

Professor Max Herman  
Rossey Hall 539  
Department of Sociology and Anthropology  
New Jersey City University  
Jersey City, NJ 07305

30 May 2017

Dear Professor Herman,

After spending a full day at NJCU meeting with faculty members from the Department of Sociology and Anthropology I submit the following report.

### **Strengths**

A clear strength of the Department is the faculty. They are extremely caring and dedicated to serving a diverse population of students, many of whom are non-traditional students working part or full-time. It was evident that the faculty truly cares about their students and beyond teaching them the subject matter and analytical skills of sociology, anthropology and social work, they want to empower their students to succeed in life.

Another strength is the involvement of faculty in various interdisciplinary programs, such as the Minor in Urban Studies, the Minor in Ethnic and Immigration Studies, the Concentration in Alcohol and Drug Studies (CADS), and the study abroad program.

Another strength is that the Department succeeds in fulfilling important university missions, such as providing students with a cross-cultural understanding of social phenomena and the ability to analyze social problems through critical thinking and quantitative analysis. These skills are necessary for providing society with an informed and civically engaged citizenship.

### **Weaknesses**

The main weakness of the program is that there is not enough full-time faculty. The department offers a Major in Sociology and a Minor in Anthropology, but has only three sociologists, two anthropologists, and two social workers. At least two more full-time faculty members in Sociology faculty and one more full-time faculty member Anthropology should be hired so that the fundamental areas of the disciplines of Sociology and Anthropology are adequately covered.

Another weakness is that the faculty is burdened with a heavy teaching and advising load. There should be course releases for faculty who coordinate minors and concentrations, participate in the study abroad program, create new courses or programs, and apply for research grants.

Another weakness is that too many courses are taught by adjuncts. This puts additional burdens on the faculty, such as attempting to recruit and supervise adjuncts. The solution to this is to hire more fulltime faculty. In the meantime, there should be a course reduction for faculty members who oversee the hiring and supervision of adjuncts.

Finally, there does not appear to be enough physical space for the department's faculty, staff, and students.

### **Opportunities**

With upcoming retirements, there is an opportunity to infuse the faculty with young and exciting professors with cutting-edge research agendas. The opportunity also exists to integrate sociologists and anthropologists affiliated with other departments at NJCU into the program in some manner, perhaps as affiliated faculty.

The hiring of new full-time faculty would provide an opportunity to diversify the department. Given that NJCU is designated as an "Hispanic Serving Institution", targeted hires of those identifying as Latina or Latino would be appropriate.

Tutoring should be available to students who are taking statistics classes and assistance should be available for faculty engaged in quantitative research. This could be met through the creation of an interdisciplinary data laboratory that serves students and faculty from various disciplines, including Criminal Justice, Economics, Geography, National Security Studies, Political Science, Psychology, etc. Indeed, the creation of such a laboratory would be extremely beneficial given the University-wide goal of promoting quantitative literacy.

Opportunities exist for facilitating interdisciplinary research on important social issues. One possibility is to create an interdisciplinary social science research institute that crosscuts various research interests of faculty on campus. One possibility might be a Center for the Study of Immigration and Urban Studies, which would leverage NJCU's urban location, proximity to Ellis Island, and Hispanic-serving mission.

### **Threats**

The upcoming retirements in the department must be replaced with full-time faculty.

### **Faculty expertise, curriculum and instruction, graduation rates, and resources**

The faculty are experts in a number of areas across Sociology, Anthropology, and Social Work, including addiction, African society and politics, folklore, gentrification, labor, race and ethnicity, and urban riots.

The curriculum fulfills the minimum basic requirements for a Sociology Major, including introduction to sociology, sociological theory, and research methods and statistics. It is impressive that the department also emphasizes experiential learning and requires its students to complete a field internship course.

For transfer students the graduation rate is 50% and for incoming freshman the graduation rate is 11% in recent years. One would like to see higher rates of graduation, however given the fact that a majority of the students are working full or part-time, there are substantial constraints on attaining high rates of graduation.

As stated above, the administration has not adequately provided resources for the department in terms of full-time faculty, course reductions, and physical space.

### **Recommendations**

Given the high number of courses taught by adjuncts as well as the broad substantive scope that the department must cover, *at least two* new tenure-track Sociology faculty should be hired and *at least one* new tenure-track faculty each in Anthropology and in Social Work. In addition, longtime adjunct professor, Gabriel Okafur, should be moved to a tenure-track position.

Given the importance of the Social Work major for students at NJCU and to more accurately reflect the composition of the department, the department may want to consider changing its name to the Department of Sociology, Anthropology and Social Work. Other universities with Departments of Sociology, Anthropology and Social Work include Auburn University, Kansas State University, Seton Hall University, Texas Tech, University of Dayton, and University of North Florida. This, however, should be viewed as a *short-term* solution since Sociology and Anthropology are social sciences while Social Work is an applied profession. From a long-term perspective, a sufficient number of faculty should be hired to have two stand alone departments: Sociology and Anthropology and Social Work.

Concerning the curriculum, the faculty may want to consider re-working the existing concentrations. One possibility for the faculty to consider is to create a minor in Social Work. Once that is done, appropriate tracks might be: (1) Sociology Major with Anthropology Minor, (2) Sociology Major with Ethnic and Immigrant Studies Minor, (3) Sociology Major with Social Work Minor, and (4) Sociology Major with Urban Studies Minor. Students should be required to declare one of the four tracks and there should be a clear and attainable degree map for each.

In the long-term, assuming that the more immediate concern of building up the Department with more faculty is met, it would be appropriate to develop Bachelors in Social Work (BSW) and Masters in Social Work (MSW) programs. There seems to be a high demand for such programs among NJCU students and currently there are no MSW programs in Hudson County.

Sincerely,

*K. Schock*

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