

## Sociology SAC Assessment Report 2012-2013

### **Introduction**

During the 2011-2012 academic year the sociology SAC worked diligently to develop, administer, and analyze a pre-post test survey in our introductory sociology courses. We garnered useful data. However, it was determined, based on the peer feedback we received, that this was largely a project of *indirect* assessment and, therefore, not reliable enough. We were urged to create a project for the 2012-2013 year that focused on *direct* assessment.

### **Timeline of Assessment Activities**

#### *Fall 2012*

At the fall 2012 in-service SAC meeting, with the guidance of Sally Earl, the sociology SAC decided to try to develop a direct assessment tool. We chose to create a common assignment to provide greater consistency in our comparisons. Instructors would be encouraged to use the paper in their Sociology 204 Sociology in Everyday Life course. The paper assignment would be known as the "Sociological Autobiography" and employ the concept of the *sociological imagination* to discursively assess the PCC core outcomes of:

Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving  
Self-Reflection  
Cultural Awareness  
and Communication.

#### *Late Fall 2012/ Early Winter 2013*

A sub-committee formed to work on both the assignment and the rubric. After a draft assignment and rubrics were created, the documents were sent to the larger SAC for comment. In contrast to the earlier SAC decision understood by the subcommittee, some faculty expressed concern over the use of a shared assignment as well as the criteria on the rubric. It was soon clear there would not be consensus on whether or not to go forward with the planned assessment activities for the year. This also prompted one faculty to enroll in the assessment course. It was suggested that we simply do it as a pilot project with just a couple of instructors using the assignment, but the subcommittee was not sure if the data would be conclusive enough. The assignment itself was used by one instructor in the winter term, given the work that was done to create it and to test the quality of the assignment.

#### *Late Winter 2013/Spring 2013*

Given the growing concerns arising in the SAC over our collaborative efforts, the SAC consulted an outside facilitator to assist with formalizing decision-making processes and help us move toward completing the administrative tasks required of the SAC (most pressing is assessment). The facilitator met with our SAC a total of four times

and offered a variety of skills and tools. We have drafted a formalized decision-making process document and hope that it will help us in future efforts to collaborate.

### **Conclusion**

Following the departure from the “Sociological Autobiography” work, we began work on the creation of a set of rubrics that might be applied to a variety of assignments across instructors and courses. These rubrics are intended to measure a diverse pool of assignments, rather than a common or shared assignment. This may alleviate the concern around pedagogical flexibility expressed by faculty. On the other hand, some faculty are concerned this approach may not yield useful data. However, we were not able to complete this project as we focused on decision-making processes in the SAC during winter and spring. We will likely proceed with the common rubric approach versus a common assignment approach in the fall of 2013. Feedback on this approach (the common rubric across many assignments) from the team reviewing this report is welcomed by the SAC.

This fall we will welcome one new permanent full-time instructor and one temporary full-time instructor to our SAC. With a total of 6 full-time instructors and 25 part-time instructors, it is important that these instructors be part of our ongoing dialogues. We are hopeful that by formalizing decision-making processes and the addition of two full-time faculty, we will be able to resume our assessment activities and work on a project that is representative of some form of *direct* assessment during the 2013-2014 academic year.