




## College of Arts and Sciences

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8 September 2016

### MEMO

**TO:** Kate Miller  
Provost/VPAA

**FROM:** Paula M. Lutz   
Dean, Arts and Sciences

**RE:** Program Review for Sociology M.A. degree—Dean's recommendation

Sociology has produced nineteen M.A. degrees in the past five years. As stated very passionately in the program review, this is one of UW's longest-lived graduate programs, and sociology is a foundational social science. The dean also agrees that the department needs additional resources to succeed.

A recent external review indicated potential in this department and its programs, providing strategic investments could be made. Alumni fare well in the job market and are pleased with their educational experience and the careers that follow. The junior faculty represent the research strength of the department.

Unfortunately, the department will be down to four faculty by the end of the calendar year. Their strategic plan indicates the need for at least two faculty hires, and based on low student demand in their B.A. and other desperate needs in A&S, these will not be forthcoming in the near future. Two degrees cannot be supported at this time. In these tough financial times, the department's focus should be on their B.A. where there is great potential for increasing their number of majors. Sociology remains an increasingly popular degree option across the country.

**The dean's recommendation is to discontinue the M.A. program and concentrate on the B.A.** Their need for additional faculty can be met in the short term by reaching out and forming connections with other units. Ideas are mentioned in the program review—focus on those possible new collaborations in both teaching and research.

**Academic Program Review**  
**Department of Sociology, College of Arts and Sciences**  
**Master's Program**

Submitted by Donna Barnes, Department Head ([dbarnes@uwyo.edu](mailto:dbarnes@uwyo.edu); x3111)

August 25, 2016

The Department of Sociology was recently asked to do an Academic Program Review of its Master's Program. The Department believes that it provides a high-quality program. It is one of the longest-lived graduate programs at UW, with the oldest sociology Master's thesis at UW dating back to 1898. The faculty hopes that sufficient resources can be provided to retain and further strengthen the M.A. program.

1. **Program Demand:** Sociology had 19 students complete its Master's program from 2010-2015. The Sociology Master's Program falls into the mid-level demand category, defined as having between 15 and 25 graduates over the last 5 years. While 13 Master's Programs in A&S were low-demand programs (less than 15 graduates in the last 5 years), Sociology and four other departments in the College had Master's Programs that fell into the mid-level demand category.

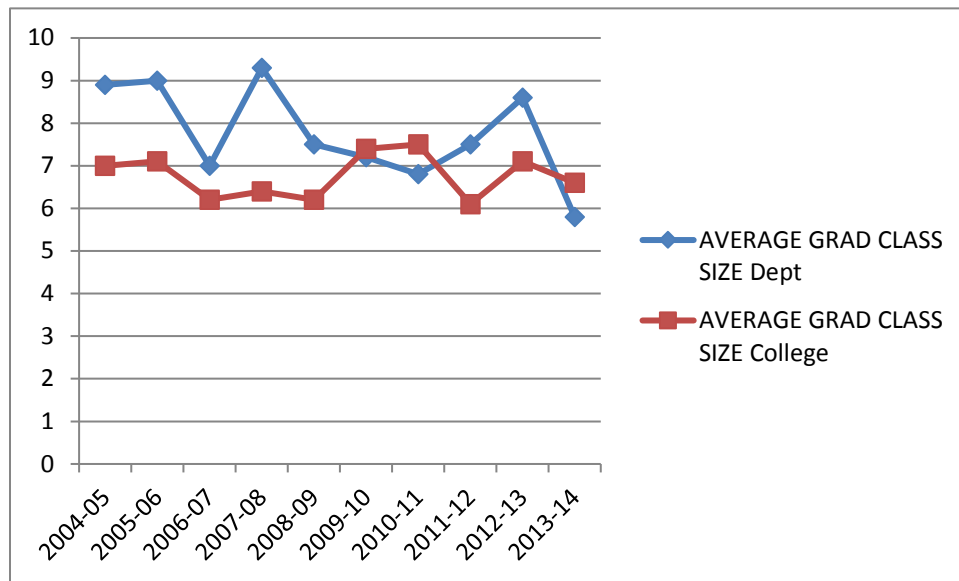
The mid-level success in terms of number of M.A. graduates was achieved despite recruiting challenges created by the department's GA allocation being reduced in 2013 from 5 to only 4, the lowest GA allocation of any standalone M.A.-granting department in the College. The challenge of increasing graduate cohort sizes and the number of M.A. degrees awarded is intricately linked to the small number of GAs allocated to the department. The department has worked hard to increase its applicant pool, experimenting with such tools as the GRE Recruitment Search program. Over the last few years, however, the department has lost a significant number of prospective graduate students because of its inability to offer full-GA awards to compete with awards offered by other Sociology graduate programs. In last year's recruitment cycle, the department admitted seven graduate students, of whom four chose to attend other graduate programs. The applicants whom we failed to recruit with partial- GA awards had strong GPAs and GRE scores (mean GPA: 3.57; mean GRE: 314).

The department encourages graduate applicants to actively pursue alternative sources of funding available through other programs or units on campus. This approach has been occasionally successful. For example, some of our graduate students have been supported by Criminal Justice, SLCE/Student Leadership & Civic Engagement, and Athletics. However, the delayed timing in notifications of these non-Sociology GA opportunities does not always work well with our recruitment timeline, and we have lost recruits as a consequence. Demand for the M.A. program is sensitive to graduate funding assistance, and recruitment efforts would benefit significantly from having an allocation of five to six GAs, which is in line with other small M.A.-granting departments at UW.

Regarding program demand as reflected in graduate student credit hours, the latter has fallen since the 2004-05 AY. The decline is not surprising, given that the number of sociology faculty has been cut in half since 2005 and the department can offer fewer

graduate courses. It is only with the careful planning of course schedules that the department has avoided the problem of under-enrolled graduate courses. As shown by Figure 1, in eight of the past ten years the size of Sociology graduate courses has met or exceeded the average size of graduate classes in the College of Arts and Sciences.

**Figure 1. Average Graduate Class Size for Sociology and the College of Arts and Sciences, 2004-2014**



## 2. Program Quality

**2a) Date of last program review:** This is the first internal APR of our MA program. The department, however, did an external review in Spring 2016. It was very favorable and stressed the “tremendous potential” of our program (the Dean’s Office has a copy of the External Review Report, which was submitted on 3/30/16). The external reviewers noted that alumni of our M.A. program have tended to fare well in the job market. Furthermore, since 1990 sixteen of our MA students have earned doctorates and two others are currently working on their PhDs. Information on the post-graduate careers of a select group of alumni of our M.A. program who responded to a request by the department for updated career information is provided in Table 1.

**Table 1. Careers of Post-1990 Alumni of the M.A. Program in Sociology at UW**

<b>NAME</b>	<b>YEAR</b>	<b>CAREER INFO</b>
Ashman, Jill Jacobsen	1992	PhD from Johns Hopkins University. Currently Dissemination Team Leader in the Division of Health Care Statistics at the Center for Disease Control
Atwood, Elizabeth Atwood	2011	Assistant to the Associate Provost for Educational Attainment at Colorado State University
Bentel, Brian	1994	PhD from the University of Oklahoma. Was an assistant professor at East Central University in Oklahoma; now teaches at the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater
Butler, Steve	2004	Research scientist for the Wyoming Survey & Analysis Center (WYSAC) at UW; won the Hoke National Publication Award for Excellence in Research/Policy Analysis from the Justice Research & Statistics Association
Chavez, Brianna Best	2011	Assistant research scientist at WYSAC; currently data analyst & statistical consultant at Cheyenne Regional Medical Center
Dommaraju, Premchand	2005	PhD from Arizona State University. Currently an Assistant Professor of Sociology at the Nanyang Technological University in Singapore
Gunderson, Ryan	2011	PhD from Michigan State University. Currently an assistant professor at Miami University in Ohio
Heusser, Phil	2014	Works with the Dean of Faculty, Union College, as Academic Advising Facilitator
Home, Julie Tennant	1996	Was Director of Victim Services in the WY Attorney General's Office. Currently Deputy Administration in the Prison Division, Department of Corrections
Jacquet, Jeffrey	2005	PhD from the Department of Natural Resources at Cornell University. Was an Assistant Professor of Sociology at South Dakota State University; now Assistant Professor of Rural Sociology at Ohio State University.
Johnston, Janis	1998	PhD from Colorado State University. Currently a data analyst with the USDA Food & Nutrition Services
Kasper-Wolfe, Janel	2002	Member of a team providing support to NASA's Marshall Space Flight Center's Office of Strategic Analysis and Communication
Koeber, Chuck	1993	PhD from SUNY-Binghamton. Currently Associate Professor of Sociology & Associate Dean at Wichita State University
May, Candace	2006	PhD from Colorado State University. Was an Assistant Professor of Sociology at the University of Louisiana-Lafayette; currently an Assistant Professor of Sociology at South Dakota State University. .
Miller, Carissa Moffat	1999	Doctorate in education from the University of Idaho. Currently Deputy Executive Director of the Council of Chief State School Officers in D.C.

Muecke, Nancy	1997	PhD in Community College Leadership at Iowa State University. Campus Dean at Ellsworth Community College in Iowa.
Myers, Anna McCormick	2014	Associate Director of Annual Giving, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee's Office for Development and Alumni Relations
Panas, L.J.	2010	Earned a Master's in Public Health; PhD from the Population Health Sciences program at the University of Texas Medical Branch-Galveston. Currently a research analyst at Kansas Health Institute
Pribanic, Kelli	2009	Was Coordinator for the Gulf Coast Fair Housing Center's Education and Outreach & Hurricane Relief Programs (post-Katrina). Currently an investigator for an international legal consulting team
Rohde, Kristen	1999	Career in applied public health research and evaluation. Works in a research and evaluation unit within the Oregon Public Health Division that evaluates community health and public policies
Root-Elledge, Sandy	2001	Director of the Wyoming Institute of Disabilities (WIND), which is affiliated with the College of Health Sciences at UW.
Rottweiler, J.D.	1992	PhD at the University of Utah. Was Executive Vice President for Academic Services at Central Wyoming College and is now President of Cochise College, a community college in southeastern Arizona
Roussell, Aaron	2007	PhD from University of California-Irvine. Was an assistant professor in Department of Criminal Justice & Criminology at Washington State University; now @ Portland State Univ.
Sasnett, Sherri	2013	ABD in PhD program at the University of Colorado, Boulder. Plans to finish dissertation in Spring 2017
Tezli, Annette	2004	PhD from the University of Calgary. Currently an Instructor of Sociology Department there while she is on the job market
Thompson, Matt	2012	PhD student at Univ of California-Davis
Utz, Scotty	2006	Research Associate for Princeton University @ Princeton-Blairtown Center, an outdoor education center serving disadvantaged urban youth in NYC /Philadelphia megalopolis
Williamson, Bethany Kopsa	2013	Manager, Human Resources Department, GROUND Engineering in Denver, CO.
Yoshida, Akiko	1994	PhD from the University of Oklahoma; Associate Professor of Sociology at the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater

The external reviewers—Julia McQuillan, Professor and Chair of Sociology, University of Nebraska; Susanne Monahan, Dean, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, Western Oregon University—commended the Sociology faculty for integrating graduate students into research projects and publishing with them. They also noted that their discussions with our graduate students during the site visit confirmed that the graduate curriculum is challenging and “earning a high grade requires considerable effort,” with students reporting that they appreciated the rigor of the curriculum. The external reviewers also commended the faculty for coming together and finding innovative ways, such as “a creative MA thesis prospectus process, to maintain a quality education during a low resource time.” Finally, the reviewers recognized the value of the M.A. program in Sociology to the broader goals of the College, the University, and the state of Wyoming.

Regarding specific recommendations, the external reviewers recommended that the department set forth clear and measurable goals on which progress could be tracked and curricular review triggered if progress was deemed inadequate. Another recommendation was that the department conduct an alumni survey to discern what they had found most useful about the skill set they attained by completing the M.A. program in Sociology and what additional skills they wished that they had developed.

The external reviewers also commented on the low level of GA funding in Sociology, which makes recruitment challenging. They made a number of recommendations, including the following: Develop a Plan B (non-thesis) option that might attract students willing to attend graduate school without GA funding in order to gain applied skills that enhance their career options; considering a graduate minor; seeking non-departmental GA opportunities; and recruiting university staff to the M.A. program.

The faculty has already begun discussing the above recommendations and plans to continue these discussions in the 2016-17 AY. Faculty members are particularly interested in the Plan B recommendation and are working on moving forward with a Plan B proposal, particularly with those students interested in the dual ENR-SOC degree or another applied skill set applicable to employment in the corporate and non-profit sectors.

## **2b) Credentials of faculty**

i) Currently, the Department of Sociology has five faculty members, all of whom help deliver the graduate curriculum, direct individual conference courses focused on literature reviews for graduate thesis-research projects, chair M.A. thesis committees, and serve as members of thesis committees. Information on each of these faculty members, all of whom received their PhDs from Top 20 doctoral programs in Sociology, is provided below.

- Donna Barnes, PhD in Sociology from the University of Texas at Austin
- Malcolm Holmes, PhD in Sociology from the University of Texas at Austin
- Shiri Noy, PhD in Sociology from Indiana University
- Matthew Painter, PhD in Sociology from The Ohio State University
- Anna Zajacova, PhD in Sociology from Princeton University

ii) Gender & race/ethnicity/nationality of faculty

--Sixty percent of the faculty are female, which mirrors the current gender breakdown of doctoral recipients in Sociology  
([http://cfd153.cfdynamics.com/research/stats/gender/number\\_doctorate.cfm](http://cfd153.cfdynamics.com/research/stats/gender/number_doctorate.cfm))

--There are no racial minorities among the Sociology faculty, although the department tried unsuccessfully to make a target-of-opportunity hire in 2012. In terms of nationality, the department faculty includes two foreign-born sociologists: Professor Noy is Israeli, and Professor Zajacova is from Slovakia.

iii) Grants awarded in previous 5 years: 18; total funding: \$781,915

-- UW Basic Research Grant, 2011. "Madam Senator: Trajectories of Growth in Women's State Senate Representation, 1980-2010." (\$1500) Professor Painter.

--UW Faculty Grant-in-Aid Program. "Shape of the Association between BMI and Biological Risk Indicator," 2011. (\$5,000) Professor Zajacova, PI.

--National Cancer Institute, National Institutes of Health, 2011-2013. "Effect of Cancer on the Survivors' and Their Families' Economic Well-Being." R03 grant (\$143,500) Professor Zajacova, PI.

--Northern Rockies IDeA Networks for Biomedical Research Excellence (INBRE) Program Research Support, 2011-2012. "The Relationship Between BMI and Health Outcomes Among Older Adults." (\$10,000) Professor Zajacova, PI.

--National Institute of Child Health and Human Development. 2010-2012. "Immigrant Wealth Accumulation." R03 (\$148,059). Professor Painter, co-PI.

--Wyoming INBRE Pilot Research Grant, 2012-2014. "Variability in long-term body weight trajectories among older adults, health, and mortality: implications for public health recommendations." (\$86,000) Professor Zajacova, PI.

--Institute for Translational Health Sciences, University of Washington Pilot Grant, 2012-2013. "Establishing the feasibility of functional data analysis for determining the health consequences of body weight changes among older adult." (\$6,800). Professor Zajacova, PI.

--NCRR, National Institutes of Health, 2013-2018. "Clinical and Translational Research Infrastructure Network IDeA-CTR." 1U54GM104944-01A1. (\$140,375 to University of Wyoming subcontract). Professor Zajacova, PI on UW subcontract in years 1-2, Co-PI in years 3-5.

--Wyoming Geriatric Education Center, College of Health Sciences Faculty Development in Aging Mini-Grant, 2013. (\$1,895) Professor

Zajacova, PI.

--UW Basic Research Grant, 2014. "World Bank Health Projects, 1980-2010. (\$3000) Professor Noy

--UW Innovative Course Grant Award, SOC4900: Study Abroad in Israel, 2015. (\$5000) Professor Noy.

--Wyoming Geriatric Education Center, 2014. College of Health Sciences Faculty Development in Aging Mini-Grant." (\$2,015) Professor Zajacova, PI.

--American Sociological Association (ASA) Fund for the Advancement of the Discipline Award, 2014. "World Bank Discourse on Health Sector Reform, 1980-2010." (\$6,992). Professor Noy.

--Agricultural Experiment Station, UW, 2014-2015. "Assessment of alfalfa pest management challenges and strategies across Wyoming: responding to farmer priorities and engaging students in the land-grant mission." (\$56,079) Professor Noy, Co-PI.

--National Institutes of Health, Network on Life Course Health Dynamics and Disparities in 21st Century America, 2015. "Trends in US Womens Health, 1997-2014, by Education Level." (\$11,491) Professor Zajacova, PI.

--NLSY97 Postsecondary Research Network Award, 2015. "Understanding Health Outcomes of College Noncompleters: Do Credit Hours or Credentials Matter More?" University of Texas Pilot Grant Award. (\$5,000) Professor Zajacova, PI.

--National Institutes of Health, 2016. "Anomaly in the gradient: Health of U.S. adults with subbaccalaureate education:" (\$144,209) Professor Zajacova, PI.

--UW Innovative Course Grant for the Development of a Study Abroad Course, SOC 4900: Israeli Social and Political Institutions, 2016. (\$5,000) Professor Noy

iv) Unfunded Grants submitted in previous 5 years: 9

--National Institute on Aging, National Institutes of Health, 2012. "Race & Ethnic Variations in Predictive Strength of Self-Rated Health for Mortality Risk". Professor Zajacova, with Hyeyoung Woo.

--National Institute of Health, 2013. "Young Women's Health & Wealth: Timing of First Birth & Race/Ethnicity," Professor Painter, Co-PI.



--National Institutes of Health, 2014. "Life course socioeconomic correlates of multimorbidity among middle-aged and older adults." Professor Zajacova, Co-PI.

--National Institutes of Health, 2014. "Trends in Older Women's Mortality Levels and Disparities by U.S. State." Professor Zajacova, Co-PI.

--National Institutes of Health, 2014. "Race and Ethnic Variations in Predictive Strength of Self-Rated Health for Mortality Risk." Professor Zajacova, Co-PI.

--American Heart Association, 2015. "Body weight patterns across age and cardiovascular multimorbidity in American adults." Professor Zajacova, PI.

--National Science Foundation, 2015-2020. "Vertically Integrated Science Technology and Application (VISTA). Professor Painter, Co-PI.

--National Science Foundation, Science, Technology and Society Division, 2016. Collaborative Research Standard Grant, "Public Engagement with Science in the US, Israel, and Italy: Examining Linkages Between Science and Religion. Professor Noy with Tim O'Brien.

--National Science Foundation, ADVANCE Grant, 2016-2021, "Project BETTES: Bringing Equality to the Equality State. Professor Zajacova, (Co-PI); Professor Noy as a consultant.

v) Presentations and publications by academic personnel for previous 5 years

Total presentations: 76 conference papers, 4 invited talks, & 2 invited panelists

Total publications: 66 refereed articles, 4 non-refereed articles, 9 book chapters, & 2 books

Presentations, by year

2011: 18 conference paper presentations; 1 invited panelist

2012: 11 conference paper presentations

2013: 13 conference paper presentations

2014: 20 conference paper presentations

2015: 14 conference paper presentations, 4 invited talks, & 1 invited panelist

Publications, by year

2011: 11 refereed and 2 non-refereed articles, 1 book, 2 book chapters

2012: 12 refereed articles

2013: 8 refereed & 1 non-refereed articles, 1 refereed & 2 non-refereed book chapters

2014: 21 refereed articles, 2 refereed and 1 non-refereed book chapters, 1 book

2015: 14 refereed articles and 1 non-refereed book chapter

vi) External awards/honors for previous 5 years

- *Handbook on Evolution and Society* by Jonathan H. Turner, **Richard Machalek**, and Alexandra Maryanski, eds.  
--Selected as a *Choice Magazine's* "Outstanding Academic Titles" for 2015. Fewer than 3% of books submitted for this honor are chosen. Of the three ranking categories for these titles (recommended, highly recommended, and essential), the *Handbook* was ranked as "essential."  
--Winner of the 2016 Book Award of the "Evolution, Biology, and Society Section" of the American Sociological Association.
- American Sociological Association (ASA) Fund for the Advancement of the Discipline Award, 2014. "World Bank Discourse on Health Sector Reform, 1980-2010." Professor Noy.
- Best faculty paper award, 2014. "The World Bank and Targeting in Health Policy in Peru, Argentina, and Costa Rica." Sociology of Development Conference, Salt Lake City, Utah. Professor Noy.
- IPUMS (Integrated Public Use Microdata Series) Research Award, 2014, for "Explaining the Widening Education Gap in Mortality among U.S. White Women." Professor Zajacova with Jennifer Karas Montez.
- IPUMS Graduate-Student Research Award, 2014, for "Education as 'the Great Equalizer': Health Benefits for Black and White Adults," Professor Zajacova with UW Sociology Major Christopher J. Holmes as lead author.
- Gerontological Society of America Senior Service America Junior Scholar Award, 2012, for "Why has the Educational Gradient of Mortality Risk Increased Among US Women?" Professor Zajacova with Jennifer Montez.
- *The Louisiana Populist Movement, 1881-1900* (Louisiana State University Press, 2011). Winner of the 2012 Louisiana Library Association's Literary Award. Professor Barnes.

**2c) Program reputation:** Master's-only programs in Sociology are not ranked. As part of this program review, however, the Chair asked alumni to reflect on the quality of the M.A. program and its utility to their post-graduate career. The letters of alumni who responded to this request are included in Appendix A. The general opinion of alumni is that the M.A. program is of high quality and has played an important role in their post-graduate success. There are also letters in Appendix B from employers attesting to the value of our M.A. alumni as employees.

Another indicator of the quality of our program is the appreciation of alumni who helped create the \$100,000+ endowed Chet Meeks Memorial Scholarship Fund, which allows the department to provide summer funding for graduate research projects. Alumna Amy Wilbourne, who earned both her B.A. and M.A. from our department, also has endowed a scholarship fund that will soon reach in excess of \$70,000 with additional state-match dollars as a result of the 2016 Small-Match Initiative. It would be a huge disappointment for these donors if our M.A. program were discontinued.

**2d) Curriculum of major:** Graduate students must complete 27 credit hours of course work, plus a thesis. There are three required foundational courses in the Sociology MA curriculum: SOC5000: Advanced Sociological Theory; SOC5100: Advanced Sociological Research Methods; and SOC5070: Statistical Methods for the Social Sciences. The rest of the curriculum is flexible, with students selecting three elective Sociology courses and three additional elective courses that may be taken outside of the department and may be used to complete a general degree in sociology or to focus on a more specialized area of study, such as Crime, Law and Deviance; Environmental and Natural Resources; Global & Comparative Sociology; and Statistics & Quantitative Research.

**2e) Distance delivery of MA program:** N/A

**2f) Quality of Assessment Plan:** The MA Program has a Tier-2 assessment rating based on its last submitted assessment report in 2015. It hopes to achieve a Tier-1 rating in the next M.A. assessment report cycle in 2017.

The department has three graduate learning outcome goals:

1. *Students will develop broad knowledge of the theory and methods of the discipline and in-depth knowledge of a specific area of concentration.*
2. *Students will develop advanced analytical, writing, and oral communication skill.*
3. *Students will demonstrate the ability to conduct original research in a substantive area of sociology.*

In terms of direct assessment of these goals, the process has been modified over time in response to extensive faculty feedback. The current process consists of three components. First the department holds an annual Thesis Proposal Symposium, which department faculty and graduate students attend. Graduate students who have not yet defended a thesis prospectus present a thesis proposal at the symposium, and presentations are followed by a question-&-answer period. At the end of the symposium, faculty members complete an evaluation form that is shared with the graduate student, the Chair of the student's thesis committee, and the graduate director. The general consensus is that the Symposium, which is the newest component of the assessment process, is a valuable addition. The students did a tremendous amount of work leading up to the Symposium, such that it really

advanced their thinking about their thesis project. Students reported that early feedback on their thesis project was invaluable.

A second component of the direct assessment process entails the Graduate Director electronically distributing the thesis prospectus of each graduate student to faculty, who then assess the prospectus using the Thesis Prospectus Assessment Form. The third component entails the internal thesis committee members completing a Final Thesis Assessment Form following the thesis defense hearing. The Chair and the Director of Graduate Studies compile the data from the Thesis Prospectus Assessment and Final Thesis Assessment forms and present them to the faculty, who discuss how well the learning goals are being achieved and how the MA program might be improved.

For indirect assessment, the Chair conducts exit interviews with graduating M.A. students to assess the extent to which they perceive that their graduate training has allowed them to achieve the aforementioned learning outcomes. The Chair summarizes the exit interview data to share with the faculty, who then reflect on the quality of the graduate curriculum and what changes might improve the curriculum.

**2g) Strategic Plan:** Strategic Planning stalled at UW in 2013, when draft plans that had been submitted were not acted upon. The department, however, remains committed to the following goals for its MA program that were identified in its draft department UP-4 submitted in the 2013-14 AY:

- To strengthen the dual SOC-ENR graduate degree option to attract students who have a strong interest in careers with an environmental focus: The department seeks to hire a sociologist with both a teaching and research interest in environmental sociology. After completing the hire, it plans to dual-list the Environmental Sociology course so that it can be taken for graduate credit. It also hopes to offer an environment-focused, special topic seminar (SOC 5250) every other year.
- To build a Community Development area of focus within the department: The department seeks to hire a sociologist interested in community development whose interests include applied research that would enhance the university's land-grant mission and state-engagement activities, particularly as they relate to the challenges of community development. A former MA alumnus, Jeffrey Jacquet, was referred to as an "unsung hero" for his community development work in Sublette County during the economic boom caused by the energy development in the mid-2000s (AHC, "Energy Boom" oral history collection). A hire in the area of Community Development would strengthen the department's ability to mentor students like Jeff Jacquet who have an interest in Community Development, an area of focus identified by the higher administration in the draft University UP-4 Plan, 2013.

In addition to the above goals, as a result of the department's external review in Spring 2016, the faculty voted to consider another initiative in its strategic planning for the curriculum in its graduate program: To offer a Plan B non-thesis option in

addition to the Plan A thesis option: This potential change in the MA program was discussed at length in the 2015-16 AY, and discussion will continue during the 2016-17 AY. The faculty are optimistic that a Plan B option might attract praxis-oriented students who would derive career benefits from a M.A. in Sociology, but are not interested in conducting original thesis research.

### **3. Mission Centrality: Does program advance the mission of UW?**

**3a)** As a foundational social science, Sociology is vital to the liberal arts mission of the College of Arts and Sciences and to the University. The discipline is central to the university's stated mission to "expose students to ... the complexities of an interdependent world" and "to nurture an environment that values and manifests diversity... and mutual respect" (Academic Affairs, UW Mission Statement: <http://www.uwyo.edu/acadaffairs/mission/index.html>). It is also central to the mission of A&S, which exhorts students to "Prepare for Complete Living," a mantra borrowed from Sociologist Herbert Spencer. The College sees its mission as cultivating in students "broad perspectives, empathetic approaches to people throughout the world..." a mission in which the social sciences play a crucial role.

The Department of Sociology offers graduate coursework, and its faculty conduct research, on a number of "burning issues" in the U.S. and the world today, such as:

- a special topics graduate seminar on social inequality, SOC 5250: *Social Inequality*, with relevance to the issue of growing economic inequality and to issues of diversity (in terms of race/ethnicity/class/& sexual orientation) that have figured prominently in U. S. politics and the current presidential campaign.
- a special topics graduate seminar, SOC 5250: *Sociology of Development*, as well as SOC 4110/*Sociology of International Development* (which can be taken for graduate credit), offers students the opportunity to engage with research on the complexities of international development and the effects of globalization.
- a special topics course (SOC 4890) for undergraduate or graduate credit on police "extra-legal aggression," taught by Professor Holmes whose research expertise includes this topic. Controversial legal and law enforcement issues are also covered in the dual-listed *Sociology of Law* and *Deviance and Social Control* courses.
- a Global Political Economy course (SOC 4370) and Study Abroad course (SOC 4900) taught by Professor Noy, both of which can be taken for graduate credit and which contribute to the internationalization of the curriculum. The Study Abroad course focuses on Israeli social and political institutions and provides an excellent opportunity for UW students to learn more about current affairs in the Middle East.
- a special-topics seminar, SOC 5250: *Sociology of Health*, which discusses health inequalities, health care policy, and legislation such as the Affordable Care Act.
- a special-topics graduate seminar, SOC 5250: *Social Movements*, which focuses on the emergence and development of social movements that have shaped our nation and the world and continue to influence nations in a wide variety of ways.

Sociology as a discipline is also crucial to several of the university goals identified in the draft University UP-4 Plan (2013), such as:

--Develop an appreciation for diverse cultural perspectives and for the value of domestic and international diversity, especially as they relate to the “growing social and cultural diversity in Wyoming and beyond” (Draft University UP4: 3, 4, 12): Culture is a foundational concept that guides the discipline of Sociology; the related sub-concepts of cultural relativism and ethnocentrism are also central to discipline. Furthermore, race/class/gender divisions within society are a major focus of sociological research,

--Prepare students to compete in a global economy & strengthen internationalization (Draft University UP4: 4, 7): The MA program in Sociology has enhanced its course offerings that have cross-cultural, international content, such as *Sociology of International Development* and *Global Political Economy*. It has a cross-listed Study Abroad course with Global and Area Studies (*Shanghai: Past and Present*), as well as a newly developed Study Abroad course that focuses on the political and social dynamics within Israel.

--Attain greater statewide engagement that enhances the well-being of Wyoming citizens (Draft University UP4: 11, 12): The department’s MA program regularly produces skilled research analysts who work for organizations or research institutions within the state, such as WYSAC and Cheyenne Regional Medical Center (see Appendix B for letters of support from two employers of graduates from our MA program). Also, one faculty member is currently working on an applied-research Agricultural Experiment project involving alfalfa farmers in Wyoming. The department could contribute more to statewide engagement if its strategic planning goal of hiring a sociologist with an interest in Community Development (see pg. 11 of this review) were to receive support from the administration.

--Develop Environment, Agriculture, and Natural Resources as Areas of Distinction (Draft University UP4: 5): One of the strategic planning goals of the department is to strengthen the dual SOC-ENR graduate degree option. ENR has been supportive of our efforts. The department has already graduated several students with this dual degree, but it is confident that the number of graduate students seeking a dual SOC-ENR degree can be increased once an environmental sociologist is hired.

**3b)** Given the relevance of the sociology curriculum to current world events and data-driven decision-making, it is commonplace to have graduate students from other programs enroll in Sociology graduate courses. For example, graduate students in the Global and Area Studies program often enroll in our globalization/internationalization courses, while students in the Criminal Justice Program often enroll in the dual-listed SOC 4350/5350 *Sociology of Law* course. Graduate students from the Colleges of Business, Health Sciences, and Education and from departments other than Sociology in the College of Arts and Sciences also place enrollment pressures on SOC 5070/*Statistical Methods for the Social Sciences*. Therefore, the benefits of our course offerings extend beyond our own graduate students.

**3c) Placement data:** See Table 1, pgs 3-4.

**3d) Uniqueness of program:** While UW also has M.A. programs in Anthropology and Political Science, Sociology is widely recognized as a unique social science that has value distinct to that of other social sciences. Almost all states provide their residents the option of a M.A. program in Sociology at their land-grant and/or flagship university (usually at both).

- 4. Cost: Is program financially viable?** The cost of our department would have been similar whether we had a MA program or not. That is, we have not had a more generous faculty FTE due to our MA program. The only additional cost of our MA program is four graduate assistantships. Therefore, with the exception of part b which includes GA costs as part of direct instructional expenditures, the data for this section is based on the cost of the department delivering its BA & MA program.

**4a) Ratio of total student credit hours per FTE:** Laramie campus: 413.2 (based on Table 8, OIA Standard Data Set).

**4b) Direct instructional expenditures:**

- i) Per student FTE: \$6,717 for FY15 (Table 17, OIA Standard Data Set)
- ii) Per total degrees awarded: \$44,767 for FY15 (Table 17, OIA Standard Data Set)
- iii) Non-personnel expenditures: \$26,397 for FY 15; per FTE: \$4,399.5 (Table 16, OIA Standard Data Set)

**4c) Course enrollment:** Based on Table 11, OIA Standard Data Set

- i) Number of courses falling under University minimums: 0 in 2014-15; 3 in last 5 yrs: 1 lower-division, 1 upper-division, 1 graduate course
- ii) Lower-division courses falling under University minimums: 0 in 2014-15; 1 in last 5 years

**4d) Other instructional cost-drivers:**

- i) Section fill rates: While almost all Sociology courses exceed the University minimum enrollment standard, most enroll significantly more than those minimum requirements, often reaching their enrollment caps. Those caps are usually set at 125-140 for SOC 1000; 45-60 for 2xxx and 3xxx level courses; and 30-35 for 4xxx level courses (with a slightly lower cap on dual-listed courses). For Fall 2016, the enrollment data for courses taught by SOC faculty are as follows (as of 8/25/16):
  - SOC 1000-01: 110
  - SOC 1000-02: 140 (full)

SOC 3110: 50 (full)  
SOC 3150: 50 (full)

The fill rates and class size of lower-division and 3xxx-level main campus courses are provided because the department uses its graduate assistants to provide assistance in these large classes. If the graduate program were to be discontinued, faculty would have to reconsider the enrollment caps on these courses.

The fill-rate for 4xxx-level, dual-listed, and graduate courses are as follow:

SOC 4020/online: 32 (full)  
SOC 4350/5350: 26 (full)  
SOC 4650/online: 38 (full)  
SOC 5000: 9  
SOC 5070: 12 (full)  
SOC 5250: 6

ii) Course completion rates: N/A from OIA's Standard Data Set. However, it is very uncommon for graduate students to drop or withdraw from courses.

iii) Curricular complexity: Due to the department's small size, a concerted effort has been made to keep the graduate curriculum as flexible as possible. The M.A. program's requirements are as follows: Graduate students must complete 27 credit hours of course work, plus a thesis. There are three required foundational courses (SOC5000/*Advanced Sociological Theory*; SOC5100/*Advanced Sociological Research Methods*; and SOC5070/*Statistical Methods for the Social Sciences*). The rest of the curriculum is flexible, with students choosing three elective Sociology courses and three additional elective courses that may be taken outside of the department to focus on a specialized area of study.

iv) Faculty course load: The faculty is in compliance with the current work load policy of the university, which stipulates a standard 3-2 course load with possible adjustments due to factors such as high research productivity.

**4e) Research expenditures per faculty FTE:**

Research expenditures, FY 15: \$29,982; per FTE: \$4997 (Table 16, OIA Standard Data Set)

**4f) Cost-data comparison based on Delaware Cost Study:** OIA's Standard Academic Data Set does not provide comparative cost-data. It only provides the cost data that was reported by UW to the Delaware Cost Study. The cost data for Sociology at UW were provided in section 4b, p. 14, of this report.



**Appendix A**  
**Letters of Support from Alumni of the Sociology Master's Program at UW**



**COCHISE COLLEGE**  
OFFICE OF THE  
PRESIDENT

July 11, 2016

Laurie Nichols, President  
Kate Miller, Provost  
Paula Lutz, Dean  
C/O Dept of Sociology (Dept 3293)  
University of Wyoming  
1000 E. University Ave.  
Laramie, WY 82071

Dear President Nichols, Provost Miller, and Dean Lutz:

My name is J.D. Rottweiler, and I am the president of Cochise College located in southeast Arizona. Like many in the United States, education, for me, was the vehicle to the American Dream. I am a first generation college graduate raised in Riverton, Wyoming by two loving parents who wanted the best for their children. Although they never had the opportunity to graduate from a college or university, they understood the value of higher education and the opportunities it would provide their children. The University of Wyoming, and, the Sociology Department in particular, has changed my life, and the life of my family for the better. Since my graduation with a Bachelor of Arts in December of 1990 and a Master of Arts in July 1992, both in Sociology, I have dedicated my career to educating first generation and under served populations in Wyoming and the mountain west.

Upon graduation from high school, my higher education outlook was based on what my friends were planning to do as my family had very limited experience in higher education, its processes, and expectations. Likewise, cost was always going to be a factor. Suffice it to say, my options were limited, not based on my abilities or desires, but on my lack of understanding and exposure to colleges/universities and a liberal arts education. I now understand how fortunate I was to be introduced, even by happenstance, to the Department of Sociology at the University of Wyoming. I found my education to be top-notch; exposing me to ideas and thoughts not typically found in rural Wyoming. Upon completion of my Bachelor of Arts degree I was encouraged by the department to apply for graduate school. I would have never imagined that I had the abilities for graduate school without the encouragement and mentorship of dedicated faculty in the Sociology Department. As a graduate student I had the opportunity to lecture and lead discussion groups in introductory Sociology courses. That experience shaped my now twenty-five-year career in higher education.

4190 WEST STATE HIGHWAY 80 • DOUGLAS, ARIZONA 85607-6190 • (520) 417-4056 • FAX (520) 417-4006  
901 NORTH COLOMBO AVENUE • SIERRA VISTA, ARIZONA 85635-2317 • (520) 515-5401 • FAX (520) 515-5406

The education I received in Sociology at UW prepared me for a very successful teaching career at the community college level. My academic preparedness in the discipline was unmatched, even by colleagues with PhD's. The research and critical thinking skills acquired during my time at UW allowed for an easy transition into a department with significant teaching and research responsibilities. Likewise, my UW education prepared me for the rigors of doctoral work at the University of Utah in Educational Leadership and Policy with Sociology as the allied field. My interests in intergenerational transmission of culture, social structure, and social mobility, acquired during my time at UW, positioned me well for graduate research and a career in higher education administration.

Remembering my experience as a first generation college graduate, my life-changing liberal arts education, and my interest in social mobility I have worked to provide similar experiences for students across Wyoming, Idaho, Utah, and Arizona. Upon graduation from UW in 1992, I served on the faculty of Ricks College (now BYU-Idaho) for three years, served as Associate Professor of Sociology/Department Chair at Salt Lake Community College, Associate Dean of Instruction at Western Iowa Tech Community College, Executive Vice President for Academic Services/Professor of Sociology at Central Wyoming College, and for the past seven years as President of Cochise College.

It was a dream come true when I returned to Riverton, Wyoming as the Executive Vice President at Central Wyoming College. My academic training allowed me to assist in making education accessible to underserved populations and communities. There were a number of specific projects that I believe benefited the State of Wyoming, Fremont County, and multiple communities. These successes are a direct result of the training I received while at UW. Some examples include the development of a unique program in Railcar Repair that combined elements from the Welding and Automotive programs along with a customized curriculum that met the needs of local business and industry. A local railcar repair shop in need of a trained labor pool provided a railcar on campus, and together we developed a certificate program that was recognized as the "Outstanding Workforce Partnership" at the 2006 Governor's Workforce Summit. Although not the case today, in 2008 the oil and gas industry was in need of an Environment, Health, and Safety program that would meet the increasing health and safety compliance demands in Wyoming and surrounding states. Companies supported curriculum development and contributed hundreds of thousands of dollars toward an endowment to support the program. The Rural Criminal Justice Training Center, funded through the Department of Justice, provided training for students and officers working in multiple agencies on the federal, state, county, and municipal levels. Similarly, the rural nature of Wyoming required additional training for nurses working in small hospitals. To address this, we established the Virtual Medical Skills Lab that simulated medical conditions not frequently seen in rural America.

Bringing together people from all walks of life, interests, and backgrounds allowed for life changing opportunities in Wyoming. A background in sociology prepares one to navigate the various social institutions and situations. In 2007, in partnership with the Department of Correction, CWC began a Construction Trades program at a local correctional facility where the college provided the curriculum and instructor, the Department of Corrections provided the classroom and lab, and the Wyoming Community Development Authority provided the money for construction materials. Fifteen to twenty inmates were selected to participate in the Corrections Construction Trades Program where they earned 20 college credits while they built single-family housing units to be distributed across the State of Wyoming as affordable housing.

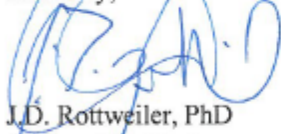
Governor Freudenthal recognized this program as a model partnership between the college, the Department of Corrections, and the housing authority. In Teton County, where tourism is the primary economic sector, the college established programs unique to the Jackson Campus. In partnership with the Four Seasons Resort, a Culinary Arts program was initiated to prepare chefs and kitchen staff. Utilizing the plethora of Executive Chefs in the Jackson Hole area and the outstanding commercial kitchen space, CWC was able to run a high quality culinary program at a community college price.

These are but a few of the unique opportunities I have had to contribute to and give back to Wyoming. All of this is because of the training and education I received in my bachelor and master degree programs in Sociology. Now I find myself in Arizona helping first generation Hispanic students and service men and women stationed at Fort Huachuca in the same way we served students in Wyoming. The skills I have relied on as a professor, dean, chief academic officer, and president all were acquired during my time at the University of Wyoming.

Being in Arizona, I understand, all too well, the difficulties facing the State of Wyoming and the University. Important decisions have to be made. I also know that it is easy to quantify the benefits of specific programs to the state and region. It is easy to count and measure the impact of petroleum engineers, high school teachers, and accountants. It is less easy to measure the impact of sociology, and more importantly graduate level sociology, on the state and region, as many of us find ourselves in jobs and careers that fall outside our field. That said, please remember that many of the people working in education, social services, criminal justice, and business have their academic training in sociology at the University of Wyoming. Please consider this in your important deliberations.

If I can provide any additional information, please don't hesitate to contact my office. I appreciate the opportunity to provide this letter of support to the Sociology Department. Go Pokes!

Sincerely,



J.D. Rottweiler, PhD  
College President

cc: Donna Barnes, Chair

July 12, 2016

To Whom It May Concern:

As Wyoming faces an economic downturn, we are all looking at ways to trim budgets so as to be more efficient and effective. As I understand, the Master of Arts in Sociology is one program being reviewed at this time. As a graduate of the University with this degree, I want to offer my belief of the value and need for the continuation of this program.

I received my MA in 1996, and it has proven an invaluable asset to me throughout my career. I was a non-traditional student; returning to college at age thirty with two children. I finished my Bachelor's degree in Sociology and immediately stated the MA program.

Earning this degree and the education that came with it has been one of the factors in the exceptional jobs I have had within State government. Without the degree, I am confident; I would not be where I am.

Currently, I am the Deputy Administrator for Support Services within the Wyoming Department of Corrections. I oversee all the functions in all five prisons in the areas of Housing and Classification, Education, Medical Services, Programming, Reentry, Religious Services and Food Services. Without the broad-based knowledge of the Sociology MA program, I could not be as well versed as I am in each of these areas. As you can imagine, there are several skill sets needed to manage these areas, and I earned them through the MA program at UW.

Prior to coming to Corrections, I was the State Director for the Division of Victim services within the Office of the Attorney General. The primary role of this division is to provide funding for local victim service providers throughout the state who provide direct services to victims of crime, and to administer the Crime Victim Compensation Fund, which provided financial assistance to victims of crime. If you can imagine the diversity of information needed for this role, you can understand the value of the education I received.

The University of Wyoming is an exceptional institution, and part of that success is the value of the MA program in Sociology. As with many Wyoming families, I am the third generation UW graduate and my children are fourth. We believe in Wyoming and we believe in the University.

I personally believe the Sociology Department is exceptional in every way, focuses on real life learning for its students and is seen as a value to employers. It certainly has been in my experience.

Thank you,

  
Julie L. Tennant-Caine  
3506 Stampede Ranch Road  
Cheyenne, WY 82007  
(307) 778-7927  
jlte8285@gmail.com

# GROUND ENGINEERING

July 13, 2016

Dear Dean Lutz, Provost Miller, and President Nichols:

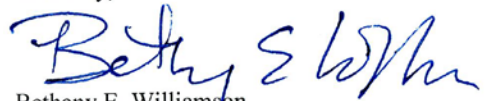
I am pleased to write this letter on behalf of the University of Wyoming Sociology Graduate Program. In 2013, I completed my Master's program through the Sociology Department with an emphasis in crime, law and deviance. During my program, I had the privilege of working as a Graduate Assistant with both the Sociology and Criminal Justice departments. After graduating, I moved to Denver, CO and began working for an engineering firm as a Human Resources Coordinator, where I am currently and was recently promoted to Manager of Human Resources.

Although Human Resources (HR) was not the career path I had originally intended to pursue with my Sociology degree, I have found it closely ties to the knowledge and skills I developed during my graduate program. There are few, if any, aspects of HR I haven't related back to my foundation in Sociology; status, social norms, culture, customs, religion, ageing, law, deviance, competition and conflict. You name it, we've got it. No matter what the organization or where it's located, all these social facets have a huge impact on a company and its success. The Sociology program was able to offer a broad range of study, contributing greatly to my ability to problem solve and evaluate, at a much deeper level, the kind of social forces impacting my workplace, company and our employees.

Apart from the awareness my course work provided, the research opportunities and assistance provided by the Sociology staff built my confidence as both a researcher and statistician. I never anticipated the value my research and statistics skills would have going into the workforce, especially relating to HR. I use HR metrics on a daily basis. My company makes major decisions based on the research I present after collecting information, analyzing data and identifying potential solutions. This area alone has placed me far above others in my field. To not only be able to recognize areas of need, but present my owners with hard facts, as to why and how, has been invaluable. I recognize these skills I owe entirely to the training and support of the Sociology Department's Program.

There is no doubt in my mind that my background in Sociology and what I took away from the Master's Program have been a major contributor to my success in this career field. Based on my experience, I am confident this program can continue to provide these same necessary skills to future graduate students.

Sincerely,



Bethany E. Williamson  
Human Resources Manager  
GROUND Engineering Consultants





To whom it may concern:

I am gladly writing in support of the value of the Master of Arts Program in Sociology at the University of Wyoming as an alumnus of the MA Program. I had the pleasure of profiting from the excellence of the MA Program during the 2009-2010 and 2010-2011 academic years. The MA Program's high quality in research and teaching and its individualized attention to master's students made for an ideal environment for my academic, personal, and career development and will continue to be for future master's students.

The value of the MA Program for master's students is clearly seen in the high quality of research among faculty. Master's students have access to leading experts in a wide range of sociological subfields and topics, including police brutality, social movements, sociobiology, demography, health and aging, and development, who publish in top-ranked journals in their respective areas of expertise as well as generalist sociology journals, including *American Sociological Review* and *Social Forces*. Further, while the MA Program has clear specialties and tracks for master's students, I found the breadth of faculty interests and backgrounds especially helpful. My academic career benefited significantly from interacting with professors of this caliber and I learned the skillsets needed to do research and publish results. Due to mentoring and support from faculty, I was able to develop my thesis into three peer-reviewed articles along with a research note. These early publications provided the technical foundation and confidence for my later research at Michigan State University as a PhD student and in my current work as an Assistant Professor at Miami University.

Every seminar I took as a master's student was excellent. I remember much of the content from each course largely due to the quality of teaching. The seminars were set up in a way in which application for research was possible, a feature advantageous for those going into academic or non-academic career paths. For example, even Advanced Sociological Theory with Dr. Richard Machalek encouraged master's students to write a theory-based research proposal as a term paper. Most importantly, all of the professors who taught seminars I was part of—Drs. David Ashley, Malcolm Holmes, Machalek, Anna Zajacova, and Margie Zamudio (deceased)—clearly *cared* about graduate student learning, evident in the liberal amount of time faculty devoted to students' questions outside of class.

In addition to the high quality of research and teaching in the MA Program, perhaps the most exceptional aspect of the MA Program is its individualized attention to master's students. Doors were almost always open and students were free to enter, even outside office hours without appointments. After later joining a larger program and talking to graduate students from other programs, I am confident that the warm and personal atmosphere of Wyoming Sociology is

unique. To only provide a few examples of the consideration professors showed to me during my time as a master's student: After the late Dr. Margie Zamudio tragically passed, I asked Dr. Machalek if he would be willing to join my thesis committee last minute. He promptly agreed and became a knowledgeable and supportive member. Another example of the warm and personal culture of the MA Program is Dr. Matthew Painter's openness to reading several drafts of my application letter to PhD programs, despite the fact that he was not my mentor, I never made formal appointments, and he was a new (and extremely busy) Assistant Professor. Finally, the countless hours Dr. David Ashley offered for academic conversation proved to be the most important period of my intellectual development.

For the reasons above, one can understand why I was honored when asked to write a letter of support for the MA Program in Sociology. My two years in the MA Program were central to, and provided the foundation for, a career in academia. As a master's student, I learned what it means to be committed to students and the field, or, what it means to be a good professor. I deeply hope that the MA Program remains intact for many years to come so future students can profit from it as much as I did.

Please feel free to contact me if have any questions or need further information.

Sincerely,



Ryan Gunderson, PhD

Assistant Professor  
Department of Sociology and Gerontology  
Miami University  
366 Upham Hall  
Oxford, OH 45056

Tel: (307) 670-1671  
Email: [gunderrn@miamioh.edu](mailto:gunderrn@miamioh.edu)

July 7<sup>th</sup>, 2016

Dear Dean Lutz, Provost Miller, and President Nichols:

I am a graduate (2011) of the Master's Program in Sociology at the University of Wyoming. After graduating with a B.A. in Sociology from the department, I made a decision to pursue a Master's Degree and chose to stay at UW because of the relationships I had built with many, if not all of the faculty within the department as an undergraduate student. I come from a small town and I am drawn to similar cultures in other facets of my life. The Sociology Department offered those small town familiarities that appealed to me. I had no doubts that I fit in with the department. Furthermore I wanted to continue the progress I had made as an undergraduate with the people who helped me improve as a person and as a student.

The skills and abilities I developed since my time at UW can be encapsulated into three areas. First, the faculty have a strong history of publication and are excellent writers themselves. This strength has been passed on over the years to many graduate students like myself who continue to research, write, and publish. As a doctoral student and soon to be doctoral candidate I have enjoyed the success of constant panel and poster acceptances to the top conferences in my current field of communication. I have put to use the writing habits that I learned from professors like Dr. Holmes, Dr. Machalek, and Dr. Barnes by continuously publishing articles in the area of health communication. As a graduate student I have averaged around 3-4 articles a year as a lead author and/or co-author. I enjoy this success because of the instruction, the evaluation, and the dedication to writing that the department holds as a part of their program philosophy.

The second area stems from the rigorous grounding I received in theory. Despite my shift from sociology to communication, I have continued applying the information I collected from faculty members' perspectives. Particularly on the instruction of theory in general, how theories are structured, how they engage phenomena, and how to best utilize them in new projects. I have a stronger sense of sociological theory and now learning new theories has been much easier to comprehend and apply to scholarly situations.

Finally, the course structures offered by the department encourage not only rigorous scholarly writing, but just as importantly a building of an academic presence through discussion, presentation of ideas, and formal organization of research. I became a more confident speaker from courses where I had to lead the discussion for the day, present a semester long project, and ultimately defend the thesis for my work. I was better prepared for the work I would have to do during my time as a doctoral student. In turn, this prepared to me be a better instructor. I have modeled many of the different courses I teach based on my experiences with different faculty members. I have found great success here, students have responded well and I several awards for my time in front of a classroom.





The Master's Program in the Department of Sociology ought to continue its long standing tradition of excellence. More resources should be given to the faculty to better help them recruit strong candidates for the program. While it is important for them to continue to recruit outstanding UW graduates, establishing a greater nationwide brand will help exemplify the UW traditions and standards of excellence in academic work within the university community. Cutting the program will not help in continuing this mission. I urge you all to consider the impact that the department has had on myself and others like me who are at strong R1 universities because of the work done in establishing strong academic scholars.

Sincerely,

**Jeremy Weaver, M.A.**  
**Instructor/PhD Student**  
**University of Utah**  
**[jeremy.weaver@utah.edu](mailto:jeremy.weaver@utah.edu)**  
**307-760-4734**



**Wyoming Survey & Analysis Center**  
UNIVERSITY OF WYOMING

UNIVERSITY OF WYOMING  
1000 E. UNIVERSITY AVE. DEPT. 3925  
LARAMIE, WY 82071  
307.766.2189 | WWW.UWYO.EDU/WYSAC

July 14, 2016

Laurie Nichols, President  
Kate Miller, Provost  
Paula Lutz, Dean  
C/O Dept. of Sociology (Dept. 3293)  
University of Wyoming  
1000 E. University Ave.  
Laramie, WY 82071

Dear President Nichols, Provost Miller, and Dean Lutz:

My name is Janelle Rottweiler Simpson. I am currently an Assistant Research Scientist at the Wyoming Survey & Analysis Center (WYSAC). I am a second generation graduate of the University of Wyoming. My parents instilled the importance of higher education throughout my childhood and always talked highly of their time at the University of Wyoming. Following my graduation from Central Wyoming College, I transferred to the University of Wyoming. In 2012, I graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in Social Science. Because of my time spent in sociology classes and encouragement from sociology professors, I applied and was accepted to the sociology graduate program.

My time spent in the Sociology Department as a graduate student was life changing. I increased my knowledge of sociological principles and application, but I also learned critical thinking skills, presentation skills, and proper research methods. Because of the mentoring I received and the opportunities I was given, I found a passion for applied research. I completed a Master of Arts in Sociology with a graduate-level minor in Statistics in May 2014. My time in the Sociology Department prepared me for employment and I accepted my current position with WYSAC in July of 2014.

At my current position, I evaluate prevention efforts conducted by the Wyoming Department of Health to reduce tobacco use, substance abuse, and chronic disease. For example, one of my clients is the Wyoming Tobacco Prevention and Control Program. Their goal is to reduce tobacco-related morbidity and mortality in Wyoming. They do this by implementing evidence-based strategies to reduce youth initiation, increase

cessation, and decrease exposure to secondhand smoke. Our evaluation assesses the impact of these strategies and tracks outcomes related to knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors.

For each of the programs I am involved with, the evaluation provide a systematic and scientific review of the effectiveness of the program in reaching its goals and objectives. As part of the evaluations, we assist the Department of Health in ensuring they are meeting federal reporting requirements. Often, the research I conduct is given to law makers and stakeholders to make educated and data-driven decisions to improve lives in Wyoming. My time in the Department of Sociology gave me the skills I needed to work with my clients in the state. I know how to lead them in forming appropriate research questions and research plans. It also prepared me to conduct analyses and taught me how to interpret results to make meaningful conclusions. My education from the Department of Sociology is positively impacting the State of Wyoming and its citizens.

As a Wyoming resident, I understand the difficulties facing the State of Wyoming and the University. I know that cuts and hard decisions have to be made. At first glance, the benefits of Sociology may be harder to quantify than other departments. Please remember that graduates of the Sociology Department's Master of Arts program are benefitting society through diverse working sectors such as research, government, education, and criminal justice.

I am proud to be a graduate and employee of the University of Wyoming. I appreciate the opportunity to provide this letter in support of the Sociology Department. If I can provide any additional information, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



Janelle Rottweiler Simpson, M.A.

Cc: Donna Barnes, Chair



July 12, 2016

Dr. Paula Lutz  
Dr. Kate Miller  
Dr. Laurie Nichols  
University of Wyoming  
Laramie, Wyoming 82071

Dear Dean Lutz, Provost Miller, and President Nichols:

As Executive Director of the Wyoming Institute for Disabilities, it gives me great pleasure to write this letter of support for the Department of Sociology Master's Degree program. I graduated with a bachelor's and a master's degrees from this department and I attribute much of my subsequent successes to the preparation and guidance I received from the program. The Department of Sociology faculty and the Master's Degree rigor provided me with the preparation to pursue several Ph.D. opportunities, for competitive employment in state government and higher education, and with the abilities to successfully compete among a national pool of selected interviewees with doctoral degrees for appointment to my current position in the College of Health Sciences.

In 1997 and with a strong experiential background in business and health care administration, I returned to school as a non-traditional student with the vision of earning the academic credentials to support the disability-related policy and advocacy work I was doing in Wyoming and Washington, D.C. My husband and I have two children, now adults, with developmental and other disabilities; they remain the stimulus for my second career. I did not intend to complete more than a bachelor's degree and perhaps in fields more directly aligned with education and health. However, the Department of Sociology proved to be not only a match but the best selection for my future. I earned several awards, student research grants and was invited to join honorary societies, including Phi Beta Kapa. After earning my Master's Degree in Sociology, I recognized that I was far better prepared for policy and program work, applied research and administration than colleagues from other academic backgrounds, including those who had earned terminal degrees. With the skills I gained to consider the sociological context, apply theoretical understandings, and collect as well as analyze and report data to address issues, my academic training is often the envy of others. I was accepted into three Ph.D. programs but given our personal situation, I was unable to move and accept those offers. I nearly completed a Ph.D. in adult education from the University of Wyoming while holding an administrative position at Ivins Memorial Hospital in Laramie; however, when an initial opportunity at the Wyoming Institute for Disabilities opened, I applied and successfully competed to earn the faculty appointment in 2004. To date, I have made significant contributions to teaching, research and service, including securing \$12 million in competitive grant and contract funding for the University of Wyoming. I am frequently invited to collaborate on national initiatives and dialogues that are addressing some of the most pressing concerns related to education, health and disabilities. I began at the institute as the coordinator of community education, was promoted to co-associate director, then associate director and this April to the position of executive director. While I have innate skills and a good secondary and early post-secondary educational background, it was the Master's Degree education in Sociology that honed these skills to make me successful and competitive with those who hold medical, doctoral, juris doctorate, and other terminal degrees.



Of note are my significant contributions to service in Wyoming and beyond. At the designation of Wyoming's Governor in 2004, I direct Wyoming Assistive Technology Resources, the state's Assistive Technology Act program that includes multiple ongoing and new activities. I direct Wyoming Family to Family Health Information Center that provides families that have a child with a special health care need with the information, training, support and advocacy they may need – especially when they may be overwhelmed with an initial diagnosis. I also direct UW ECHO which has earned the University of Wyoming international recognition because we were named an initial ECHO Superhub last year along with ECHO India, ECHO of Northern Ireland and the American Academy of Pediatrics. This designation provides the university and the Wyoming Institute for Disabilities with the opportunity and responsibility to train universities, agencies and organizations throughout the world to build capacity in health care, education, and disabilities by replicating our model. We were given this distinction because we successfully translated the health model for use in education and specifically for assistive technology. Now, we are now applying our UW ECHO model to address Wyoming needs related to autism, childhood literacy, early childhood transitions, educational leadership, geriatrics, positive behavior supports, secondary transitions, and student health. We are now developing networks to address the professional development needs of para-educators, pharmacy preceptors, school nurses, and new graduates from the Doctor of Nursing Practice programs. We recently received a contract from Wyoming Medicaid to coordinate the Wyoming Telehealth Network. These contributions were only possible because my skill set was so richly developed through the Department of Sociology Master's Degree program. I am now able to transfer my knowledge and successes, rooted in my academic background, to others at the institute and in our college for ongoing development that will continue to serve the people of Wyoming for decades.

I am keenly aware of the budget issues facing our state and university. I recognize the need to eliminate programs. Yet, I know that those prepared through the Master's Degree program in Sociology at the University of Wyoming will be key contributors to analyzing our current needs and addressing our future and diversified development.

In summary, it is with my full support and without reservation that I urge you to maintain this integral program. Please contact me if I can provide further support for the University of Wyoming, Department of Sociology Master's Degree program.

Sincerely,



Sandra Root-Elledge  
Executive Director  
Associate Lecturer, College of Health Sciences

**Brianna L. Chavez (Best)**

3413 Luckie Rd.  
Cheyenne, WY 82001  
Phone: 307-287-5086  
Email: [bbest333@gmail.com](mailto:bbest333@gmail.com)

July 18, 2016

University of Wyoming  
Office of Academic Affairs  
Dept. 3302, 1000 E. University Ave.  
Laramie, WY 82071

Dear Dean Lutz, Provost Miller, and President Nichols:

It is my understanding that the current economic climate of Wyoming is such that you are forced to consider removing a number of important academic programs from the offered curricula. As a 2011 graduate of the UW M.A. program in Sociology, it is my pleasure to write a letter in support of the program. The UW M.A. program in Sociology has played an integral role in my personal and professional success. The key skillsets I gained in the program include, but are not limited to:

- Data-driven program evaluation
- Technical report writing
- Incorporation of current research into practical strategies
- Design and execute studies
- Teach
- Bridge cultural differences
- Work for social justice and change

These diverse skillsets allowed me to pursue a range of careers in:

- Teaching
- Research science
- Case management
- Healthcare performance optimization

The UW M.A. program continues to make a difference in my community and globally by virtue of my active volunteerism. I attribute my active involvement with our local homeless shelter, an organization that helps people coming out of prison, my church, and an organization that helps children in poverty in third world nations to the experiences and knowledge I gained through the program.

The UW M.A. program in Sociology has historically demonstrated the ability to produce high-achieving employees and active community members and I am fully confident it will continue to do so. To that end, I wholeheartedly endorse funding for appropriate staffing to successfully implement this critical graduate program.

Sincerely,



Brianna L. Chavez

July 17, 2016

Dear Dean Lutz, Provost Miller, and President Nichols:

Thank you for allowing me to take a minute of your time. The Sociology MA program is the reason I am writing to you as the Executive Director of the Fremont County Alliance Against Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault. The skills I acquired during my Graduate education which contribute to my profession are vast and were crucial to my being hired right out of school. A few of these skills which my Board highlighted when they hired me include the ability to write professionally, the ability to do independent research development, comprehension of peer reviewed research, and the overall understanding of the multi-intersectional causes of domestic violence and sexual assault. In particular, the courses and support I got from the UW Sociology department allowed me to follow my own research interests which eventually led me to writing my thesis on fertility decisions in couples characterized by domestic violence.

I work in a field where I respond to crisis situations on a daily basis alongside six different law enforcement agencies. Obviously I am a bit biased because I loved my program, but I never would have been able to build up my program in the past year without the training I received from the department. Not only was the coursework itself responsible for my career, but the experience I received as a GA improved my public speaking and presentation abilities. I work and serve the Wind River Indian Reservation and outreach has been a key goal of mine since June of 2015, which means I give a large number of presentations and speeches around the community. These speeches and presentations are aimed at primary prevention and intervention because the county I work in has the highest rates of domestic violence, sexual assault, and violent crime in Wyoming. My speeches are informed by the great professors and courses I took during Grad school, of specific importance has been the training I received about Socioeconomic Status, race and poverty as it contributes to these kinds of crimes.

The Sociology Department not only supported my immediate needs following graduation but also have continued to support me as a Sociologist. I have the opportunity to do some very insightful research in my County and through my program that can inform our practices and services while also contributing to the body of knowledge about domestic

violence, sexual assault, and stalking more broadly. This would simply not be possible without the training I got from UW's Sociology MA program. I look forward to a long career with a high probability of continuing my education because this department has instilled such a love for research and expanding our understanding of the world in me that I cannot turn away from. The rest of my life, my career, my program, and my future have all been impacted for the best by my time studying within the UW Sociology MA program.

Sincerely,

Sydney Moller

Executive Director

Fremont County Alliance Against Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault

[director@fcafvo.org](mailto:director@fcafvo.org)

(307)856-0942



July 21, 2016

Dean Lutz, Provost Miller, and President Nichols:

I am pleased to write a letter supporting the Master of Arts (MA) program in sociology here at the University of Wyoming (UW). I received my master's degree in 2010 through the Department of Sociology here at UW. The most important aspect during my graduate study was the process of completing my thesis. The process was self-directed, with great guidance from my thesis committee members. Throughout the process, I had opportunities to select a topic in which I was interested, research literature, compile data, analyze data with appropriate methods, and report findings.

Now, as a research scientist for the Wyoming Survey & Analysis Center (WYSAC), these are exactly the tasks that I perform on a daily basis. I am the primary data analyst on the evaluation of the Wyoming Tobacco Prevention and Control Program (WY-TPCP). The WY-TPCP is managed by the Wyoming Department of Health; it aims to safeguard the health of Wyoming residents by decreasing the burden of death and chronic disease in Wyoming caused by tobacco use. WYSAC provides evaluation and surveillance services to the WY-TPCP to track program outcomes and to improve program services. As a data analyst, I'm responsible for managing data, performing statistical analyses, creating data tables, writing reports, and working closely with the Principal Investigators to produce deliverables that closely reflect clients' needs. I have conducted a variety of data management duties from carefully cleaning and recoding data to weighting survey data. I have also conducted a variety of statistical analyses from simple cross-tabulation analysis to more complex logistic regression modeling. The data I manage and analyze informs decisions about statewide WY-TPCP programming. The process of completing my thesis provided me with the training that I needed to perform my current job duties and advance in my career as a data analyst.

Without the training I received during my graduate study, especially writing my thesis, I would not have been as successful as I am in my career at WYSAC. The MA in sociology at UW was invaluable to me and will be indispensable to prospective students.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Muneyuki Kato', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Muneyuki Kato, MA

July 27, 2016

Dr. Donna Barnes  
Chair, Department of Sociology  
University of Wyoming, Dept. 3293  
1000 E. University Ave.  
Laramie, WY 82071

Dear Dr. Barnes,

I am writing to express my support and appreciation for the value of the Master of Arts in Sociology program at the University of Wyoming. As you may remember, I graduated from the program in 2011, with my thesis titled *Don't Blame it on the Alcohol: College Binge Drinking Predictors Related to Student Life and Campus Involvement*. I currently work as Assistant to the Associate Provost for Educational Attainment at Colorado State University, and as Assistant to the Executive Director for the Reinvention Center, a consortium of universities dedicated to strengthening undergraduate education in America's research universities. The M.A. in Sociology program was integral to preparing me for this dual role position and my career overall.

In my current position with Colorado State University, my role essentially covers anything to do with supporting the Student Success Initiatives to improve our graduation and retention rates. Thanks to my background in advanced social research methods and statistical methods, I am able to take on research projects and analyze data to find areas where we can improve our interventions. For example, I assisted a professor with designing, conducting, and analyzing a survey and set of focus groups to assess the Academic Support Coordinator (ASC) position. We used this analysis to figure out how to improve work conditions for the ASCs, how to better support them to provide quality academic guidance to our students, and to find tools to enable them to better understand student data and predictive analytics.

Additionally, I am currently in the process of developing a literature review of research related to first generation students. A few of my colleagues and I are interested in the unique challenges that first generation students face as they transition first from high school to college, and then from general education courses to primarily major courses in their junior and senior years. We are compiling peer-reviewed research because much of the "research" we've found related to first generation students is purely anecdotal. We hope to use the literature review to provide a starting place for a first generation student research repository, identify gaps in the research, and guide future studies at CSU and beyond.

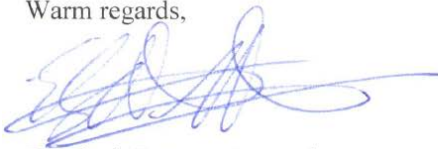
I have also benefited from my advanced studies in the sociology program at UW in my other professional role with the Reinvention Center. I primarily work with university vice presidents

and vice provosts, along with other faculty members and administrators, from research universities across the country to develop conference programs that will help these administrators grow in their positions and improve undergraduate education at their institutions. Though I have not personally been a university administrator, my advanced sociological training has prepared me to critically analyze trends and research in order to develop meaningful, research-based sessions for academic audiences, as well as identify appropriate and respectable speakers.

In both of my roles, my writing ability, which was strengthened throughout my experience in the M.A. program, and my understanding of student behavior and development from my thesis work and course work have made me a valued member of our CSU and Reinvention Center teams. I am able to make meaningful contributions to both organizations beyond what was originally expected in these roles directly as a result of my master's studies.

I am currently thinking about starting a Ph.D. program as the next step in my career in higher education administration, either in Industrial/Organizational Psychology, Sociology, or Cognitive Psychology. I feel that my work in the M.A. program has effectively prepared me to successfully complete a Ph.D. in any of these areas because of the freedom I was given to explore my interests as a master's student, the excellent mentorship I received from the faculty, particularly from you and Dr. Gary Hampe, and the courses that taught me sociological theory and methods, along with a number of invaluable skills that I've been directly able to apply to my professional work in higher education. Thank you for your role in my education.

Warm regards,



Elizabeth Bennett Atwood



Portland State  
UNIVERSITY

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College of Arts and Sciences  
Dean's Office  
University of Wyoming  
Laramie, WY 82071

July 28, 2016

To whom it may concern:

I felt very sad and anxious when I recently heard that the University of Wyoming may be targeting Sociology's MA program for elimination. As a proud alumnus of this program, I want to explain how valuable I found my UW education. I could not have attained my present level of educational and professional achievements without the springboard of Sociology's MA program and I object strongly to its elimination.

I was fortunate to be accepted into Sociology's MA program in 2005. Optimistically, I had applied for several PhD programs and been roundly rejected. Of the MA programs to which I also applied, only UW's had PhD-level funding for a working class kid who had taken out too many loans already for undergrad. So I attended and finished my degree in two years, TAing for the Sociology and Criminal Justice Departments, incurring no debt, and acquiring a first class education and teaching experience in the process. Thanks to the education of the UW Sociology department, both official and unofficial, I was accepted into a top 5 department for my PhD (Criminology, Law & Society at the University of California, Irvine).

From Christian Ukaegbu (chair when I arrived) and Donna Barnes (chair when I left), I learned how to handle myself academically and professionally. From the late great Margie Zamudio, I learned the ethics of how to be the scholar-activist I've always wanted to be. From Malcolm Holmes, I learned the craft of quantitative sociological research and how to write academically. And between them, Richard Machalek, and the other professors who taught my courses, I was set on the fast track in my PhD program at UCI.

I cannot overestimate the value that came from having the background I gleaned from Sociology's MA program. The program was run like a tiny little PhD program in which I could go as far and fast as I wanted and study what I pleased. When I was admitted to UCI (which would never have happened without UW), I hit the ground running, publishing three different articles in my first two years with UW faculty and a fourth a few years later. It is entirely likely that my subsequent success on the academic job market was due just as much to my MA as to my PhD training.

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Department of Sociology • <http://www.pdx.edu/sociology/home>

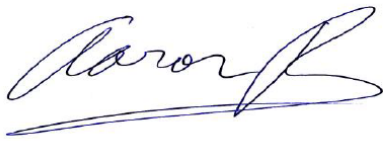
PO Box 751 • Portland, OR 97201-0751

Main (503) 725-3926 • Fax: (503) 725-3957

I am currently a tenure track Assistant Professor of Sociology at Portland State University, having just moved from Washington State University where I spent three years also as an Assistant Professor. I am at the beginning of my career, having landed in two excellent programs of my choice. I mentor my own PhD students now and I utilize all the lessons that I learned at UW to prepare them for the academic world. The Sociology department at UW took a chance on me and I'm forever in their debt. I'm not the only one, of course—many of my UW grad student colleagues have also done quite well and we keep in touch with one another and UW Sociology regularly. The program is well-developed, well-structured, and well-staffed and I sincerely hope that it remains that way. It is an incredible asset to the field.

Please let me know if there is anything further I can do to help preserve this fine program and don't hesitate to contact me using the information listed below.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Aaron Roussell', with a long horizontal flourish underneath.

Aaron Roussell, Ph.D.  
Assistant Professor  
Department of Sociology  
Portland State University  
P.O. Box 751  
Portland, OR 97201-0751  
[roussell@pdx.edu](mailto:roussell@pdx.edu)

Dean Paula M. Lutz  
College of Arts and Sciences  
Department 3254. 1000 East University  
Laramie, WY 82071

July 18, 2016

Dear Dean Lutz, Provost Miller, and President Nichols:

It is my great pleasure to write a letter in support of the Sociology Department Master's Program at the University of Wyoming. I strongly believe that the professional successes I've been fortunate enough to enjoy in my life are rooted in the education I received at UW, and in particular, the knowledge and experience I gained during my master's work in sociology.

My undergraduate degree is in mathematics and as a senior, I signed up for a course that would fulfill one of my core, education requirements: History of Social Thought, a sociology course. I was hooked from the first day and over the course of that semester, I began to understand that at least for me, the hard sciences seemed to be missing an integral piece of the puzzle – the human element. I applied to the sociology department the next year and began to study sociology in earnest.

The sociology master's program prepared me for where and who I am today. I consistently draw on elements of the education I received in the master's program, from the research methods and statistics classes, to the more area-focused programs that incorporated how we interact with our environment, how social class affects opportunities in every facet of our lives, and importantly, what I might be able to do for society armed with that knowledge. The sociology master's program awakened in me a hunger to understand more about "the social," and to contribute in whatever small way I can to make the world a better place.

I'll admit that it is a bit outside my comfort zone to talk much about my achievements, but given the current situation and the fact that I really do attribute my success to the sociology master's program and its wonderful faculty, I want to take a minute to let you know how my experiences in the sociology master's program contribute to the work that I have done, and the work that I am still doing.

After earning my master's degree, I was accepted into the PhD program at Colorado State University. The faculty there were well aware of the program at UW and even offered to waive one of the required classes because the reputation of the sociology program spoke to the "high quality of the education" I had received in my master's program. In the classroom, I found that I was often able to meaningfully contribute to classes in ways my colleagues



were not, something that was possible because of the educational foundations I got at UW. In fact, within two years of entering the PhD program, I had completed all my required course work, passed my comprehensive exams, and was preparing to begin work on my dissertation and to start teaching classes. As I continued to work towards my PhD, I continued to use the experiences and education I got from my time in the sociology master's program. I used that background to directly inform classes I taught, e.g., using the research methods class at UW as a model for my undergrad methods class and drawing directly from a course on human societies in a class I taught on "community." I used my sociology master's work to inform my dissertation, a work that compared the experiences of ranchers in two Colorado counties. I used my sociology master's degree background to inform other, academic research interests and projects, e.g., work on social policy focused on welfare reform. And I used the knowledge and spirit of my sociology master's degree to continue to engage as an informed researcher. By the time I graduated from CSU, I was co-editor of a reader, *Inequality: Social Class and Its Consequences* (2007) and had co-authored 22 refereed journal articles.

After I finished my degree at Colorado State, I moved to Washington D.C. as an American Association for the Advancement (AAAS) of Science, Science & Technology (S&T) Policy Fellow. AAAS is the world's largest scientific society, and the fellowships are highly competitive. The committee that interviewed me for the fellowship noted the diversity in my education and was particularly interested in my master's thesis work on social movements and the environment. As a result of my strong academic background, I was selected for a fellowship at the Environmental Protection Agency's, National Homeland Security Research Center (NHSRC), where I focused on risk and crisis communications centered on natural and human-created disasters. Quite simply, I would not have placed with NHSRC without the work I did at UW.

Since the fellowship ended, I have been working for the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service (FNS). I started at FNS as a "Social Science Policy Analyst" in the Office of Research and Analysis and have since moved up to become the "Senior Technical Advisor" to the Director of the Food Distribution Division. In both positions, I drew (and draw) on the skills and research ethic I learned in sociology master's program. As an analyst, I lead the research and writing on a number of projects, including regulatory impact analyses (RIA) for some of the chief provisions in the 2010 Healthy Hunger Free Kids Act, a major initiative of the White House. RIAs are required for any rule the Department passes that has economic implications for stakeholders, society, program participants, etc. As an analyst, I was the lead for RIAs for the "Smart Snacks in Schools Rule," local school wellness policies, and rules pertaining to the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program, among others. I've also worked on budget modeling and database management for FNS national-level data. Because of this work, I earned a number of USDA awards and was selected to represent FNS at a USDA-wide event that included Secretary Vilsack and First Lady Michelle Obama. (I also won the John P. Ellbogen Meritorious Classroom Teaching Award for my work during my graduate work at UW.)

Last year, I took a new position as Senior Technical Advisor, and I now work closely with FNS leaders who oversee Food Distribution Programs (such as the "Food Distribution

Program on Indian Reservations” that is in place in over 100 tribal locations, including the Wind River Indian Reservation in Wyoming). In my current position, I oversee contractors who conduct research on FNS programs, identify and conduct original research to determine whether our programs are operating efficiently, conduct outreach with other FNS programs and other Agencies, and provide support to the division director, the deputy administrator, the administrator, and our undersecretary. I am also engaged in outreach. I recently presented information on our programs to a group of Wyoming farmers and ranchers who were in D.C. to learn more about becoming vendors for the USDA Foods program. I am proud to work for the U.S. Government and I do not believe I would be here today, were it not for the education I received in the sociology master’s program.

I have continued to conduct research with colleagues outside my work in government. In addition to publishing occasional journal articles, I am the co-author of two new books, *A Chronicle of Permutation Statistical Methods: 1920-2000, and Beyond* (2014) and *Permutation Statistical Methods: An Integrated Approach* (2016), both published by Springer International. I am also pleased to say that the *Chronicle* was just recognized by the American Libraries Association Choice Magazine as “Outstanding Academic Title, 2015.”

I firmly believe that my professional success is due in large part to my master’s degree in sociology from UW. My studies there, and, in particular, working with the passionate sociology faculty, awakened my interest in science and society and opened my eyes to what has become a lifelong pursuit of knowledge. It is difficult to convey how strongly I feel about the doors that opened in my life because I had the opportunity to study sociology at the master’s level at UW. I believe that the university is stronger with the sociology master’s program than without it. UW is and has always been an integral part of my family’s education: We are a three generation UW story that includes both my parents, me and my brothers, and my daughter (not to mention more extended family including an uncle and several cousins). The sociology master’s program is very much part of that legacy.

I know that you face severe challenges in this time of significant budget issues, but I also firmly believe that the sociology master’s program is very much worth saving. Without it, future students will have lost a significant opportunity to go into the world with a strong, scientific foundation that will benefit countless others. Thank you so much for your consideration, and please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or if you would like additional information.

Sincerely,

*Janis Johnston*

Janis E. Johnston, PhD  
3001 Park Center Drive  
Alexandria, VA 22302  
703.305.2106



## Appendix B

### Other Letters of Support for the Sociology Master's Program at UW



**Wyoming Survey & Analysis Center**  
UNIVERSITY OF WYOMING

UNIVERSITY OF WYOMING  
1000 E. UNIVERSITY AVE., DEPT. 3925  
LARAMIE, WY 82071  
307.766.2189 | WWW.UWYO.EDU/WYSAC

July 25, 2016

Dean Paula Lutz  
College of Arts and Sciences

Dean Lutz:

This letter is in support of the master's degree program in the Department of Sociology. As I detailed in my most recent bi-annual report, the Wyoming Survey & Analysis Center (WYSAC) is one of the premier social science research organizations of its kind across the United States, and is especially recognized for the quality of its work within the Rocky Mountain Region. In a very large measure our reputation and success are founded on our people.

At WYSAC we conduct research in a variety of social science areas, but we uniformly need researchers who are knowledgeable in fundamental social science, capable in quantitative analysis, and skillful in oral and written communication. Although there are several social science departments at the University of Wyoming, we have disproportionately hired from the Department of Sociology. It is not that we need knowledge of sociology more than any other social science area, but rather the exceptional level of education and training they have received. Their graduate students and master's degree graduates have been thoroughly prepared and are totally capable of stepping immediately into the profession as researchers.

Many employees can seem exceptional on paper and then never live up to expectations their resumes generate. However, this has not been the case with our hires from the Department of Sociology. In every case, these employees have not only lived up to their resumes, but have exceeded all expectations. As a consequence, these people have stayed with us and excelled in their jobs for years.

At WYSAC we are continuing to excel. It is my hope that we will continue to be able to rely upon the excellent master's degree graduates from the Department of Sociology in both the near and distant future.

Respectfully,

Stephen L. Bieber, Executive Director



**Wyoming Survey & Analysis Center**  
UNIVERSITY OF WYOMING



## Cheyenne Regional Medical Center

214 E. 23<sup>rd</sup> Street, Cheyenne, WY 82001  
(307) 773-8238 [www.crmcwy.org](http://www.crmcwy.org)

To: President Nichols, Provost Miller, and Dean Lutz

From: Eric Dalton, Supervisor of Data Management

Date: Jul 21, 2016

Subject: Value of UW Sociology program graduate for CRMC

1. Dr. Barnes asked us to attest to the value of the Sociology program for Cheyenne Regional Medical Center (CRMC). I can specifically speak to one Sociology alumna, Brianna Chavez (née Best). Brianna is a great data analyst for us. Our expectations of her are two-fold... she must be a technical expert, but her Sociology education prepared her for an equally important component—she must be able to communicate highly technical information and concepts to laypersons; in our case, physicians and nurses. She does that very well.

2. Specific skills from her Sociology background that she has applied at CRMC:

- Data driven program evaluation
- Data visualization
- Strategic communication
- Bridge cultural differences (to include professional sub-cultures)
- IT platform integration

3. It's probably not intuitive that a Sociology grad would be a good data analyst. However, Sociology has proven to be a huge enabler especially when combined with her UW other degrees program and on-the-job training.

Sincerely,

Eric M. Dalton

July 15, 2016

Laurie Nichols, President  
Paula Lutz, Dean

Dear President Nichols and Dean Lutz:

At the request of Donna Barnes, I am writing with my observations of the Department of Sociology's graduate program. It goes without saying that I base my letter on my relations with the Department prior to my retirement as Dean three years ago.

I might add that I am a bit biased toward the Sociology Department because from it one of my sons received his undergraduate degree. I was particularly impressed with the department's high academic standards and the emphasis the department placed on writing and statistical analysis. My son Brett received his MA in Sociology from the University of Nebraska where his statistical skills far exceeded those of his fellow students. He subsequently graduated from Duke University Law school. He was competitive with his fellow students many of whom came from high-prestige private universities. He has consistently lauded the UW Sociology Department for the part it played in his success.

Over the past ten years Sociology has averaged ten graduate students and graduated an average of three. Although the trend has been slightly down in the last few years, the Department's program has never been large. Clearly, this is the result of two factors: a decline the size of the Department's faculty and, perhaps most important, a reduction in the number of its graduate assistantships.

So why retain a graduate program in Sociology? Primarily, it is because the department has demonstrated it can offer a high quality program whose graduates have moved on to successful careers. A quick review of their graduate's careers reveals an impressive list of achievements. In my opinion it is not in the best interests of the University or the state to

eliminate a high quality graduate program simply because it is small. Numbers are not the **only** measure of a successful program.

Frankly, there is another reason I am concerned about the continuance of the Sociology graduate program. The department has an endowment of over \$100,000 designated specifically to support summer graduate student research. The establishment of this endowment was spear-headed by my three sons in memory of a colleague, Chet Meeks, who received his undergraduate degree in the department and subsequently earned a Ph.D. in Sociology from SUNY-Albany. Following completion of his degree he taught at the University of Northern Illinois and Georgia State. Chet died of cancer. When it became clear that Chet's life was near an end, my sons proposed to him that they raise funds for an endowment in his memory. Chet specifically requested that the income from the endowment be designated for the purposes stated above. Obviously, the thought of eliminating the purposes for which the Chet Meeks' endowment was established are very painful.

In these times of great financial stress for the University, I hope you will be particularly sensitive to the elimination of a high quality long-standing graduate program.

Sincerely,

Oliver Walter

Academic Program Review: **Sociology MA**

**Section 8 – Cost**

a) Ratio of student credit hours per FTE (AY 2014/15): **610**

b) Direct instructional expenditures (FY 2015): **\$895,346**

i) Per student FTE: **\$6,717**

ii) Per total degrees awarded: **\$44,767**

iii) Non-personnel expenditures / total academic FTE: **\$4,399**

c) Course enrollment (AY 2014/15)

i) Classes falling under university minimums: **0**

ii) Lower-division courses falling under university minimums: **0**

e) Research expenditure per tenure-track FTE (FY 2015): **\$4,997**