. Sociology faculty diligently work towards a better campus by being active citizens in university governance through their work in the Faculty Senate, UNAC, Chancellor and Provost search committees, IRB, UAB, and Promotion and Tenure Review committees, as well as contributing to important initiatives such as the Multicultural Postdoc, Women and Gender Studies program, International Studies program, International and Intercultural Learning Outcomes, and the UAA Chancellor's Working Group to Address Gender and Violence. We have offered scholarly productivity and writing workshops on and off campus. Our work across campus is a further testament to our desire to contribute to and collaborate with other programs.

Sociology continues to meet the UAA 2020 strategic plan's goals for student success (providing high quality instruction, mentoring undergraduate research, retaining and guiding students to graduation through individualized advising, creating a respectful campus environment), excellence (in teaching, service and scholarship, engaging our community partners, evolving program to meet current needs such as distance delivery and high impact teaching practices), access (reducing barriers for students by streamlining program requirements and decreasing time to degree, accessible course design, offering ASD access to sociology faculty, participating in all high school programming on campus), and affordability (such as using Open Educational Resources, minimizing program fees). Diversity and Inclusion Student Learning Outcomes are also very much integral to our program and are highlighted in all of our courses and curriculum updates. Our philosophy is fully aligned with UAA's mission in all areas from teaching and research to engagement and creative expression.

The UAA Sociology program has established a consistent stream of graduates and has done so efficiently; it has exceeded the UAA 2020 goals for six-year graduation rates and has exceeded the Chancellor's goals for student-to-faculty ratios; it generates considerable demand outside the major and produces more student credit hours per faculty than is typical across the university; its tuition revenue exceeds the costs of instruction even as it delivers courses costing less per student credit hour than the university average. It has accomplished all of this while simultaneously garnering local, national, and international recognition for its research. In short, UAA Sociology is a solid, sustainable, "right-sized" program which has contributed greatly to our university, local community, and to the state of Alaska. *(499 words)*