

# **SOCIOLOGY DEPARTMENT LAY SUMMARY DOCUMENT**

## **Timeline**

**Launch semester:** The AUP process was initiated in Fall 2016.

**Action Plan approval:** The action plan was approved by the Sociology Department in June 2022 and was finalized in conversation with the Dean of HSS in July 2022.

## **1. Self-Study Process**

The self-study started in 2016-2017, but was delayed due to changes in department leadership and the shift to remote work during the COVID-19 pandemic. The self-study was completed in July 2021. The Self-Study process was a collaborative effort across the Department, with sub-committees taking responsibility for the different sections of the reports. Due to the unique nature of our Police Studies programs, separate reports were prepared for Sociology and Police Studies.

The main overarching recommendations and priorities highlighted in the Self-Study Reports included the need to repair the departmental culture of collegiality, as well as the need to navigate the challenges posed by the tension between our successful and popular undergraduate and graduate programs coupled with declining resources due to non-replaced faculty retirements and departures. In addition, the major priority highlighted in the Police Studies Self-Study Report was to transform the program from Police Studies to Criminology to reflect the content of the program. Both Reports also offer a wide range of specific recommendations related to our undergraduate and graduate programs, research and scholarship, public engagement and collaboration, and organizational structure and resources.

## **2. Panel Review**

The panel review took place in November 2021. Due to COVID-19 considerations, the panel held its visit virtually. The panel met with the Department Head, Graduate Coordinator, Undergraduate Coordinator, Police Studies Coordinator, other faculty, staff, and graduate students. The panel also considered written submissions. In their overall assessment, the panel noted the significant departmental strengths in teaching, research, and community engagement. Their main recommendations included: the need to better articulate a strategic plan and vision for the future of the department; the need to better integrate the Sociology and Police Studies/Criminology streams of the department; and the need to address the increasing challenges of declining human resources, particularly around the shortage of tenured/tenure-track staff in Police Studies/Criminology.

## **3. Unit Response and Action Plan**

The Department submitted our response to the panel report in April 2022. The Department will undertake a strategic planning process to review our core areas of strength, which will inform all aspects of our teaching, student mentoring, and research. This strategic planning process will also help shape our faculty recruitment priorities. The Department is also moving to better integrate the Sociology and Criminology program streams at the undergraduate and graduate level.

Our action plan, which was finalized in July 2022, includes 26 specific action items that will help strengthen our strategic directions, undergraduate program, graduate program, research and scholarship, public engagement and collaboration, and organizational structure. Action items are

broken down into short-term objectives to be addressed within one year and medium term objectives to be addressed within 2-3 years. We have also designated responsibility for implementing action items, with responsibility assigned across the Department Head, Undergraduate Committee, Graduate Committee, and the Department as a whole. As of Fall 2022, several of our near-term action items are completed or in progress.