I. Relationship of the Academic Unit Mission to the College and University Missions

Evaluate the program’s contributions to the College and to the University. Tie the program to the College and University missions.

Sociology is a program offered in the Department of Social Sciences, which in turn is housed in the College of Liberal Arts at Louisiana Tech. Sociology as a degree program has been offered for over 75 years at Louisiana Tech. During its entire history it has been located in the Department of Social Sciences.

Sociology as a discipline enables a student to see how our behavior is largely shaped by groups to which we belong and the society and world in which we live. Individuals can utilize sociology on a more personal level to move beyond established ways of thinking, thus allowing them to obtain new insights into themselves and to develop a greater awareness of the connection between their “own” world and that of other people. Sociology promotes understanding and tolerance by enabling students to look beyond common sense, intuition, and personal experiences. The discipline offers to majors and thousands of other undergraduate students a guiding theme: our lives are ordered and influenced by powerful social forces that are larger than we are. At the same time, individual action can influence those forces. Hence, one value of sociology lies in its ability to show the reciprocal connection between the most private elements of our lives — our characteristics, experiences, behaviors, and thoughts --- and the cultures, groups, organizations, and institutions to which we belong.

Both the Department of Social Sciences and the College of Liberal Arts are committed to the University’s dedication “to quality in teaching, in research, and in public service.”

The Department mission states: “the Department of Social Sciences....offers an education which provides a firm foundation for professional work or graduate school for majors in...sociology.” This mission component supports the following College goals, “[t]his liberal arts education prepares students for... professional careers... [and] provides training leading toward various graduate degrees,” and the following University statement, “Louisiana Tech University... offers a broad range of fully accredited undergraduate degrees to qualified students.”

The Department mission states: “The Department affords students opportunities to sample knowledge from all fields; to develop writing, problem-solving, and interpersonal skills sought by employers; and to acquire the sort of liberal arts background which enriches a lifetime of political, social, cultural, and leisure-time activities.” This statement supports the following College of Liberal Arts goals, “students in the College of Liberal Arts became acquainted with many areas of intellectual interests,” “this liberal arts education [provides] the basis for a richer and better life,” “it offers courses in such areas as... social sciences which are required in many curricula... for students desiring minor fields of study, for non-traditional students..., and for any other student interested in learning about various areas of liberal arts... [and] prospective teachers who desire to major in such subjects as... social science,” and the following University mission statement, “the University encourages its students to regard learning as a lifelong process.”

Full texts of the Department of Social Sciences, College of Liberal Arts, and University Mission Statements may be found in Appendix A.
II. Relationship to Other Programs

1. Describe the links between this program and others within the department, the college and the university. Include such issues as shared requirements, interdisciplinary activities, and so on.

As noted more specifically below, Sociology is an integral part of a quality liberal arts education, and, as such, the links between Sociology and other disciplinary fields are multiple and of considerable depth at Louisiana Tech University. In order to earn a baccalaureate degree from the university, a student is required to take nine hours of Social Sciences, which may include courses in Sociology. Sociology is linked to other disciplines in the Department of Social Sciences by 1) requiring students to take two Political Science courses (one at the introductory level and one at the upper division level) and, 2) providing a cultural studies option in lieu of a foreign language requirement. Thus a sociology major who does not take foreign language courses may instead fulfill a requirement in cultural studies. Most students select one or two Geography courses from among the cultural studies courses from which they may choose. Therefore, most Sociology majors have a good basis of knowledge in, and become aware of the connections among Sociology, Political Science, and Geography.

The Sociology curriculum provides direct connections to Psychology, requiring all undergraduate majors to take six hours, beginning with the introductory course. In addition, there is a statistics requirement which is primarily met by students taking Psychology 300. In return, Psychology majors are often satisfying their social science GER requirements by taking Sociology 201 and an upper division course relevant to their focus of study.

Sociology is also closely connected to the General Studies Program. This degree program allows students to develop thematic concentrations or areas of enhancement in any discipline, and sociology is a popular choice.

Sociology students are required to enroll in numerous courses in Liberal Arts which are outside the Social Sciences, including History (minimum of six hours), English (minimum of twelve hours), and Foreign Language (minimum of nine hours optional). If a Sociology major opts for the nine hours of foreign language, they will be mastering a chosen language, which extends their knowledge and appreciation of another culture from a sociological perspective. If a student chooses the cultural studies option, they will take additional courses in Archaeology, History, English, or Geography, all of which have cultural based themes to enhance their understanding of the differences in and among people in literature, law, music, religion, etc. There are specific interdisciplinary activities which involve the Social Sciences Organization for majors and minors in Sociology, Political Science, and Geography, and Phi Alpha Theta, for students with at least 12 hours of history and a 3.0 grade average. In addition, top sociology students may choose to be involved and take honors courses in the Honors Program including and honors section of Introduction to the Principles and Elements of Sociology.

Outside the College of Liberal Arts the sociology program contributes to the interdisciplinary minor in Gerontology by offering such courses as Sociology of Aging, Retirement and Community, and Grieving and Loss.
2. Discuss the relationship between your unit and other units which may require courses from your unit—for instance, for minors and for content course for teacher training.

Louisiana Tech University requires undergraduates pursuing a baccalaureate degree to take nine hours in the “Social Sciences,” which is defined as a minimum of two disciplines from Economics, Geography, Anthropology, Psychology, Political Science, and Sociology. In addition to these general requirements, individual departments and schools often make more specific requirements that involve Sociology (as noted in the next section). Students from other majors often choose to minor in Sociology. In such cases, the students are required to take Sociology 201 (Introduction to Sociology), along with courses that are of specific interest to them, for a total of 21 hours. Education majors are required to take Sociology 201 and are required to take three additional hours from among a selection of Social Science courses, which include Sociology 306 (Juvenile Delinquency), Sociology 312 (Race and Ethnic Relations), Sociology 345 (Social Stratification), and Sociology 416 (Sociology of Education).

3. Discuss the extent to which students from other disciplines take courses in your field to satisfy GER requirements and how you think these courses are suitable for that purpose.

See Appendix B

III. Student Demographics

For each academic program you offer, describe the students in the program.

1. Describe the quality of their academic preparation for the degree

Louisiana Tech is a university with selective admissions, assuring that most students who major in Sociology are at least basically prepared to undertake this rigorous program of study. For those students with low ACT scores, remedial courses are required in English and Math in order to better equip students to be successful overall, which includes those who enroll in the Sociology program. In spite of the overall preparation for college, many students are poorly prepared to enroll in Sociology primarily because few have taken a Sociology course in high school. Only the largest high school districts in Louisiana and the contiguous states of Texas, Arkansas, and Mississippi offer Sociology courses and then only as elective courses. Thus, students generally are lacking in the ability to think critically upon enrolling in contemporary, college-level Sociology courses. A significant proportion of Sociology majors have chosen the program after completing one, and sometimes two years at Louisiana Tech. Those who transfer at this point from another department or college have completed many of the GER requirements and are often more prepared to complete the program successfully. The Sociology program also includes many students who have transferred from other universities. These students must meet the transfer requirements of Louisiana Tech in order to be admitted to the program.

2. What is the student demand for the program?

The number of students majoring in Sociology has doubled over the course of the past ten years. During the last five years the number of majors has been steady as follows: Fall 1998 - 128; Fall 1999 - 128; Fall 2000 - 113; Fall 2001 - 113; and Fall 2002 - 134. The number of students majoring in Sociology is very large in relation to the number of Sociologists on staff. Upper-level courses range in size from 40 to100 students. This large class size is a result of several factors: 1) the large number of Sociology majors 2) the large number of General Studies majors who concentrate their thematic focus on Sociology or Social Sciences and, 3) undergraduate students who are attempting to complete their GER
requirements. Often degree requirements in various programs require a student to take two social science courses in the same discipline, i.e. Sociology 201 and an upper-level Sociology course. The program is constrained by the relatively small number of upper-level courses that can be offered each quarter by only four Sociologists. In addition, a certain number of courses are offered to assist other disciplines in strengthening their students’ backgrounds, as noted in previous comments about Education, Nursing, Aviation, Psychology, Health Information, etc. Thus, for a variety of reasons, student demand for the program are very high and difficult to meet with the present faculty size.

3. How is the information on students made available to faculty and used in planning the curriculum?

Information regarding students and potential students is made available through a variety of means, including the VIP(Ecoms), BOSS and CICS (mainframe) computer software systems, and by sundry other means, such as word of mouth and direct experience with students. The university provides opportunities for high school students who are interested in Sociology to meet with faculty and learn about the program by sponsoring “Time Out for Tech.” Additionally, the Sociologists meet with high school students on an ongoing basis when they make on-campus visits through the Admissions Office. This provides faculty with a sense of future students’ areas of interest, career objectives, and background preparation, and leads to changes in courses, course foci, etc.

4. Provide five-year enrollment and graduation figures.

This information is presented in Appendix C.

IV. Program Goals and Curriculum

1. List the goals, expectations, or desired learning outcomes of the program, telling what students are expected to know and what skills they are expected to demonstrate. For reference, Expected Outcomes for All Tech Graduates are included on the Curricula Effectiveness Survey as part of Appendix A.

In addition to the expected outcomes for all Louisiana Tech Graduates, students graduating with a degree in Sociology should possess excellent critical thinking skills. Students should be able to use logical analysis of complex issues in communicating (written and verbal) their understanding of these issues. Graduates should be able to understand a wide range of social issues/problems and the social policy directed at these issues/problems, and have the ability to articulate them to other people whether, these are domestic or global. It is important that sociology majors are able to sort social fact from opinions and views held based on common sense perspectives. Sociology graduates are expected to be open minded individuals and respect the views, values, and beliefs of all groups, societies, and institutions. In their courses students are continually required to do written assignments, critiques, reaction papers, film, and research projects to apply the concepts and theories of the discipline in their work. In doing so they should employ creative thinking regarding the social facts, ideas, and concepts they have read and discussed. More than most majors, Sociology majors should have a great understanding of how groups work. In their course work they are given the experience of team work, team building, etc. Finally, Sociology majors should possess the research skills to conduct research projects based on their own understanding of research methods employed in Sociology. These skills would allow them to design and investigate any issue related to people, organizations, etc. in their work, community, or graduate-professional setting.
2. Describe how the above goals are communicated to faculty and students. Indicate how faculty are involved in the development of these outcomes and how these outcomes are communicated to faculty and students through courses, presentations, organizations, etc. If external stakeholders are involved in the development process, please describe.

At the institutional level faculty members consult the University Mission Statement. In addition they review the College of Liberal Arts and Department of Social Sciences Mission Statements. Another source of review is information provided by the Expected Outcomes for All Tech Graduates when faculty are constructing their courses. There are annual reviews of faculty members by the Department of Social Sciences Chairperson which address desired learning outcomes from the previous year as part of an annual review of goals, objectives, etc. Faculty members address the goals and outcomes in general conversations among themselves. Faculty members communicate these goals to students primarily in their course syllabi, which explicitly state the expected learning outcomes of individual courses. Furthermore, faculty members communicate the general desired learning outcomes during the first class meeting of each quarter and through personal advising sessions which occur every quarter. Five sample syllabi are included in Appendix D, one introductory and four advanced. Descriptions/objectives are indicated on the syllabi, as are methods of teaching and assessing facts, concepts, and research.

3. For each academic program you offer, explain how the curriculum reflects program goals. In your description, focus on the structure of the curriculum, which may include the following items:

   **Explain how the major is organized:** Are there core courses that all majors take? Does the curriculum have options within it?

The Sociology major is organized around ten courses or thirty semester hours of credit. There are several core courses that are required for all majors. Every major is required to take Sociology 201, Introduction to Principles and Elements of Sociology; Sociology 320, Research Methods; Sociology 401, Social Theory; and either Sociology 308, The Family, or Sociology 345, Social Stratification. These courses provide students with broad overviews of the discipline of sociology and the skills to understand and conduct their own academic research. In addition these courses provide for a graduate in Sociology to be accepted into any graduate Sociology program by having fulfilled the core requirements for entering a master’s level program in Sociology. Thus, there are four courses or twelve hours of courses required. The remaining eighteen hours are chosen by students to complete their thirty hours for a major. The eighteen hours are usually chosen by students to concentrate in courses related to criminology, family, applied, or general areas of interest in sociology.

**Explain how major-area courses at various levels --freshmen, sophomore, junior, and senior—are designed to build on each other and how the content and difficulty of the courses differ at the four levels. If there are prerequisites for a course, explain the rationale for those prerequisites.**

The courses in Sociology are connected to each other in several ways. Sociology 201, Introduction to Sociology is required prior to any other Sociology course. This is to insure that students become familiar with the concepts, terms, theories, research techniques, and specialized areas of interests that the discipline provides. This course provides the fundamentals of Sociology as a discipline. Often freshmen students take Sociology 201 despite the fact that it is considered to be a sophomore level course. Sociology advisors tend to advise freshmen sociology majors to enroll in basic GER courses during their first year and begin taking Sociology courses in their sophomore year. This is not always possible, but it is the objective. Beyond the Sociology 201 course there are several other basic level courses, such as Sociology 202 - Social Problems, Sociology 205 - Introduction to Anthropology, Sociology 210 -
Introduction to Criminal Justice, and Sociology 230 - The Social Welfare System in the United States. Each of these courses provides valuable research, knowledge, social policy issues, domestic agenda debates, and diversity issues that provide a solid foundation to take the more difficult and specialized Sociology courses at the 300 and 400 (Junior and Senior) levels. In the junior year students are required to enroll in the core course of Sociology 320, Research Methods, a very challenging and difficult course. This course is offered in the Winter Quarter only and requires that the student take a statistics course as a prerequisite. Since the Research Method course requires students to actually design, execute, collect, and statistically analyze their data, the statistics course provides the skills to do so. In addition, students are required to obtain higher level computer search skills, work with data sets, and enter their data in SPSS data and statistical packages to display the data and be able to interpret their findings. The Family (Sociology 308) or Social Stratification (Sociology 345) can be taken any quarter during the junior or senior year. The final required core course, Sociology 402 (Social Theory), is offered each Spring Quarter, and each major should have had several other sociology courses including Research Methods that prepares them for this senior level course.

**Explain the extent to which students in the program share learning experiences in their major fields. Explain how the program is designed to allow or enable the students to learn together.**

The range of Sociology courses is varied, but can be categorized as focusing on the following areas of interest:

**Family** - Sociology 308 (The Family), Sociology 410 (Family Violence), Sociology 437 (Retirement and Community); **Criminology** - Sociology 210 (Introduction to Criminal Justice), Sociology 314 (Criminology), Sociology 420 (Treatment of Offenders), Sociology 444 (Substance Abuse), Sociology 306 (Juvenile Delinquency), Sociology 313 (The Sociology of Deviance), and Sociology 424 (Sociology of Corrections); **Applied Sociology** - Sociology 230 (The Social Welfare System in the United States), Sociology 330 (An Introduction to Social Work), Sociology 420 (Treatment of Offenders), Sociology 436 (Grieving and Loss), and Sociology 444 (Substance Abuse). There are several courses that overlap all areas and therefore can be used in different ways for undergraduate students majoring in Sociology. These areas or categories enable students with similar academic interests within the discipline to learn together, creating a shared learning experience that is evidenced by the collegial interaction in and outside the classroom. Often there are shared learning experiences because the Sociology faculty provide field trips, guest speakers, etc. to assist the group learning experience. Furthermore, many courses require group interaction in both class discussions and projects. The Social Science Organization provides a venue to bring students outside the classroom to engage in community activities.

One of the experiences that we try to provide for undergraduate sociology majors is the possibility of an internship experience. There is not a requirement for an undergraduate sociology major to take an internship, but several graduate professional schools require or prefer that a student have this experience prior to being accepted into a graduate program. This is particularly the case in the areas of social work, counseling, and, sometimes, criminal justice. Also employers consider an internship placement to be a good indicator of whether or not the student would work well in an agency setting. In addition, internship credit is considered by many agencies as work experience and provides an extra advantage to the student who is competing for employment. There is not an internship coordinator position in the Sociology faculty. Rather, each faculty member, through their contacts, places students into agencies, businesses, or organizations and is directly responsible for supervising and assessing their students’ performance, and awarding grades for the three hours of credit. The experience in internship settings certainly enhances the academic knowledge base gained in courses, creates a shared learning experience...
with the professional staff students work with, and provides closer faculty-student exchange between the
supervising faculty member and the intern to discuss issues, circumstances, and experiences they have
during the internship. It also allows individual students to achieve learning experiences with those
professionals already working in the field, thus learning together to understand what it will take in
various areas to enter this area of career activity. Examples of internship placements are as follows: The
Methodist Childrens Home, The Lincoln Parish District Attorney’s Office, Wade Correctional Center,
Lincoln Parish Sheriff’s Office, Lincoln Parish District Judge’s Office, Ruston City Court, Chautauqua
Center for Family Therapy, State Farm Insurance, Louisiana State Department of Probation, Parish
Detention Centers, Ruston Mental Health and Substance Abuse Center, many Attorney at Law Offices,
Disney World, All State Insurance, The Federal Drug Enforcement Administration, Church Ministries,
Homeless Centers, Ruston Parks and Recreation Center, and many others.

Explain which courses in the major that (sic) are designed specifically to address writing skills and
knowledge of technology.

Every Sociology course stresses the importance of writing skills, especially in the upper division
courses. Communication skills (writing and speaking) are essential to successfully completing the
Sociology curriculum. Writing skills are accomplished through exams, critiques, reaction papers, term
papers, and research projects which are conducted both inside and outside the classroom. These same
assignment are used to improve critical thinking skills, which are stressed by every faculty member in
their courses. For example, Sociology 401 (Social Theory) requires students to identify theoretical
concepts, terms, and ideas present in film; this requires the ability of the student to synthesize complex
ideas and articulate how these ideas are present in a scene of the movie. Faculty commitment to writing
skills enhancement has been most recently illustrated by faculty participation in the Faculty
Development Workshop entitled “Assessing What Students Know and Improving Student Writing.”

Sociology 320 (Research Methods), a required course for Sociology majors, is specifically designed to
teach technology skills. Students are required to conduct a research project which results in the
collection of data. As part of the course they are required to use a sophisticated statistical program
(SPSS) which is available in the Social Science computer lab. Each student must be able to work with
this program to enter the data, analyze it statistically, and display the data in the form they choose
(tables, graphs, mapping, etc.) in order to complete the project. Prior to gathering their data they must
become skilled in the use of on-line resources available with Info-Trac and all available search engines
provided by Prescott Memorial Library. The library staff provides a two hour training program for
students enrolled in this course to allow them to gain the computer search skills necessary to complete
the course, acquire confidence in research settings, and prepare them for graduate professional training
or the workplace.

Does the curriculum have a culminating experience such as a capstone course, comprehensive
exam, research project, or dissertation? If so, what is the content and focus?

There is not a capstone course in Sociology that would allow graduating students the opportunity to
demonstrate all the communication skills, critical-thinking skills, and knowledge based information
learned from their curriculum. Sociology 320 (Research Methods) is the closest course available to
illustrate the level of preparation undergraduates received from their experience as sociology majors.
This course, as stated previously, requires students to build on the skills gained in other Sociology
courses. The research project requires that students be able to synthesize and analyze scholarly journal
articles during their review of the literature, and utilize an appropriate sociological theory which would
generate at least two testable hypotheses from their search. In addition, students must construct solid
research designs through which to collect the data to test their hypotheses. Next, there is the challenge of collecting and analyzing the data statistically in order to test the hypotheses. Through the interpretation of their data students must offer explanations for why the hypotheses were supported or denied. Upon completion of this research project students must publically present their research issue, findings, and conclusions before their peers in the course as well as two outside sociologists from the department, who critique, question, and analyze their efforts. This is as scholarly an endeavor as any undergraduate student will encounter in their experience as a student. In addition, graduating seniors are encouraged to take the Major Field Achievement Test (MFAT) in Sociology, which allows them to measure their overall knowledge of the discipline of Sociology.

V. Documentation

1. Describe the process used to regularly monitor and assess the quality of the program relative to the overall goals of the program and the learning outcomes. Identify the stakeholders and how and when they are consulted.

   a. Sociology faculty monitor and assess knowledge extensively in their own classes, using various measurements. Different kinds of exams are used, including daily quizzes, unit tests, mid-terms, and finals. Other measurement instruments include critiques, reaction and term papers, research assignments and projects. All these assignments also assess writing, problem solving and critical thinking skills. Oral presentations, and class and group discussions are used in all classes. These assess speaking and thinking skills. Group assignments are required in most classes. These assess interpersonal skills, as do class discussion requirements. Some exam questions, individual and group projects, and class discussions also promote and assess ability to explain and defend ones views and appreciate an understanding of others. Courses in The Family, Race and Ethnic Relations, Substance Abuse, and Criminology among others, require students to grapple with moral and ethical issues.

   b. In addition to assessment by faculty in their own classes, there is additional assessment in the required research methods class (Sociology 320). Although the teacher of record assigns the grade, all student research projects are evaluated by two other sociology faculty members.

   c. Graduating seniors are encouraged to take the Major Field Achievement Test in Sociology. This is a national standardized test.

   d. Sociology majors planning on attending graduate school take several different standardized exams, depending on the graduate or professional program in which they intend to enroll. Most take the Graduate Record Exam (GRE), which is required for most of the professional programs sociology graduates enter, but several graduates decide to apply to law school (LSAT), business (GMAT), or education (Miller Analogy Exam).

   e. Stakeholders in the program are current students in the sociology curriculum and alumni who are graduates in sociology.

Current student stakeholders are consulted through student evaluations of all classes each quarter. Other consultation includes quarterly academic advising by sociology faculty advisors and conferences and conversations with teachers, advisors, the department head, and dean, as issues, problems, or questions arise.
f. A Graduating Seniors Questionnaire is administered to all graduating seniors in Liberal Arts by the Dean’s Office. Students identify themselves by curriculum, and the questionnaires filled out by sociology students are returned to the Social Sciences Department. These questionnaires provide a rich source of information from student (soon to be alumni stakeholders).

g. Other alumni information is obtained informally by faculty contacts with former students and, occasionally, with their employers, graduate school faculty, associates and colleagues. Requests for letters of recommendation are one important source of contacts and feedback.

h. Internships are monitored by the individual faculty member on the Sociology staff. Students are required to obtain a letter from the agency, organization, etc. for which they would like to take the internship. In addition, they are required to work no less than 200 hours during the quarter of their internship (20 hours a week for ten weeks). They are required to keep a diary of each day during their internship, which includes what they may be learning, any specific experiences (good or bad) they have had, and impressions they receive considering whether or not this is a good experience for them. The agency, organization, etc. that has agreed to supervise the intern must provide a letter stating the student has fulfilled the time required as well as provide an evaluation of the student’s performance while working in the setting. The overall responsibility for assigning the grade resides with the supervising faculty member.

2. Present evidence of the extent to which the curriculum/program/major field goals are being met. List the sources of evidence, both quantitative and qualitative.

a. Grades in sociology courses are generally good, with 67-73 percent of students typically receiving A’s and B’s in the lower division courses. The percentile for upper division A’s and B’s is 51-75 percent of students. About 6-19 percent of students typically receive D’s and F’s. These figures include classes taught at Barksdale AFB, which are not under the supervision of this department. Grades there are somewhat higher. Grade distributions in sociology courses for the last four quarters may be seen in Appendix E.

b. The research projects from Sociology 320 (Research Methods) this year were found to be acceptable by the additional sociology professors, and the assessments were deemed appropriate.

c. Sociology graduates take the national MFAT Exam as an assessment tool to allow comparisons of our students with sociology majors across the nation. Comparisons are available from 1999-2002. The scores for Louisiana Tech sociology majors are slightly below or near the national level for these four years. The mean scores were as follows: 1999, Louisiana Tech 144 - National 149 (n=19); 2000, Louisiana Tech 149 - National 149 (n=9); 2001, Louisiana Tech 146 - National 149 (n=12); 2002, Louisiana Tech 144 - National 149 (n=11). Variety in the number of students taking the MFAT contributes to sometimes wide ranges in scores from year to year. In addition to an overall score, the Sociology MFAT is broken into two Subscores and eight to nine Area Indicators. The two Subscores are I- Core Sociology (Theory and Methodology) and II- Critical Thinking. The scores for sociology majors on Core Sociology for 1999-2002 were slightly (3-4 percentage points) below the national mean, while in the 2000 cohort scores were two percentage points above the national mean. The scores for Critical Thinking for 1999-
2002 ranged below the national average anywhere from one to eight percent. These scores reveal that, for a small department that does not have multiple sections of theory and methods, our students do extremely well compared to sociology majors in institutions across the nation. There are eight to nine Assessment Indicators on the MFAT. They are as follows: General Theory, Methodology and Statistics, Deviance and Social Problems, Demography and Urban/Rural, Multiculturalism, Social Institutions, Social Psychology, Gender, and in 2002 the MFAT added Globalization. Since 1999, when scores in Theory and Methodology were five to seven percent lower than the national mean, the scores have been only one or two points lower, or, as in 2000, three points higher than the national average. Our department emphasizes Criminology and Deviance, and each year our scores are close to or higher than the national mean scores. Our scores in Social Psychology each year are one or two points lower than the national mean scores, or, as 2002 scores show, nine points above the national mean. Our emphasis in Family shows strength in the scores for Gender. Our students’ scores are slightly below the national average except in 2000 when the scores were two points higher. The scores for Multiculturalism in 1999 were nine points below the national average, but the department had not taught a course in minority relations in five years. Since 2000 the course has been offered, and our students’ scores have been slightly below the national mean. Globalization was a new assessment added in the 2002 MFAT, and our students performed significantly above the national mean, 53 to 42 percent. Our department does not offer courses in Demography, Urban/Rural, or Social Institutions, and often the scores reflect this fact. While there is room for improvement for sociology majors in the areas of focus, our students perform consistently near or above the national average as seen in Appendix F.

d. Scores on the standardized exams (GRE, GMAT, LSAT) for graduate or professional training, while not directly available to the sociology faculty apparently are sufficiently high that students are accepted to graduate school at a rate of 70% and higher. A core of students attend graduate school to obtain a Master’s in Social Work. Most of these students attend LSU, University of Texas at Arlington, Tulane, or Arkansas, with a much smaller number attending Grambling State. Several graduates have remained at Louisiana Tech and completed an Master’s in Business Administration. In addition a large number of our students enroll in the Master’s in Counseling and the Master’s in Industrial Organization at Louisiana Tech. Another core group of students attend graduate school in Criminal Justice. Most of these students remain in Louisiana, attending the following graduate programs: LSU, University of Louisiana at Monroe, Grambling State University, and University of New Orleans. Several of our majors have attended law school in the state: LSU, Tulane, and Southern University, as well as the region (Mississippi College, Arkansas, for example). A few matriculate to specialized fields at the graduate level (clinical psychology, gerontology, consumer affairs, English, and speech communications). Several students decide to enter the Fifth Year Masters of Education program at Louisiana Tech. This program allows any undergraduate to receive a bachelors degree in any field, enter the program, complete it in four to five quarters (including student teaching), and teach anywhere in the nation in middle school and high school. Many of our students have decided on this option through the years because of the opportunity to work with youth. Many student athletes in Sociology also choose this graduate program in order to teach and coach.
e. Sociology faculty received excellent ratings on student evaluations. Ratings on the lower division Sociology courses (Sociology 201 and 202) averaged 3.68 on a 4.0 scale over the past year (Spring 2002-Winter 2002-03). Advanced course ratings averaged higher at 3.78. Overall ratings were 3.75.

f. On the Graduating Seniors Questionnaires, given over the past year (Spring 2002-Winter 2003), Sociology graduates rated the program between “very good” and “excellent” on all the advising and teaching questions: “availability of your advisor,” “value of information provided by your advisor,” “teacher’s knowledge of their subject matter,” “appropriate exams and other forms of evaluation,” “teachers’ attitudes toward students (fair, open to inquiry and debate, etc.),” and “accessibility of teachers for consultation outside of class.” Ratings on curriculum items ranged from slightly better than “very good” on “availability of courses and sufficient sections of courses in your major field”, the “variety of courses in your major field”, and “appropriate class size in your major field” to above “very good” on content and quality of courses in your major field. The ratings in the curriculum area are the lowest on the survey, and, while the ratings are very good, they reflect the concerns that undergraduate sociology majors have for the limited number of courses and large class size in the curriculum. It is clear undergraduate Sociology majors are not satisfied as they could be because of these two issues. Students rated above “very good” on the professional and life skills questions: “How would you rate the undergraduate education you received at Tech in preparing you for a graduate or professional program?” “How would you rate the undergraduate education you received at Tech in preparing you for a future occupation?” “Regardless of its effect on your future occupation, how would you rate the undergraduate education you received at Tech in teaching you independence, self-discipline, how to learn, critical thinking, moral judgment, and other life skills?” These assessments from graduating seniors allow one to conclude that sociology graduating seniors are extremely pleased with all facets of their undergraduate experience: advising, teaching, curriculum, and professional preparation and the acquisition of life skills. Specific questionnaire ratings can be found in Appendix G.

g. The assessments of the internship opportunities reveal that our students do an excellent job while engaged in internships. The evaluations by external professionals in the agencies, organizations, etc. that are used consistently extol the abilities, professional demeanor, and work ethic that our Sociology students portray on the job. Not one sociology student has failed to complete an internship and very few have not made an A in satisfying their responsibilities with the course. The internship opportunity continues to be a strength in our curriculum. One way to make it stronger would be to employ a faculty member whose responsibility would be to coordinate and supervise all internship placements.

3. Critically analyze/review information and data collected about the curriculum. Identify strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities for this curriculum. Report strengths, weaknesses and opportunities identified.

The sociology curriculum at Louisiana Tech has increased in popularity with students over the past ten years and remained stable at between 125-135 over the past five years. Numbers of enrollees and graduates have been growing, and the department is one of the largest in terms of majors in the College of Liberal Arts. Students and graduates generally appear very satisfied with the teaching, advising, skills and life preparation they are receiving, based upon student
evaluations and the Graduating Seniors Questionnaire. Students are learning course information, skills, and critical thinking as measured by course exams and other evaluations. Students are achieving near national norms, as indicated by MFAT results, and they are being admitted to graduate professional schools in large numbers.

The weakest areas identified by students relate to availability and variety of courses offered in sociology. Course offerings are limited by the small number of faculty and the need to offer courses (primarily numerous sections of Introduction to Sociology) for GER, the needs of other curricula such as Education and General Studies, as well as student demand. Students are concerned about the large size of lower and upper division sociology courses. One of the ways this could be addressed is the hiring of a fifth sociologist. On the graduating senior survey, while sociology majors believe their undergraduate education has prepared them well for a future career, they still show a slight concern. That may be why such a large number of our graduates attend graduate school within the first three years of graduation from college. MFAT scores that indicate slightly weaker student performance in areas that are not offered by the department could be rectified by increased faculty. The areas where our students score at or above the national mean could be enhanced by additional faculty who could strengthen these areas with additional courses. Because we are a small faculty it is not possible to be all things to all people. Lower scores may also reflect a lower entering student preparation and interest in certain areas. Apparently our sociology graduates have been slightly better than average on graduate professional testing, which has allowed them to attend graduate schools throughout the region.

One of the strongest aspects of the Sociology curriculum is the ability to provide internships to those students who want them. The quality of this effort can be measured in the following ways: improved learning opportunities and experiences; supervision by faculty as well as professionals in the field; and the ability to obtain jobs, sometimes directly with the agency, organization, etc. for whom they are interning.

Possible ways of strengthening the program are suggested in VI - 2 below.

VI. Prior Assessment and Development of the Program

1. Describe how assessment results have been used in the recent past to improve the program goals, learning outcomes, curriculum, faculty, or resources.

This is our first Program Review, but we have been doing SACS assessments as well as internal evaluations for many years. One of the goals achieved has been to receive in the past two years another faculty position in Sociology. Our numbers for Sociology majors had increased beyond the manageable abilities of only three full time faculty. An additional faculty member made possible the accomplishments of many goals that had not been possible in previous years. The Social Sciences Cartography Computer Lab has been added and has been used by the required methods class - Sociology 320. Faculty have attended and developed numerous technology classes, workshops, seminars, and sessions at professional conventions. Two departmental scholarships have been implemented for social sciences students, and new recognitions have been added, including an Outstanding Student Award for Social Sciences. Plaques recognizing scholarships winners and awards have been placed in the Social Sciences office. Several of these award and scholarship winners have been Sociology majors. Mentoring of new faculty has been implemented, including assistance in teaching, advising, and with administrative issues. In addition there has been a dinner established recognizing all graduating sociology majors and the faculty. This is scheduled at the end of each quarter so that every graduate has the opportunity to...
attend this event in their honor. Not only is this a nice social event, but it is also used by the faculty to supplement assessment of the program. Each sociology major is asked to speak concerning their undergraduate experience, which includes curriculum, advising, career preparation, and they also share what their future plans are with the group. This is truly a wonderful evening of fun and substance and allows everyone to meet together for one last official function. Many insights, suggestions, and recommendations have been provided in these dinners that have assisted faculty in improving the Sociology program over the past few years.

2. **Report the implications of the findings, particularly as they relate to needed changes in the curriculum.**

One problem has been getting regular standardized test results. The number of seniors each year is smaller than the number of graduates in the department. Since their graduations are scattered over four quarters we have tended to test the Spring Quarter graduates because there are usually larger in number. Perhaps scheduling them the over two or three quarters would increase the number of students taking the MFAT, but as it stands now the exam is not mandatory. The sociology faculty have not been in a position to know the scores of their graduates on graduate professional exams unless the individual student communicates these scores to their advisor. But a significant number of our majors attend and successfully complete graduate professional schools, indicating that scores must, on the whole, be good.

MFAT results tell us that, in the areas of concentration that are provided our majors tend to perform close to the national average. In areas where we do not offer specialized courses our majors tend to perform much lower than the national average. A senior year capstone course would probably help students review and consolidate their knowledge and thus result in a better performance on the MFAT. A philosophy course would probably strengthen sociology students’ analytical skills in preparation for graduate professional exams. (Philosophy has not been offered at Tech since the retirement of a political science/philosophy faculty member three years ago). Finally, a larger offering of courses would allow greater flexibility for students to pursue their particular interests, and it would also reduce class size, which has been growing in recent years. “Availability of courses, variety of courses in your major field, and appropriate class size in your major field” were items on which sociology was rated lowest on the Graduating Seniors Questionnaire.

3. **Describe how you will use the information you have collected and analyzed, outlining changes to be made based on the evidence collected.**

MFAT results we have received may signal the need for more comparative specialized courses. Though we have added one faculty member to our staff in the past two years, and our regular offerings have increased, what we can offer is still limited. Also, our enrollment in the introductory course is so great that all faculty must teach several sections of it, limiting further the number of advanced classes. A capstone course would probably be helpful, but with only four sociologists we can not spare the personnel from the regular courses that are taught. We could request permission from the administration to add a fifth sociologist to the faculty, perhaps one who could also teach an additional specialty area in sociology. This would allow us to teach additional courses, including perhaps a second course in methodology and statistics, and a capstone course. It would also allow us to reduce class size. From the students’ standpoint, they would have greater course selection and smaller classes, two areas of concern on the Graduating Seniors Questionnaire.
4. If your academic unit teaches courses used to satisfy the General Education Requirements at Louisiana Tech University, describe in adequate detail the measures your unit and/or the University are using to evaluate the skills and knowledge added by these courses.

See Appendix B.

VII. Faculty

1. List the major subject subdivisions in your program, listing the faculty who teach in those areas.

Major subdivisions in Sociology are: Introduction to Sociology, Family, Criminology, Applied, General, Social Theory and Methodology.

Faculty who teach courses in the above areas are as follows:

**Introduction to Sociology:** Dr. Cathy Martin, Dr. Gary Stokley, and Dr. Richard Hutchinson

**Family:** Dr. Cathy Martin (the family, family violence, social stratification)

**Criminology:** Dr. Gary Stokley (criminology, juvenile delinquency, corrections, introduction to criminal justice)

**Applied:** Mr. Rick Emerson, M.S.W. (introduction to social work, the social welfare system in the U.S., treatment of offenders, family therapy, sociology of aging, grieving and loss, substance abuse)

**General:** Dr. Richard Hutchinson (social psychology, social movements and collective behavior, sociology of religion, anthropology)

**Social Theory and Methodology:** Dr. Gary Stokley (social theory and research methods)

Faculty Member Listing: (Faculty vitae may be found in Appendix G)

- Mr. Rick Emerson, M.S.W., Louisiana State University, Social Work
- Dr. Richard Hutchinson, Ph.D., University of Arizona, Sociology
- Dr. Cathy Martin, Ph.D., University of Nebraska, Sociology
- Dr. Gary Stokley, Ph.D., Louisiana State University, Sociology

2. Describe the mechanisms used in your unit to ensure that each faculty member is “providing quality instruction for all classes assigned” (Faculty and Staff Handbook). Such mechanisms would include unit level seminars and meetings devoted to teaching and curriculum development, attending faculty development activities presented by the Center for Faculty Excellences, attending subject area conferences, attending conferences and workshops focused on teaching, and competing for Summer Research Grants and Instructional Innovation Grants.
The unit ensures faculty proficiency in quality instruction in a number of ways. Yearly meetings which relate to the quality of instruction are held between the department chairperson and each faculty member, these meetings include a review of student evaluations and a discussion of teaching methods used in courses. Faculty members devote considerable time to ensuring teaching excellence in a variety of ways.

Mr. Richard Emerson
- As a new academic advisor for sociology he is being mentored by Dr. Gary Stokley, Academic Advisor, Sociology and the 1st recipient of the University Faculty Academic Advisor Award
- Departmental in-service meetings regarding changes in curriculum, College of Liberal Arts
- Advising Procedures, and University Advising Procedures from Vice-President of Academic Affairs

Dr. Richard Hutchinson
- Syllabus for Collective Behavior and Social Movements included in Syllabi and Teaching Resources in Courses on Collective Behavior and Social Movements, American Sociological Association, 1997

Dr. Cathy Martin
- Instructional Innovation Committee Faculty Development Seminar, “Considerations in Teaching a Course Via Internet.” 1998
- In-Service Workshop on LaGenius/LaSmarts, 1998
- Instructional Development Course directed by Dr. Linda Ramsey, Louisiana Tech University, Fall 2001
- Paper presentations, assessments on teaching strategies, etc. at both national and regional Sociology conferences which include: National Council for Family Relations (1997), American Sociological Association (1999), Mid-South Sociological Association (1998, 1999), Mid-West Sociological Association (1998, 2003), and Southwestern Sociological Association (2000, 2002)

Dr. Gary Stokley
- Instructional Development Course directed by Dr. Linda Ramsey, Louisiana Tech, 2001
- Instructional Technology, “Easy Ways to Use Technology in the Classroom” by Dr. Steve Graves, 2000
- Instructional Development Course, “Enhance Your Teaching with Technology Tour,” Louisiana Tech, 1997
- Co-Facilitator with Dr. Stephen Webre, Faculty Development Course, “How to Teach in Large Classrooms”, 1997
- Paper presentations on campus Liberal Arts Symposium (1997-2002), state conferences (2000-2002), and attendance at Mid-South Sociological Association and Southwestern Sociological Association regional meetings
VIII. Faculty/Student Contact

1. Describe any activities which promote student-faculty interaction, such as organizations, formal meetings, and informal counseling and other contacts.

Faculty members engage in numerous activities which promote student-faculty interaction. Sociology faculty members have served as the faculty advisor for the Social Sciences Organization, a student organization which includes majors and minors from Geography, Political Science, and Sociology. In addition, faculty members serve as advisors to other student organizations on campus, serve as judges for fraternity and sorority functions, judge debate tournaments, serve as panel members for student events, participate as guest speakers for organizations’ formal meetings, serve on boards in the community which often use sociology majors to intern in their agencies, supervise interns, provide several levels of counseling (academic, career, and personal), provide opportunities for informal counseling and contact with majors, minors, and non-majors, and encourage students to make full use of office hours, for specific class questions as well as for the general concerns of students.

Mr. Rick Emerson
- Counseling students on applying to graduate school in counseling and social work
- Meet and visit with prospective students and parents about Louisiana Tech as the students’ choice of university and sociology as their choice of major
- Personal counseling of students as a licensed social worker

Dr. Richard Hutchinson
- Counseling students on applying to graduate school in sociology
- Counseling students on career choices and options
- Out of class counseling of students relating to instruction

Dr. Cathy Martin
- Faculty Advisor, Golden Key International Honor Society (1998 to current)
- Faculty Advisor, Social Sciences Organization (1998-2001)
- Advisory Board Member, North Louisiana Division of Volunteers of America (open to juniors and seniors--all majors--who are in the top 15% of their class with community service projects)
- Guest speaker to other classes on campus regarding research issues with family violence
- Mentoring two faculty in the past few years especially focusing on academic advising
- Counseling students on applying to graduate school and career decision making
- Meet and talk with prospective students and parents about Tech as the students’ choice of university and sociology as a choice of major
- As a result of some of the courses taught (The Family and Family Violence) there is the opportunity to counsel students informally with regard to family and dating relationships

Dr. Gary Stokley
- Faculty Advisor, Kappa Alpha Order
- Faculty Advisor, Social Sciences Organization (1991-2000)
- Faculty sponsor of undergraduate student (Jami Griswold) presenting paper at Louisiana Tech’s Undergraduate Research Symposium
- Guest speaker for several campus organizations at formal functions (Delta Gamma, Lambda Sigma, Alpha Chi, Kappa Alpha, Student Government Association, Business Students Association, Delta Pi Epsilon, Wesley Foundation, Baptist Student Union,
Union Board, Resident Hall Housing, other courses taught on campus
- Guest speaker for other professors and their courses on campus
- Board Member, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Northeast Louisiana--allows the recruitment of volunteer college students (majors, minors, students in classes) to become Big Brothers and Big Sisters to the students of Lincoln Parish Elementary and Secondary Schools
- Board Member, Domestic Abuse Resistance Team (D.A.R.T) which allows recruitment of Sociology majors for internship and potential job opportunities
- As a result of the courses taught in the field of criminology there is often the opportunity to counsel students in classes and across campus regarding their legal situation and refer them to the proper individual or agency
- Judge at debate tournaments hosted by the university
- Panel member for various campus/student organizations for topical issues, debates, and presentations (College Republicans, Phi Alpha Theta, Student Government Association, Business Students Association, Social Science Organization, etc.)
- Member, NCAA Institutional Career Advising Committee, which allows for consulting with student athletes regarding their prospective professional careers in their specific sports and provides considerable contact with sociology majors as well as students from across campus. During the recruiting of student athletes to the campus, often visits with the prospective athletes and family members to discuss the academic, social, and extracurricular aspects of the university and surrounding community
- Counseling students on applying to graduate school, law school, and career choices
- Individual and personal counseling for majors, students in courses, and other students
- Meet and talk with prospective students and parents about Tech as the students’ choice of a university and sociology as their choice of a major
- University Seminar Instructor
- Academic Advisor, Sociology which provides the opportunity to work with prospective students who may decide to major or minor in the discipline; review academic and curricula issues with sociology majors; assign students to faculty advisors based on their interest.

2. If faculty serve as advisors, describe how faculty are trained to be advisors in the program. If not, describe how advising occurs in the unit.

Instruction is readily available in the Louisiana Tech Advising Handbook, published by the Division of Enrollment Management (March 2002). In addition to this handbook, Advising Instructions and updates are regularly received from the Registrar’s Office, the Dean’s Office and other administrative offices on campus.

In the Fall of 2002, the Registrar’s Office conducted workshops for faculty in the use of BOSS Website registration. Complimenting these formal modes of training, Social Science faculty are assigned mentors who are on hand to assist and answer questions that new and younger faculty members might have regarding various aspects of their jobs. Part of this mentoring involves helping with advising questions. All faculty are expected to do some advising, but new faculty are introduced to the task gradually, beginning usually in the Spring Quarter of their first year. They begin with a few students and take on more as they become more experienced and familiar with the process. In addition to these more structured training methods, the small size of the Sociology and all the Social Science faculty, together with the friendliness and collegiality of the Department, make for an atmosphere in which assistance and help of any kind is readily available and always cheerfully rendered. In addition to the Department, the Office of the Dean of Liberal
Arts is always ready to assist any faculty member who seeks help. Also the staff of the Registrar’s Office is invaluable in helping to answer questions regarding screens for student access, advising concerns, and other issues which invariably arise during advising periods.

- Mr. Rick Emerson advises approximately 12 undergraduate sociology majors, most of whom are interested in a career in social work or counseling.
- Dr. Richard Hutchinson is a new faculty member who will gradually be assigned advisees and will be mentored regarding the advising process by Dr. Stokley.
- Dr. Cathy Martin advises approximately 40 undergraduate sociology majors many who have a specific interest in the areas related to family.
- Dr. Gary Stokley advises approximately 100 undergraduate sociology majors, many who have specific interests in the field of criminology and criminal justice. He has 32 years of experience in advising sociology students as well as having served as the Director of the General Studies Program for approximately 14 years.

IX. Facilities and Support

1. **Identify the facilities (classroom, laboratory, studio) and equipment available to the program.**

Classroom smart carts, classrooms equipped with instructional technology, multimedia training stations, and software for on-line course development and management are available for instructional use. Among the many classrooms utilized by the Social Science Department, these specific rooms offer the following equipment:

Room 123A, in George T. Madison Hall, the Honors Room, is equipped with a state of the art Plasma Board and Matisse Screen. The standing podium, with one button technology, is smart cart interactive.

Room 105, the George T. Madison Hall auditorium, has a mounted projector and a document camera that accommodates power point. The College of Liberal Arts makes available a lap top smart cart accessible to all classrooms in addition to the auditorium.

A social sciences/cartography lab is located in George T. Madison Hall. The lab has 15 new computers with Pentium III processors in addition to 5 extra, older computers. Sociology methods classes use the lab.

Room 213 in the Professional Aviation Building has a screen projection wall TV, projector video screen, compact disc player and a podium with amplifiers.

Among the myriad software platforms available to Social Sciences faculty is Blackboard, a course management system with customizable, institution-wide portals, online communities and an advanced architecture that allows for Web-based integration with administrative systems. Excel is another software platform for spreadsheets used in grade management by social science faculty.

The Computing Center operates three central laboratories with 144 workstations and laser printers for students (one lab is open 24 hours, 7 days a week) providing full internet access and e-mail service. Several satellite labs of terminals are located in buildings around the campus and provide an additional 250 workstations for students.
2. Report all financial support for the program, including operating funds, travel funds, equipment funds, support from student fees, funds for assistantships and fellowships, funds for student workers, and grant/gift income. Provide a three-year summary and a projection for the coming year.

Because Sociology is housed in the Department of Social Sciences, they share the Social Sciences Department budget with other programs. The other programs are geography and political science. Geography is the smallest program with one professor and approximately 10 majors. Sociology is the largest with four professors and approximately 130 majors. Political Science, which also supports Pre-Law, has three professors and approximately 120 majors. All programs provide introductory courses for large numbers of students.

Operating funds budgeted for the Department of Social Sciences last year were $9,939. Travel funds were $200. Student worker funds budgeted to the Department totaled $2,515. An additional $3,150 in student worker funds was provided by Admissions. Federal funds provided work study students with $9,682.09. University Research and Graduate Studies provided a graduate assistantship of $3,600. Royalties and money raising projects provided funding for scholarships and other purposes. Gift accounts have mostly lost money the last couple of years as investments have done poorly. Financial support for the Social Sciences Department for the past three years and projected into next year is shown in Appendix I.

X. Program Strengths and Weaknesses

Considering all of the above sections on students, program goals and organization, and faculty expertise, assess the program strengths and weaknesses.

1. Identify areas of particular strength in program make-up, students, and faculty. Refer to information documented in this report.

   • Program make-up. The basic sociology curriculum provides a major consisting of ten sociology courses, including required courses in Introduction to Sociology, Social Theory, The Family or Social Stratification, and Research Methods. A minor is not required, but there are twenty nine elective hours that students may use as they choose. Many sociology majors do minor in a variety of different areas on campus. Popular minors include Political Science, Psychology, English, History, Geography, Family and Child Studies, Foreign Languages (Spanish and French), and Business. The twenty nine hours of electives available to sociology majors allows them to minor, double minor, or devise a wide range of courses in areas of interest to them. Other social science and humanities courses, cultural studies, statistics, and GER requirements round out the curriculum. This undergraduate degree provides a strong liberal arts preparation for entry level positions throughout the business, social service, and government worlds. Employers look for people with the skills that an undergraduate education in sociology provides. It is also an excellent preparation for future graduate work in sociology or other fields. Since its subject matter is intrinsically fascinating, sociology offers valuable preparation for careers in journalism, politics, public relations, business, or public administration --- fields that involve investigative skills and working with diverse groups. Many students choose sociology because they see it as a broad liberal arts base for professions such as law, education, medicine, social work, and counseling. Sociology provides a rich foundation of knowledge that directly pertains to each of these fields. In the corporate, non-profit, and government worlds sociology majors are needed as
directors of research, policy analysts, consultants, human resource managers, and program managers. Today, sociologists embark upon literally hundreds of career paths. Although teaching and conducting research remains the dominant activity among the professional sociologists of today, other forms of employment are growing both in number and significance. In many sectors sociologists work with economists, political scientists, anthropologists, psychologists, social workers, and others, reflecting a growing appreciation of sociology’s contributions to interdisciplinary analysis and action.

- Students. Students graduating from the Sociology program perform well compared to students across the nation who take the MFAT. In some years students actually outperform the national mean for specific assessment areas. The lowest levels of performance on the MFAT are in the assessment areas that are not taught in the department as there are too few faculty to teach all areas. Graduating students rate their undergraduate educations in Sociology from above “Very Good” to “Excellent” on questions relating to instruction, advising, graduate or professional preparation, and life skills preparation. A significant percentage (70%) of graduates attend a graduate or professional school within three years of graduation from Louisiana Tech. Most of them (nearly 50%) enter immediately upon graduation with their bachelor of arts degree. Graduates in sociology follow a wide range of career choices, including: Social Workers, Counselors, Teachers, Law Enforcement Officers, Probation Officers, Correctional Officers, Federal Drug Enforcement Officers, Human Resource Managers, Program Managers, Government Officials (local, state, and federal), Accountants, Corporate Managers, and Professional Sociologists.

- Faculty. The four members of the Sociology faculty are diverse in their training and professional development. Three have Ph.D’s, and one has a Master’s in Social Work (terminal degree). Combined they have a total of 58 years of teaching experience. Their areas of expertise, training, and teaching experience allow for a diverse presentation of courses to undergraduate sociology majors. In addition, many of their specialties complement and overlap other faculty, thereby strengthening the knowledge base from course to course. The faculty cover the core subfields of the discipline (See Section VII.1). Faculty continually upgrade their teaching skills through professional development and instructional workshops (See Section VII.2).

2. Identify areas that need improvement, again with reference to information givendocumented in this report.

Weaknesses acknowledged by students and faculty alike are the lack of variety of courses, limited availability of courses, and particularly the overly large class size in major field courses. In addition there is a significant burden on the faculty to offer numerous sections of Introduction to Sociology in order to meet courses for GER. Student performance on the MFAT is slightly lower than the national average in several assessment areas, but exceptional in the new area of globalization. An additional faculty member in Sociology could address all of these concerns. It is apparent that undergraduate students score well on all forms of standardized graduate professional entry exams because of the high level of acceptance of our majors into graduate professional programs (See Section V.3).
XI. Future Actions to Improve the Program

Project any contemplated changes over the next two years to improve the program. Any changes should be those which can be achieved by the present or realistically-projected additional resources; any improvement dependent on additional resources should have those resources fully explained. Such resources might include increased enrollment, realistic changes in the faculty, expanded budgets, higher admission standards, university recruiting changes, and grants or other outside funding that might be received.

This section should be grounded on the analysis in the earlier sections of this document.

Attempts will be made to ensure that sufficient numbers of seniors take the MFAT to receive consistent results from year to year. This should allow us to judge the areas of strength and weakness in the measured outcome of our program compared to other undergraduate programs nationally.

Although securing a permanent fourth Sociology faculty position during the past two years has improved program offerings and reduced class size, those are still areas of weakness with our curriculum. Because of the heavy teaching load for GER courses in the Social Sciences and the continuing underwriting of the General Studies Degree Program it is simply not feasible to overcome these weaknesses with current faculty numbers. Adding an additional Sociology faculty member would indeed address all the weaknesses identified by students and faculty. Providing an adjunct faculty member to teach one course per quarter would alleviate the problems to a lesser degree. Within the next two years the faculty member with the longest time on staff (32 years) will be retiring. Because of other university duties he only teaches two courses per quarter each of the four quarters, thereby teaching eight courses per year. A replacement faculty member who would be teaching full time each quarter (3 courses) would only allow the curriculum to gain one more course a year, perhaps two if the faculty member is allowed to teach one summer course (which is not guaranteed in a nine month faculty contract). So the weaknesses will not be alleviated by a retirement in the department.

University entrance requirements will be increased within the next two years. This will not affect the Sociology faculty initially, since very few students come the Louisiana Tech seeking our degree program, but it may affect the number of high school students who meet the entrance requirements for a selective admissions university. The increased requirements should keep the overall university population around 11,000 students a year, and there is no reason to think that the number of Sociology majors would decrease under those circumstances.

Raising the sociology grade requirement from a 2.0 to a 2.25/2.5 would further guarantee our students would continue to succeed as undergraduates and graduate professional students. It would initially reduce the size of upper division level classes, but only for a short period.

Given the large enrollments in Sociology courses and the sizable number of majors, adding a fifth faculty member in Sociology should be an attainable goal. A capstone course could then be taught as well as additional sections of social theory and research methods.

Increased financial resources from the Sociology introductory custom textbook royalties should enable us to provide increased funding for the following: undergraduate scholarships (both in number and amount), travel for departmental faculty, and teaching and research resources for faculty, including equipment, computer packages, videos, dvd’s, etc. that are not available
through regular department funding. The continued contributions by the Social Science Organization to a scholarship fund generated from a luncheon honoring a former faculty member should continue to provide stability for the John Caldwell Memorial Scholarship. Investment income, which has been at a standstill for the past three years, should also improve as the economy recovers, allowing us to further enhance these areas.

Additionally, in order to assist the College of Education in its goal of offering a Masters of Science in the content area of Social Studies as part of the federal “No Child Left Behind” requirements, we plan to offer several courses for both undergraduate and graduate credit. This should enable current high school teachers to earn a certification in Social Studies or obtain a masters degree in this content area. The additional time devoted to graduate level students may be substantial, raising the desirability of increasing faculty in the Sociology area.
APPENDIX A

Mission Statements

The Mission of the Department of Social Sciences

As part of a liberal arts philosophy, the Department of Social Sciences at Louisiana Tech offers an education which provides a firm foundation for professional work or graduate school for majors in geography, sociology, political science, and pre-law. The department affords students opportunities to sample knowledge from all fields; to develop writing, problem-solving, and interpersonal skills sought by employers; and to acquire the sort of liberal arts background which enriches a lifetime of political, social, cultural, and leisure-time activities.

The Objectives

–to obtain the information and skills that are necessary prerequisites for rewarding and satisfying professional employment

–to acquire the substantive knowledge that allows a university graduate to be admitted to the company of educated men and women

–to learn to think, speak, and write clearly and effectively

–to achieve an appreciation for the ways in which we gain our understanding of other societies and to enable students to view themselves in other, wider contexts

–to gain proficiency in explaining and defending one’s views

–to relate a liberal arts education to career and life decisions in a way that allows the individual to make discriminating moral choices

The Mission of the College of Liberal Arts

As part of Louisiana Tech University, the College of Liberal Arts is committed to the University’s dedication “to quality in teaching, in research and creative activity, and in public service.” First and foremost, the College of Liberal Arts seeks to support the mission of Louisiana Tech University in maintaining “a faculty committed to teaching and advising, a student-oriented faculty dedicated to preparing students to achieve their goals in a rapidly changing economic and civic environment...a faculty that will through both theoretical and applied research and creative activities, contribute to the development of new knowledge, new art, and new technology.”

Specific Goals of the College of Liberal Arts

Through their studies, students in the College of Liberal Arts become acquainted with many areas of intellectual interest and acquire a thorough knowledge of a specific field through the courses in their major field. This liberal arts education prepares students for business and professional careers as well as providing the basis for a richer and better life. To bring about these ends, The College of Liberal Arts serves both its own majors and the University community in the following ways:
• it offers courses in such areas as English, history, foreign languages, the arts, and social sciences which are required in many of the curricula at Louisiana Tech University;
• it provides traditional humanities and arts courses for students desiring minor fields of study, for non-traditional students who may or may not seek a degree, and for any other student interested in learning about various areas of liberal arts;
• it provides pre-professional training for those students who intend to study law and speech-language pathology or audiology;
• it assists in the preparation of prospective teachers who desire to major in such subjects as art, English, foreign languages, music, social science, and speech;
• it provides specialized training for vocations in such fields as architecture, aviation, graphic design, interior design, journalism, music, and theatre; and
• it provides training leading toward various graduate degrees.

The Mission of Louisiana Tech University

Louisiana Tech University is a comprehensive public university committed to quality in teaching, in research and creative activity, and in public service. A selective admissions university, it offers a broad range of fully accredited undergraduate degrees to qualified students in Louisiana, as well as from the region, the nation, and foreign countries. Integral to the purpose of the University is its expanding commitment to graduate-level education in its areas of strength; Louisiana Tech offers master’s degrees in a variety of areas and doctoral programs in areas of specific expertise.

Louisiana Tech maintains, as its highest priority, the education of its students. To that end, it recruits a faculty committed to teaching and advising, a student-oriented faculty dedicated to preparing students to achieve their goals in a rapidly changing economic and civic environment. The University provides, in a challenging, yet safe and supportive environment, extra-curricular and athletic programs that foster and enrich the development of its students. In addition, it provides opportunities for interaction between students and the larger business and civic community. The University encourages its students to regard learning as a lifelong process.

Recognizing that research and service are fundamental to its mission, Louisiana Tech recruits and retains a faculty who see research and teaching as intertwined and complementary and who, through both theoretical and applied research and creative activities, contribute to the development of new knowledge, new art, and new technology.

Louisiana Tech University understands its community and civic obligations. Through on-campus learning, through its off-campus presence, through outreach programs and continuing education, the University will continue to enhance the quality of life and the economic development of the region, state, and nation.

As a university with a rich engineering heritage, Louisiana Tech has a special responsibility to integrate advanced technology into teaching and learning. At Tech, advanced technology supports quality teaching, research, administration, and service. The University is committed to providing its students with the advanced technological skills that will help to ensure their success both in the internal environment of the University and in the wider surrounding community.
APPENDIX B

The Role of Sociology in Satisfying GER Requirements

1. Give the Mission Statement for your academic unit, which must include a statement about the unit’s teaching of GER courses.

The Mission Statement of the Department of Social Sciences includes the following statement about its teaching of GER courses: “The Department offers courses meeting social sciences general education requirements for all students at the University.” The full text of the Mission Statement may be found in Appendix A.

2. List the courses in your academic unit that are typically used to satisfy a Louisiana Tech University GER requirement.

The main sociology course used by students to satisfy the GER requirement in social sciences is the introductory course in Principles of Sociology (Sociology 201). Because students are allowed to have a maximum of six of the required nine social science hours in one discipline, some students do take a second sociology course for GER. Typically, this is true of students who have an interest in the sociology topic. But the vast majority of sociology GER credit is earned for 201.

3. For these courses, individually or in groups (if they are used to satisfy the same GER requirement), list the Expected Outcomes, those skills the course is to develop. For those skills, use the Regents’ list in Appendix B.

Sociology 201 develops the following skills:
- to read with comprehension
- to reason abstractly and think critically
- to understand data and statistics
- to understand the scientific method
- to recognize and appreciate cultural diversity
- to develop a personal value system while retaining a tolerance for those of others

4. For these courses, tell how your academic unit determines that those skills are being taught in the courses (such items as syllabi that list Expected Outcomes and Catalog course descriptions).

Expected outcomes illustrating each of the skills listed above may be found in the following sample Sociology 201 syllabus requirements and exam questions.
- assignments are given that require reading from the text
- students are required to know what an ideology is and to make comparison between ideologies
- students must write the major tenets of the three main sociological theories and use that information to explain a specific issue, such as crime
- students must know the number and percent of Americans living below the poverty line, how it changes based on family size, and how poverty is calculated
- be able to compare the differences in research methods used by sociologists
- define culture and know some of the ways that culture varies by race and ethnicity
5. For these courses, tell how your academic unit internally documents that these skills have been transmitted to the student (such evaluation methods as standardized tests, written essays, final portfolios, oral presentations, research papers, and other teacher and peer assessments methods, as would apply).

The primary method of documentation of skills is through tests given in class. Because Sociology 201 is taught as a large lecture class, with the number of students ranging from 90 to 200, testing is typically objective, consisting of multiple choice, true false, and fill in the blanks. The smaller number of students using an advanced sociology class for GER credit would typically face other assessment methods, including essay exams and research papers. Sample Sociology 201 test questions assessing each of the listed skills:

• to read with comprehension: “According to the text, which of the following concepts refers to the total way of life shared by members of a society: (A) values (B) norms (C) culture (D) socialization”
• to reason abstractly and think critically: “Cultural values in the U.S. are: (A) Uniformly individualistic (B) Often at odds with one another (C) Uniformly collectivist (D) Often the same as European Society”
• to understand data and statistics:
• to understand the scientific method: “Higher education causes greater earnings over a lifetime. In this example, higher education is (A) an independent variable (B) a dependent variable (C) a random variable (D) a spurious variable”
• to recognize and appreciate cultural diversity:
• to develop a personal value system while retaining a tolerance for those of others:

6. For these courses, tell how your academic unit externally documents that these skills have been transmitted to the student (such evaluation methods such as feedback from other academic units, standardized university-level testing, outside reviewers or other assessments methods, as would apply).

Unit Heads and faculty in areas outside Social Sciences express satisfaction with GER courses offered by our department. Extensive review by the College of Education in constructing curricula and evaluating teacher preparation is a more formal and thorough evaluation that has been especially helpful feedback in this area.

The fact that Sociology 201 has been made a requirement or option in a number of curricula is indicative that curriculum designers in these areas value the information and skills taught in the course.

The following departments and curricula require Sociology 201:
• The Department of Professional Aviation, Aviation Management, B.S.
• The Department of Social Sciences, Geography and Political Science, B.A.
• The School of Biological Sciences, Medical Technology (B.S.M.T.)
• The Department of Health Information Management, Health Information Administration (B.S.H.I.)
• The Department of History, History curriculum, B.A.
• The School of Human Ecology, Nutrition and Dietetics, B.S.
• The Division of Nursing, Pre-Nursing (A.S.N.)
• The Department of Speech, Speech and Speech-Language Pathology, B.A.
The following departments and curriculum require Sociology 201 or Psychology 102:
- The School of Professional Accounting Program, B.S.
- The Department of Computer Information Systems, B.S.
- The Department of Economics and Finance in each of its three curriculums (Business Administration, Economics, and Finance), B.S.
- Business Management and Entrepreneurship, Human Resources Management, Marketing, B.S.

In addition, degrees in General Studies may include fifteen hours in a thematic concentration in Social Sciences which often includes Sociology as the students’ coursework focus. There are also three enrichment areas allowed in the General Studies Program, one of which is often Sociology.

7. **Tell how the assessment results discussed in #5 and #6 are used in the annual academic unit plan to improve the GER courses taught in the unit (such possible improvements as changes in course content, textbooks, etc.).**

Each faculty member plans his or her own course and determines on the basis of his or her own experiences in class and through examination feedback what changes to make. These decisions are influenced by discussions with colleagues. For example, one professor decided to make use of a specific group activity in class that another professor found to be instrumental in student understanding of important concepts. The sociology professors have organized a custom text, including several chapters authored by faculty members. Changes are made in the selection of a base text on considerations of appropriate content, readability, and features that enhance student learning, such as computer and other ancillary serves to go with the text. The faculty members also design assignments that are included at the end of each chapter. The use of these assignments is evaluated for possible changes on an annual basis.
## Sociology Enrollment and Graduation Figures Past Five Years

### Enrollment:

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<tr>
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### Graduation:

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APPENDIX D

SAMPLE COURSE SYLLABI
### Spring 2002

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<tr>
<td>C</td>
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<td>10.9</td>
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### Summer 2002

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### APPENDIX F
Sociology MFAT Percentiles

#### 1999

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<tr>
<td>General Theory</td>
<td>35</td>
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<td>Methodology and Statistics</td>
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<td>38</td>
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<td>Deviance and Social Problems</td>
<td>51</td>
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<td>Demography and Urban/Rural</td>
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* 123 Institutions participated

#### 2000

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* 128 Institutions nationally
### 2001

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* 128 Institutions participated

### 2002

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</table>

* 128 Institutions participated
APPENDIX G
Sociology Graduating Seniors
Questionnaire Result
Spring 2002-Winter 2003

Rating Scale:  4 = Excellent; 3 = Very Good; 2 = Average; 1 = Below Average; 0 = Poor

Advising
1. Availability of your advisor 3.65
2. Value of information provided by your advisor 3.34

Teaching
3. Teacher’s knowledge of their subject matter 3.5
4. Appropriate exams and other forms of evaluation 3.42
5. Teachers’ attitudes toward students (Fair, open to inquiry and debate, etc.) 3.26
6. Accessibility of teachers for consultation outside of class 3.33

Curriculum
7. Content and quality of courses in your major field 3.32
8. Variety of courses in your major field 3.0
9. Availability of courses and sufficient sections of courses in your major field 3.06
10. Appropriate class size in major field courses 3.06

Professional Preparation and Life Skills
11. How would you rate the undergraduate education you received at Tech in preparing you for a graduate of professional program? 3.24
12. How would you rate the undergraduate education you received at Tech in preparing you for a future occupation? 3.12
13. Regardless of its effect on your future occupation, how would you rate the undergraduate education you received at Tech in teaching you independence, self-discipline, how to learn, critical thinking, moral judgment, and other life skills? 3.29
APPENDIX H

Faculty Vitas
## APPENDIX I

Financial Support for Social Sciences Department

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<td>Support from student fees</td>
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<td>$3,600.00 (funds come from Univ. Res &amp; Grad Stud)</td>
<td>$3,600.00 (funds come from Univ. Res &amp; Grad Stud)</td>
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