**Department of Sociology, Anthropology, and Health Administration & Policy**
**Three-Year Follow-Up to the 2013-2014 Academic Program Review**
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In the three years since the 2013-2014 Academic Program Review (APR), SAHAP has developed stronger coordination among our four programs, new department initiatives, and expanded cross-departmental opportunities for students.   The Department also continues to be highly productive in terms of submission of external grant proposals, publications, and national presentations.  While the number of undergraduate majors has fluctuated over time, we are currently showing an uptick; efforts to increase graduate enrollment, described below, are ongoing.  In addition, as found in the three year review tables, the number of ethnic minorities in each of our undergraduate programs has increased.

The structure of our faculty has experienced notable changes since the APR.  HAPP, which had 4.5 faculty in Spring 14, now has 6 faculty solely dedicated to the program, which has helped reduce program pressures.  At the same time, the number of Sociology faculty has fallen, e.g., from 12 faculty in 2003 to the current 7.5.  The reduced number of Socy faculty has resulted in higher advising and program service loads, which is a source of stress within the program.  We do note that the number of Socy majors has fluctuated overtime, however, the number of credit hours generated has remained strong and Socy faculty still carry administrative responsibility for the BA and MA, as well as supporting several PhD programs.

We also have significantly restructured two key staff position, in large part to address the need for greater communication among programs noted in the APR. With the addition of HAPP faculty and the later resignation of the HAPP Associate Director (whose time was 50% teaching) we have restructured the HAPP Program Coordinator and Associate Director into a Departmental Academic Program Coordinator and Program Management Specialist.  These changes have further facilitated the integration of our programs.

While SAHAP remains a strong, productive Department and the faculty is very excited by curriculum changes post-APR, we are experiencing challenges in terms of advising and service loads, particularly in Sociology, and the limited resources to address TA needs, the peer mentor program, and Center for Aging Studies' bridge funding.

### *Large Scale Recommendations of the 2013-2014 APR*

- **Evaluate the relationship of HAPP to the Department's curricular and research mission**: A new HAPP major curriculum was established as of January 2017 which has reduced the total number of major credits while now requiring all students to take research methods, ethics, and health communication courses.  The new plan also includes electives from across the Department, allowing HAPP majors to expand their understanding of the social significance of race and ethnicity, gender, or aging.  Finally, HAPP has added GEP credentials to HAPP 100 to encourage UMBC students to explore the major at the start of their undergraduate career.
- **Develop a prioritized hiring plan:** SAHAP's Integrated Hiring Strategy was submitted to Dean Scott Casper in spring 2017.  As indicated in the plan, SAHAP's critical hiring needs are a) permanent Anthropology faculty in light of Seth Messinger's resignation and the program's sizeable Department and University service contributions, including large intros and GEP courses; b) permanent Sociology faculty who can address the high level of student interest and important national dialogues on criminology and inequality; and c) permanent HAPP faculty to support the health policy track, which has much potential for growth. Fundamental to this plan is  hiring full-time, tenure track faculty capable of conducting top tier research/scholarship with the possibility of extramural funding

  If the Department's current Post-doctoral Faculty Diversity Fellow, Cameé Maddox-Wingfield, successfully converts to a tenure track position, the needs within Anthropology will

2018 for review and then forwarded to the college and UGC with the hope of implementing by spring 2019.

- **Sociology Curriculum Review & Revision:** The Sociology Undergraduate Program is re-evaluating all GEP designations, course titles, prerequisites, and course levels. This review is aimed at addressing changes in our faculty, the discipline and student interests.
- **Adjunct Review Process:** Our Department is heavily reliant on part time instructors and needs more systematic procedures for ongoing evaluation of adjunct faculty. All programs have begun observing new adjuncts to provide early feedback. The Sociology program is now taking the lead in developing ongoing evaluation procedures, including the review of course materials, grade distributions, and classroom observations to provide feedback on teaching excellence and areas of concern.

**Recommendations in Process/On-going concerns**

Several APR recommendations are in the process of being addressed. Progress has been more limited due to resource availability. To briefly describe these efforts and our concerns:

- **Streamline and increase support for academic advising:** SAHAP's Academic Adviser has been reclassified as a Department Advising Coordinator. In this position, the Advising Coordinator addresses HAPP-specific advising needs, especially new major advising and degree progression requirements. The Advising Coordinator also organizes the Department's undergraduate advising timeline and student assignments, updates faculty on UMBC academic policies, and represents faculty concerns to the advising community. Through the Advising Coordinator the Department's faculty has clearer understanding of advising procedures, university policies, and semester timelines.

  While the Advising Coordinator is providing important advising support and systematizing the Department's advising procedures, of growing concern, particularly within the Sociology program, is the volume of advising and the University's expanding expectations for undergraduate advising. First, with respect to the volume of advising, Sociology faculty provide substantial advising to students at all levels, i.e., carrying formal advising loads of 25-30 Sociology undergraduate majors, plus the undergraduate Sociology minors, and graduate level advising of Sociology MA students and doctoral students from multiple programs. This is all while maintaining a vibrant and high-service undergraduate Sociology program and fully staffing the Sociology MA courses.

  Second, undergraduate advising responsibilities frequently reach beyond faculty expertise (e.g., students increasingly contact their major advisers about GEP requirements, course availability, non-major transfer courses, registration requirements, etc.). These demands limit the faculty time for a) advising students on areas that are within faculty members' expertise (e.g., careers in the social sciences), b) mentoring students' research projects (e.g., independent study, URAs, etc.), and c) conducting research.

  Thus, advising at all levels (undergraduate, master's, and doctoral) and on the broad range of student concerns is a heavy burden on faculty, an issue that is particularly salient in the Sociology program, where all but one faculty member are Assistant or Associate in rank and seeking tenure/promotion. An increasing department priority is exploring options for additional Sociology advising support, e.g., a staff position that can directly advise Sociology undergraduates.

- **Provide mentorship for undergraduate mentors for large undergraduate lecture classes:** Sociology 101, which was redesigned under an USM initiative, employs peer

mentors to lead small group discussions.  USM provided funding to support the redesign, but no ongoing funding of the peer mentor program.  The lack of regular, state-supported financial resources makes student mentorship a continuing challenge.  The Department has assumed the cost of paying peer mentors through our revolving account and a fulltime lecturer oversees the peer mentor program as part of her service.  The continued success of the Sociology 101 redesign is dependent on additional resources to support faculty time in peer mentor coordination, including support for the development of peer mentor training materials, conducting training, providing feedback & debriefing sessions during the semester, and evaluating performance for purposes of contract renewal. In addition, the Department notes that ongoing, systematic, university wide training for undergraduates who are serving as peer mentors or teaching fellows is critically needed, especially given the large number of programs across the campus who are employing undergraduates in this way.

- **Increase TA support for large lecture courses and methods courses:**  The Department provides several large service courses to the University with minimal teaching assistants.  While 10-hour state-supported TAs are assigned to Socy 101 and required undergraduate and graduate methods & stats courses (Socy 300, Socy 301, Socy 600, Socy 604), TA support is not available for other large intros (e.g., Anth 101 or HAPP 100), upper level Sociology courses, and other current methods courses.  For example, the Sociology program offers several large upper level service courses with enrollments of 80+.  TA availability also is a concern as the MA program seeks to expand the methods course offerings in response to student interest.  SAHAP funds five hours a week of grading support for many of these courses when possible, but this level of support is not adequate.

  A related concern is the level of TA training available to graduate students.  The extent to which TAs provide meaningful support to courses often is dependent upon their blackboard skills and understanding of the TAs role. University-led TA training that would cover TA responsibilities and codes of conduct, university resources, Blackboard (especially functions related to the assignment functions, safe assign, grading, and gradebook maintenance) is critically needed and should be ongoing throughout the semester.

- **Evaluate the graduate program**:  Over the past three years, the graduate program has evaluated the graduate admissions criteria and the graduate curriculum.  As noted in the APR, the Program began requiring GRE scores in fall 2014 to address student quality concerns.  GRE scores, however, have not been predictive of student success.  In place of the GRE students are now required to submit a Sociology or related social science writing sample. We will be evaluating the impact of this change on enrollment and student success.

  The program also has expanded marketing and recruitment efforts in order to attract more high quality applicants.  Marketing initiatives include updating the website and program brochure, sending targeted emails with customized pitches to allied UMBC programs, and increasing our social media presence.  In terms of recruitment, we have held information sessions and panel events, and developed a webinar. We also developed a graduate student ambassador program to recruit UMBC undergraduates to the graduate program.  We have experienced an uptick in admissions for spring 2018 and will monitor the ongoing impact of these efforts.  Over the long term, we need to more effectively market our program outside of UMBC.  Additional resources are needed for this.  While we can send targeted emails with customized pitches to various programs in the region, we need assistance to determine how to more strategically employ our website and social media as recruitment tools. In addition,

we believe radio advertising would be effective in reaching new audiences, but this would require considerable funds.

With respect to the curriculum, while the program recognizes a theory course requirement could be beneficial to students as discussed in the APR, the program does not have sufficient faculty to support such a requirement. In addition, the faculty has decided increasing the methods course requirement is a greater priority in order to ensure students have a fully developed applied tool kit. Proposals are under discussion that would provide opportunities for community engaged, applied research that is not limited to health and aging issues, a need identified in the APR. The Capstone Paper guidelines also have been refined, changing the "Analytical Paper" to "Master's Paper," with several specific capstone options. Currently we are working on a revision of the Graduate Handbook.

We are currently working with DPS on several initiatives. First, we are revamping the non-profit certificate, rationalizing the curriculum and developing marketing materials. Second, the Sociology program will contribute several courses to the new MPS in Data Science program. Similarly, Sociology courses will be included in the Entrepreneurship, Innovation, and Leadership MPS to be launched in spring 2018. We anticipate these programs will increase enrollment in our courses; we will closely monitor course size to determine when/if additional sections are needed.

Finally, our MA graduates continue to experience professional success, obtaining research and administrative positions with universities and government agencies. The graduate program has identified alumni engagement as an additional goal moving forward.

- **Address salary inversion issues:** The Department has made progress on the salary inversion issues noted in the 2013-2014 APR. However, salary inversion is an ongoing issue.

- **Bridge funding for faculty and staff funded on NIH grants:** As noted by the external review team in their report to the Provost (4/18/14), "The Center for Aging Studies (CAS) model is excellent and brings in substantial funding and opportunities for the Department. The University should recognize this through support for infrastructure and bridge funding… We urge UMBC to support the department research infrastructure through CAS—and through other such ventures and by broadening the mission of CAS, since the benefits to the Department and University are so clear." To support the efforts of tenure track faculty competing for top tier funding (i.e., NIH and NSF) it is essential that we retain highly seasoned professional research staff during funding troughs. Since research funding builds on previous funded studies and the analysis and publication of findings, loss of such staff professionals dramatically undermines proposal development and research productivity.

To sum, since the 2013-2014 APR, SAHAP has made notable progress in updating the graduate and undergraduate curriculums to reflect current faculty strengths, directions in our respective disciplines, and the UMBC strategic plan. We are excited that these efforts may be resulting in larger percentages of minority undergraduate students finding an academic home in our department. All of our faculty actively present and publish research, often with collaborators from other institutions. A clear bridge funding source would help address concerns for research staff continuity. In addition, high advising and service loads are a growing concern, particularly as they effect faculty research productivity and morale.