

Assessment Report for Student Learning  
Sociology Major  
2015-2016 Academic Year

July 18, 2016

**Executive Summary**

This Assessment Report for the Sociology major assesses student learning during the 2015-2016 academic year. **Assessment results indicate that students continue to perform at an excellent level for the Learning Goal #1, and remain at an adequate level for Learning Goal #3. Learning Goal #2 was not measured this year (see explanation below).**

**FY16 Goals – Sociology & OL**

Goal 2 - Expand performance learning in OL and SOC classes

Goal 5 – Build and market a traditional OL minor

Goal 6 – Market the PACE CJ certificate program

Goal 7 – Complete search to fill open, tenure-track position in Sociology (theory, globalization expert)

Goal 8 – Develop Leadership Center (LC) programming

**Student Learning Goals**

The learning goals for the Sociology major are:

1. Students will demonstrate the ability to analyze personal and social experiences by applying the sociological imagination.
2. Students will demonstrate the ability to use sociological analysis to explain the structural inequalities of race, class, and gender.
3. Students will demonstrate the ability to design a sociological research project, and communicate its findings in accordance with the professional standards of the discipline.

The sociology faculty is committed to the Millikin mission and has designed a curriculum that intentionally prepares majors for professional success, democratic citizenship in a global community, and a personal life of meaning and value by producing graduates who are capable of thinking critically from a sociological



from their required statistics and research methods courses. Students continue to learn the power of the scientific method of inquiry as they engage in research in the community and how to use computer-based statistics packages for analyzing and interpreting social data. These experiences culminate with the development of a research project, often commissioned by organizations within the larger Decatur community in the senior year.

Beyond exposure to the discipline, students learn skills necessary to assess and critically evaluate the diversity of human experiences, especially the impact of diversity as characterized by race, class, and gender of groups. The integration of performance learning and experiential education throughout the sociology curriculum creates a pervasive theme that pushes students to examine questions of ethics and values as they study issues of social inequality and interpret the social forces producing such inequality. Whether studying race and ethnicity, criminology, deviance, or urban and/or environmental sociology, students learn to synthesize existing theoretical knowledge using research findings to develop practical solutions. Their training enables and empowers sociology majors to critically analyze complex, real-world problems, evaluate the merits of various solutions, and appreciate the role diversity plays in the analysis of human behavior, and its ethical implications for their personal and professional lives. In sum, the sociology major integrates the general education and major curriculum with pre-professional experiences and mentor relationships, to mirror the University goals of professionalism, citizenship, and a life of personal meaning and value by advocating and demonstrating the impact of life-long learning and service.

### **Assessment Methods and Data**

The Sociology faculty has decided to collect the following assessments of the sociology major:

1. Learning Goal 1 is assessed in Sociological Analysis SO450, the capstone course, through an analysis of the final paper, which asks students to write specifically to this learning goal. Three final papers were randomly selected for assessment.
2. Learning Goal 2 is to be assessed in SO 320 Social Stratification, our required fundamentals course; however, since this class was not offered during this academic year, this learning goal was not assessed. Although other courses in sociology speak to this learning goal, these courses were not determined to be an appropriate measure of learning in the discipline. For example, although SO 100 contains content on race, class and gender issues, this course serves predominantly freshmen and non-sociology majors. Other courses like Environmental Sociology, Sociology of Popular Culture & Media, and Deviance, are cross-listed as IN courses and also have many non-majors which makes them poor choices for measuring learning of our majors.
3. Learning Goal 3 is assessed by evaluating the proposal for a research project that students turn in while they are students in SO221, Methods of Sociological Research. A random sample of 3 proposals from Sociology majors was assessed.



## **Discussion**

We took a sample of 3 artifacts for each goal and assessed them according to the rubric. We then calculated the average score for the artifacts for each learning goal, and split the range into three equal parts: 1.00-2.39 = Nominal (Red); 2.40-3.79 = Adequate (Yellow); 3.80-5.00 = Excellent (Green). Using this methodology, the mean score for Learning Goal #1 was 4.30 (Excellent/Green), Learning Goal #2 was not measured, and Learning Goal #3 was 3.67 (Adequate/Yellow). We also show a seven-year trend for the percentage of artifacts receiving at least a 3 (Adequate). Assessment results show that students remained at the Excellent level for Learning Goal #1, and remained at Adequate for Learning Goal #3, although scores improved somewhat. Learning Goal #2 was not measured (as discussed above), but will be assessed using SO 320 next year.

## **Appendix 1 – Sociology Assessment Rubric**

### **Learning Objectives**