

# Instructional Program Review 2022/23 (Comprehensive)

## Sociology

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### Program Mission Statement

The study of sociology as an academic discipline requires rigorous inquiry and systematic interpretation of evidence. Sociologists focus on collective, as opposed to individualistic, explanations of human behavior, and therefore emphasize the roles of social structure, culture, and social interaction in shaping behavior both historically and cross-culturally. We also emphasize the methodological issues endemic to these pursuits: the role of fact and value, quantitative and qualitative methods, and positivist and constructionist approaches.

Mindful of our role in the community college system, and our commitment to equity and excellence, we focus on sociological theory in order to give students a broad understanding of the issues mentioned above. Accordingly, sociology courses at the college level require substantial reading, reflection, and writing. Sociologists have a professional duty to encourage the sociological imagination among students and within the general public.

We also take as axiomatic that the proper understanding of social forces requires an understanding and appreciation of diversity in thought and social location and of the relationship between the two, and their attendant multiplicity of perspectives and perceptual adumbration, and their theoretical and methodological implications.

The Sociology Program in San Diego Mesa College Behavioral Sciences Department currently offers five disciplinary courses: Principles of Sociology, Contemporary Social Problems, Advanced Principles of Sociology, Sociology of Family, Sociology of Latinos, Research Methods in Sociology, and Sociology of Race and Ethnicity. Health and Society has been reactivated and we will begin offering this course in the 2023/24 academic year. These courses are for both non-social science majors and sociology majors. In addition, the student population in the courses is very diverse. For this reason, the mission of the San Diego Mesa Behavioral Sciences Sociology Program is three-fold and as follows:

- To prepare transfer students for upper division sociology courses.
- To prepare students for jobs or careers in sociologically related fields such as education, social work, Law, medicine, business, urban planning, counseling, labor union organizing, and public policy.

- To provide a basic understanding of scientific principles of the social world in general so as to prepare students to make informed decisions about issues they will face as responsible citizens.

The Sociology Faculty of the San Diego Mesa College Department of Behavioral Sciences, in conjunction with our colleagues throughout the San Diego Community College District, are in accord that their mission is wholly compatible with the general professional mission of all sociologists.

The Sociology Faculty understand these major responsibilities to be:

- (1) The offering of high-quality instruction to all students;
- (2) The advancement of student learning;
- (3) Engagement in appropriate scholarly activity; and,
- (4) The rendering of effective professional service.

In order to assure a high level of teaching effectiveness, professional growth, and service to the college and community, and to advance student learning outcomes, the Sociology Faculty endorse the following resolutions:

1. Hiring: To recommend for tenure-track appointment only the best qualified persons, while remaining committed to diversifying our ranks, consistent with College and District policies;
2. Facilities: To insist that the College and District honor their responsibility to provide high-quality facilities for teaching, meeting with students, preparing for classes, and conducting research.
3. Curriculum: To develop, improve, and maintain course offerings that prepare students;
4. Instruction: To pursue teaching excellence and to facilitate student success in fulfilling college, department, and sociology program learning outcomes.
5. Scholarship and teaching: To engage in scholarship which includes not only research, but also the integration and application of knowledge, and the transformation of knowledge through teaching;
6. Learning and idea dissemination: To continue learning and exchange of information utilizing all available assistance in scholarly activity and maintenance of good professional relations among faculty members within the Department and with faculty in other departments and institutions.
7. Collegial relations and decorum: To observe standards of professionalism in collegial relations consistent both with a community of scholars in an atmosphere that incorporates all tenured, tenure-track, adjunct faculty, and students. This includes, but is not limited to, upholding equity in scheduling, funding access, committee service, and information dissemination.

8. Dissemination of intellectual work: To share the results of scholarship with the widest possible audience, through publication, paper presentation, workshop and panel participation, and other forms of communication;
9. Resource advocacy: To work with and through School, College, District, AFT Guild, and educational advocacy groups, and with state political representatives to increase and secure the resources necessary to enhance and sustain the Department in its mission;
10. Sociological advocacy: To participate in efforts by individuals, departments, and professional organizations devoted to the furtherance of sociology as a discipline and to the improvement of instruction and scholarship in sociology.

The sociology department's mission statement ties into Mesa College institutional goals of student access by creating an atmosphere conducive to participation and learning for all students. We contribute to Mesa's goal of student success by building critical thinking, global awareness, written and oral communication into all of our course work; more specifically, teaching structural competency and awareness, and cultural understanding both within American society and globally, emphasizing the sociological imagination, and using exams and papers that require students to develop their academic skills. We also have created in the new sociology library in The Social and Behavioral Sciences building which contains books and articles dating back decades on a range of topics from human sexuality to free market economic theory. Furthermore, our Sociology Of Latinos class and Introduction to Race and Ethnicity class contribute to Mesa College's designation as a Hispanic Serving Institute.

## Program Information and Executive Summary

### Program Challenges

The last comprehensive program review was held in 2018/19. Understandably, the COVID-19 pandemic will be central to this program review. While we are all eager to move past this event, it inevitably contours both the successes of, and challenges to, the Sociology Program in San Diego Mesa College's Behavioral Sciences Department. Sociology faculty are proud of our successes, and our students' many successes, and they are only amplified by the challenges brought on by pandemic isolation. For that reason, we are starting with these challenges in our program review.

As you will read in the forthcoming Data Reflection section, our student success rates and equity rates, as they are determined by the college, stayed about the same, if only because distance education teaching meant that exams were held online instead of in the classroom, and were usually open-book, and open-note. In terms of equity, the online/remote modalities especially

affected students who do not have access to technology or secure internet. As we'll discuss in the Data Reflection sections, African-American, Black, and Latinx students are more likely to experience these problems with technology, despite the best efforts of student services providing on-campus Wifi and free laptops during the COVID-19 pandemic. These students missed parts of class due to slow internet connections, and faculty report some students regularly getting kicked offline or experiencing choppy access due to bad connections. This makes students less likely to participate again. It also impacts the presentation of teaching as faculty internet connections are also not infallible.

As expected, the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and the ongoing conditions thereof negatively affected student success and equity in each discipline of the social and behavioral sciences, including Sociology, but there has been an uptick in success rates since the slow return to face-to-face classes.

These data being used to determine success and equity rates are descriptive and lack some of the control measures and statistical analyses that are necessary for understanding the nuances of student education. One such control measure is enrollment rates, and another is actual learning outcomes. Relatedly, another challenge to higher education, more broadly, is the incentivization of online learning and consequent drop in enrollment in face-to-face classes. Lack of regular in-person communication causes an absence of accompanying forms of nonverbal communication that are necessary for supporting students who are learning to think critically about complex course material. Spontaneous discussions that flow smoothly are crucial for students learning to engage with, and use sociological theory to understand social patterns that are so relevant to their day-to-day lives. This has reinforced the Sociology faculty's commitment to providing in-person courses that are intellectually robust and relevant to the experiences of students from diverse backgrounds. It has also reinforced our commitment to remaining knowledgeable of current sociological research, to contributing to sociological research, and using Sociology to close the gap between theory and praxis in education and in our community.

## Program Successes

Closing the gap between theory and praxis has been central to the many successes in our Sociology Program at San Diego Mesa College. Our faculty contributions to sociological research is couched in studies of social movements and racial/ethnic inequities praxis. The following is a list of both academic and mass media publications authored by Sociology faculty with San Diego Mesa College affiliation:

- “‘Spokes in the Wheel’ and How Policy Reform Can Diversify a Social Movement” (2019) *Social Movement Studies* 19(3): 268-286.
- “Globally Visible Environmental Protest: A Cross National Analysis, 1970-2010” with Evan Schofer and Ann Hironaka (2020) *Sociological Perspectives*, 63(5): 786-808.

- “Institutionalization of Animal Welfare and the Evolution of Corona Virus(es),” special edition of *This View of Life*, The Evolution Institute, [published online on August 31st](#).
- “San Diego’s Commission on Police Practices needs these five things to create real change,” *San Diego Union-Tribune*, [June 23rd, 2020](#).
- “Care Movements, Climate Change, and Multi-Species Refugees,” (2021) *Like an Animal: Critical Animal Studies Approaches to Borders, Displacement, and Othering*, eds. Natalie Khazaal and Nuria Almiron, Brill Publishing.
- “A Mediation Model for Why Controversial Organizations Get the Coverage They Want,” (2021) with Edwin Amenta and Thomas Alan Elliott, *Society & Animals* (1) 1-22.
- “The Policy Trap of Personal Responsibility,” *Times of San Diego*, [May 20th, 2021](#).
- “Animal Advocacy and the ‘Good Cop-Bad Cop’ Radical Flanking of Laboratory Research,” (2022) *Sociological Inquiry* <https://doi.org/10.1111/soin.12521>
- *Introduction to Latinx Studies: A Social Science and Cultural Studies Reader* (2023) co-edited/written with Lydia Huerta Moreno, Cognella Publishing.

Not only have our faculty contributed to academic discourse, we also engaged in Public Sociology, where we focus on making Sociology publicly relevant, impactful, and accessible. One method for doing so is by engaging with the broader community and organizing departmental and campus events. Our faculty started holding informal and virtual Sociology Club meetings for students and Sociology majors. We created a system for gathering and maintaining sociology major contact information through the club and are writing newsletters to provide students with information such as transfer deadlines, class availability, and internship opportunities. Since students of color and marginalized communities are attracted to sociology, the club provides a forum for learning more about social justice issues and opportunities to apply sociological learning.

Our informal Sociology club meetings have included a film series on care workers, inequities, and social justice movements that was funded by the Humanities Institute and included collaborations with the FAST Center, Voices for Children and San Diego’s Court Appointed Special Advocate program, ANIMARTE art collective out of Reno, Nevada, and the San Diego Mesa College student initiative, Propelled by Protests. Faculty also collaborated with the Women Studies Advisory Committee and organized an event on Gendered Professions for Women’s History Month. Finally, the Sociology faculty collaborated with the Environmental Sustainability Committee and our student environmentalism club, TerraMesa, on a film screening event for our campus Earth Fair in 2023.

## Curricular and Service Changes/Updates

We are continuing to build our academic programming and have introduced an honors section for Sociology of Family, and reactivated Sociology of Race and Ethnicity, Research Methods for Sociology, and Sociology of Health and Society. We have also significantly increased enrollment in our Sociology of Latinos/as/x course. These have not only elevated the voices of Mesa College’s diverse student body, but they have also provided a variety of avenues through which students can empower themselves to be civically engaged.

All of this was accomplished during the massive curricular and service changes brought on by pandemic and the now ongoing readjustment to on-campus learning. During this entire public health crisis Sociology faculty have remained active in the service and curricular changes related to the Guided Pathways policy initiatives and the Mesa 2030 plan. Our faculty were also active members of the Environmental Sustainability Committee, Faculty Professional Learning Committee, the AFT executive board, and Women's Studies Advisory Committee. As you can see above, and as you'll read in the Data Reflection section, our pedagogical, service, and curricular activities are anchored to equity, diversity, inclusion, and structural competency that acknowledges and addresses the root causes of education disparities related to ethnicity, race, able-ism, and gender.

## Impact of New Resources

With the support of established faculty sociologists, our two new faculty members gained tenure and were able to spearhead many of these successes. More importantly, they were able to maintain the integrity, rigor, and justice-oriented substance of our course programming. This is especially important considering the ongoing pressure to acquiesce to broader neoliberal pressures to compromise our commitment to liberal arts education. As opposed to prioritizing job-training, we continue to prioritize equity and excellence by supporting in-person classes, as opposed to converting our courses to online modalities and to short-term courses.

We have reviewed our Course Learning Objectives in Curricunet and verified their accuracy.

## Data Reflection

### Trends in Services Data

According to the Enrollment Management Dashboard, the total enrollment in Sociology classes from fall 2019 (so excluding summer 2019 for consistency) to present is 6,841. This value differs from total valid enrollment data in the Course Outcomes Measures. We continue to provide classroom instruction that both accommodates and empowers neurodivergent and medically/physically disabled students. According to the Course Outcomes Measures and Equity Gap Analysis, since the last reporting period in 2018/19 Sociology has had 218 students who receive Disabled Students Programs Services accommodations, and 5,722 students who do not receive DSPS accommodations, for a total of 5,940 students. Our Program Success Rate is 3 percentage points below the campus and school success rate of about 73%. Our success is also

3% lower than the campus school for students who receive services through Extended Opportunity Programs and Services (EOPS.) What should be noted is that the equity gap, according to these measures, is in favor of students who receive EOPS, indicating that increasing financial and other resources for individual students is effective for improving course and program success rates. This is not surprising, and points towards there being broader social structural problems influencing our students' educational success.

## Trends in Instructional Data

The data on course success for students from historically marginalized social groups mirrors that of the other programs in Behavioral Sciences and of other Schools. San Diego Mesa College is designated as a Hispanic Serving Institution, where "Hispanic" is meant to include students who identify as Indigenous and/or other students who reject this neocolonial panethnic label. According to the Course Outcome Measures and Equity Gap Analysis, from fall 2019 2,545 Latinx, 1,553 white students, 489 African American students, 476 Asian students, 497 students identifying as "Other," 254 Filipino, 90 Unreported, and 28 Pacific Islander/Native Hawaiian students have taken Sociology courses. The three groups experiencing an unfavorable equity gap are Latinx, African American, and Unreported students. The success rates in our courses for Latino/a/x students is significantly lower than all other groups, including Black and/or African-American students. This may partly be a problem of descriptive data, as Black and/or African-American students are still under-represented in our college as a whole, and the lack of population level control measures may be skewing the equity measure data. That said, there is no disagreement from our program that an equity gap absolutely exists, as we teach in our Sociology classes using more statistically valid analyses.

In terms of gender equity gaps, 3,624 female-identifying students, 2,282 male-identifying, 19 Non-binary, and 15 Unreported students have been in our Sociology classes since fall 2019, and we have a disproportionate equity gap in favor of women. This may also be a problem with data, as systemic pressures often push women into non-STEM majors and classes, but we are happy to see that there does not appear to be a significant equity gap that is unfavorable to women or non-binary-identifying students.

Finally, and also mirroring other departments, we have an equity gap indicating that first-generation students are experiencing a disadvantage in Sociology classes. While data used may be problematic, these overall patterns in course success rates and equity gaps are important for all faculty to acknowledge and address. This is especially true for Sociology faculty whose research and teaching specializations focus on equity gaps and social movements addressing those gaps.

## Practice Reflection

For this section, we will focus on distance education practices, including access to technology and the growing reliance on that technology. We are anchoring our discussion of how to address equity gaps and improve education for all to distance education and technology because of the massive shift towards holding more courses online both synchronously and asynchronously. In Fall 2021, a poll was given in four sections for SOCO 101 distance education courses. A question on the poll asked students the primary technology tool they are using for the course. 171 students responded and 30% of the students said a phone or tablet was the primary device. Mobile devices have accessibility drawbacks for viewing course material on Canvas, and completing reading and writing assignments. The primary reliance on mobile devices reflects the digital divide, or the lack of access to the internet and computers outside of campus spaces.

According to the National Science for Education Statistics (NSES), black, indigenous and people of color (BIOPIC) and low-income households are more likely to have either no or unreliable internet access. For example, in 2015, the NSCES reported that 17% of Hispanic households have little to no internet. Also, according to The Pew Research Center, about four-in-ten adults with lower incomes do not have home broadband services (43%) or a desktop or laptop computer (41%). San Diego Mesa College, and the Sociology program serve first-generation college students, and these students are more likely to be BIPOC and/or low-income. According to more recent data from the Pew Research Center, “racial minorities and those with lower levels of education and income are less likely to have broadband service at home.”<sup>1</sup> The below table of data is drawn from Pew Research Centers website tracking at-home broadband service by race.

<b>Home Broadband Adoption by Race</b>			
Date of data collection	white	Black	Latinx
1/18/2018	72%	57%	47%
2/7/2019	79%	66%	61%
2/8/2021	80%	71%	65%

The same Pew Research poll reported complete equity of at-home broadband adoption by gender, with 77% of all men polled reporting at-home broadband access, and 77% women have high speed internet at home. If these data on gender were disaggregated by race, we would surely see the intersectional equity gaps where women of color are even more of a disadvantage in

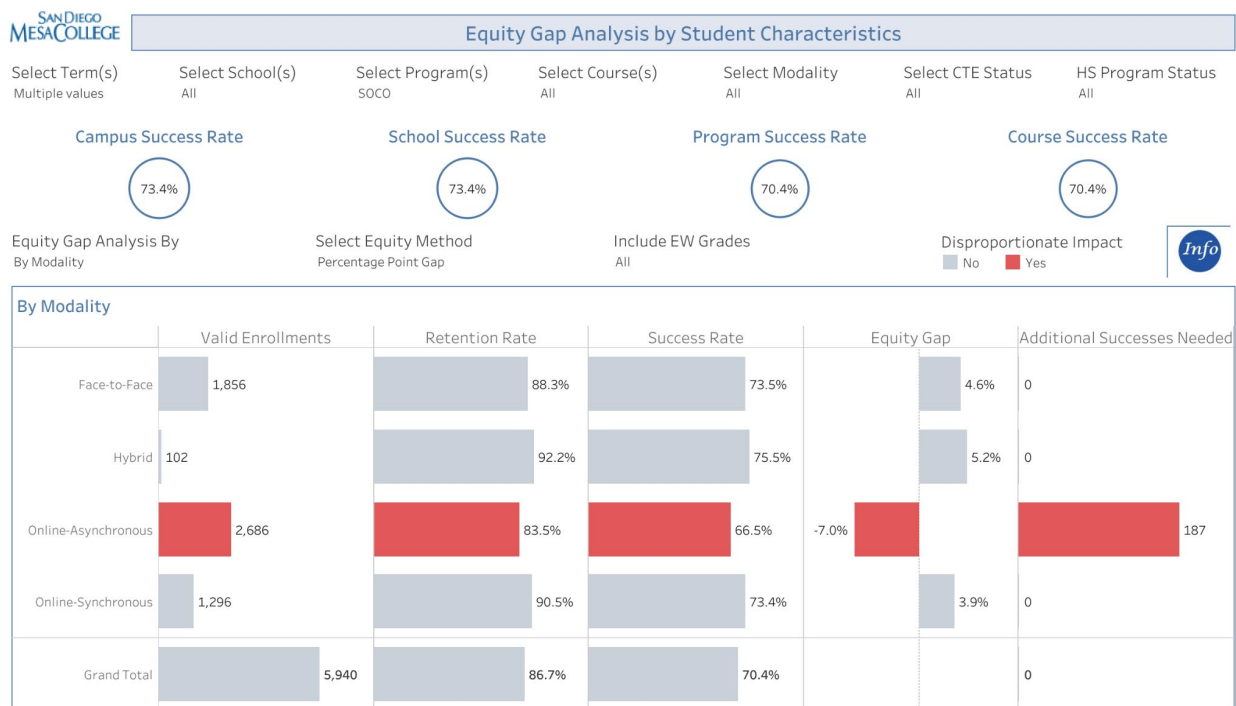
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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/fact-sheet/internet-broadband/>



terms of have high speed internet at home. These data, coupled with the tendency for students to use smartphones for their course material, indicate that maintaining fair access to face-to-face classes is the best way to address equity gaps until access to high speed internet becomes a publicly provided good.

According to the Course Outcomes Measures, providing on-campus internet and free laptops had a negligible effect on an aggregated level. While this helped many students get through their courses pandemic, it is not a solution to the structural barriers creating the digital divide. For instance, even after pandemic lockdown, students who want to participate in Zoom classes are often relegated to their cars because it is the only personal and quiet space for them to do so, and students who did not have cars were dissuaded from participating at all. Our faculty routinely report students using public cafes to access the internet for classes and office hours. These conditions may be suitable for completing homework, but they are not suitable substitutes for in-class learning. To illustrate this equity gap that is not related to instructional capabilities, we are including the Equity Gap data on modalities.



Note: This dashboard uses an updated methodology to calculate Equity Gaps and Disproportionate Impact. The new methodology better captures Equity Gaps at Majority Minority Institutions and considers sample size when flagging a group as Disproportionately Impacted. [Click here for the Technical Guide to Equity Calculations](#)

# Unit Goals and Action Plans

## Unit Goals

The Sociology Program has three specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-bound unit goals: 1) to continue expanding our face-to-face course list with curricula related to the structural roots of inequities, 2) to address the curricular obstacles for Sociology majors related to transfer and degree requirements, and 3) to build upon our Sociology library to include a computer with A/V access for students in need of a quiet space for synchronous online classes and/or course assignments.

## Mesa 2030 Roadmap Strategic Objective Alignment

Goal #1: Continue expanding our face-to-face course list with curricula related to the structural roots of inequities.

- SO: Mesa College will build a community culture that utilizes antiracist practices to cultivate collaboration, inclusion, diversity, equity, and personal growth so that all students, employees, and members of our external community are valued.
- SO: Mesa College will develop and sustain processes that prioritize environmental justice and sustainability, reduce Mesa College's carbon footprint, and allocate its human, physical, technological, and fiscal resources around the goal of increasing student access, success, and parity in outcomes across racial/ethnic groups and all disproportionately impacted groups.

Goal #2: Address the curricular obstacles for Sociology majors related to transfer and degree requirements

- SO: Mesa College will institutionalize (or Mesa-nize) practices that clarify pathways to timely completion for students, with the priority on those practices that create parity in outcomes across racial/ethnic groups and all disproportionately impacted groups.
- SO: Mesa College will leverage pathways and partnerships within its internal and external communities to eliminate barriers and provide support for students entering Mesa College, through to completion, and beyond to transfer and employment.

Goal #3: Build upon our Sociology library to include a computer with A/V access for students in need of a quiet space for synchronous online classes and/or course assignments.

- SO: Mesa College will prioritize equity and excellence by fostering innovation and high-quality, culturally relevant teaching/learning experiences with the priority on those practices that create parity in outcomes across racial/ethnic groups and all disproportionately impacted groups.

## Specific Actions

Goal #1: Continue expanding our face-to-face course list with curricula related to the structural roots of inequities.

1. Build enrollment in our newly introduced courses on Sociology of Race and Ethnicity, Research Methods for Sociology, and Sociology of Health and Society.
2. Create courses in Social Statistics and Sociology of Deviance.
3. Create honors sections for higher enrolled courses.

Goal #2: Address the curricular obstacles for Sociology majors related to transfer and degree requirements.

1. Articulate courses in the follow ways:
  - a. For UCSD SOCI 10 - American Society: Social Structure and Culture in the United States
    - i. Sociology of Latinos (SOCO 150)
    - ii. Race and Ethnicity (SOCO 207)
  - b. For UCSD SOCI 40- Sociology of Health Care Issues
    - i. Health and Society (SOCO 145)
  - c. For UCSD SOCI 60- Practice of Social Research
    - i. Research Methods for Sociology (SOCO 220)
  - d. For SDSU SOCI 201- Elementary Social Statistics
    - i. Research Methods for Sociology (SOCO 220)
2. Revise degree requirements to include more Sociology courses as elective requirements.

Goal #3: Build upon our Sociology library to include a computer with A/V access for students in need of a quiet space for synchronous online classes and/or course assignments.

1. Identify lines of funding to purchase a computer with A/V access.

These actions require relatively minimal funding that can be acquired departmentally or through institutional grants.

## Lead Writer and Management Information

Erin M. Evans

Sociology Program | Department of Behavioral Sciences

Department Chair: Dina Miyoshi

School Dean: Pearl Ly

Submitted to Manager:

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