ACADEMIC PROGRAM REVIEW
SELF-STUDY REPORT

Department of Sociology
Georgia State University

Approved by the Department of Sociology Faculty on March 7, 2014

Academic Program Review Committee

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INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND
The Department of Sociology last conducted a self-study as part of its Academic Program Review in 2004. Its first review was conducted in 1995. These prior self-studies allowed the department to critically reflect on its development and plan for its future. We have used the opportunity of this third self-study to do the same. In its 1995 self-study, the department described itself as having a general, rather than a specific focus and set as its primary goal the development of two concentrations that would create a stronger departmental identity. The department was of modest size, with 14 faculty, 145 majors, and an MA and PhD program that served students largely from the Atlanta metropolitan region. By our second self-study in 2004, the department had developed a very clear identity with three distinct concentrations: Family and Life Course, Gender and Sexuality, and Race and Urban Studies. The faculty had grown to 21, including two non-tenure track lecturers, serving 543 majors and 89 graduate students. As the result of that self-study, the department focused itself on enhancing its national reputation; broadening diversity, through faculty recruitment and curriculum development; and improving the quality of its graduate program. Since then, our concentrations have continued to serve the department well (with the expansion of one to Family, Health, and Life Course). Our faculty has grown to as large as 26, including four lecturers, in 2010; although we have since dropped to 22 faculty due to recent retirements. We have continued to see growth to over 600 majors and over 100 graduate students. Consistent with the goals articulated in our last self-study, we have created not only a larger, but a stronger program, enhancing our national reputation, broadening diversity, and increasing the quality of our graduate program. The first two sections of this report provide extensive detail on the current status of our program, with comparisons to four peer institutions selected on the basis of similarities both at the department and university-levels. These institutions are North Carolina State University; the University of Pittsburgh; the University of California, Riverside; and Wayne State University. In the final two sections of this report, we lay out a plan for continuing the progress we have witnessed since our first self-study in 1995 and creating a framework for our continued contribution to the university’s strategic plan.

SECTION 1: WHERE IS YOUR UNIT NOW?

UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION
The Department of Sociology at Georgia State University is one of the largest in the southeast. Our 600-plus majors may pursue a general degree or they may specialize in one of four areas: Gender and Sexuality, Race and Urban Studies, Family, or Gerontology. (These differ slightly from our departmental concentrations due to other programmatic issues that we address later.) Beyond the standard curriculum, we offer students the opportunity to participate in a number of signature experiences including a long-standing internship program, conducting research with faculty, and study abroad programs.

Quality of Majors
Number of Majors
The Department of Sociology has roughly 600 majors, ranging from 566 to 610 during the self-study period (see Appendix 1, Table 1). The undergraduate program has grown since our last self-study, when the number of majors had just topped 500. As of Fall 2012, most of our majors are women (77%), and the majority of our majors are members of minority groups (see
Appendix 1, Table 2). Fifty-six percent of our majors are Black, 29% White, 5% Asian, and 4% are multi-racial.

Recruitment of Majors
Students are rarely exposed to sociology before reaching college, so few freshmen enter as declared sociology majors. Among the few freshmen who do enter as sociology majors (only 53 between 2009 and 2012), the average high school GPA was 3.3 and the average SAT score was 1107 (see Appendix 1, Table 3). Most of our majors are transfer students (55%); the remainder are students who change their major after gaining interest in sociology through introductory or upper-level elective courses. Among all sociology majors, not just those who declare their major as freshmen, the average high school GPA was 3.19, and the average SAT score was 1000. Of all of our majors during the self-study window, a slight majority are first-generation college students (56% on average between Fall 2009 and Fall 2012). (See Appendix 1, Table 4.)

Support for Majors
Number of Majors Relative to Faculty
Our undergraduate student to faculty ratio is 33 to 1, is among the highest relative to our peer institutions (see Appendix 2). UC Riverside is the most similar to our department on this measure, with 1006 majors and a student-faculty ratio of 51:1. North Carolina State, the University of Pittsburgh, and Wayne State all have smaller undergraduate programs and lower student-faculty ratios. North Carolina State has 425 majors and a 21:1 student-faculty ratio, the University of Pittsburgh has 230 majors and an 18:1 student-faculty ratio, and Wayne State has 175 majors and a 13:1 student-faculty ratio. Despite our high student to faculty ratio, we consistently produce high quality undergraduate educational experiences, driven by innovative teaching.

Student Advisement
For many years our department has had an in-house departmental academic advisor. This position has changed with the university’s recently restructured advising program aimed at remedying high student-advisor ratios. A new pilot program was approved and funded by the Board of Regents, and the Department of Sociology was one of few departments chosen to aid the new initiative. As such, our department’s in-house academic advisor now works in tandem with the University Advisement Center to provide our majors with academic guidance, career advisement, and enrollment assistance in appointment, group, classroom, and web-based formats. Our departmental advisor also meets with prospective new majors, students minoring in sociology, and students planning sociology coursework. In addition to advising duties, our advisor assists the Undergraduate Director in coordinating the internship program. The advisor attends regular meetings about new advising developments, policy changes and university infrastructure changes, and uses the new digital advising tracking system supplied by the USG Educational Advising Board, which sends weekly advising and tracking reports to Enrollment Services. The majority of both our current sociology majors (68%) and our alumni (74%) agree or strongly agree with the statement: “Having an academic advisor with an office located in the Department of Sociology has been helpful to me.” Indicative of the regard with which our students hold our advisor, one student noted in their survey responses: “Every single time I interact with [the advisor] it is priceless. He goes beyond problem solving. He is a visionary [who] . . . helps you understand your life now and in the future.” (See Appendix 3.)
Beyond direct advisement of undergraduate students, our Departmental Academic Advisor collaborates with the Director of Graduate Studies to advise graduate students and works closely with the Chair, Undergraduate Director, and Graduate Director in developing course schedules, creating new courses, and implementing curricular changes. The Departmental Academic Advisor also works with the Office of Academic Assistance to establish best practices for utilizing OAA tools for tracking our majors and recruiting new majors.

Financial Support
A majority of sociology majors receive financial aid (see Appendix 1, Table 4). Most receive Pell Grants (averaging 31% during the self-study period). A smaller percentage (roughly one-third of majors) received Georgia Hope Scholarships.

The department offers a number of undergraduate awards, some with monetary prizes. Since 2010, the department has annually awarded the endowed Margaret Andersen Award. Dr. Margaret Andersen received her MA from the department, and has gone on to become a prominent sociologist in the area of gender and intersectionality studies; she is currently the Edward F. and Elizabeth Goodman Rosenberg Professor of Sociology at the University of Delaware. In addition to this endowed award, the department awards up to five students our annual Undergraduate Award, and to one student our annual Outstanding Undergraduate Award. These students typically receive a small monetary award.

Major Requirements and Course Offerings
Sociology majors may pursue a general degree, or they may specialize in a concentration area (Gender and Sexuality, Race and Urban Studies, Family, or Gerontology). Sociology majors who elect to specialize are required to participate in our internship program and must take prescribed area courses. Students who do not specialize may also participate in the internship (91% of interns do not specialize and chose to pursue a general degree). During the self-study period, 606 majors graduated in sociology with approximately 14% concentrating in a specialty area (see Appendix 1, Table 5).

Sociology majors must take two introductory-level courses, Introduction to Sociology (SOCI 1101) and Social Problems (SOCI 1160), and four upper-level required courses: Social Statistics (SOCI 3010); Social Research Methods (SOCI 3020); Sociological Theory (SOCI 3030); and Wealth, Power, and Inequality (SOCI 3201). (See Appendix 4.) Sociology majors are required to take 15 additional credit hours in upper-level sociology electives, which may or may not be entirely elective, depending upon whether or not they choose to concentrate in one of our specialty areas. Sociology majors are encouraged to pursue an interdisciplinary education; they are required to take nine credit hours selected from among 73 courses appropriate to the major in 23 departments and institutes across the university, and must take two semesters of a foreign language. Sociology majors must earn at least a C in all major-related courses.

Additionally, all sociology majors must take two upper-level Critical Thinking through Writing (CTW) courses. These courses focus on teaching critical thinking and writing skills, are limited to 25 students, and are taught by full-time faculty members. Our Social Research Methods course serves as one CTW and for the second we rotate upper-level courses among our specialty areas,
as well as offering general courses (such as Sociological Theory). Several faculty members have participated in the Honors program by having honors students as add-ons in regular courses (a total of 27 students during the self-study period). Only about a dozen of our majors participate in the honors program in any given year, however.

Our peer institutions have similar requirements for undergraduate majors: One to three introductory-level courses, theory, methods, and statistics courses and a handful of upper-level electives (typically five). (See Appendix 2.) For instance, the University of Pittsburgh requires three introductory level courses, theory, methods, two terms of statistics, and five electives – one of which must be a writing course and the second must be a capstone course. Consistent with our peers, we typically offer 18 different undergraduate courses each term. In comparison with sociology undergraduate programs at our peer institutions, we offer a wider range of courses than some (such as the University of Pittsburgh, which typically offers 10 different undergraduate courses) and a smaller range than offered by others (such as North Carolina State, which typically offers 30 different undergraduate courses).

We offer two courses that satisfy core requirements in the College of Arts and Sciences, Introductory Sociology (SOCl 1101) and Social Problems (SOCl 1160). During fiscal years 2011-2013, 8583 undergraduate students took these two courses. We offered 107 sections of upper division courses during this time period to 15,466 students. Over one-third of our undergraduate courses were cross-listed with other departments and colleges (including African American Studies; Gerontology; History; the College of Education; and Women’s, Sexuality, and Gender Studies). See Appendix 5 for course listings and enrollments. Any curricular overlap that we have would be with these units and it is not currently substantial.

Each faculty member has complete control over course material; so courses with the same title vary accordingly and have unique syllabi. However, faculty members are expected to incorporate certain common items into each syllabus, including course objectives, attendance policies, make-up policies, grading criteria, information on disability services, and information on the university’s policy on academic dishonesty.

In sum, our curriculum is comparable to our peer institutions and consistent with best practices within the discipline. The American Sociological Association (ASA) Task Force on Undergraduate Education offered 16 recommendations for improving the quality of major programs in 2001. We comply with most of these, such as providing interdisciplinary opportunities and out-of-classroom learning experiences; providing theoretical frameworks and teaching students how to apply them to real-life situations; encouraging critical thinking and theoretical analysis of current domestic and global issues; conducting assessments of student learning; and providing students with effective departmental advising.

The ASA recommends a four-tiered structure of courses, with each tier functioning as a prerequisite for the ones that precede it. Though we do offer courses at the 1000, 2000, 3000, and 4000 level, university course registration cannot be manipulated to enforce structural ordering of courses. The ASA also recommends a “capstone” course, which we do not have. We do, however, have the CTW requirement which serves a similar function to a capstone course by
focusing on critical thinking and analytical writing skills in a seminar setting with a low student-faculty ratio.

**Student Success and Satisfaction**

**Learning Outcomes**
The department collects assessment data annually to evaluate students’ learning in core (Social Problems and Introductory Sociology) and upper-level required courses (Wealth, Power, and Inequality; Sociological Theory; and Social Research Methods). Additionally, the department collects data on students’ learning outcomes in CTW courses (see Appendix 6).

Departmental undergraduate assessment instruments are designed to gather faculty assessments of students’ acquisition of knowledge by evaluating their ability to articulate key sociological concepts and theories, apply the most up-to-date facts and information about social conditions and problems, and to utilize key data sources that provide sociological information and research findings. Faculty evaluate students’ data collection and analysis skills by assessing how well they understand data collection procedures, demonstrate appropriate computer skills, and are able to read and understand sociological research. Faculty judge how well students are able to identify, analyze, and suggest solutions to pressing social problems and analyze contemporary multicultural, global, or international questions. Finally, faculty evaluate the effectiveness of students’ written communication and editing skills and their ability to utilize appropriate writing conventions and formats. Faculty members who teach CTW courses are asked to judge how well their students demonstrate their understanding of sociological research, their ability to analyze and interpret sociological work, and their ability to use the results of their analyses to formulate new research questions and/or to extend analyses in new directions.

Assessment reports submitted since 2009 show that we generally meet our target goals, in all areas (core and upper-level course assessment as well as CTW assessment). Indeed, faculty evaluate a large majority of students (typically around 80%) as meeting or exceeding these goals, that is, having “very good” or “excellent” sociological skills in the abovementioned areas.

**Student Surveys**
According to the undergraduate survey conducted by the Office of Institutional Research (see Appendix 3), our undergraduate majors generally feel they are learning a great deal in sociology courses, gaining valuable analytical skills that they feel will enhance their future opportunities, and make them better citizens. Ninety-five percent of students “agree” or “strongly agree” that: “Being a sociology major at GSU has changed the way I think about the world.” Students were asked to assess how being a sociology major contributed to their ability to “analyze problems from various points of view”; 96% agreed that sociology made a “significant contribution.” Ninety-four percent agreed that the sociology major program made a “significant contribution” to their ability to “integrate new information with past knowledge and to their capacity to “understand ethical standards.” Ninety-seven percent of majors agreed that: “In general, faculty in the department motivate me to do my best.” Ninety-one percent agreed with the statement: “My program of study is academically challenging.” Ninety-seven percent agreed with the statement: “Overall, instructors in the department stress high quality work from students.” Finally 88% agreed that the sociology undergraduate program “is preparing me for my career or future educational goals.” Alumni who responded to the survey were also pleased with their
experiences as sociology majors. Alumni recommend -- and current students would like -- more diversity of electives, more sections of major required courses, more career-planning-oriented programming, and more opportunities to interact with faculty outside the classroom through research opportunities. We are already addressing the recommendations relating to course offerings. This year our Programming Committee examined trends in enrollment over the past five years and adjusted course offerings, eliminating sections of courses with lower enrollment and replacing them with new courses or courses that hadn’t been taught recently. We address other recommendations in our goals and initiatives at the end of this report.

Graduation Rates
During the time period under consideration, 6-year graduation rates among sociology majors dropped from a high in 2009 of 67% in 2008 to 50% in 2010, then even further, to 33% in 2011. But recently, this number has risen, to 43% in 2012. The average GPA of graduating senior sociology majors between 2009 and 2012 is 2.93. (See Appendix A, Table 5.)

Signature Experiences
We offer students many opportunities that qualify as signature experiences: Participation in research projects, participation in our internship program (considered an example of “best practices” for other departments to emulate by Jonathan Gayles, Associate Dean of Undergraduate Learning), and participation in study abroad programs (through and outside of the department). Between 2009 and 2012, 244 sociology majors participated in our internship program, at a range of local, national, and international sites, which included educational institutions, after-school, and summer programs for children and youth; non-profit service, arts, and political organizations; governmental offices and judicial agencies; and a range of research-based positions, including with Georgia State faculty.

As one example of research conducted by undergraduate students with Georgia State faculty, during the period under review, 29 undergraduate students worked at least 12 hours per week per semester as interns or paid research assistants on the Atlanta Public Housing Study, run by Drs. Deirdre Oakley, Lesley Reid, and Erin Ruel. Undergraduate students participated in all aspects of the study, including subject recruitment and retention, survey development, data cleaning and preparation, and statistical analyses. Among the students who worked on the study who have graduated to date five have gone on to graduate school, one secured a research position on a study being conducted at Emory University, and two worked for the Atlanta Housing Authority on a large historical archiving project.

Between 2009 and 2012, 44 sociology majors participated in internal (15) and external study abroad programs (29) around world – in Argentina, Belize, Belgium, Brazil, Costa Rica, Cuba, France, Italy, Mexico, Spain, South Africa, South Korea, Tanzania, and Turkey. In 2009, Dr. Denise Donnelly (currently emeritus) took a group of ten students to Ireland. (It was the third time she ran this trip.) The program of study, titled “Race, Religion and Conflict in Northern Ireland,” featured week-long stays in Dublin, Ireland, and Derry and Belfast, Northern Ireland, with day-trips to surrounding areas. Participants visited numerous historical sites, monuments, and museums, and participated in experiential learning within a variety of community contexts, including meetings with community and student leaders, visits with political parties, and volunteer work with social service agencies. Classroom instruction focused on the history,
causes, and aftermath of the conflict in Northern Ireland, with classes taught by Dr. Donnelly, with guest lecturers from University College Dublin, University of Ulster-Magee Campus, and Queen’s University-Belfast. In 2012, Dr. Jenny Zhan took a group of five students to China. The program of study, titled “Global Aging and Social Policies,” exposed students to the study of population aging in a global perspective, with a comparative focus on China and the U.S. The first week of the course was held at Georgia State, and provided students with an introduction to global aging issues and comparative health policies. During the second and third weeks, students visited three Chinese cities: Beijing, Shanghai, and Changsha. In each city, students visited aging services sites and participated in round-table discussions with graduate students in China, exchanging ideas about aging and social policies in China and the U.S.

**GRADUATE EDUCATION**

Our department offers the opportunity to pursue graduate studies in three specialty fields of sociology: _Family, Health, and Life Course_; _Gender and Sexuality_; and _Race and Urban Studies_. Students with a Bachelor’s degree enter directly into our Joint MA/PhD program. It is a five year course of study to the PhD, with full-time students completing their Master’s degree at the end of year two. Students with a Master’s degree in sociology, or a closely related field, enter directly into our PhD-Only program.

**Quality of Graduate Students**

**Number of Students**

Currently, we have 103 students in the graduate program (taking into account Fall 2013 admissions). Most of our peer institutions report far fewer students. North Carolina State University reports 61 graduate students, the University of Pittsburgh reports 43, and UC Riverside reports 60 (see Appendix 2). Only Wayne State reports a comparable number of graduate students with 100. In fact, we estimate that ours is the largest PhD program in the southeast United States. These numbers represent notable growth in the size of our graduate program since our last self-study. In Fall 2002, we had only 76 graduate students. Our current number of students also represents an increase over our 2010 through 2012 numbers, across which we averaged 90 students. We attribute this continued growth to very active recruitment, modest increases in the number and level of our assistantships, and significant programmatic changes, all of which are discussed in more detail below.

After a number of years of planning, we eliminated our terminal Master’s degree program. We now admit students with a Bachelor’s degree or a non-social science Master’s degree into our Joint PhD program where they earn their MA en route to the PhD. This is consistent with the top programs in our discipline. We admitted our last terminal Master’s students in Fall 2010 and changed the catalog in Fall 2012 to reflect the elimination of this program.

Among current students, our _Race and Urban Studies_ specialty is the largest (41% of those who have declared a concentration, which is not required until the completion of 18 hours); followed by _Gender and Sexuality_ (32% of students); and _Family, Health, and the Life Course_ (26% of students). (See Appendix 7, Table 1) The addition of health to the _Family and Life Course_ concentration in 2008 has led to increases in the number of students in that concentration, however.
Our graduate student body mirrors the diversity of Georgia State overall (see Appendix 7, Table 2). Between Fall 2010 and Fall 2012, 28% of our graduate students identified as African American, 5% identified as Asian American, and another 5% identified as multi-racial. Our student body is predominantly female, with 74% of our graduate students identifying as female between Fall 2010 and Fall 2012.

**Graduate Student Recruitment**

We have increased the size of our graduate program since our last self-study, while at the same time improving the quality of those we enroll. Across the three year self-study window, the average GRE scores of our enrolled students were 528 in verbal reasoning and 583 in quantitative reasoning. These scores represent an increase from our 2004 self-study statistics where our enrolled students averaged 504 in verbal reasoning and 561 in quantitative reasoning (see Appendix 7, Table 3).

On average, we accepted 41% of those who applied to our graduate program between Fall 2010 and Fall 2012. Of those we accepted, 53% enrolled in our program. Between 2010 and 2012, we accepted on average 36% of those who applied to the Race and Urban Studies concentration, followed by 38% of those who applied to the Family, Health, and Life Course concentration, and 51% of those who applied to the Gender and Sexuality concentration. We received the largest number of applications over this same time period to the Gender and Sexuality concentration (87), with an almost even number of applications in the Race and Urban Studies concentration (86), and a smaller number in the Family, Health, and Life Course concentration (68).

**Support for Graduate Students**

**Number of Graduate Students Relative to Faculty and Undergraduates**

Over the three year self-study window, we experienced a substantial decline in our number of tenure track and graduate faculty due to retirements. This has had a direct impact on the ratio of graduate students to faculty (see Appendix 7, Table 4). In 2010, our ratio of graduate students to tenure track faculty was 4.0 and our ratio of graduate students to graduate faculty was 3.4. As of Fall 2013, our recent increase in the size of our graduate program has led those ratios to increase to 5.7 to 4.7 respectively. Even at its lowest point in 2010, our student faculty ratio was greater than all but one of our peer institutions (see Appendix 2). The ratio at North Carolina State is 3.1, the University of Pittsburgh is 3.3, and UC Riverside is 3.0. Only Wayne State has a higher ratio of graduate students to tenure track faculty than we do, at 7.7.

Our graduate students make up 13% of all sociology students (combining graduate students and undergraduate majors). While that is lower than Georgia State overall, where 25% of the student body is comprised of graduate students, it includes only undergraduate majors. Our department serves many more students than just our undergraduate majors. By contrast, the overall proportion of Georgia State students who are graduate students includes undergraduate students who have not declared a major. However, the percent of our student body comprised of graduate students is lower than that of all but one of our peer institutions. In the most undergraduate-heavy peer department (UC Riverside), 6% of students are graduate students; whereas in the most graduate-heavy peer (Wayne State), 36% of students are graduate students. The percentage of graduate students in our peer departments appears correlated with the raw number of undergraduate majors. North Carolina State and the University of Pittsburgh (the later at which
22% of majors are graduate students) both have a very small number of undergraduate majors (roughly 200). By contrast, UC Riverside more resembles our department, with over 1000 majors, and has a smaller percentage (36%) of graduate students relative to undergraduate majors.

**Graduate Student Advisement**

Students receive advisement from a number of sources. The Director of Graduate Studies and the Departmental Academic Advisor provide formal advisement on application procedures for prospective students and program requirements and progress for current students. This advising is done through meetings with students in groups, one-on-one meetings at students’ request, and through written annual evaluation letters. Students also have access to an academic advisor in the College of Arts and Sciences Graduate Services Office. More informal advising centered on mentorship and professional development is provided by department faculty. Each incoming student is assigned a faculty mentor. They are required to meet with that mentor during their first semester and until they select a faculty member to chair their thesis or dissertation, and then their chair becomes their official faculty mentor. Finally, all incoming students are required to take a proseminar class (SOCl 8000) during their first semester. This course addresses issues such as (1) expectations of graduate school, (2) academic writing, (3) research resources at Georgia State, (4) early career planning, and (5) work-life balance in graduate school.

**Financial Support**

As of Fall 2012, we maintained 29 regularly funded lines for graduate students. The addition of three 2CI Fellowships has since increased that number to 32. Funded students are initially appointed as either a GRA or GTA-A (meaning a teaching assistant who is not an instructor of record) and are assigned to work for a faculty member for 12 hours per week. Beginning their second summer in the graduate program, they are appointed as GTA-B and begin independently teaching one class per semester for the remainder of their funding period. Contingent on satisfactory progress toward their degree, Joint MA/PhD students are funded for five years and PhD-Only students are funded for four years.

During most of the self-study window, our funding levels lagged behind our peer institutions (see Appendix 2). Between Fall 2010 and Fall 2012, students who entered our Joint MA/PhD program were funded at $12,000 until they completed their MA when their funding increased to $13,000. Students who entered the PhD-Only program were funded at $13,000. All students’ stipends increased to $14,000 when they began teaching their own classes. However, the low starting stipends made our programs less competitive than our peers. Therefore, as of Fall 2013, we set our stipends at $15,000 per year for incoming students and raised the stipends for all of the current students to either $13,000 or $14,000. We will continue to bring in new cohorts at the increased level. We were able to achieve this increase without additional resources by restructuring our graduate budget to lessen the amount of the graduate budget used to pay unfunded students to teach on a class-by-class basis and by requiring all students to teach sooner.

Even after raising our stipends, they are lower than all but one of our peer departments (see Appendix 2). North Carolina State stipends are $16,300, the University of Pittsburgh stipends are $16,500, and UC Riverside stipends are $17,400. The stipends of our most recent cohorts are marginally greater than Wayne State’s at $14,000. We are the middle of our peers in terms of the
percentage of students we fund. We currently fund 37% of students on regular departmental lines. That is lower than North Carolina State and the University of Pittsburgh, where 100% of graduate students are funded; equivalent to UC Riverside, with 33% of students funded; and considerably higher than Wayne State, where only 8% of students receive funding.

We are able to offer some students higher stipends. Three of our students hold 2CI Fellowships with stipends of $22,000 and two additional students have Dean’s Supplemental Fellowships that increase their stipends to $20,000. Over the self-study period, faculty grants supported three students at $18,000 and four students at $21,000. In addition, between 15 and 20 of our unfunded students hold GRA positions in other departments or units of the university. Their stipend levels vary dramatically, however (from as low as $2000 per semester).

Pedagogical Training and Support
For over ten years, we have offered our graduate students a two-course program to prepare them to teach in a university setting (SOCI 9000 and 9001). The program begins with a full-semester pedagogy and mechanics course followed by a formal teaching internship course, in which students teach their own course under the mentorship of faculty and experienced peers. All students who are appointed GTA-B (meaning they teach as the instructor of record) are required to take both of these classes. After completing these courses, GTA-Bs continue to be offered the expertise and support of the Director of Instruction (a full-time faculty member) and the Teaching Associate (an advanced GTA-B selected through a competitive process). Also the Teaching Committee continues to observe GTA-B classes on a regular basis and awards the endowed Jacqueline Boles Teaching Fellowship for teaching excellence among GTA-Bs. While both a time and labor intensive training program, it makes our graduate students stronger teachers, ensuring our undergraduate students a better classroom experience. It has also gained national recognition and Professor Stombler recently published an article in Teaching Sociology about its effectiveness, co-authored with three alumni who were past Teaching Associates.

Graduate Requirements and Course Offerings
Reflective of the department’s goal of providing students with a sound methodological and theoretical background, students in our PhD-Only program are required to take Proseminar in Sociology (SOCI 8000), Qualitative Methods in Sociology (SOCI 8342), Multivariate Data Analysis (SOCI 9010), Advanced Research Methodology (SOCI 9020), and Sociological Theory II (SOCI 9030), two courses in their concentration, and an additional three electives (see Appendix 4). In addition to these courses, Joint MA/PhD students also take Intermediate Social Statistics (SOCI 8010), Research Methodology (SOCI 8020), and Sociological Theory I (SOCI 8030), and four electives. These requirements are consistent with all four peer institutions. This was not the case at the time of our last self-study when we required far more courses. After our last self-study, we conducted a systematic review of an exhaustive list of peer and aspirational programs and found that while we required 20 classes for the Joint MA/PhD Program, the average number of courses required by all of the programs we surveyed was only 14 courses. To be more competitive in (1) recruiting students and (2) retention, progression, and graduation of students, we reduced the required number of courses to 16 by eliminating two required courses and two electives. These changes have caused a one year recalibration of our graduate credit hour production; our graduate credit hour production remained flat this year, despite the increase in students (see Appendix 5).
Upon the completion of their coursework requirements, students must take and pass a doctoral exam in their concentration. This is a substantial change since our last self-study when we required students to take two doctoral exams, one in theory and the other in methodology. We instituted this change in recognition of the trend toward specialization in graduate education and to better prepare our students for their dissertation work.

During the self-study window, we have made one additional change in our program curriculum. We added a Dual Degree BA/MA Program. This program will allow exceptionally qualified undergraduate majors to take graduate courses during their undergraduate program and subsequently complete the coursework necessary for an MA in one year. Our first students will be pursuing this program in Fall 2014.

**Student Success and Satisfaction**

**Learning Outcomes**

Outcomes assessment for graduate students is determined by faculty assessment of students in research methods (SOCI 8020) and statistics (SOCI 8010), the MA thesis, the doctoral examination, and the dissertation (see Appendix 6).

**Professional Development**

Students in the graduate program regularly present their research at many national and regional conferences, including the American Sociological Association meetings and the meeting of the Southern Sociological Society. Graduate students are actively encouraged to publish their research, and many do (both as single authors and as co-authors with faculty members). Journals in which students have published papers and book reviews during the self-study period include: *American Journal of Health Promotion; Contexts; Culture, Health & Society; The Gerontologist; Sociation Today; Sociology of Sport Journal; and Sociology of Religion*. Finally, our students have been awarded research and scholarship funding from numerous sources, including the Ford Foundation, the Georgia State University Dissertation Grant Program, and the Southern Educational Research Board. Every year the department gives an award for outstanding graduate student research, as well as aforementioned endowed Jacqueline Boles Teaching Fellowship.

**Retention and Graduation Rates**

Over the self-study period we have graduated 20 PhD students and 10 MA students (see Appendix 3, Table 5). This represents an average of 7 PhD graduates and 3 MA graduates per year. These numbers are comparable to our peer institutions, where over that same period, North Carolina State graduated an average of 7 PhD and 7 MA students per year; the University of Pittsburgh graduated an average of 4 MA and 4 PhD students per year; UC Riverside graduated 10 PhD students and 12 MA students per year, and Wayne State graduated 11 MA students and no PhD students (see Appendix 2).

**Placement and Post-Graduation Outcomes**

Our graduates since 2010 have been very successful in their careers. Forty-six percent of our graduates are employed in higher education, 23% are employed as social science researchers, and 17% are pursuing additional degrees. Of those currently in employed in higher education, 67% are in tenure-track appointments and 27% are in full-time, non-tenure-track instructional or
administrative appointments. One student is in a postdoctoral fellowship and only one student is adjunct teaching. The corporations and agencies employing our recent graduates in research positions include: The American Cancer Society, Bank of America, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Morehouse School of Medicine, the Shepard Center, and the U.S. Army Public Health Command.

Student Surveys
According to the graduate student survey administered by the Office of Institutional Research, our graduate students find our program to be rigorous (see Appendix 3). The vast majority of students agree that our program is academically challenging (96% agree) and that faculty expect high quality work from students (87% agree). They also largely agree that faculty are well-prepared for the courses they teach and up-to-date in their fields of study (93% and 89% agree). On all of the questions regarding learning outcomes, students rate our department highly. However, only 59% of students report that our program makes a significant contribution to their educational achievements (59%). This weakness is mirrored in relatively low percentages of students reporting having sufficient research opportunities available (46% report that they do) and the department offering sufficient support for student conference presentations and publications (66% agree that we do). This finding is likely tied to the general negative student appraisal of the availability of graduate assistantships. Only 54% of students rate our availability of assistantships positively and only 34% agree or strongly agree that they have adequate financial resources to complete their degree.

Graduate Program within the GSU Context
Appendix 5 lists the courses we have cross-listed with other departments. Our courses are often cross-listed with the Gerontology Institute and the Institute for Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies. There are no other programs with which we have substantial overlap or redundancy.

RESEARCH
Over the self-study period, our faculty have been extremely research productive. In this section we assess the amount and quality of research conducted in our department since 2010, and compare our productivity to that of our four peer departments.

Success of the Department’s Research Culture
Grant Activity
Our department has been very successful in obtaining extramural funding for our research (see Appendix 2). In particular, the Public Housing Study has received funding from the National Science Foundation (two awards totaling approximately $380,000 including REU supplemental funding) and the National Institutes of Health ($366,000). Most of our peer institutions brought in far fewer grants. Wayne State brought in a single $5,000 external grant. The University of Pittsburgh and UC Riverside each brought in one grant for $215,000 and $228,000 respectively. North Carolina State brought in four grants; two for well over one million and two for a combined $100,000. Thus, we compare favorably to our peer institutions in terms of obtaining external funding. Additionally, during this the same time period, members of our department have been awarded eight internal grants.

Rankings of the Unit
Over the last decade, the Department of Sociology’s ranking has improved (see Appendix 2). According to the 2013 *U.S. News and World Report* ranking of graduate programs, we rank 76th out of 117 programs ranked (up from a rank of 93 in the last ranking and being unranked prior to that). UC Riverside is ranked at 42, the University of Pittsburgh is ranked at 52, North Carolina State is ranked at 62, and Wayne State was not ranked.

The National Research Council (NRC) has a more complicated ranking system. In the “R-Rank” category, which reflects program strength in terms of features perceived as characteristic of top departments, our graduate program achieved a range of 79-104 out of 119 departments. UC Riverside achieved a ranking of 32-74, North Carolina State was ranked at 70-110, and Wayne State was ranked at 42-110. In the “S-Rank” category, which measures program strength in terms of criteria deemed most important by scholars, our department achieved a range of 92-113 out of 119 departments. Compared to our peer departments, this range places us in the middle of the pack, with Wayne State at 96-112, North Carolina State at 87-111, and below UC Riverside at 64-87. The University of Pittsburgh was not included in this ranking system. Only 16 other graduate programs at Georgia State were ranked by NRC.

**Research Productivity**

The sociology faculty has published a substantial body of high quality work (see Appendix 2). In the three-year period under review here, we have produced a total of seven books (including three new editions of previously published books), 72 articles in professional journals, eight chapters in scholarly books, 11 book reviews, two encyclopedia entries, and 11 essays, reports, or other writings. Collectively, this output amounts to an average of 3.6 journal articles or chapters per faculty member over the period under review. This compares very well to our peer institutions: North Carolina State averaged 3.7, the University of Pittsburgh and Wayne State each averaged 2.8, and UC Riverside averaged 4.1 articles and chapters in this period.

Figure 1 in Appendix 7 disaggregates productivity in terms of peer reviewed articles by rank across the five universities. For most of the universities, assistant professors are more productive than those at other ranks. The University of Pittsburgh does not follow this pattern; however, its faculty tend to produce books rather than peer reviewed articles. Georgia State is right in the middle in terms of average productivity for assistant professors; assistant professors at North Carolina State and UC Riverside are slightly more productive than Georgia State, but the assistant professors at Wayne State and the University of Pittsburgh are less productive. The Georgia State associate professors are more productive than their counterparts at the four peer institutions. At the rank of Full, Georgia State is quite a bit less productive than the full professors at our peer institutions (the reason for this will be discussed below). Yet, comparing across all ranks, Georgia State is on a par with North Carolina State and UC Riverside and producing more than the University of Pittsburgh or Wayne State.

The primary reason for the department’s lower productivity at the rank of full professor is the dearth of full professors during this period (see Figure 2, Appendix 8). Since our last self-study, the department has lost five senior faculty members to retirement. As of Fall 2012 our current faculty consists of 22 members: Two full professors, eight associate professors, eight assistant professors, and four lecturers. In our previous self-study, we had 21 full-time faculty members: Seven assistant professors, eight associate professors, four full professors, and two lecturers. Our
current count includes Dr. Elisabeth Burgess, Chair of the Gerontology Institute, who is an associate professor. Excluding her would give us seven associate professors. As can be seen in Figure 2 of Appendix 7, disaggregating faculty by rank, we are currently larger than North Carolina State (20), UC Riverside (20), the University of Pittsburgh (16), and Wayne State (13); however, we have more assistant and associate professors than any of our peer institutions. At Georgia State a smaller percentage of our faculty holds the rank of full professor than our peer departments (i.e., at Georgia State 9.0% of our 22 full-time faculty are full professors, compared to 50% at North Carolina State, 38% at the University of Pittsburgh, 31% at Wayne State, and 60% at UC Riverside). Thus, we are a very junior department.

To assess the quality of our productivity, we turn to citations of the peer reviewed articles and the impact factors (using a one year calculation) of the journals in which these articles were published. Citations can be counted as measures of the usage and impact of the article. Impact factors, while problematic, are still one of the best ways to gather the average citation count or impact of the journal. We compiled the number of times an article published in 2010 or 2011 was cited using the Web of Knowledge database. Due to the limitations on ability to cite the most recently published work, articles published in 2012 are not included in our analysis. Own citations (citing one’s own earlier work in a new publication) were dropped. For the two year period covered, the department’s work was cited 166 times for an average article citation count of six. Two articles received no citations and the most cited article received 19 citations. There is greater variation in the journal impact factors. Many in the department are publishing in top tier journals as defined by their impact factor. Not all of the journals have impact factors, but for those that do between 2010 and 2012, the average impact factor for the journals we publish in is 1.52 (median=1.55). The impact factors range between .2 to 3.74.

The books produced by our faculty are of high quality as measured by the prestige of the publisher. A group called Socio-Economic and National Science of the Environment (SENSE) has created a five tier ranking of scientific book publishers. The top tier consists of refereed book publications from top university presses such as Cambridge University Press, Columbia University Press, or Yale University Press. These are considered outstanding in terms of quality and impact. The next tier is defined as refereed publications published by the world’s semi-top publishers and are considered excellent. This tier includes such publishers as Elsevier Science, Palgrave, Routledge, and Sage. All of the department’s books published in this period have been published in this second level tier of publishers which is considered excellent in terms of quality and impact.

Our research productivity is integral to furthering the goals of the university. We collaborate with our undergraduate and graduate students. This provides them with tremendous learning opportunities that cannot be obtained solely in the classroom. Our biggest contribution however is to the study of cities. Later in this report, we highlight in great detail our research and activities on addressing the many social challenges 21st century cities face.

Success in Recruitment, Retention, and Contributions to the 2CI
We have successfully hired one full professor under the second century initiative (2CI). Bringing in this experienced senior faculty member with a notable record in gaining external funds is extremely important given our tenure-track faculty are heavily junior in rank. This hire raises the
number of full professors currently in the department to four. We have successfully recruited productive scholars to the department in the self-study period (four new assistant hires between 2010 and 2012). Other changes to the department include two promotions with tenure from assistant to associate, one assistant and one associate leaving for positions at other universities, one faculty member not receiving tenure and promotion to associate. In just this last year (outside the study period) we promoted one faculty member from associate to full. There are four associate professors eligible to be promoted to full in terms of length of time at associate (from six to eleven years). In terms of productivity however, not all are yet in a position to go up for promotion.

**Faculty Partnerships and Professional Service**

Our faculty members are very interdisciplinary in their orientation to research and teaching. We are affiliated with the Institute for Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies (3), the Gerontology Institute (4), public health – specifically the Partnership for Urban Health Research (8), and the Health Policy Center (2). Two faculty members are affiliated with the Center of Excellence for Health Disparities Research located in the School of Public Health, one is on the executive committee and the other is a member of the research core. Sociology and Public Health collaborated in 2013 on an urban health disparities summit. We collaborated with Public Health and the Andrew Young School to create our successful 2CI. Two faculty members worked on and successfully obtained Robert Wood Johnson/PEW Trust funding conjointly with the Health Policy Center in the Andrew Young School to conduct a Health Impact Assessment of public housing in Galveston, Texas.

The Department of Sociology is very much engaged in national and regional service to sociology associations. Two faculty members are past presidents of national associations during this period, Wendy Simonds was the president of the Society for the Study of Social Problems and Heying Zhan was the president of the North American Chinese Sociologists Association. Several faculty members, (Zhan, Roche, Reid, Kim, Harvey-Wingfield) were on editorial boards or were deputy editors of top-tier journals (*Contemporary Sociology, Social Forces, Journal of Marriage and Family, Gender & Society*). The majority of the faculty was involved in various elected committee work for either the American Sociological Association, the Society for the Study of Social Problems, the Southern Sociological Society, and the Urban Affairs Association.

**Faculty Surveys**

Faculty appear to be more than satisfied with scholarship here at Georgia State (see Appendix 3). On a six-point scale, the majority of the faculty chose one of the two highest categories indicating that there are adequate resources available to conduct their research (48%). However, few faculty members agree that there is sufficient time for scholarly research (24% choosing one of the two highest categories). This is consistent with having a very junior faculty and a heavy service load placed upon a small number of senior faculty. Fifty-seven percent report that sociology colleagues value their scholarship, but only 13 percent report that Georgia State administration values their research contributions. This suggests a need for better communication to and recognition of the Department of Sociology’s achievements by Georgia State’s administrators.
CONTRIBUTION TO CITIES
The faculty is actively engaged in a variety of activities, research and otherwise, related to cities and the challenges faced by cities.

Research on the Problems of Cities
With regard to research, one of the department’s core concentrations is Race and Urban Studies. Consequently, a great deal of faculty research is devoted to issues related to challenges cities face. Faculty research projects in this concentration include:

- The transportation crisis in Atlanta (Konrad)
- Urban economic redevelopment and enterprise zones (Oakley)
- Health consequences of urban relocation (Ruel, Oakley, Reid)
- Immigrant settlement patterns in urban areas (Jaret)
- Health outcomes in poor urban contexts and health inequality among urban residents (Grief, Ruel)
- Urban education policy and inequality (T. Davis)
- Socio-emotional consequences of urban relocation (Tester)
- Homelessness (Reitzes)
- Urban crime (Reid)

One feature of departmental research on urban problems has been faculty excellence in acquiring external research funds to carry out this research. Most notably, three faculty members (Drs. Reid, Oakley, and Ruel) obtained funding from a variety of sources for their research related to the demolition of public housing in Atlanta. Dr. Ruel was the principal investigator on a National Institutes of Health grant on health outcomes in disadvantaged neighborhoods ($366,152). In addition, Dr. Ruel was awarded a Funds for the Advancement of the Discipline grant by the American Sociological Association ($7,000). Dr. Reid was the principal investigator on two grants funded by the National Science Foundation that examine crime and neighborhood change related to the demolition of public housing in Atlanta ($200,212 and $146,105). This funding from the National Science Foundation was supplemented by an additional $33,750 to fund undergraduate participation in this research. Dr. Oakley was the principal investigator on a grant from the Galveston, Texas Housing Authority investigating outcomes related to public housing demolition in that city ($50,000), and with Dr. Ruel, on a grant from the Center for Poverty Research at the University of Kentucky ($20,000). In addition to these external grants, many of the faculty have been awarded internal seed grants from the university to study urban problems (Oakley, Reid, Ruel, Tester).

The department’s faculty have formalized their collaboration on the health consequences of public housing relocation and created the Urban Health Initiative (UHI). The UHI has forged connections with researchers in other areas of the university (including the Partnership for Urban Health Research and the Center for Neighborhood and Metropolitan Studies) to generate scholarship on urban health disparities using interdisciplinary approaches. Three of the UHI faculty (Oakley, Reid, and Ruel) were called to present findings from this research in front of Congress. Dr. Oakley was also called to present research on the Federal Empowerment Zone Program before the National Academies of Science’s Committee on Valuing Community-Based Prevention Policies. Furthermore, Drs. Oakley and Ruel worked as consultants with the Housing
Authority from Galveston, Texas, advising them as they rebuilt public housing destroyed by Hurricane Ike.

More recently, Dr. Oakley has collaborated with colleagues from the Andrew Young School of Public Policy on a Cities grant entitled People and Places. This funded grant is designed to partner with Georgia Institute of Technology to create a consortium of scholars interested in developing collaborations to further research on cities. The university has also recognized the urban expertise that Dr. Oakley brings, by having her join the self-study committee of the Georgia State cities initiative to assess the needs and direction the university-wide strategy should take. In addition, Dr. Oakley was an invited guest editor of the journal *Cityscape*, published by the Office of Policy Development and Research (PD&R) of the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

**Contributions of the Arts and Media**
The department’s activities related to urban issues extend beyond research. Dr. Oakley created a blog entitled Social Shutter where both undergraduate and graduate students, as well as faculty, post photos and photo essays that explore issues in urban sociology, including neighborhood disadvantage, gentrification, and the problems associated with built environments in urban settings. Dr. Oakley uses the blog in her classes on urban sociology and race. The blog has grown to include students from other universities across the country, including students from St. Francis College in Brooklyn, NY, who used Social Shutter to document the devastation to the Northeastern coast after Hurricane Sandy. The project has received attention in academe, with Dr. Oakley being invited to speak at the State Education Editors Conference about Social Shutter.

**GLOBALIZING THE UNIVERSITY**
Since the implementation of the university’s current strategic plan, the Department of Sociology has made significant contributions toward meeting the goal of “Globalizing the University.” The department is very active in several initiatives of this strategic goal as it has conducted and published globally focused research, created and fostered partnerships with several universities outside the United States, developed student exchange and study abroad programs, attracted international students to both our graduate and undergraduate programs, and sent visiting scholars from our department to teach summer courses at foreign institutions.

**Establishment of GSU as an International Center**
For the past several years the Department of Sociology has been a leader in the effort to establish Georgia State as an international center. Numerous faculty have conducted and published research with an international focus on topics ranging from the long-term care of the elderly in China to sexual risk behavior in Nairobi. The Public Housing Study has been involved in two international conferences, as well as another in Puerto Rico, and published articles on public housing transformation in two collections of global housing research.

In addition, faculty are also important contributors and organizers of cultural events for the campus community. These contributions include participation in the activities of the Asian Studies Center at GSU, for example. To date the Department of Sociology has developed relationships with Ajou University (South Korea), Pyong Tak University (South Korea), Rikkyo
University (Japan), and Huazhong Agricultural University (China), countries that are priority nations in the university’s implementation of the strategic plan. As part of our relationship with Ajou University, several Georgia State faculty have participated in international summer sessions as visiting scholars. In addition to our faculty exchanges with Ajou University, the Department of Sociology has hosted an exchange scholar from Pyong Tak University for one semester as well as several Turkish scholars, sent a faculty member to Rikkyo University as a visiting professor, and had two faculty members teach five lecture mini-courses at Huazhong Agricultural University in China.

In addition to faculty exchanges with international universities, our department has also participated in student exchanges and study abroad programs in an effort to enhance global competency. Every semester the department processes several applications from Georgia State students to study at Ajou University. In the past two years, we have admitted five students from Ajou and have sent three Georgia State students to study there. As part of our commitment to globalizing the university, the department is currently working on an exchange program with Osaka University in Osaka, Japan. When instituted, this program will involve a student study abroad program as well as a faculty exchange program. These partnerships highlight the department’s growing and reinvigorated contribution to student study abroad experiences and students’ global competency. Indeed, as of AY2010-11, only four Sociology undergraduate majors were participating in a study abroad experience, a decline from six in AY2009-10 and ten in AY2008-09. Yet, by AY2011-12, we had tripled the number of students participating in study abroad programs to 12 – a number that remained constant for AY2012-13.

**Enhancement of Global Competency**

Along with our study abroad efforts the department has increased the global competency of students, faculty, and staff through diverse course offerings, effective implementation of global learning outcomes in the core curriculum, and by increasing cultural diversity in the student body through successful recruitment and retention of international undergraduate and graduate students. The department as a whole offers over 11 courses with a global focus from Families in a Cross-Cultural Perspective (SOCI 8142) to Global Aging and Social Problems (SOCI 4119). From 2010 to 2012, the department successfully met its goal assessment for global competency in its two core courses – Introduction to Sociology (SOCI 1101) and Social Problems (SOCI 1160). Last, the department attracts international students to both our undergraduate major and our PhD program. As of AY2012-13, 38 of our 636 undergraduate majors (6%) were non-U.S. citizens – a proportion that compares favorably to other social science departments at Georgia State including Psychology (6%), Anthropology (4%), and Political Science (12%). For the past 3 years approximately 10% of all applications to our PhD program have come from international students. The quality of these candidates is very high, as evidenced by their GRE scores. Although many factors affect whether international students eventually enroll, the department has matriculated several international students from countries such as Turkey, South Korea, and China in recent years, placing two in tenure-track positions. It is the department’s aim to increase the number of international students in the future.
OVERALL ASSESSMENT
In this section we will assess the department as a whole. The education students are receiving is excellent and comparable to that received at our peer institutions, if not better. Undergraduates also receive many opportunities to engage in out of classroom signature experiences. Undergraduates concur with that assessment in their survey responses with high levels of agreement (over 50% but often over 70%) on the department’s contribution to their general learning outcomes, program preparation, program quality, and faculty interaction. In particular, 68% agree that having an academic advisor within the department is helpful. This is an important sustaining innovation. Students think we should offer more opportunities for undergraduates to engage in research with faculty.

The Department of Sociology has one of the largest graduate programs in the southeast United States; we have recently increased both the size and the quality of our entering students. We have adjusted our program requirements to be more similar to our peer institutions. In other respects we offer a high-quality education to our students, which is evidenced by the student surveys and by the success our students have achieved in post-graduation placements. These measures of success suggest that the program is of high quality and should be sustained. There are two improvements that should be made: (1) Our graduate student stipends are too few and lower than those of all of our peer institutions, and (2) graduate students would like more opportunities for research collaboration and professional development.

There is clear evidence that the department is highly productive in terms of quantity of high-quality publications, garnering external funding, and meeting the university’s strategy on cities. This productivity is all the more laudable given that the department is very junior in terms of faculty experience. This clearly justifies investments in sustaining innovations. Over time, our faculty will gain more experience and many of the issues we currently face will be resolved. Given the prominence of the Public Housing Study and the high regard it has nationally, there is clear evidence that Sociology can take a strong lead in critically examining the social problems that cities currently face, as well as future trends. We have a less consistent record of contribution to global initiatives and have ideas of how to improve on this metric.

SECTION 2: HOW ADEQUATE ARE YOUR UNIT’S RESOURCES?

FACULTY RESOURCES
Student/Faculty Ratio
The ratio of undergraduate students to tenure-track faculty in FY2010 was 19:1, it increased to 22:1 in FY2011, and to 33:1 in FY2012. Our peer institutions in Fall 2012 had the following student/faculty ratios: North Carolina State 20:1, the University of Pittsburgh 18:1, UC Riverside 51:1, and Wayne State 13:1. Except for UC Riverside, which seems to be an extreme outlier, we have a very high student/teacher ratio. Likewise compared to other departments in our own college, we are understaffed. English has a ratio of 13:1, Math & Stats has a ratio of 7:1, and African American Studies has a ratio of 7:1, but computer science has a ratio of 34:1. (See Appendix 1.)
Credit Hour Generation
Credit hour generation by the department has remained largely consistent over the review period, from 11,813 in FY2010, to 11,788 in FY2011, to 11,274 in FY2012. On average, the department has generated 11,625 credit hours per year during the review period. (See Appendix 4.)

Faculty Surveys
Faculty generally agree that there are adequate resources to conduct research here at Georgia State, however, 47% say resources to assist with securing external funding are lacking (see Appendix 3). Additionally, 53% of faculty believe the teaching load is reasonable, and 47% believe the overall workload is reasonable. The majority of faculty (91%) stated that salaries at Georgia State are not competitive and far lower compared to the sociology field. Unfortunately, fewer than a quarter of the faculty state that they do not plan to leave Georgia State. This implies that the department could lose a large number of junior or associate faculty to better paying institutions.

The opinion of our faculty that salaries at Georgia State are far lower than comparable institutions is supported by empirical data. Comparing salaries of sociology faculty at Georgia State to sociology faculty at other universities with a Carnegie Classification of having very high research activity is telling. Figure 1 of Appendix 9 documents the dramatic differences between salaries in our department and departments with similar research expectations, as well as the severe compression in salaries at all ranks below full professor within our department. As Figure 1 shows, the salaries of advanced assistant professors in our department are virtually the same as the salaries of newly hired assistant professors. The average salary of our associate professors is within ten thousand dollars of newly hired assistant professors. And this average includes associate professors who have been in our department for more than a decade. More disturbing is that the salaries of associate professors in our department are lower than the salaries not only of advanced assistant professors, but of newly-hired assistant professors in other research very high institutions. On average, associate professors of sociology in other very high research institutions make $15,000 more than associate professors in our department. The data in this table control for inflation, so not surprisingly salaries have remained relatively flat since 2005, at both Georgia State and other sociology programs in very high research institutions. This is true at all ranks except that of full professor. Interestingly, in 2005 the salaries of our full professors were, on average, equal to that of full professors in sociology programs at other very high research institutions. However, the average salary of our full professors has plummeted with the retirement of all but one of our most senior full professors. Clearly the concerns that our faculty express regarding salary issues at Georgia State are well-founded and we are at risk of losing our best faculty because we will not offer competitive salaries. Solving the salary resource issue is essential to maintaining both the morale and the momentum of the department.

Administrative Resources
The day-to-day functioning of the Department of Sociology depends on the efforts of three full-time staff members: A Business Manager, an Administrative Coordinator, and a Departmental Academic Advisor. Our existing staff supports 18 tenure-track faculty, 4 lecturers, and 15-20 graduate teaching assistants. There is evidence that we are currently understaffed relative to peer departments both inside and outside Georgia State. Our faculty to staff ratio is 7:1, higher than
all of our peer institutions which average a faculty to staff ratio of 5:1. For this reason, among others, it is essential that we preserve all three of our current full-time staff.

**TECHNOLOGICAL RESOURCES**

Currently, most faculty members have up-to-date office computers. Our faculty equipment is on par with that of other departments in the social sciences. In the last APR it was noted that numerous faculty had to share software due to a lack of resources needed to purchase multiple copies. Due to increases in resources, this is no longer the case. The department has sufficient funds to purchase/provide copies and licenses of software to each individual faculty member as needed.

In terms of the technological resources available to our undergraduate students, we currently have a lab with nine computers for graduate and undergraduate majors. Although both the hardware and software for these machines is up-to-date, the ratio of computers to undergraduate students is roughly 70 to 1 and has increased since the last APR due to increasing undergraduate enrollment.

Technological resources for graduate students are also limited; however, the department (in conjunction with the Political Science Department) recently secured a university-sponsored grant to purchase 14 computers (seven for sociology; seven for political science), a laser printer, and several software packages (STATA/SE, Stat-Transfer, SPSS, Atlas.ti, and Adobe) for our joint graduate student workspace. Given that we currently have approximately 100 graduate students, the ratio of computers to students is now 14 to 1. This is a dramatic improvement but access to computing within the department for graduate students remains inadequate.

In the past several years the department has maintained a website that serves as an important portal of information about the department for parties outside the university, including potential majors and graduate program applicants. The department, nonetheless, lacks the resources to consistently maintain and update this website. Our webmaster is overtaxed since his primary job is as the Departmental Academic Advisor. This was also the case for previous webmaster. Moreover, our webmaster is not formally trained in information technology and has only limited ability to troubleshoot problems or make updates to the website.

Last, although the instructional needs of the department’s statistics and research methods classes are facilitated by the numerous computer labs throughout campus, sociologists use many software packages that are not installed on these computers, including STATA, AMOS, LISREL, HLM, and Atlas.ti. It is therefore not possible to instruct our students in methods that require these programs, many of which are central to cutting edge research in the discipline.

**SPACE RESOURCES**

Adequate space remains a problem, as it was in our two past self-studies, but we are hopeful that upcoming relocations will enable an expansion of the department to an entire floor of Langdale Hall, doubling our space in size. This expansion certainly will help to address (if not entirely solve) our dearth of adequate space. Ideally, with the expansion, we would be able to have a larger student computer lab, communal office space for all graduate students, window offices for all faculty members and most office staff, and more semi-private offices for graduate students.
who are teaching. Currently, up to four graduate student instructors share one small office; ideally two with alternate teaching day schedules could share an office. Additionally, we would like to have two sizeable seminar rooms of our own, two smaller meeting rooms, a kitchen, and open space for collaborative work. Our recently renovated bathrooms are an improvement, but the sinks do not have hot water (and thus, do not meet OSHA standards).

**GSU FOUNDATION RESOURCES AND OTHER GIFTS**

GSU Foundation funds are used to support a number of different activities in the department. They include: Faculty workshops, outside speakers, graduate and undergraduate awards, department retreats and special occasion events, recruitment of new faculty, bereavement/illness flowers, graduate orientation events, retirement events, promotion events, and graduate student travel. These funds are an important source of departmental funds; without them these activities would be significantly curtailed. In addition, (as mentioned previously) the department awards the endowed Margaret Andersen scholarship annually to an outstanding undergraduate student who plans to attend graduate school.

**LIBRARY RESOURCES**

Based on data provided by our departmental liaison librarian, the University Library’s sociology holdings adequately support the research areas of our faculty and students (see Appendix 9). The library’s analysis of the books they receive through their automated acquisition system indicated that they receive 33% of the available print books and 13% of the available e-books in the relevant call number ranges for our department. Our liaison librarian has also conducted targeted collection-development projects during the self-study period to strengthen the sociology collection by ensuring all of the material on our departmental reading list for doctoral exams is in the library collection and enhancing resources on non-Western cities. Comparison data provided by our liaison librarian indicate that our library acquisitions for sociology are greater than that of any of our peers.

**SECTION 3: WHERE DOES YOUR UNIT WANT TO GO?**

In August 2013, the Self-Study Committee collected input from all faculty members on what they would like to come out of this APR self-study. Specifically, the committee asked faculty for concrete ideas they would like to see the department implement over the next seven years. The full faculty then used our annual retreat to rate the ideas provided by the faculty on the basis of their potential impact and ease of implementation. The Self-Study Committee then considered all of the ideas ranked as either “challenges” or “possibilities” to generate the goals and initiatives listed below. We have categorized these goals and initiatives around components of the University Strategic Plan. We do not, however, present our goals in the order they are presented in the University Strategic Plan or as we have presented these topics in this report thus far. Instead, we have prioritized our goals and their presentation in the next two sections reflects that prioritization. Here, in Section 3, we introduce these prioritized goals in broad terms and discuss how they align with and advance the university’s strategic plan. Later, in Section 4, we present the specific initiatives through which we will achieve these goals, along with a timeline and discussion of the sources of any resources necessary for their implementation.
Some of the goals and initiatives we have set are disruptive innovations that take our department in new directions; others are sustaining innovations that expand on successful practices already in place. You will see that the goals and initiatives at the top of our ranked list tend toward disruptive innovations. While they build on existing strengths, they present the vision we have for moving our department forward in new directions. Acknowledging that the self-study is not a mechanism for securing additional funding, most of these goals are not resource dependent. The more disruptive the innovation, however, the more resources may be needed. Strong returns depend on strong initial investments. That said, for all of our goals and initiatives we clearly articulate the resources necessary to accomplish them and we outline our strategies to secure those resources.

GOAL 1: BROADEN OUR RESEARCH BASE
In order to contribute to the university’s goal of becoming a leading public research university, we intend to provide greater support for our faculty research efforts through (1) the creation of a Social Science Research Center; (2) strategic faculty growth, especially at the senior level, to strengthen our concentrations, build our proposed Center, and enhance our capacity for externally funded research; (2) the provision of additional internal support for grant submissions and grant management; and (3) the leveraging of upcoming relocations in Langdale Hall to create work spaces conducive to collaborative research and essential to the creation of a social science research center.

GOAL 2: BECOME CENTRAL TO THE UNIVERSITY’S GLOBAL AND CITIES INITIATIVES
We have the opportunity to make significant contributions to the university’s strategic plan through the goals focused on understanding the complex challenges of cities and globalizing the university. These are both existing strengths of our department, so our goal is to make our contributions central to the university’s initiatives. We intend to accomplish this goal through (1) the creation of an International Faculty Exchange Program and (2) by promoting scholarship that addresses the challenges of cities.

GOAL 3: ENHANCE THE EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE OF OUR UNDERGRADUATE MAJORS
This self-study continued to document our long-standing strength in undergraduate education. Our undergraduate students and alumni report high levels of satisfaction with our department. We are not, however, complacent and aim to build on this tradition of excellence and provide even more opportunities for our students. We intend to do this by (1) formalizing a research-based signature experience; (2) creating pathways to graduate school through our dual degree program; (3) reinforcing our already strong departmental advising; (4) forging stronger connections with our alumni; (5) rewarding faculty excellence in undergraduate instruction and mentorship; and (6) better aligning our undergraduate and graduate curricula.

GOAL 4: SIGNIFICANTLY STRENGTHEN OUR GRADUATE PROGRAM
In its relative short history, our graduate program has gone from a small master’s program in general sociology to a very large doctoral program, with clearly defined specialty areas, that is continuing to move up in rank and increasingly recruits students nationally. We are in the position to contribute to the university’s goal of strengthening its base of distinctive graduate
programs by (1) recruiting and retaining students through more funding lines; (2) offering valuable pedagogical training for future university instructors; (3) more conscientiously developing pathways for student career success, inside and outside of academia; and (4) instituting more rigorous admissions standards, to ensure we do not sacrifice the strength of our program as it continues to grow.

SECTION 4: WHAT DO YOU NEED TO CHANGE OR DO TO GET THERE?

GOAL 1: BROADEN OUR RESEARCH BASE
Initiative 1: Create a Social Science Research Center
As a recent National Science Foundation report to Congress states, “our quality of life increasingly depends on understanding human factors.” At Georgia State University we have a strong cadre of social scientists, especially within the College of Arts and Sciences. We do not, however, have explicit coordination of their work across disciplines. We intend to create a center housed within our department to facilitate the work of those faculty and to promote our aggregate expertise outside the university. Sociology is the natural home for such a venture because our faculty skillset spans a broad range of social science methodologies, from analyzing large data sets to conducting in-depth interviews on sensitive topics. Over the next seven to ten years, we envision creating a Center with the overarching aim of increasing the national prominence of our department and the university through the production of high quality social science research that is funded by federal agencies, published in top social science outlets, and influential in public policy. To that end, the Center will have a number of related aims:

1. Within the Department of Sociology, the Center will coordinate and facilitate research across our three concentrations, creating an incubator for cross-concentration collaboration. As our concentrations have matured, multiple nodes of cross-concentration research have emerged. An initial aim of the Center will be to foster those cross-concentration collaborations and support their growth into areas of national distinction for our department. The public housing research emerged out of a cross-concentration collaboration focusing on health disparities, urban violence, and public policy. We envision other such collaborations emerging around areas such as sexual health or racial disparities in mental health.

2. Across the university, the Center will serve as a consulting unit for interdisciplinary social science scholarship. As the university has promoted interdisciplinary work through the 2CI mechanism, many research groups have formed with an explicit or implicit social science focus. The sociology faculty are often called on to support these programs because of our methodological skills and our ties with various communities and agencies in the city and state. The Center would formalize our role in supporting social science research across the university. Moreover, the Center will grow to be truly interdisciplinary with affiliates from other departments and units.

3. Within Atlanta, the Center will build its capacity to serve a similar consulting role for city and state agencies that use social science research, contributing to the college’s efforts in expanding community partnerships. The center will also coordinate cross-university collaborations within the Atlanta metropolitan area by creating an Atlanta
Social Science Consortium comprised of affiliates with social science research expertise at other local colleges and universities.

We were asked in this self-study to categorize our goals and initiatives as sustaining or disruptive innovations. Most of the initiatives we propose are sustaining innovations. This, however, is clearly a disruptive innovation. This proposal builds on our existing strengths, but takes our department in a new direction. We see a void not just at Georgia State University, but in the immediate region, that a Center such as the one we are proposing could fill. While Duke University and UNC Chapel Hill have social science research centers, both are largely quantitative in their methodological focus. By contrast, we look to go big and small, so to speak, by having a joint focus on big data, demographic analysis, and ethnography (increasingly referred to as deep data). There are few centers that take such an approach, and none in the southeast. Moreover, by the nature of the work we do in our Department and GSU’s position as a leading urban research university, we expect that this Center will have a uniquely city-based focus, akin to the Lewis Mumford Center at The University at Albany-SUNY or the Kinder Institute at Rice University.

As a major disruptive innovation, the success of this Center will be largely contingent on resources beyond those currently available to the department. However, we are poised to leverage (1) existing faculty expertise; (2) recent and possible future 2CI or other university-level initiatives; and (3) other goals and initiatives in this self-study toward the creation of this Center. We also recognize that the long-term viability of such a center is dependent upon resources from outside the university, such as the types of gifts that funded the Lewis Mumford Center and, more recently, the Kinder Institute (which recently received a $15 million endowment in 2010).

**Initiative 2: Hire More New Faculty, Especially at the Senior Level**
Our department is smaller today than it was in 2010 at the beginning of this review window, despite growth in the number of students we serve and continued growth of our research productivity. In order to broaden our research base, especially funded research, we need to increase the size of our faculty, through strategic growth with an emphasis on hiring grant-active senior faculty who could support our goal of creating a Social Science Research Center. This will strengthen our department’s national reputation, increase the quality of our undergraduate and graduate instruction, contribute valuable service to the college and university, and provide strong mentors to our junior faculty. We seek to modestly grow our department from 22 to 30 full-time faculty members by FY2018. With two new faculty this year and two more coming on board next year, we will have 26 faculty by FY2015, leaving only four to reach this goal. We see the 2CI and Cities Initiative as mechanisms through which to generate the remaining new lines, but we will also need additional resources through the college to hire faculty who will help strategically grow our research base, which has been eroded through recent retirements and faculty departures for other universities. We see one to two of our four remaining new faculty being generated by either the 2CI or Cities Initiative and the other two to three being funded through the college over the next seven years. We plan for all of these new faculty to be central to developing our proposed Social Science Research Center.
Initiative 3: Provide More Support for Generating External Funding
Our recently revised Promotion and Tenure Guidelines have an increased focus on funded research, consistent with the college’s and university’s expectations. We need more departmental support for the development and management of sponsored programs to allow our assistant professors to establish a research trajectory leading toward external funding and to allow our associate professors to secure the funding that supports the caliber of research that will secure their promotion to full professor. Our faculty report spending too much time and effort on pre-award and post-award sponsored programs administration. This initiative is aimed at enabling faculty to focus on preparing the research plans (but not the budgets) for grant proposals, and for those with funded grants to be able to focus on data collection and analysis (but not administrative details and bureaucratic tasks). To do this, we need to research how other departments balance the tasks associated with grants management across faculty and staff within the department and with staff in the college and the Office of Sponsored Programs. From this research we will develop procedures to use in our department to make the pre- and post-award grants management less cumbersome for faculty. We intend to have procedures in place by FY2016. While the development of such procedures will not require new resources, it may be that the implementation of the procedures will require increased staff support within the department, especially as the size of our departmental funding portfolio increases.

Initiative 4: Find More Space and Make Better Use of It to Cultivate Collaboration
Our last two self-studies highlight the need for more space. We appear to finally be in the position to address that problem. As the Dean’s Office and the non-social science departments move to 25 Park Place, we need to be assigned the entire ninth or tenth floor of Langdale Hall. Beyond adding office space for faculty and shared offices for graduate students, we need to create strategically-oriented space that is conducive to collaborative research and essential for the creation of a social science research center. Restructuring the space on a floor of Langdale Hall would require significant resources, but it would represent a truly disruptive innovation that creates a built environment conducive to collaboration, communication, and professional socialization among faculty and between faculty and both graduate and undergraduate students. Assuming that the Board of Regents funds the replacement of the roof and HVAC system for Langdale Hall, that project will commence in late fall 2014. While it is unclear if we will need to relocate at all during those renovations, that time period would be ideal for any renovations to the ninth or tenth floor of Langdale Hall.

GOAL 2: BECOME CENTRAL TO THE UNIVERSITY’S GLOBAL AND CITIES INITIATIVES
Initiative 1: Foster an International Faculty Exchange Program with Global Urban Partners
To contribute to the GSU’s goal of globalizing the university, we plan to develop an international faculty exchange program with the aim of creating a visiting position for a foreign faculty member (on sabbatical from their home institution) with interests in cities or global issues, and inviting international scholars to give lectures. In addition, we plan to strengthen ties with existing international partners (South Korea and Japan) and identify and establish collaborative research projects with new international partners (particularly China, and other countries targeted by the university) that involve securing funding for research and hosting international conferences. We envision this as a long term plan that we will develop over the next five years.
and fund through internal Georgia State University initiatives, such as ISI grants and the college’s DEEP initiative.

**Initiative 2: Promote Scholarship on the Challenges of Cities**
Departmental research that addresses the challenges of cities is not limited to our Race and Urban Concentration. Across all of our concentrations you find research that uses the city of Atlanta as its natural laboratory. We intend to promote and advertise this scholarship both within the university, by taking an active role in GSU’s Council for the Progress of Cities, and outside the university, through various professional organizations. Our aim is to make our department nationally recognized as a place to study social issues in the city, not simply urban sociology. This initiative will be ongoing and require no additional resources.

**GOAL 3: ENHANCE THE EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE OF OUR UNDERGRADUATE MAJORS**

**Initiative 1: Provide More Undergraduates with the Opportunity to Work with Faculty on Research**
We have a strong and popular internship program. Over the past few years, a small number of faculty have used the internship to provide students with the opportunity to collaborate with them on research. We intend to formalize this practice by developing an Undergraduate Social Science Research Fellowship Program that will serve as a university signature experience. We envision this program beginning as something akin to our current internship program and growing into something more like the McNair Scholars Program, where students: (1) Work with faculty on research; (2) present their research at undergraduate conferences, such as the Georgia State Undergraduate Research Conference (GSURC) and the SouthEastern Undergraduate Sociology Symposium (SEUSS); and (3) engage in broader programming around planning for graduate school. We have the opportunity in our department to broaden the pipeline of students entering graduate school, but many of our students are not sufficiently mentored to do so. This program could provide students with greater preparation to successfully continue their education.

We intend to spend AY2014-15 addressing any curricular changes needed to accommodate this program, creating a selection mechanism, and advertising the program to students. Building on the infrastructure currently in place for our internship program will make this a straightforward task. We intend to have students enrolled in the program in AY2015-16. Initially, this program will require little monetary resources. We will, however, need to develop a mechanism through which to compensate faculty for the additional workload mentoring fellows would require. Over the longer term, we will seek funding for students who participate in the fellowship through two mechanisms. First, we will work with faculty to include funding for undergraduate research assistants in grant applications or to secure separate funding through mechanisms such as the NSF Research Experiences for Undergraduates supplements or the National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities Research Infrastructure in Minority Institutions Program. Second, we will work with the college and university development offices to endow the program, creating a mechanism through which to fund students, provide for a travel allowance, and/or cover graduate school application fees.
Initiative 2: Grow Our Dual Degree Program
In 2013, we were approved for a BA/MA dual degree in Sociology, with a specialization in data analysis. Through this program, exceptional sociology majors have the opportunity to complete both a bachelor’s and master’s degree in as short as five years. Students in this program take the entire sequence of statistics and methods classes required of both MA and PhD students in our program. We see this program as having two aims: (1) Students who plan to go directly into the workforce will do so with the expertise to contribute to a wide range of social science research needs, and (2) students who are interested in a PhD will have a strong foundation to leave Georgia State for other doctoral programs. We find that many of our undergraduate majors are strong enough to be accepted into top PhD programs, but they do not have the confidence or the professional socialization to pursue such a move. This dual degree program can serve as an intermediary step for such students, providing them with the needed support to leave the Georgia State nest, so to speak. The dual degree program is in our undergraduate and graduate catalogs and we are recruiting our first class of students for Fall 2014. We will use AY2014-15 to develop a plan for recruiting and mentoring these students at all stages of the program. This initiative will require no additional resources.

Initiative 3: Enhance Student Advising and Mentoring
The Department of Sociology has had a very effective departmental advising process for many years. This is evidenced by 52% of majors reporting an in-house advisor has had a positive impact on their academic progress. We see the centralized advising as an enormous asset to our students early in their program, but our history of in-house advising has had a profound impact on our majors. It is critical we have an office staff that includes an advisor based in the department. Our students often enter the major late in their college careers. Not only do they need significant advising on how to navigate the sociology major, they need in-depth advising on careers and future educational opportunities with a degree in sociology. They need to be integrated into the major quickly so that their time to degree is not further delayed.

With the significant progress the university is making toward improving centralized student advising, through University Advisement Center and their use of the GPS Advising System, we are concerned that our in-house advisor will be fully enveloped into the centralized system. This would be absolutely detrimental to our students and our department as a whole. We aim to ensure that our department retains a Departmental Academic Advisor in our office. This is a sustaining innovation that fully justifies continued investment. In that the salary line for the Departmental Academic Advisor is part of the Department of Sociology’s budget, this initiative does not require additional resources. We do however require the support of the Dean’s Office in maintaining our current advising structure.

Initiative 4: Better Connect with our Alumni
Many years ago, we had a departmental alumni board. We intend to resurrect and restructure this board, creating two boards: A leadership board comprised of alumni who are established in their careers and a recent graduate board comprised of alumni who are within five years of graduating from Georgia State. Both boards will serve as professional networks for our majors and help generate support for departmental giving. We will hold an annual joint meeting of the boards and we will create a number of annual events that involve board members (examples of such events include an annual alumni lecture, a week-long event where we invite alumni to attend classes, a
student-alumni mentoring program, regular meetings with the department chair, etc.). On a very utilitarian level, we recognize that development requires donors having a relationship with a college and department over many years and we see these boards as a starting point for such relationships.

In AY2014-15 we will research how other departments, both at Georgia State and nationally, have successfully maintained alumni boards and we will develop a more comprehensive directory of both undergraduate and graduate alumni. In AY2015-16 we will plan annual events and invite alumni to join the boards. In AY2016-17 the boards will be in place and we will have our first board events. Resources for communication and events will be funded via departmental foundation accounts.

Initiative 5: Reward Undergraduate Teaching Excellence
Our faculty are extremely successful classroom instructors. To reward that success we will create an award for an annual Faculty Teaching and Mentorship Award to our full-time faculty. We already make such an award to our graduate student instructors. In the short term, the award will be recognized simply with a plaque; but we will work with our Development Committee and the college and university development offices to endow this award and provide the awardee with a modest travel or supply grant. We will make the first award in AY2014-15 and we will work to endowing the award by FY2018.

Initiative 6: Reorganize Undergraduate Concentration Areas
Our final initiative related to our goal of enhancing the education experiences of our undergraduate students is a minor curricular fix. We intend to organize our undergraduate concentration areas to make them more parallel to our graduate specialty areas: Gender and Sexuality; Race and Urban Studies; Family; and Health and the Life Course. Although we do not have a Family concentration, Family remains extremely popular with undergraduates so we will preserve it for now. This would eliminate the Gerontology concentration. The Gerontology Institute has its own undergraduate certificate program and aging is a central component of our Health and Life Course concentration, making a stand-alone concentration in Gerontology both redundant and confusing to students. This reorganization will mean that we will develop a general Life Course class, as well as electives in the new concentration area. We will begin the catalog change process in Fall 2014 for inclusion in the AY2015-16 undergraduate catalog. We will also add a Life Course class in Fall 2014. During AY2014-15 we will develop a number of electives in the new concentration area to be offered beginning Fall 2015. These changes will require no additional resources.

GOAL 4: SIGNIFICANTLY STRENGTHEN OUR GRADUATE PROGRAM

Initiative 1: Increase Number of Graduate Student Stipends
We need to increase the number and size of our doctoral student stipends if we are to successfully attract well qualified and high achieving doctoral students. At this juncture, the more critical need of our program is more funded lines (recognizing that we will need to continue to increase the level of stipends in the future to remain competitive). While our funding level is lower than all but one of our peer departments, we just increased the stipend amount and we were quite successful in recruitment at that level last year, with only one student declining our assistantship offer. However, the number of funded lines we currently offer is insufficient.
We currently have 32 funded lines. This number includes three 2CI Fellowships, but does not include grant funded students (as of this semester only one student is funded on a faculty grant). We fund roughly thirty percent of our students. This is comparable to UC Riverside, but much lower than North Carolina State and the University of Pittsburgh, which fund 80 to 90% of their students. Over the next five years, by FY2019, we intend to add an additional ten funded graduate student lines. We will fund this initiative in the following ways: (1) We will work within the department budget to best utilize current resources. We have largely separated the graduate and general departmental budget in the past and we have not strategically coordinated the instructional needs of the department and the recruitment goals of the graduate program. By carefully restructuring how we use funded students to meet our departmental instructional needs, we estimate we can fund four additional lines in AY2015-16. (2) We will seek additional 2CI fellowships. Sociology is part of a 2CI in this cycle and, if funded, this could add an additional three funding lines as early at AY2015-16. (3) As the grant productivity of our faculty increases, we anticipate being able to depend upon at minimum one additional funding line. (4) To fund the remaining lines we will work to develop alumni and donor networks and we will position ourselves to leverage new university or college funds should they become available.

**Initiative 2: Continue to Support Graduate Student Instructors**

A significant portion of our undergraduate instruction is conducted by our graduate student instructors. We owe it to our undergraduates to ensure they receive quality instruction, be it from our regular faculty or our graduate student instructors. And we owe it to our graduate students to provide excellent pedagogical training. Our two-course teacher training program was one of the first at Georgia State and continues to be one of the strongest. The program is resource intensive in that it is two semesters and students do not begin the course sequence until spring of their second year. However, our faculty strongly believes that the resources are well spent for the following reasons: (1) Lower level and core upper level courses are how we grow our majors. We must have strong instructors teaching these courses. (2) We recruit PhD students from social science disciplines other than sociology. While these students have excellent social science methodological skill sets, they often need training in the core discipline before they are ready to enter the classroom. (3) The student evaluations of our graduate student instructors are consistently high in part due to their training. Finally, (4) our program is consistent with best practices in the discipline. Our aim in this initiative is to sustain innovation by committing to maintaining this program in its current form. There is no further timeline for implementation and this initiative does not require resources beyond those currently expended on the program.

**Initiative 3: Create a Sustained Program of Professional Development and Career Advisement for Graduate Students**

As important as supporting students while they are in our graduate program is, preparing them to support themselves as professional sociologists is more important. To that end, we aim to improve our advisement of graduate students in three ways. First, we have restructured our required graduate proseminar course to provide students with a strong introduction not just to graduate school but to the profession. We will extend that formal mentorship through a series of three workshops offered annually on publishing, funding, and the job market. We will begin this program in AY2014-15 and it will not require additional resources.
Second, for the past two years we have conducted an annual evaluation of all students in the program. In this evaluation we worked from very broad time limits to reach specific program milestones (allowing up to 17 years to complete the program). With the experience we now have in providing students with annual evaluations, we will develop reasonable and enforceable time limits within which students must reach key milestones. This may not appear to be directly related to career development, but we think it is. Not every student who begins a PhD program will finish it. It is our responsibility to provide students with clear guidance as to their progress in the program, so they can choose another career path before they have invested inordinate time and money in a program that does not suit them. And for those students who will complete their PhD and follow a career in academia, they need to be prepared to meet similar milestones on a similar timeline as they work toward tenure. We intend to create new time limits to reach key program milestones in AY2014-15, for inclusion in our 2015-16 Graduate Handbook. This will require no additional resources.

Finally, our students are increasingly interested in non-academic career paths. Given the continued dearth of tenure track jobs, it is our responsibility to assist students in preparing themselves for such careers. To that end, we will create a research-oriented graduate internship program. We already have such a course in our catalog, but it has been used in rare occasions when students have found internships on their own. By AY2016-17, we will develop a collection of established internship sites like we have for our undergraduate internship program. In addition we will develop guidelines for internships to ensure a positive experience both for our students and the internship sites. We do not anticipate additional resources will be necessary for this endeavor.

**Initiative 4: Improve the Quality of Incoming Graduate Students**

While we have been able to meet our graduate recruitment goals for the past three years, we need to make more progress toward improving the quality of our students. We intend to implement a two-pronged initiative to improve the quality of our applicant pool and our incoming cohorts. First, we will enhance our current recruitment efforts by hosting two annual recruitment events, one in the fall dedicated to introducing prospective recruits to faculty and current students and a second in the spring that provides information on how to fund your graduate education. We will record the speakers at both of these events to have follow-up virtual events for students outside the region. We will begin these events in AY2014-15, for the Fall 2015 cohort. We will draw on the modest departmental recruiting budget for these events. These events will augment the wide range of recruitment strategies we already employ (e.g. active use of Hobson’s for direct emails, purchasing ETS GRE lists, attending graduate school fairs and other events, mailing flyers to feeder programs nationally).

Beyond improving our recruitment strategies, we will conduct a study to determine appropriate GPA and GRE score admissions standards. We do not want to put undue weight on these metrics, but we recognize their utility in making difficult admissions decisions. Beyond setting new admissions standards, we will institute an official waitlist category for applicants. In the past we often employed higher standards early in our recruitment cycle than we did later in our recruitment cycle. A waitlist will enable us to maintain higher standards without necessarily losing high quality students by rejecting them outright early in our recruitment season. We will
do the necessary preparation to implement these two strategies with our Fall 2015 recruitment class and they will require no additional resources.