# Undergraduate Assessment Report

In 2018, the Sociology Department neglected to do our assessment tasks at the undergraduate level. This was perhaps a product of a transition in department head to an interim head who is now turning the job over to the permanent head, Michael Dreiling. This is on his immediate to-do list for winter 2019. Here I report what we did do the previous year.

In 2017, the Sociology Department assessed departmental Learning Outcome #3. This objective states that “Students will be proficient in basic research methods including interviews, direct observation, content analysis, and surveys. They will know how to collect and analyze data, and how to identify appropriate methods for answering different sociological questions.” The assessment plan comprised two strategies. First, the assessment committee evaluated department syllabi to assess which of sociology courses contribute to this learning outcome. Second the assessment committee administered a survey to students in three sociology classes to evaluate their understanding of basic research methods. In general, we found that sociological research methods are addressed throughout the curriculum and that students with more exposure to sociology curriculum, especially curriculum focused on research methods, proved more proficient in basic research methods. The full report is provided as a separate document attached to this email.

# Graduate Learning Outcomes

The sociology department only has a PhD program. The learning outcomes for this program are:

1. Demonstrate mastery of core sociological knowledge and knowledge of several sub-fields within sociology.
2. Become proficient in empirical data analysis.
3. Demonstrate independent scientific thinking and advance knowledge within the discipline of sociology.
4. Demonstrate effective oral and written communication skills.
5. Understanding ethical issues and responsibilities, particularly with regard to human subject research.
6. Professionalization into the discipline of sociology.

# Graduate Degree Assessment Plans

The sociology department already has a number of practices in place that help to assess the graduate learning outcomes (LO). These practices are:

1. Three years of coursework that covers core sociological knowledge (LO 1), sub-field specialties (LO 1), methods of empirical data analysis (LO 2), ethical issues in sociology (LO 5) and professionalization (LO 6).
2. An MA paper in the second year of the program that demonstrates independent and original research that contributes to the discipline (LO 3). This paper requires students to demonstrate mastery of sociological knowledge (LO 1) and proficiency in empirical data analysis (LO 2). It also is an assessment of a student’s written communication skills (LO 4) and their grasp of ethical issues in research involving human subjects (LO 5).
3. A written comprehensive examination that tests a student’s mastery of knowledge within at least one substantial sub-field of sociology (LO 1) and ability to communicate information in written form (LO 4).
4. Completion of the dissertation which is an original and independent piece of research (LO 3) for which students must demonstrate mastery of sociological knowledge (LO 1) and proficiency in empirical data analysis (LO 2). It also is an assessment of a student’s written communication skills (LO 4) and their grasp of ethical issues in research involving human subjects (LO 5). Students must also defend the dissertation orally (LO 4).
5. Annual workshops led by the DGS that cover different aspects of professionalization (LO 6).
6. A colloquia series that students are invited to participate in. This is often used to present the results of the MA paper or to deliver a practice job talk. The Q&A session after such talk is divided into a regular Q&A session and a feedback and advice session. (LO 4, LO 6).