

UGC PREPORT ON THE ACADEMIC PROGRAM REVIEW
OF
THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY AND ANTHROPOLOGY

A. STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:

1. Anthropology

The Cultural Anthropology program specifies four learning outcomes that correspond to UMBC's broader student competency goals. To assess the extent to which these goals are achieved, the program identifies specific learning objectives for designated courses: ANTH 211 (Cultural Anthropology), SOCY 300 (Methodology of Social Research), and a substantive 300 or 400 level course.

The direct measures used to assess the achievement of course learning objectives range from scores on keyed exam questions and ungraded questions administered at the end of the semester for ANTH 211 to computer project and final exam grades for SODY 300, and paper grades for the 300/400 level elective course.

2. Health Administration and Policy Program (HAPP)

The HAPP program identifies three educational goals. It measures the first goal ("Understanding of concepts, perspectives, and approaches") by tracking the number of students who successfully complete the program's core and track courses in a specified period of time (fall 299 – fall 2012). HAPP measures its second educational goal, "application of concepts, theories, and methodology," through preceptors' evaluations of student internship performance (HAPP 495). Program goal three, "the research process and the ability to express ideas clearly in an appropriate writing form," is assessed through research papers assigned in HAPP 100 (Survey of the U.S. Healthcare System) and HAPP 452 (Healthcare Service and Delivery).

3. Sociology

The SOCY program specifies three learning goals: 1) understanding of sociological concepts and theories, 2) knowledge of social science research processes, and 3) ability to apply key concepts and theories to a substantive area. The first goal is assessed in SOCY 101 (Introduction to Sociology) through pre- and posttests. In SOCY 409, this goal is assessed through an assigned paper. The achievement of the second goal is assessed in SOCY 300 by way of research proposals and the assessment portion of the final exam, and in SOCY 301 by final SPSS projects. Achievement toward the third goal is assessed through paper or project grades in an upper-level elective course. In addition, the program notes its use of two indirect assessment measures: student GPAs in sociology and exit interviews of graduating seniors.

B. STATE OF THE DISCIPLINE; PROGRAM MODIFICATIONS; PROGRAM CHANGES

1. Anthropology

With the introduction of the Degree Audit System, in 2011 the Anthropology program revised its major requirements to allow students to apply any upper-level ANTH courses toward completion of the major. Previously, the program had used a prescribed set of upper-level electives, but the advent of the Degree Audit system made cumbersome the updating of this list as new courses were added to the curriculum. In addition, requirements for the major now explicitly specify that 12 of the 18 elective credits taken for the major must be 300 or 400-level courses

The program revised its minor requirements to allow students to apply up to three SOCY credits (one course) to the completion of the ANTH minor. The program made this change to allow students who may have particular interests in topics like gender and health the flexibility to pursue further their interests with a SOCY course on such topics.

To reflect currents in the discipline and student interest, the ANTH program has added several new courses. These include: ANTH 382 (Global Flows in Local Worlds) and ANTH 367 (Anthropology of Gender)). The program now offers a new 100-level course (ANTH 101) that introduces students to the four traditional sub-fields of the discipline. This is an important addition to a curriculum that offers only a major/minor in Cultural Anthropology. The program developed ANTH 101 to serve both the interests of its majors who want a comprehensive grounding in the field of Anthropology and for UMBC undergraduates who seek general education credit (SS or C).

2. Health Administration and Policy Program

HAPP has changed its program considerably over the past five years in terms of course content and pedagogical approaches. The program has also revised the structure and timing of its courses. Most obviously, the enactment of the Affordable Care Act (2009) necessitated content revisions in a number of courses, particularly in HAPP 100 (Survey of US Healthcare System). The program made major content revisions for other reasons as well. Most notably, Social Epidemiology is now Epidemiology (HAPP/SOCY 420) to support the need for students in the health sciences to have a strong foundation in traditional epidemiology methods.

An enhanced focus on writing was included in key courses—a writing component for HAPP 100 and a “Writing Intensive” designation for HAPP 411 (Health Regulation and Quality Improvement). On-line delivery methods through Blackboard have been incorporated into the pedagogy of HAPP 100, while team-teaching (HAPP 452—Health Care Organization and Delivery) and community

partnership (HAPP/SOCY 354—Social Bases of Public and Community Health) have become successful features of the curriculum.

The HAPP program also raised the minimum qualifying cumulative GPA for its mandatory internship requirement (HAPP 495) from 2.0 to 2.5. And to better prepare its students for a successful internship experience, the program added a prerequisite seminar course, HAPP 496.

3. Sociology

The Sociology program has made significant changes to its undergraduate statistics/methods courses, SOCY 300 and 301, and to its introductory course, SOCY 101.

With regard to the statistics/methods requirements, students must have completed their mandated GEP course in MATH before enrolling in SOCY 300 (Methodology of Social Research). Students must pass SOCY 300 with a grade of “C” or better before they can take SOCY 301, Analysis of Sociological Data. As to SOCY 101, it has been fully redesigned from a large lecture class to one that utilizes on-line learning and assessment activities, in-class group work, and peer group leaders.

C. UNDERGRADUATE CURRIULUM

1. Anthropology

The program offers a 31-credit major and an 18-credit minor in Cultural Anthropology. The major consists of 4 required courses (13 credits) and 6 elective courses (18 credits). ANTH 211 (Cultural Anthropology), ANTH 303 (Anthropological Research Methods), SOCY 300 (Methodology of Social Research) and ANTH 400 (Anthropological Theory) constitute the required courses for the major. The program also stipulates that at least 12 of the 18 elective credits for the major be 300-level or above and that at least 12 elective credits be from ANTH courses (six SOCY credits may be applied).

The Anthropology program conscientiously monitors the frequency of its course offerings. Multiple sections of ANTH 211 and SOCY 300 are taught each semester. ANTH 400 is taught every fall and ANTH 303 is offered each spring semester. Typically, the program offers 5-7 elective courses per semester and courses on “cornerstone topics” of anthropology such as kinship, gender, and medical anthropology are taught annually.

Going forward, the program is considering several changes to its curriculum. At present, the ANTH major does not include a capstone requirement. The program plans to evaluate the pros and cons of adding such a requirement. At minimum, the program is likely to reconstitute ANTH 303 into a 400-level course, a change that

would be commensurate with the work required for the course. The program will also strive to add several new courses that reflect faculty research strengths in medical anthropology, psychological anthropology, and the anthropology of aging.

2. Health Administration and Policy Program

HAPP offers a multidisciplinary, three-track major. HAPP students select one of three tracks: a) health service administration, b) health policy, and c) public health. HAPP instituted the public health track in 2007 and considers this a “strategic move” to meet market demands for qualified graduates in health administration and policy. HAPP notes that the Office of Undergraduate Admissions heralds the public health track as one of UMBC’s “unique offerings,” along with Global Studies and STEM.

HAPP stresses that its program contains many of the foundational competencies recommended by relevant accreditation bodies including the Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH) and the Association of University Programs in Health Administration (AUPHA). Looking forward, HAPP anticipates carefully considering whether it is feasible to become an accredited program.

The HAPP major contains 8 core courses, 7-8 track courses, and 3- 4 elective courses. On average, HAPP students take 58 credits to complete their majors. HAPP’s core curriculum consists of courses from a number of disciplines, including Information Systems (IS), Statistics, and English, as well as HAPP courses that all majors must complete. HAPP 100, a capstone course (HAPP 452), an internship course (HAPP 495), and the preparatory course that precedes the internship (HAPP 496) are the contingent of required HAPP courses. Track courses are specific to each track and are also multidisciplinary. In addition to the core requirements of each track, all tracks require students to select 3-4 electives from approved course lists that are also multidisciplinary. These elective course options are meant to help students build competitive skills.

HAPP courses are regularly offered. Most HAPP core courses and track core courses are offered both in the fall and spring semesters. Notable exceptions to this pattern are HAPP 497, which is offered only in the fall and HAPP 498, which is only offered in the spring semester. The least frequently offered course is HAPP398 (the special topics course) and it is taught every other semester.

HAPP majors from all tracks are encouraged to pursue minors or certificates in related fields such as Sociology, Information Systems, Public Administration, Management of Aging Services, Accounting, and Management Science. The program notes that because some courses from these fields count toward completion of the HAPP major, completing a minor or certificate program is likely to require only one additional semester of study.

3. Sociology

UMBC undergraduates can elect to pursue either a major or a minor in Sociology. Thirty-two (32) credits are required for the SOCY major. The major has four required courses (14 credits): SOCY 101, Basic Concepts in Sociology (3 credits); SOCY 300, Methods of Social Research (4 credits); SOCY 301, Analysis of Sociological Data (4 credits); and SOCY 409, Sociological Theory (3 credits).

The remaining credits for the major are elective. Students can count up to six ANTH credits toward completion of their SOCY major. In addition, the program specifies that at least 16 credits toward the SOCY major must be earned at UMBC.

The Sociology minor requires SOCY 101 and 15 elective Sociology credits. Of these elective credits, at least six must be at the 300-level or higher and at least nine credits for the minor must be earned at UMBC. The Department also offers a SOCY minor at UMBC's Shady Grove campus. For Shady Grove students, up to 12 credits of the minor may be completed at Montgomery College.

The SOCY curriculum stresses early introduction to modes of inquiry and methodology. The process begins with SOCY 101 where basic concepts and various methodologies are discussed. It continues with the SOCY300/301 sequence which students are encouraged to take before their senior year. However, the SOCY major currently does not have a capstone requirement. The program may decide to develop a capstone course in the near future with the idea that such a course would enable students to apply what they have learned to a project suitable for career development.

The Sociology program offers a combined BA/MA degree. Qualified undergraduate SOCY majors who complete the B.A. degree can count up to 9 undergraduate credits in approved 400-level Sociology courses toward the M.A. requirements of the Applied Sociology degree. The Department credits this option for bringing some excellent students into its graduate program.

The Department carefully monitors its course offerings. Multiple sections of SOCY 101 and SOCY 300 are available each semester. Also, at least one section of SOCY 301 and SOCY 409 is offered each semester. The Department is careful to offer a variety of day/time options for these courses with one major caveat. Since all of the SOCY faculty also teach graduate classes and these are exclusively taught in the late afternoon and evening slots, the undergraduate classes are almost always offered in the traditional morning and afternoon time slots. The Department acknowledges that this may seriously inconvenience some of their undergraduates.

Going forward, the SOCY's undergraduate committee aims to revise its program to reflect the interests and strengths of its current faculty. This is important because of considerable faculty turnover in recent years. The committee also anticipates providing courses toward a Social Science and Medicine Certificate that might improve the scores on the social science section of the MCAT exam. The SOCY

program will continue to coordinate with the Global Studies program. Careful coordination between these programs will likely grow in importance. Currently, ten SOCY courses are included as either core or elective courses in the Global Studies major. SOCY notes that growing numbers of Global Studies majors could result in enrollment pressures in SOCY courses.

D. RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES FOR UNDERGRADUATES

The Sociology and Anthropology Department actively promotes undergraduate research. Students are offered a number of avenues to conduct research including through honors theses in Anthropology or Sociology, independent studies, and McNair Scholars' projects. Undergraduate majors from the department regularly participate at URCAD and present their research findings at national conferences. Students are also encouraged to submit their manuscripts to the *UMBC Review*.

Department undergraduates have obtained research funding from a number of sources: the Undergraduate Research Award (URA), the McNair Scholars' Program and the Department's Distinctive Undergraduate Experience Research Fund (DUER). Established by the Department in 2008, the DUER program promotes undergraduate research experiences. This program not only provides research funding, but it also helps students develop skills in the areas of proposal writing and budget development.

E. UNDERGRADUATE ADVISEMENT

1. Anthropology

The Anthropology program assigns each major a faculty advisor. Each semester during the period of advanced registration, faculty members meet with their advisees to discuss their progress toward the completion of both their major and university degree requirements. Students with double-majors who may obtain clearance to register for classes in their other major department are strongly encouraged to meet at least once a semester with their faculty advisor in Anthropology. Students with minors in Anthropology can also be assigned a faculty advisor. To facilitate appointment scheduling during advanced registration, the program has initiated with great success the use of signupgenius.com. In addition, all majors and minors can seek advice outside the advanced registration time frame through email or by scheduling an appointment.

2. Health Administration and Policy Program

HAPP has faced significant challenges with regard to student advisement. These challenges stem from the complexity of its undergraduate program and the tremendous growth the program has experienced without an equivalent growth in faculty resources. HAPP has hired a full-time academic advisor to absorb the bulk of the program's advising responsibilities. The program also has created a full-time retention position staffed by a contractual employee whose

responsibilities include some academic advising, especially for at-risk students. At the time of the APR, the academic advisor advised approximately 250 students per semester while the program's Associate Director advised between 60 and 70 more. This arrangement allows HAPP faculty members to concentrate their advising efforts on the mentoring involved in career development and job placement.

In addition, HAPP secured authorization from the Registrar's office to assign advisees through the SA system. Beyond the assignment of advisors to advisees, this system allows students, advisors, and faculty full access to advising information. HAPP faculty received training in advising strategies and learned about the advising tools available to them. Implemented in fall 2013, this arrangement has resulted in faculty members advising students each term in groups of ten for a total of 30 students.

3. Sociology

The Sociology program reports advising procedures that are similar to those of the Anthropology program. At the same time, however, it finds these procedures increasingly unsatisfactory. Due to a 28.9% increase in the number of Sociology majors between 2008 and 2012 and a decrease over the same time period in the number of faculty, the advising load on faculty has become quite burdensome. As a result, the faculty has requested staff support in advising. The program also expressed interest in hiring a full-time academic advisor as HAPP has done.

F. COUNCIL OF MAJORS, UNDERGRADUATE HONORS, AWARDS, AND RECOGNITION

Of the three undergraduate programs reviewed here, only Anthropology reported a Council of Majors.

Anthropology and Sociology have honors programs. Students in both program can apply to join the honors program once they have earned 60 credits toward their undergraduate degrees with minimum cumulative/ major GPAs (3.0 /3.5 for ANTH and 3.3/ 3.3 for SOCY) and have taken three upper-level courses in the major (for Sociology, one of these must be SOCY 300). To graduate with honors, students in both programs must complete at least 16 credits in the major at UMBC and take a two- course independent study sequence to complete an honors thesis.

Both the Anthropology and Sociology programs host chapters of their disciplines honor societies. Majors who meet specified credit and GPA requirements are invited to join.

G. FACULTY DEVELOPMENT AND TEACHING QUALIT

The Sociology and Anthropology Department fully endorses UMBC's commitment to excellence in undergraduate teaching. Monitoring and encouraging improvement in teaching quality are tackled in a number of ways for both tenure-track and adjunct faculty.

The teaching quality of the tenure track faculty is comprehensively evaluated at the first year review, contract renewal, promotion and tenure review, and at post tenure reviews. To ensure that every member of its faculty meets and then strives to exceed departmental expectations on teaching, the department has instituted a number of policies. Junior faculty are assigned a limited number of course preparations in order to focus attention on course substance and pedagogy. The department also appoints a faculty teaching mentor who is available to assist junior faculty with pedagogical development. For tenured faculty, on-going efforts toward teaching excellence are explicitly recognized in the department's merit policy. Members of the faculty at all ranks are encouraged to take advantage of the resources of UMBC's Faculty Development Center.

The Department also monitors the teaching quality of its adjunct instructors. Within a month of the end of a term, adjunct instructors must submit course syllabi, descriptions or samples of assignments, representative samples of exams/quizzes, and a signed CV. These submitted materials are evaluated annually by a member of the associated Program Committee using the Department's Evaluation Rubric for Review of Teaching Materials and Performance. The Department Program Committees also conduct in-class observations of the class(es) of adjunct faculty.

H. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS; SUMMARY EVALUATION

During the period under review (2007 – 2014), the Department of Sociology and Anthropology experienced significant growth in its undergraduate programs while it absorbed the loss of 7 tenure/tenure track faculty (4 to retirement, 2 to other positions, and 1 to negative promotion and tenure review). Since the APR, the Department has had one more of its tenured faculty retire. As is routinely the case, the process of replacing tenure track faculty has not kept pace.

To its credit, the Department has managed to sustain the quality of its undergraduate programs. A full-time permanent lecturer has been hired who has both advising and teaching responsibilities. The Department has also hired several one-year, renewable full-time lecturers. In order to maintain consistency in its core courses, the Anthropology and Sociology programs have revised ANTH 211 and SOCY 101 to update pedagogy and make course content uniform. The HAPP program has found creative ways to meet the advising crunch. However, challenges remain.

Among these challenges, two stand out: 1) undergraduate advising and mentoring and 2) sustained teaching excellence. Even with the hire of a permanent academic

advisor, the advising/mentoring strain on the Department's tenure and tenure track faculty would remain considerable. By and large, it is the tenure/ tenure track faculty who mentor undergraduate research activities and counsel about graduate school. Without a significant increase in the number of tenure/ tenure track faculty, it seems very unlikely, for example, that either the ANTH or the SOCY program could seriously entertain the establishment of a capstone requirement for its undergraduates. And with regard to the quality of teaching, relying on visiting lecturers and adjunct instructors to deliver a significant portion of the curriculum raises the potential problem of quality control. The Department has policies in place for course review, but their effective implementation over the long term will strain other faculty resources. These challenges are certainly not unique to the Department of Sociology and Anthropology and meeting them will require a university-wide commitment.