

STRATEGIC PLAN

Department of Sociology & Anthropology Illinois State University

Mission Statement

The Mission of the Illinois State University Department of Sociology & Anthropology is to:

- help students learn, understand, discover, and apply knowledge about sociology & anthropology;
- create and maintain, with our students, a comfortable and challenging teaching-learning community, both inside and outside the classroom, in order to promote student development, shared responsibility for learning, and academic achievement; and
- encourage and reward faculty/staff development in alignment with individual interests and strengths while promoting excellence in teaching, scholarship, and service.

Principle Values

The Department of Sociology & Anthropology is committed to advancing the following values:

- Collegiality and Professional Respect
- Excellence in Undergraduate Education
- Unique and Distinctive Graduate Programs
- Scholarly Productivity and Purposeful Research

Vision

Our vision for the next three to five years includes:

1. Personnel

The faculty have ambitious plans for the department and its sociology and anthropology programs. Over the next two years we will be in the process of filling several vacant faculty lines, which will afford a unique opportunity to further shape the department's trajectory for the foreseeable future. We are committed to conducting strategic and purposeful faculty searches that will result in a department with identifiable strength in a few key substantive areas. Doing so will serve a number of important purposes: (1) we will improve the intellectual vibrancy of the department by creating synergistic clusters of faculty working in related substantive areas; (2) having identifiable substantive strengths will aid in the recruitment of high-quality graduate students with interest in those areas and will ultimately improve the training they receive and shorten the time-to-degree of those admitted to the program; and (3) it will enable us to build undergraduate curricula that reflect faculty strengths and that will improve the recruitment of stronger students and the depth of training provided to our majors.

2. Collegiality and Intellectual Life

The next few years of change will also provide an opportunity to reaffirm our commitment to collegiality, openness, and shared governance. As such we seek to establish new traditions and to revisit old ones. To advance these ends, we will institute a dedicated two-hour block of time to be used for faculty and committee meetings, colloquia, and other important departmental functions. Having a regular time slot during which no courses will be scheduled will provide all faculty members the opportunity to participate. Moreover, expanding the duration of the dedicated time slot from its traditional 50 minutes to two hours will provide the time necessary to fully discuss and to complete departmental business. Having such a time in the weekly calendar will also enable us to schedule research talks of jobs candidates so that all members of the faculty can attend, and to schedule committee meetings and colloquia.

Re-instituting a regular departmental colloquium is another initiative we seek to implement in the coming years to contribute to the interaction of the faculty and the intellectual life of the department. The presentations will range from ideas in formation to polished completed work that will provide faculty members with an audience to generate constructive feedback and suggestions from colleagues. It will also serve as an opportunity for both graduate and undergraduate students to be exposed to the research of their professors, and to see research at a various stages of completion. Regular colloquia will contribute to the goal of a collegial department environment by providing a forum in which faculty may become familiar with the work of their colleagues.

As a joint department, we have an opportunity to use the alliance between sociology and anthropology colleagues to build disciplinary bridges that impact the faculty, our programs, and our students. We are committed to strengthening the collegial ties between sociologists and anthropologists, and work together in a spirit of cooperation to achieve our many goals.

Finally, in the spirit of increasing the flow and ease of communication among members of the department, we will seek to develop a number of new e-mail list-serves. SOADEPT will be a stand-alone list to which tenured and tenure-track faculty, non-tenure track instructors, support staff, and graduate students will belong. This list will speed communications intended for the entire department community and will ensure the all members of that community are kept apprised of developments. SOCFAC will be a list-serve for the use of tenured and tenure-track sociology faculty to advance discussion of issues regarding department business specific to them, whereas SOCANTH will include tenured and tenure-track anthropologists and sociologists. SOCGRAD will be a list for the exclusive use of graduate students. These list-serves will promote communication and virtual dialogue, and are part of our plan to improve the department's virtual presence, in conjunction with the goal of substantially improving our department's website.

3. Curricula

As a department with a reputation for excellence in teaching, as well as a number of faculty renowned for research on teaching and learning, we continue to strengthen and update the curricula for both the graduate and undergraduate programs. Specifically, we will revisit the

entire catalog of course offerings to insure that only viable courses and meaningful areas of concentration are included. At the undergraduate level, we hope to continue to promote an academic culture that is known for its intellectual rigor. We also seek to continue to improve the quality of our graduate programs. We intend to do this by attracting high-quality students, developing identifiable substantive areas of strength, and to offer required courses and elective seminars that will prepare our students for further graduate work and/or careers in the community. Among the goals for the graduate programs is to build reputations for producing highly trained, fundamentally sound, graduate students who are well prepared for the rigors of advanced graduate work in the nation's best Ph.D programs.

4. On-going Strategic Planning

We view the process of strategic planning as an on-going one. Through regular and open dialogue among the faculty, we hope to use our program reviews to provide a springboard for strategic discussions, planning, and actions that advance our present and future interests and goals.

Strategies

1. Collegiality

Promote collegiality by creating structures that foster an atmosphere of intellectual vibrancy, democratic self governance, shared responsibility and equity.

Actions:

- Develop approach to shared responsibility for teaching core courses in our curricula.
- Expand mentoring opportunities for new faculty.
- Successfully complete search for new department chair.
- Establish a weekly two hour block of dedicated time for colloquia and department and committee meetings during which no classes will be scheduled.
- Re-establish regular faculty colloquia and brown bag lunches.
- Hold regular faculty meetings during the dedicated block.
- Create department list-serves to enhance communication among various departmental constituencies. [e.g SOCDEPT; ANTHFAC; SOCFAC; SOCGRAD]

2. Areas of Substantive Specialization

Identify and develop substantive clusters and hire strategically to strengthen faculty bench in these areas and create new areas of departmental strength.

Actions:

- Develop cognitive map of faculty research and teaching interests in order to identify 3-4 core areas of existing departmental strength.
- Engage in strategic searches to build depth in areas identified as core areas of strength
- Identify a substantive area(s) at the cutting edge of the discipline in which to build new and exciting area(s) of strength.

- Seek new faculty lines to build areas of emerging strength.
- Increase focus on global and transnational approaches in our curricula.
- Improve department website to include faculty profiles, research interests, and curriculum vitas to enhance visibility and accomplishments of our faculty members.

3. B.A./B.S. in Sociology

Continue to develop and improve logic of undergraduate curriculum.

Actions:

- Continue to hire faculty with a commitment to teaching.
- Seek to develop an undergraduate curriculum with higher standards and fewer specific course requirements.
- Increase minimum credit hours required for completing undergraduate major from 37 to 40.
- Require students to take minimum of nine credit hours at 300-level, exclusive of capstone seminar.
- Consider reducing required anthropology cognates from six to three credit hours.
- Review curriculum and the distinction between 200-300 level courses
- Review curriculum to identify “old” courses to eliminate
- Continue to expand professional practice, co-curricular, and service-learning opportunities for sociology students.
- Develop strategies and prepare for anticipated period of oversubscription.
- Significantly improve overall quality and user-friendliness of department website

4. B.A./B.S. in Anthropology

Continue to advance and provide a four-field approach to the field, and develop a new concentration.

Actions:

- Successfully hire a physical anthropologist
- Establish a forensic anthropology concentration.
- Secure a new line to support the forensic concentration.
- Increase the quality of our majors.
- Increase library holdings and resources in anthropology.

5. M.A./M.S. in Sociology

Continue to develop and improve logic of graduate program and curriculum.

Actions:

- Substantially upgrade departmental website to promote the marketing of the graduate programs and to facilitate applications to the program
- Continue to decrease ratio of acceptances to completed applications to match or exceed the College ratio.

- Increase the ratio of enrollments to acceptances to exceed the show rates for the College.
- Increase the mean GPA for new sociology graduate students to 3.50 while maintaining the commitment of ISU and the department to diversity among our students.
- Decrease the time-to-degree for students from 3 years to 2.5 years.
- Increase the number of students who complete the program.

6. Alumni, Cultivation, and Fundraising

Increase connections to our alumni and continue to invest efforts in cultivation of future donors.

Actions:

- Establish an Alumni Advisory Board
- Invite alumni periodically to campus to meet with faculty and students
- Initiate the “Annual \$10” campaign aimed at doubling the proportion of alumni giving to department.

7. Further Integrate Sociology and Anthropology

Build programmatic and intellectual bridges between the Anthropology and Sociology faculties.

Actions:

- Seek funding for additional faculty line for someone doing research that crosses disciplinary boundaries and who would teach interdisciplinary courses.
- Explore possibility of offering courses jointly taught by Anthropologists and Sociologists

8. Excellence in Scholarship

Support and advance diverse faculty interests and excellence in research, scholarship, and teaching.

Actions:

- Secure additional funds for faculty professional travel.
- Re-examine core substantive areas of faculty strength
- Engage in purposeful hiring to build areas of strength to promote critical mass of faculty working on related issues
- Establish commitment to mentoring our junior colleagues