

## ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION AND ACTION\ACADEMIC AND PERSONNEL

March 17, 2021

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**ACTION:** **Approve Continuation of Sociology Program at Wayne State College with Annual Monitoring**

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Per Policy 4200, existing academic programs shall be reviewed every seven (7) years by each College to determine the quality and effectiveness of each program, the efficiency with which each is delivered, and to avoid unnecessary duplication. Each program is evaluated based on the minimum threshold requirements established by the Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education (CCPE). Should a program not meet the established thresholds, Nebraska Statute 85-1414 establishes the expectation for the institution and its governing board to complete an in-depth review. Programs continued by the governing board shall be further monitored by the governing board which shall report the status and process of the monitoring to the CCPE.

During its last review, the Sociology Program at Wayne State College did not meet the required minimum 5-year mean threshold for number of graduates for baccalaureate programs, which is seven (7). The program has completed an in-depth review and has recommended continuation of the program. The findings of that review are provided to the Board in the attached report for approval and subsequent submission to the CCPE for consideration for continuation of the program.

The System Office and Wayne State College support the findings of the in-depth review and the recommendation for continuation of the program. For each of these in-depth reviews, the Colleges are asked to outline strategies/approaches for continuing to improve enrollments and graduate production in the future, which warrants ongoing assessment and evaluation by the Board. An annual review of enrollment and graduate numbers will be shared with the Board each Spring term to monitor progress of the program's growth related to these recruitment efforts.

The System Office and Wayne State College recommend approval of the Continuation of Sociology Program at Wayne State College with Annual Monitoring.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

- 2021 WSC Sociology Existing Program Review Report with In-Depth Review (PDF)

**WSC Existing Program Review Report 2021**  
**Sociology**

1. Section One: Overview of Program Offerings

Major	Option, Concentration, Focus Area or Endorsement	Minor	Undergraduate	Credit Hours
Sociology	Sociology Subject Endorsement (7-12)		BA/BS	36
Sociology	Sociology		BA/BS	36
Sociology		Anthropology		21
Sociology		Sociology		21

This program is not externally accredited.

2. Section Two (Option A): Analysis of Program, Including Adequacy of Resources and Related Concerns

The Sociology program uses direct and indirect measures for its program assessment. The direct measure is a standardized 50 question sociology subject exam. The key indirect measure is a student satisfaction survey. Students routinely note a desire for a wider range of elective course offerings.

Anthropology has been a part of the sociology program for many decades. In December 2018, our tenured Anthropologist retired after returning for one semester after taking sabbatical. The position was not renewed. Students continue to indicate interest in this area of sociology as our SOC 110 Introduction to Anthropology is included to meet the WSC General Studies Program, Core Academic Tenet (CAT) 8. While we have been considering removing SOC 110 Introduction to Anthropology from the Sociology program, we have retained the course for the time being in the interest of helping to serve the General Studies program.

A great opportunity we see for the future is to investigate the possibility of submitting a proposal to the General Studies program committee of one or more alternative courses that could be offered in replacement of, or in addition to, SOC 110. The department is thinking about re-purposing our SOC 345 Race and Ethnic Relations course to be included in the general studies curriculum rather than an upper-division course. Keeping SOC 110 as an elective is a consideration.

**Faculty and faculty related resources:**

The Sociology program has 1 tenured and 1 tenure track faculty member with terminal degrees in Sociology. Prior to the senior faculty member, Dr. Monica Snowden joining the program in 1997, and up until the retirement of the tenured Anthropologist in 2018, the sociology program was staffed by 3 full-time faculty members—2 Sociologists and 1 Anthropologist. Additionally, during some semesters the program draws on FTE of tenure track faculty from the Political Science program to cover 6 hours of required research methods courses in the Sociology major (SSC 300 Social Science Research Methods & SSC 319 Statistics for Social Sciences). Though additional faculty would help offset some of the SCH teaching load, resources are adequate.

### Opportunities:

It is important to note that our honors students often present their honors projects at state and regional conferences, the annual Nebraska Undergraduate Sociology Symposium (NUSS) and/or the Midwest Sociological Society (MSS) annual meetings. The schools that bring students to NUSS are UNL, UNK, UNO, Nebraska Wesleyan, Doane University, Midland University, and Creighton University. WSC sociology students stand out amongst their peers in the state in conducting and excelling in original research. In the last 7 years, 6 of our students have been awarded in the paper competition at NUSS. The Sociology program at WSC does not require students to complete an internship, but many students do complete in a broad range of settings, such as the Northeast Nebraska Department of Public Health, UNMC School of Public Health, Nebraska Appleseed, The Center for Rural Affairs, and Haven House Family Services Center in Wayne, NE. Students earn credit hours in the major for their internship. As such, our students have also participated in internship panels at NUSS to share experiences with students from across the state.

In the past seven years, we have had courses identified in the on-campus class schedule as service-learning courses. In the fall semester of 2019 and 2020, a sociology class was identified to participate in an applied collaborative learning project with students from the University of Nebraska Medical Center Northern Division College of Nursing, Norfolk campus, to complete an Inter-Professional Educational (IPE) project. The project culminates in an event at the end of the semester. Nursing students and Wayne State Students work together and learn about, from, and with each other to enable effective collaboration and improve health outcomes.

We want to expand opportunities for sociology majors and minors to conduct original research, find valuable internships, and participate in collaborative research projects, service learning, and community-based research.

We acknowledge that faculty-led labs for students to work on research projects would greatly benefit students who need to develop their curriculum vitas for application to increasingly competitive graduate programs and enhance the College's mission to meet the needs of the region. One area of focus that the sociology faculty has been involved is creating and supporting the rural mental and behavioral health pipeline and workforce. There is much to be done in this area to prepare students to enter into the unlicensed and licensed mental and behavioral health fields and providing opportunities for the existing workforce in the College's service region to acquire continuing education credit. The Sociology program and faculty are interested in helping meet this need.

We also would like to create an undergraduate TA position. The undergraduate(s) TA could be trained to grade assignments and assist in research courses and with individual student research projects. The TA position would help build the student's resume and curriculum vitae as well as help to ensure that all students are best prepared to successfully enter unlicensed career fields as well as those that will require post-graduate study.

### **Informational resources (library, technology, data services, etc.):**

Informational resources, including library, technology, and data services, are adequate.

### Opportunities:

WSC's renewal of licensure for access to SPSS is critical to the Sociology program because gaining competency in basic quantitative research skills is one of the key learning outcomes of the program.

Acquiring licensure for a qualitative research package, such as QDA Miner 6 would enhance our program's capacity to ensure competency in basic qualitative research, which is a key learning outcome for the program.

Providing access to CITI (and IRB) training for our students would enhance our program.

**Physical facilities and instructional equipment, if applicable:**

Classroom space and computer and projection equipment is adequate.

3. Evidence of Demand and Efficiency (per established CCPE standards for 5-year means)

Number of Degrees/Awards in Program		SCH/FTE
Baccalaureate	7	300
Masters	5	300
Specialist	4	300

		15-16	16-17	17-18	18-19	19-20	5 yr avg
<b>Student Credit Hours (SCH)</b>		2,343	2,328	2,330	2,124	1,992	<b>2,223</b>
<b>Faculty Full-time Equivalency (FTE)</b>		3.00	3.13	2.63	2.88	3.01	<b>2.93</b>
<b>SCH/Faculty FTE</b>		781	744	886	738	663	<b>759</b>
<b>Number of Degrees and Awards</b>  <i>(list degrees/ awards separately)</i>	<b>BA</b>	1	0	0	0	0	<b>0.2</b>
	<b>BS</b>	3	4	8	11	2	<b>5.6</b>

The five-year SCH average is 2,223 with the FTE of 2.93. We feel that the demand for this program, and for the courses within the program is strong. This is evidenced by the 5-year average of SCH/Faculty FTE is 759. It is greater than the 5-year average of 713, reported in the 2008-2013 program review. The SCH/Faculty FTE of 759 exceeds the 300 established by the CCPE. Finally, the Ruffalo Noel Levitz' *Wayne State College: Academic Program Environmental Scan* (2016), lists Sociology as a medium demand bachelor's program in which WSC is only meeting 2% of its market share. These data points demonstrate strong interest in, and need for, Sociology coursework. It also represents a wonderful opportunity for WSC to support sociology and related programming.

4. Section 4 (Option A): Justification and Evidence of Need

- The Sociology Program is critical to the role and mission of the institution.

The Sociology program is critical to the role and mission of WSC by its strong commitment to, and high performance in, preparing students for "...careers, advanced study, and civic involvement. The College

is committed to faculty-staff student interaction, public service, and diversity within a friendly and collegial campus community.”

Sociology majors find employment in both the private and public sectors. Sociology majors are prepared for career and post-graduate study in human and social services, community and city development and planning, criminal justice fields and law, human resources, business and marketing research, policy fields, public health, mental and behavioral health, and medicine. Sociology course work is critical to pathway programs of study for the three high demand occupations for Nebraska: nursing, elementary school teachers, and secondary school teachers (<http://h3.ne.gov/welcome.xhtml>).

Furthermore, the Sociology faculty have a long tradition of providing individualized instruction to their majors. This includes, but is not limited to, mentoring original student research that can be presented at state, regional and national conferences as well as facilitating internships, service learning and community-based research projects. Many of our graduates pursue post-graduate study. In the last 7 years we have 2 Sociology alum that have obtained a PhD in Sociology with recent tenure-track appointments. Other WSC Sociology alum have acquired a PhD in Counseling Psychology, Master’s degrees in Sociology and Social Work as well as law degrees. Additionally, WSC Sociology alums hold tenured positions in the Sociology departments at Nebraska Wesleyan & Midland University.

A final important connection to the College’s mission is the focus on diversity, which is part of all Sociology courses. The Sociology program also offers specific courses that center topics of diversity and inclusion, such as SOC 345 Race and Ethnic Relations. We have interest in converting this course to a general studies course.

- The Sociology program contains courses supporting general education or other programs.

Table 1 illustrates the Sociology courses required or identified as an elective in other WSC majors, minors, or program of study. The table does not show that several of the pre-professional health majors, such as dental hygiene, recommend SOC 101. Students in the Pre-Medicine program often take SOC 101 because a quarter of the MCAT exam is devoted to Psychology and Sociology.

**Table 1: SOC Courses in the WSC Course Catalog Required (X) or Identified as an Elective Option (\*) in Another Major, Minor or Program of Study**

Course	General Studies (CAT)	Human Services Counseling Major	Pre-Nursing	Public Health Minor	Environmental Studies Minor	Pre-Law Minor	Criminal Justice Major
SOC 101 Introduction to Sociology	*(5)	X	X				
SOC 220 Social Problems		X	*				*
SOC 110 Introduction to Anthropology	*(8)			*			
SSC 300 Social Science Research Methods				X			*
SSC 319 Statistics for Social Sciences			*	*			*
SOC 305 Sociology of						*	*

Deviance							
SOC 320 Social Welfare		X					*
SOC 408 The Sociology of Mental Health				*			
SOC 345 Race & Ethnic Relations			*	*			
SOC 355 Human Populations					*		
SOC 415 The Family		X	*				
SOC 420 Environmental Sociology				*	X		
SOC 460 Social Inequalities				*		*	

- Student or employer demand is high and external funding would be jeopardized by discontinuing the program.

Sociology courses are in high demand by students. Over the course of the last 7 years, enrollment caps for low and upper level sociology courses have risen, and many are exceeded. The high SCH/FTE demonstrates the demand and need for sociology courses.

Additionally, the skills that a Sociology major imparts are highly desired by employers in a variety of workplaces, and as evidenced through the links below.

Key skills and knowledge identified by employers are (see links below for references):

- Communication skills—written and oral
- Problem-solving skills
- Ability to complete an applied learning project
- Ability to work in a team—including the ability to solve problems with people from different backgrounds & with views different from their own
- Quantitative research skills
- Critical thinking and analytical skills
- Intercultural skills
- Completion of a service-learning project, participation in a collaborative research project, a field research project in a diverse community setting with people from different backgrounds, or a community research project
- Both field specific & broad knowledge
- Civic and institutional knowledge

Hart Research Associates, 2015

<https://www.acu.org/sites/default/files/files/LEAP/2015employerstudentsurvey.pdf>

Job Outlook 2019, National Association of Colleges and Employers

<https://www.nacweb.org/talent-acquisition/candidate-selection/employers-want-to-see-these-attributes-on-students-resumes/>

- The Sociology program provides unique access to an underserved population or geographical area.

Sociology course work uniquely prepares students to work with underserved populations as well as working in diverse settings. The Sociology program's curriculum offers courses that prepare students to work in the unlicensed mental and behavioral health workforce and for post-graduate study to become a licensed mental and behavioral health professional.

Sociology courses are required in the Human Services Counseling major offered at the WSC South Sioux City Campus, providing access to a 4-year degree for underserved populations in the College's service region. The Sociology program offers one or more classes every semester at the SSC Campus.

- The Sociology program meets a unique need in the region, state, or nation.

Sociology supports a broad range of careers in the private and public sectors, including social services, human relations, criminal justice, public health, and counselor services as well as preparing students for a broad range of post-graduate education (also see the first justification).

Sociology courses are a critical source of training and education for those students who plan to enter public-facing fields. One such field is health care. For example, students who apply to medical school must take the Medical College Admissions Test (MCAT). Part of this exam tests a student's knowledge of sociological concepts. Additionally, while it is glaringly apparent that America needs to invest in and develop the behavioral health care workforce, the need is especially dire in rural areas. The Sociology program has responded to meeting the demand for training the next generation of health care workers and professionals in three important ways.

First, Dr. Snowden, Sociology professor and Chair of the Department of Psychology and Sociology, co-chaired the WSC President's Taskforce for Career Development in Behavioral Health (CDBH) from November 2018 to September 2019. The Taskforce delivered a report to the President on the behavioral health care needs of the College's service region and an outline of specific steps that WSC can take to become a model for rural behavioral health education. Sociology courses are integral to building pipeline programs and sustaining the behavioral health care workforce.

Second, we have reviewed and updated the Sociology curriculum. For example, Introduction to Sociology helps to prepare students for the MCAT and health related fields, while advanced pre-professional health students will find upper-level courses very beneficial. In addition to offering a minimum of 3 sections of Introduction to Sociology each term, we have added a Sociology of Mental Health course that is offered at the 400 level and may submit a proposal to list the course at graduate level. Additionally, we have submitted an academic policies proposal to rename and change the description of SOC 355 Human Populations to, Health and Human populations. With Dr. Shelton's addition, the department can now offer more special topics courses about health care work and organization.

Third, we have formed a partnership with the nursing faculty at the University of Nebraska Medical Center, Northern Division College of Nursing. Through this collaboration with nursing faculty, our students participate in an Interprofessional Education (IPE) event at the end of the semester. Nursing students and Wayne State Students work together and learn about, from, and with each other to enable effective collaboration and improve health outcomes. The courses that have participated are SOC 320 Social Welfare and SOC 415 The Family.

The stated objectives of the IPE on our assignment identify that students from the WSC Sociology of Welfare Class and UNMC BSN nursing programs will:

- Learn about, from, and with each discipline to enable effective collaboration and improve health outcomes.
- Understand the role of other healthcare professions
- Apply cultural competency
- Apply Structural competency (i.e., environmental factors, health disparities)
- Identify opportunities and barriers to effective healthcare and outcomes
- Effectively use skills to communicate with team members from other disciplines

Students from both WSC and UNMC nursing have responded positively to this experience. The IPE collaboration is also important to the accreditation of the UNMC Northern Division College of Nursing program. The collaboration will continue between the two groups of faculty and students.

A final key action taken by the Sociology program to improve the program and respond to changes in student and regional needs is development and expansion of Sociology courses offered online. Sociology offered no online courses until the Summer 2019. The Sociology program has steadily grown its online course offerings, which has helped to expand elective course offerings for majors and minors, as well as provide an opportunity for high school teachers in Nebraska to acquire the necessary credit hours to continue to teach Sociology in their schools.

As stated above: The Sociology program is critical to the role and mission of WSC by its strong commitment to, and high performance in, preparing students for "...careers, advanced study, and civic involvement. The College is committed to faculty-staff student interaction, public service, and diversity within a friendly and collegial campus community."

Sociology majors find employment in both the private and public sectors. Sociology majors are prepared for career and post-graduate study in human and social services, community and city development and planning, criminal justice fields and law, human resources, business and marketing research, policy fields, public health, mental and behavioral health, and medicine. Sociology course work is critical to pathway programs of study for the three high demand occupations for Nebraska: nursing, elementary school teachers, and secondary school teachers (<http://h3.ne.gov/welcome.xhtml>).

Regarding room for growth and opportunities to grow, what follows is a list of points being considered:

- The sociology major has room for growth. According to the *Wayne State College: Academic Program Environmental Scan Report* by Ruffalo Noel Levitz (2016) sociology falls in the medium demand category for bachelor's programs. WSC's market share for sociology is at 2%.
- Sociology major/minor is appropriate for pre-professional health fields, such as Occupational Therapy. These students, however, are assigned to the Life Sciences department.
- Sociology Major/Minor is also appropriate for Accelerated Nursing and the Public Health Minor.
- Sociology Major/Minor could link with a Behavioral Health Minor (if developed).
- Sociology Major/Minor could link with a Gerontology minor (if developed).
- Sociology Major could link with other programs or develop a minor in City Planning and Urban Development.
- Offer Sociology honors course Spring 2021

Recruitment efforts could include:

- Starting Your College Search Saturday (meet with high school juniors and their families).
- Focus on You Friday (meet with high school seniors and their families).



- Meet with prospective sociology students individually throughout the year.
- Psychology and Sociology Meet and Greet (not held Fall 2020 due to COVID-19; plan to host Fall 2021).
- Psychology/Sociology Club or Sociology honorary society AKD host guest speakers representative of the field of Sociology.
- Sociology program is offering more courses online working towards the potential to offer the major or minor online.
- Take prospective and current sociology students to the Nebraska Undergraduate Sociology Symposium in the fall 2021.
- Advise the WSC chapter of Active Minds that raises awareness of mental health issues, including stigma, and the role of psychology and sociology in making a positive difference in the lives of people living with mental illness.
- Re-instate the sociology honorary society, Alpha Kappa Delta, spring 2021.
- Take prospective and current sociology majors to the Nebraska Undergraduate Sociology Symposium Fall 2021.
- PSSO Meet and Greet Spring 2021.
- The sociology honorary society, AKD, host a careers panel with WSC alum's Fall 2021.
- Develop Internship site guide book for students to assist in identifying possible internships, Fall 2021.
- Develop new Fact Sheets for the Sociology Major/Minor for the licensed behavioral health care fields, if possible Fall 2021.
- Develop Webinars for Sociology Major/Minor, if possible, Fall 2021.
- Share fact sheets and other information with high school counselors in the region to promote sociology major and minor—Fall 2021, if possible.