Status of Action Items from Prior Review

- **Provide additional, contiguous office space to support the Department's research and teaching activities.** INCOMPLETE. The Sociology Department offices on the 10th floor of Langdale Hall continue to be limiting for its faculty, staff, and students. In fact, we now have to use three offices on the 8th floor of Langdale Hall to house a visiting instructor and two faculty emeriti who are still regularly teaching courses and conducting research. However, there are plans to move the Sociology Department to either the entire 9th floor of Langdale Hall or to take over the entire 10th floor of Langdale Hall in the next year or so. Once that move happens, we should have sufficient office space for faculty, staff, and students. Moreover, the move should also provide for space for collaborative research projects, colloquia, and meetings. The move will provide opportunities to reconfigure the 9th or 10th floor of Langdale Hall to best use the space.

- **Increase tenure-track faculty.** INCOMPLETE. In the 2004 self-study the Department reported 21 faculty (19 TT and 2 NTT) and created a plan to add four tenure-track positions, with two at the Associate Professor level. The 2014 self-study report counts 22 faculty (18 TT and 4 NTT). However, since the submission of that report the Department has lost two tenure-track faculty, both full Professors. One of those has left Georgia State University, and the other has been promoted to the position of Associate Dean. With the inclusion of a new junior tenure-track faculty member who joined the Department in January 2015, the Department has 21 faculty (17 TT and 4 NTT). Currently the Department is conducting a search for a new Chair, who will join the Department in July 2015. This additional faculty member will return the Department to the level reported in the 2014 self-study report.

- **Enhance graduate student stipends.** COMPLETED.

- **Increase faculty diversity.** COMPLETED, BUT EFFORTS CONTINUE. Since the last self-study the Department has hired and successfully retained several faculty members who contribute to the Department’s diversity on gender, race/ethnicity, and sexuality, and two women have been promoted to full Professor. (One of those women has since left, but another woman is currently being considered for promotion to full Professor). The Department continues to place very strong emphasis on the diversity of its faculty and will continue to recruit, mentor, and advance minority-group faculty.

- **Increase the visibility of the Department and its faculty in the profession and community.** COMPLETED BUT ONGOING. Many Sociology Department faculty members serve as officers, committee chairs, and committee members of professional organizations and serve on editorial boards of journals and other publications. Several faculty have been elected to office in the two most prestigious national professional associations; in fact, since the last self-study one faculty member has served as President of one of these associations. Even though we have increased the visibility of the Department, we continue our efforts to become more visible and involved in the profession and community.

**Major Findings in Current Review**

The External Reviewers "were extremely impressed with the Department of Sociology across several dimensions: 1) the high quality of its quite diverse faculty, 2) the commitment to training the next generation of graduate and undergraduate students who come from a wide array of class, racial, gender, and sexuality positionalities, and 3) the forward-looking focus on research productivity strengthened by a web of networks that range from within the local urban community to ties that span the world." The External Reviewers offered several recommendations, which the Sociology Department rank and present below.

1. **Strength of Faculty Research.** The External Reviewers found the Sociology faculty to be "very productive, especially at the assistant and associate ranks" and that the Department had "attracted a highly motivated, highly skilled coterie of junior scholars." Combining the faculty's research strengths with the Department's "collegiality," the External Reviewers determined that the faculty are "well poised to develop and submit (and resubmit) a significant number of collaborative [grant] proposals." The External Reviewers also saw the future and ongoing collaborative and inter-disciplinary research as "an exemplar of the strategic goal of GSU 'to become a leading public research university with a deep culture of research at all levels [including] community-campus collaborations'."

2. **Establishment of Research Center(s).** The External Reviewers found a research center to be a
"significantly promising investment" that "fits the GSU Strategic Plan in every way through graduate and undergraduate research experiences, community partnerships, graduate training in research conceptualization, and dissemination of findings through publications and research reports that are relevant to the policy makers and the broader community ... [and with] the GSU Strategic Plan's desire for the University to engage with and address the Challenges of Cities." Since the self-study report, the Department now believes that there is expertise and opportunity for either multiple research centers (in topics such as LGBTQ Communities and Health and Neighborhood and Metropolitan Studies) or for one center with multiple research programs.

3. **Strength of the Graduate Program.** The External Reviewers found the Sociology graduate program to be "impressive, training graduate students in theory as well as rigorous quantitative and qualitative methods - slightly ahead of the national trend in the discipline" (emphasis in original). The External Reviewers also commented on "a very unique strength [of the program] in that 28% of its student composition is African American, and, if more specific data were collected, we believe one of the most diverse graduate student bodies in the nation ... [making the GSU Sociology Department] an important pipeline for producing PhDs with diverse backgrounds who will serve as future scholars, educators, citizens, and community leaders.” The External Reviewers also noted that graduate student access to teaching and publication opportunities need to be expanded. In all, though, the External Reviewers found the Department to be “poised to play a major role in the second strategic goal of the college and the university: to provide strong graduate and professional programs that support and nurture the next generation of researchers and community leaders.”

4. **Impressive Undergraduate Program.** The External Reviewers “found the commitment to and quality of undergraduate teaching to be impressive.” Not only do the required major courses “fit in line with national standards for sociology as a discipline,” but “the sheer numbers of students who have transferred out of other programs in order to major in sociology speaks to the perceived relevance of what is being taught to the experiences of those in the classroom.” Moreover, the External Reviewers noted that the “proportion of sociology undergraduate majors who are minorities (71% - virtually unheard of in most R1 universities) underscores the Departmental mission to serve and train those who may be first generation (56%), minority, working class, or who are otherwise traditionally underserved by institutions of higher education.” The Department’s internship program, research projects, study abroad opportunities, and particularly the in-house advisor produced majors who “get jobs.” The External Reviewers concluded that “[c]learly, the GSU Department of Sociology provides a huge service to the College and University through its undergraduate teaching program. It deserves high marks for its contribution to the university’s first strategic goal: to serve as a model in higher education that all undergraduate students, regardless of background, can succeed” (emphasis in original).

**Action Steps for the Coming Cycle**

As noted by the External Reviewers, the Sociology Department “is in a time of transition: senior faculty have retired or are moving to other jobs, there is a large cohort of recently hired junior faculty, the graduate program is the largest it has ever been, and the Department is teaching record numbers of undergraduates with an overall low number of faculty.” By implementing the Action Steps ranked (by importance and from short- to long-term) and described below, the Sociology Department can capitalize on this time of transition “to continue to grow, rise in the rankings, and strengthen elements of the GSU Strategic Plan.”

1. **Strength of Faculty Research.** (ST=short term step; MT=medium term step; LT=long term step)
   a. Enhance faculty mentorship system to support and retain junior faculty. (ST)
   b. Increase the number of collaborative and inter-disciplinary research teams to work on research projects, such that there is at least one such team per department specialty area. (ST/MT)
   c. Increase “support in the mechanics of proposal writing and submission” (as described by the External Reviewers) by starting to use the College of Arts & Sciences grant-writer. (MT)
   d. Increase use of GSU internal grant mechanisms and various seed money programs to provide support and time to conduct pilot research projects and write external grant proposals. (MT)
   e. Increase the use of summer research stipends for the purposes of support and retention of faculty, especially junior faculty. (MT)
   f. Increase the number of summer research stipends for faculty through the use of indirect costs generated
by grants, thus providing faculty time for writing publications and grant proposals. (LT)
g. Through the conversion of visiting lecturer and part-time instructor lines, hire tenure-track faculty. (LT)

2. **Establishment of Research Center(s).**
   a. Increase collaborative and inter-disciplinary projects that contribute to the Cities Initiative by using Atlanta as a laboratory. (MT)
   b. Increase collaborative and inter-disciplinary projects that focus on LGBTQ communities and health. (MT)
   c. Reinvigorate the Center for Neighborhood and Metropolitan Studies by naming a new director, increasing faculty associates, and submitting more grant applications. The director of the current Center (http://www2.gsu.edu/~wwwnms) is Dr. Timothy Crimmins, who – although retired – continues to work closely with several Sociology faculty on research projects. (MT)
   d. Submit more grant applications with community organizations as partners. (LT)
   e. Target hires at the Associate or full Professor level to expand grant experience on the faculty. (LT)

3. **Strength of the Graduate Program.**
   a. Increase access to the popular and nationally-recognized two-course teacher-training program run by the Sociology Department. Six students participated in the internship Summer 2014. (ST)
   b. Improve the quality of incoming graduate students through increased recruitment efforts, including hosting annual recruitment events. (ST/MT)
   c. Improve mentorship of graduate students by increasing opportunities to work with faculty on externally-funded research projects (currently only one student is grant funded). (MT)
   d. Increase graduate student publication through more frequent offering of and larger enrollments in the “Writing for Publication” graduate course. This class was last offered Spring 2014 with 5 students. (MT)
   e. Better mentor graduate students by establishing a series of annual workshops on publishing, funding, and the job market. (MT)
   f. Grow the graduate internship program by establishing internship sites and increasing student participation. Only one student has enrolled in each of the last three semesters. In the past sites were determined on an ad hoc basis; there are no long-standing sites at current. (MT)
   g. Through the increase in funded research projects, increased use of 2CI doctoral fellowships (currently one student), and other fellowship programs (e.g., SREB and Ford, which are funding two students), increase the number of graduate students being funded by the Department and increase the funding level for PhD students (currently at $16,000). (LT)

4. **Impressive Undergraduate Program.**
   a. Continue to support the in-house academic advisor who is, as described by the External Reviewers, “fundamental to both reducing dropouts and helping graduates obtain employment” and who also increases Sociology majors' retention, progression, and ultimately graduation. (ST)
   b. Grow dual degree (BA/MA) programs. One BA/MA student is taking graduate courses in Spring 2015. (ST)
   c. Rename undergraduate concentration areas and revise curriculum to match graduate areas and faculty expertise. (MT)
   d. Increase undergraduate student participation in faculty research projects (currently none) through use of the department Internship Program and College of Arts and Sciences Field School, which will be fielded for the first time by the department Summer 2015. (MT)
   e. Reward undergraduate teaching excellence by establishing an annual Faculty Teaching and Mentorship Award for full-time faculty. (MT)
   f. Grow the Internship Program, through ties with community organizations and faculty research projects. (MT)
   g. Connect better with alumni through establishment of an Alumni Advisory Board. (LT)
   h. Increase undergraduate student participation in faculty-led study abroad programs, last offered in May 2013 for five students. (LT)
Signatures

Dawn Baunach:  
Interim Chair, Department of Sociology  
Date: January 21, 2015

William Long:  
Dean, College of Arts and Sciences  
Date: January 21, 2015

Risa Palm:  
Provost and Senior Vice President  
Date: 12/8/15