DePaul University
Academic Program Review

Memorandum of Agreement -- June 1999

Department of Sociology

As a result of the first cycle of DePaul University's Academic Program Review Process (Cycle I), the participants in the process enter into the following agreements. The participants understand that this document will be available to be made public once the signatures are in place: for the unit, the chair of the unit's review committee and the department chair/program director; for the college/school, the dean; for the Academic Program Review Committee, the unit subcommittee members; for the university, the Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs.

Acknowledgements

The Academic Program Review Committee wishes to thank the Sociology review committee for the thorough and dedicated effort it has given to the university's program review and self-study process. The self-study report was well-done and adhered to the guidelines and to the original plan submitted to the APRC a year ago, serving as a good example to others who will engage in review. The APRC subcommittee has enjoyed working with the Sociology colleagues in subsequent discussions about the department's review. The APRC subcommittee acknowledges the ongoing efforts the department has made to further discussion on the major issues; in discussions about the self-study, the APRC has made several recommendations to refine the departments conversations on the key areas listed below.

Common Issues and University-level Commitments

During Cycle I, the unit program review self-studies raised several issues generally in common that have important university-wide implications. In subsequent conversations about these major issues, the units, the deans, the Academic Program Review Committee members, and the Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs all have recognized the need for university-level coordination to support units in the following areas: a) advising activities; b) recruitment and marketing efforts; c) structures that facilitate cross-departmental and cross-college collaboration; d) improvement of the university-level data collection and reporting efforts on academic programs; e) assessment efforts and research on students; f) efforts to maintain connections with alumni. To follow up on these common issues and determine the appropriate courses of action needed to address them at the university and unit level, the Academic Program Review Committee and the Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs agree to do the following:

1. The Academic Program Review Committee agrees to prepare a summary report on Cycle I to the Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs which discusses these and other issues that have important connections to other university-wide initiatives, especially to the Strategic Plan. That report will be made public, along with the Memoranda of Agreement.
2. The Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs agrees to direct the appropriate university-level offices to work with the units and their deans on how to effectively address these issues.
3. The Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs will require a progress report in June of 2000 from the appropriate offices that will be shared with the Academic Program Review Committee.
4. The Academic Program Review Committee will invite representatives from the appropriate offices to an Academic Program Review Committee meeting in the fall quarter of 1999-2000 academic year to follow-up on these issues and discuss possible courses of action.

In addition to these university-level commitments, the following are issues and actions agreed upon at the unit level.
Issues and actions agreed upon

Mission

1. Acknowledging the sense that the department is being pulled in many different directions, the department agrees to continue to have regular discussions about the future direction of the program and about the focus of the undergraduate and graduate curriculum, taking into consideration

   - the relationship to Liberal Studies Program;
   - the expansion to Lake County -- Graduate program; and
   - the development of new concentrations in the Undergraduate program.

Curriculum Review and Assessment

2. The department and the dean agree that the undergraduate curriculum is stable and does not need a major overhaul. As it looks at the structure and focus of the Undergraduate curriculum, the department agrees that it will give careful consideration to the following when developing possible areas of concentration:

   - how students experience the course sequence and areas of specialization;
   - enrollment data on students and data from the Alumni Survey;
   - how new faculty can contribute to the course offerings and areas of concentration;
   - what students should be taught about the discipline; how to introduce them to the content areas and methodologies of Sociology.

Collaboration with other programs, especially Liberal Studies

3. The department has been a leader in embracing the goals of the new Liberal Studies program, has made important contributions to its success, and as a result, has received a new faculty position. At the same time, the department and the dean agree to monitor the balance between its commitment to General Education and the strength and integrity of its major.

Pedagogical matters

4. The department agreed to develop an approach to analyze course syllabi and assess student work from multiple sections of required core courses being taught in 1999-2000. The department and dean agreed that this would be a good opportunity to develop a dialogue among department faculty to evaluate how the curriculum is working and how department learning goals are being met.

5. Regarding advising, the department agreed to continue its efforts to be more "intrusive" in its approach with student advising (contacting students, sending information to them) and will think about strategies to keep students more connected to the department.

Technological support/capabilities

6. The department and dean agree to work together on a plan to develop the department's capacity to lead a major survey database project ("Chicago Metropolitan Survey") and a social science research center which would support a variety of research methodologies in collaboration with other departments and centers (e.g. Egan Urban Center, other social science departments). The department and dean agreed that technical equipment and expertise would enhance the department's capacity to lead such a project, and that clear structures of collaboration among the participants would also need to be a part of this plan.
**Issues and actions on which there is agreement to do further work and continue conversations**

1. The department will consider how it can explore new areas of curricular interest and specialization without excluding current areas.

2. As the department explores the possibility of collaborating with other departments, the department and the dean recognize that there need to be structures in place to help collaboration be productive.

3. The department agreed to consider working with the Advising Project to share information in an effort to improve advising at the department level and at the college and university-levels.

4. The department agreed to consider ways to further assessment of student learning as part of its curriculum analysis, especially ways to analyze samples of student work in multiple sections of required courses during 1999-2000. The department and dean acknowledged that the Title III assessment activity funds could assist in developing assessment plans and supporting assessment projects.

**Areas of discussion in which further work is needed, as yet unspecified**

**Pedagogical Matters**

1. As the department analyzes its curriculum and develops concentrations, it might be able to share information with the LAS College Curriculum Committee as part of a larger effort to identify connections among the many departmental concentrations among the social sciences.

2. As the department develops new concentrations (multicultural/inter-group relations, global orientations), it might consider how to draw on courses from other areas and collaborate with other departments on course listings.

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A hard copy of this document was signed by:

Chair of the Unit Review Committee: Kenneth Fidel

Department Chair: Richard T. Schaefer

APRC Subcommittee members: Paul F. Camenisch and Ray W. Coye

Dean of the College: Michael Mezey

Executive V.P. for Academic Affairs: Richard Meister

*The hard copy with signatures is on file in the Office of the Associate V.P. for Academic Affairs and is available upon request.*