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**MEMORANDUM**

<b>ATTENTION</b>	Senate	<b>DATE</b>	October 8, 2010
<b>FROM</b>	Jon Driver, Vice-President, Academic and Provost, and Chair, SCUP	<b>PAGES</b>	1/2
<b>RE:</b>	Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences: External Review Report of the Department of Sociology and Anthropology (SCUP 10-66)		

The Senate Committee on University Priorities (SCUP) has reviewed the External Review Report on the Department of Sociology and Anthropology, together with responses from the Department, the Dean of Arts & Social Sciences and input from the Associate Vice President, Academic.

**Motion:**

**That Senate approve the recommendation from the Senate Committee on University Priorities to implement the Action Plan for the Department of Sociology and Anthropology that resulted from its External Review.**

Following the site visit the Report of the External Review Team\* for the Department of Sociology and Anthropology was submitted in April 2010.

After the Report was received a meeting was held with the Dean of Arts & Social Sciences, the Chair of the Department and the Director of Academic Planning (VPA) to consider the recommendations. The Department then prepared an Action Plan based on the Report and these discussions. The Action plan was then submitted to the Dean on July 9, 2010. The Dean endorsed this Action Plan.

The Review Team members stated that ‘overall the Department is functioning very well. It has a superb undergraduate program, much more interdisciplinary and writing-intensive than most; a productive faculty, many with national and international reputations; and a level of collegiality, cooperativeness and generosity of spirit that would serve as a model for departments across Canada. Its graduate programs, particularly the PhD, are experiencing growing pains resulting from a level of expansion that leapt ahead of funding and faculty resources, coinciding as it did with cutbacks and loss of faculty (primarily positions left vacant by retirements)’.

SCUP recommends to Senate that Department of Sociology and Anthropology be advised to pursue the Action Plan.

**Attachments:**

1. Department of Sociology and Anthropology External Review - Action Plan
2. External Review Report – April, 2010

**\* External Review Team:**

**Sally Cole**, Professor of Anthropology & Associate Dean  
Concordia University

**Neil Gerlach**, Professor of Sociology & Associate Chair  
Carleton University

**Laureen Snider**, Professor of Sociology  
Queen's University

CC John Craig, FASS Dean (Pro Tem)  
Jane Pulkingham - Director, School of Criminology.

## **Report of the External Review Committee on the Department of Sociology and Anthropology**

***Simon Fraser University***

**Sally Cole**

Professor of Anthropology & Associate Dean

Concordia University

**Neil Gerlach**

Professor of Sociology & Associate Chair

Carleton University

**Laureen Snider**

Professor of Sociology

Queen's University

April 2010

## **I: Introduction and general overview**

To arrive at its conclusions, the External Review Committee consulted the following written sources : 1. The Self Study Report of the Department of Sociology and Anthropology SFU prepared by the Department Chair, Dr. Jane Pulkingham, with input from the Department's main committees and staff; 2. The different appendices attached to the Self-Study; 3. The *SFU 2009-2010 Calendar*; 4. The Faculty's curriculum vitae; 5. The President's Agenda, the SFU Strategic Research Plan, 2010-15, the Institutional Accountability Plan & Report, 2009/10-2011/12, the SFU and the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences' Three Year Academic Plan, 2010-13; 6. Various other documents, including data on graduate student funding, faculty funding, course outlines, documents on Community-Based Learning, and drafts outlines of new programs and projects such as Public Anthropology.

In addition, the External Review Committee visited the School site from March 24-26, 2010. During these three days, the Committee met with the SFU senior administrators, the Chair of the Department, the Graduate and Undergraduate Studies Committees, all but 4 faculty members, undergraduate and graduate students, the Department Manager and General Office Secretary, Library Representatives and the faculty library liaison.

During those meetings, we were assisted and enlightened by Dr. Stephen McBride of the Department of Political Studies, SFU. Everybody spoke openly and answered our questions in a cooperative, collegial and straightforward manner.

Overall the Committee was impressed with the high levels of collegiality and democratic governance in the Department, and with the overwhelming interdisciplinarity that marks their teaching programmes and research agendas. This level of collegiality is a notable achievement in a stressed and stretched unit such as this, where 2 disciplines and 4 different programs are competing for scarce resources that now threaten to become even more scarce. It requires good will, constant compromise, frequent meetings, and a willingness to see the other's point of view. This investment by the SA department chair and faculty cannot be easily quantified, but it translates into huge benefits for undergraduate and graduate students, and cost savings for senior administrators!

We were concerned, however, that the University, by creating two new faculties and hiring sociologists and anthropologists there, is not taking advantage of the strengths of the excellent SA unit it already has. Rather than building on the interdisciplinary opportunities, research programs and contacts already established in SA, the new Faculties threaten to weaken it, creating rivalries and enmity at worst, unrealized synergies at best. This is particularly worrying in light of the fact that the Department has 8 actual or potential retirements coming up over the next 5 years, and may be losing additional faculty through

resignations. Anthropologists in the Department are seriously overloaded now, the only quantitative methodologist resigned recently (as discussed in section II), and key areas such as feminist socio-legal and family studies are threatened. If these positions are lost, the viability of the Department will be in serious jeopardy.

*Organization of this Report:* To answer the questions put to us by the Self-Study and those set out in the SFU Terms of Reference for External Review Committees 2009/10, this report will cover the following issues: Undergraduate Studies; Graduate Studies; Research; Faculty Renewal, Retention and Succession; Governance; Staff; and finally Summary and Recommendations.

## **II: Undergraduate Studies**

### *1. Structure and Enrolment*

The Department offers a wide variety of undergraduate courses in five key areas within the disciplines of Sociology and Anthropology including: globalization and development; health, science, and environment; knowledge, culture, and power; social justice, policy, and law; and women, gender, and sexuality. These are well-chosen themes that cohere with the concerns of Canadian sociology and anthropology more generally. Each theme is well-covered by courses each year and the faculty complement is well-distributed among these five themes, although concern was expressed by one faculty member that imminent and recent retirements were jeopardizing the feminist/family field.

The courses are divided into three types: core courses that are discipline specific (either Sociology or Anthropology); a large number of interdisciplinary courses that can be designated either Sociology or Anthropology depending on the student's program of study; and a smaller group of courses designated either Sociology or Anthropology depending on the content of the course and the discipline of the instructor. On average, 49% of enrolments in the department are in interdisciplinary courses designated 'SA' and taught by Sociology or Anthropology faculty, 34% are in courses designated 'S', and 18% are in courses designated 'A'. The program is quite streamlined with clear choices for degree completion but with a fair degree of flexibility in course options.

Over the past five years the Department has averaged 287 undergraduate majors (182 in Sociology and 78 in Anthropology) and 146 minors (134 Sociology and 12 Anthropology). The average undergraduate enrolment in SA courses is 3800 students, indicating that the Department plays a crucial role as a service department for other programs. Teaching quality appears to be good: teaching evaluations for the average instructor in lower division courses is 3.38 and at the upper division level it is 3.48.

## *2. Strengths*

These facts tell only part of the tale. The Sociology and Anthropology undergraduate programs at SFU are very strong and very attractive for a number of reasons:

1. The Sociology and Anthropology programs allow for a large degree of interdisciplinary cross-over between two disciplines which are quite different in their methods and objects of research (though they share some areas of concern). The SA programs allow students to gain considerable exposure to each discipline.
2. SA has joint majors established with other departments including Archaeology, Art and Culture Studies, Communication, Contemporary Arts, Criminology, Latin American Studies, Linguistics, and Women's Studies. Some of the undergraduate students we talked to cited these joint majors as part of the reason they chose SFU.
3. Class sizes have been kept small and intense with upper division courses capped at 30 students and 4 credit hours. This provides an intimate connection with instructors that was lauded by the undergraduate students we met, as was their openness and accessibility. Full-time tenure and tenure-track instructors teach at all levels, further exposing students to faculty involved in research.
4. The Department is strongly committed to SFU's goal of developing writing skills. Many of their courses are designated as 'W' courses and all of their courses, including larger lower division courses, have sizeable writing components.

## *3. Community Based Learning and Co-op Education*

One of the greatest strengths of the SA program is its emphasis on community based learning. There are two showcase courses dedicated to this form of education. One is a third year survey design course (SA357) in which students work with community organizations that need help designing and analyzing small-scale surveys. The second is SA 498 – Field Study in Sociology and/or Anthropology in which students are placed in NGOs and other community organizations. Both of these courses are writing-intensive, teach transferrable professional skills in report writing and presentation, survey skills, and networking skills. The fourth year course has led to permanent and part-time employment for some students as well as attracting superior undergraduates to the SFU graduate program.

The Department also manages a co-op placement program that has doubled in size over the last decade to 19 placements, which is a healthy number. There is some concern that the current economic climate will impact on the ability of the Department to find placements in the future.

The Department's commitment to experiential learning is strong and well established. It would be the envy of other Canadian Sociology and Anthropology programs who are just trying now to develop this model of education. SA at SFU is clearly ahead of the curve, with a well-

developed set of contacts and procedures firmly in place. Undergraduate students love this option, identifying it as another factor that attracted them to SFU.

#### *4. Concerns*

This excellent undergraduate program is facing a number of challenges over the next 7 years.

1. Enrolments have begun to decline for majors and minors in Sociology and Anthropology. This decline is in keeping with a drop in enrolment within FASS more generally and indicates larger processes at work, including increasing competition from university colleges and other programs at SFU offering similar courses such as Health Sciences. For Sociology and Anthropology, this problem is compounded by the fact that the BC high school curriculum does not include sociology or anthropology; high school graduates therefore enter university unfamiliar with the disciplines. The Department and the university would benefit from a more aggressive and proactive high school and college recruitment strategy that involves, at the very least, sending faculty members into high schools to talk to students about sociology and anthropology, and providing a dedicated page on the departmental website for high school students - with attention-grabbing statements about the disciplines and information on how to enter the programs.
2. Because of the relatively small number of Anthropology faculty, students expressed some concern about a lack of undergraduate course options in Anthropology. They wanted both more courses, especially at the 200 level, and more courses designated 'A' rather than 'S' or 'SA'. Students commented that this absence keeps some students from doing a joint major in SA. In other words, there is a sense among the students that the Anthropology program needs more instructors and more courses.
3. Cross-listing should not be used as a substitute for disciplinary teaching: research methods and other components of a disciplinary core cannot be met through cross-disciplinary courses.

The faculty member who is responsible for teaching many of the quantitative methods courses is leaving SFU. This will leave a significant gap in the faculty complement and it is urgent that he be replaced. This Department focuses on qualitative methods, but familiarity with quantitative methods is a skill many future employers and graduate programs require, particularly in sociology. An absence of quantitative methods will also weaken the third and fourth year community-based learning courses and several others. Sociology has developed its own unique methods and applications of statistics that are aimed at addressing the specific requirements of social analysis. To train students in how to apply statistical research to organizational and community issues, it is important that a sociologically trained instructor teach these courses.

#### *5. Recommendations*

1. *The Department, with university support, should engage in more aggressive recruiting strategies to inform students about the disciplines of sociology and anthropology and about the strengths of the programs at SFU. These strategies should include high school visits and web site design.*
2. *The Department requires a replacement for its outgoing quantitative sociologist to ensure that its community based learning courses and quantitative methods courses are adequately staffed. The department also needs to hire at least one more Anthropologist to enlarge the number and variety of courses and to compensate for impending retirements in that discipline.*

### **III: Graduate Studies**

#### *1. PhD:MA ratio*

The Department maintains masters and doctoral programs in 2 disciplines. In the 2009-2010 academic year there were 53 students in total: 17 MA and 16 PhD students in Sociology; 9 MA and 11 PhD students in Anthropology

The ratio of PhD:MA students is 1:1 (16:17). Half of the graduate students, then, are Ph.D. students. This is out of line with other Canadian universities where the ratio is typically closer to 1:3. Moreover, the rapid expansion has created a situation in which the doctoral programs have not been sufficiently disentangled from the masters programs (see next section). The high proportion of doctoral students is a severe challenge for the Department. Doctoral students bring a set of specific resource needs for: long-term funding; professional development training; socialization in grant writing, conference participation, networking and publishing; and intensive faculty supervision.

Unfortunately, this expansion of the doctoral programs took place prior to the provincial government's decision to fund graduate students and prior to the university's strategic plan and declared goal to increase graduate enrolment by 25%. The SA Department should not be encouraged to further this disproportionate intake of PhD students simply to capture government funding. Given the stresses the Department already faces in supervising and funding its current graduate students (see below), attrition and lengthy times-to-completion of inadequately funded and supervised graduate students would be the result of any further expansion.

#### *2. Program Structure and Design*

Following the last external review, in response to concerns expressed about retention and times-to-completions rates, the Department undertook a major restructuring of its

graduate programs implemented in 2007-08. The restructuring also aimed to facilitate growth in student numbers with no complementary increase in faculty.

The 2010 review team appreciates the goals animating the restructuring and lauds the congenial and collegial relations between faculty and students in the two disciplines – indeed, we deeply admire the emotional labour and professionalism exhibited by virtually all members of the department who work daily to build and keep morale in the Department, something that is sadly lacking in many other North American universities in the present climate. Overall, we believe the structure of the programs works well for MA students, who were contented with their experience and need the core theory courses and training in research design. The goal of masters education is to introduce students to research. MA students typically do require more structure and higher supervision.

However, the restructuring may be problematic for PhD students. The goal of doctoral studies is to train researchers; PhD students are expected and required to undertake original research and to make an original contribution to scholarship. They need flexibility and opportunities for autonomy alongside faculty mentoring. We found the experience of the PhD students we met to be much more varied than that of the MA students. Those PhD students with adequate funding, supervision and research opportunities were satisfied with the program. Other PhD students, however, described problems of unresponsive supervisors, inadequate funding and rigidity in the program structure and offerings that made it difficult to combine jobs and families with grad studies.

Doctoral students are typically at the age when many do have family responsibilities and these - combined with the need of many to work because they are unfunded -- require greater flexibility in the program for PhD students. For example, PhD students asked why the doctoral proposal must be written within the “shell” of the Research Design course which is offered only 1 term/year (the summer term). Could it be possible for a high-achieving student with a committed faculty supervisor to develop their doctoral proposal with their supervisor (and committee) during another term? Some PhD students also lamented the attendance requirement for the Pro-Seminar saying that they had to leave children or take time off work to attend and the content often did not warrant these logistics. We agree with the mandatory attendance requirement, but think that the PhD students need a Pro-Seminar separated from MA students. We believe their resentment of mandatory attendance there would disappear if it was of clear use to them – perhaps combined with a Departmental Colloquium series (a feature PhD students noted was lacking in the Dept) where PhD students and faculty members present their research at different stages of development. Another idea would be to schedule the Pro-Seminar fortnightly rather than weekly and/or turn the second half of it into a workshop for development of the doctoral research proposal.

Other issues the Department should discuss and consider include:

- 1) The preponderance of methods teaching: in addition to the methods course, SA 856, methods also appear to be taught in the Pro-Seminar and the Research Design course and even in the small number of elective courses.
- 2) The graduate theory courses, 849 and 879, are also taught to senior undergraduates and appear to duplicate courses that most PhD students should already have taken. They should not be required courses for doctoral students except as qualifying courses for students admitted without sufficient background in theory.
- 3) There are few electives. PhD students need more opportunities to learn from faculty members in structured contexts; and faculty members – especially junior and intermediate faculty - need opportunities to teach their areas of expertise and current research – for morale, faculty retention and the intellectual vibrancy of Department life. Currently, these are often taught as independent study courses – not an efficient use of faculty labour. Furthermore, the Department advertises 5 interdisciplinary areas of expertise. These attract graduate students who should be able to expect that elective courses in these areas will be offered during their tenure in the Department.
- 4) The methods needs of anthropology PhD students may not be met by the interdisciplinary teaching of “qualitative methods” courses taken with all masters and doctoral students in both disciplines.
- 5) The PhD students need to be distinguished from the masters and undergraduate students and develop their professional identities as PhD students. Sharing the Pro-Seminar with masters students, and the theory and other graduate courses not only with masters students but also with senior undergraduates makes it more likely that they will lose interest or fail to develop the necessary initiative and discipline. These may be reflected in low retention and high TTC rates – the very problems the restructuring set out to address.
- 6) Several of the courses were described to us as “shell” courses that bring cohorts together for milestones (comprehensive exam preparation in SA 89; prospectus writing in SA857; grant writing in SA840/841). These restructuring efforts were designed to guide students but also to “provide structure for faculty members” by requiring students and their supervisors to work together on the research prospectus during the summer months (the annual research design course is only offered in the summer term). “Shell” courses act as surrogates for the mentoring that ideally takes place in the 1:1 faculty supervisor: graduate student relationship. The review team fully understands that the shell courses represent an attempt to address the problems posed by the low faculty: graduate student ratio combined with uneven loads and levels of graduate supervision, but we are uneasy with so many of the required courses in the program being directed to this purpose - perhaps at the expense of courses organized around intellectual content and goals.
- 7) The Department is making an admirable attempt to accept international students in their PhD programs. This brings challenges – faced by all universities that have greater “internationalization” in their strategic plans –for greater ESL, socialization and other support services. This cannot be the sole responsibility of Departments – the University’s International Centre needs a stronger focus on graduate student needs

### *3. Graduate Supervision*

As in most universities, supervisory responsibilities are not shared or evenly distributed in the Department. There are many reasons for this including the interests of students themselves. However the small proportion of anthropology: sociology faculty members (8:14) means that the supervisory load is especially heavy for anthropologists.

Research in graduate education in the social sciences indicates that the support of an intellectually and personally engaged faculty supervisor and mentor is as important as funding for graduate student success and timely completion. Faculty who do not train students in labs or co-author publications with them need to make their graduate training activities visible. Their supervisory labour – facilitating graduate student publication by reading and editing their papers, organizing workshops and conference sessions for their students, providing hands-on research training, placing students in jobs and networks, helping them obtain grants and awards - is hard for administrators to see. This is particularly problematic if, as at SFU, many of the senior administration were schooled in a different intellectual mentoring tradition. The University needs to develop ways to recognize the work of graduate supervision in social science disciplines specializing in qualitative and ethnographic methodologies. For its part, faculty might consider a Department newsletter, Colloquium series, annual student conference, “Research Days”, or other creative forms of visibility. The work involved in this would also need to be visible, perhaps as a service responsibility of a departmental committee.

### *4. New Graduate Initiatives*

The initiative to launch a new masters program in Public Anthropology is in part an effort to formalize the Department’s strength in qualitative, policy-oriented, community-based learning – a strength that graduate students are clearly drawn to and that establishes Simon Fraser as in the forefront in Canada. This is a current trend in anthropology in the U.S. but the only other public anthropology program we are aware of in Canada is a new UWaterloo-Guelph joint masters. This proposed program also nicely complements the character of Sociology at SFU where qualitative/mixed methods prevail and policy research is exceptionally strong.

There are many advantages to consolidating the Department’s resources and strengths in the new masters initiative. The Department is clear that, at the masters level, students “are expected to understand both traditions and may be supervised by faculty from either discipline” (p. 37). But there are risks : the idea has value, but if developed it may well mean the end of the traditional MA in Anthropology, since it is unlikely that the small number of Anthropology faculty members will be able to sustain 2 masters programs as well as the very ambitious PhD program they already have; hiring and retaining new faculty whose areas of strength are theory and cultural studies approaches may become more difficult (see section IV).

The Department needs to discuss this and be aware of the dangers as well as the advantages of going in this direction.

#### *5. Summary and Recommendations*

- 1) The number of required courses should be reduced.*
- 2) PhD students need more flexibility in their course options and timetables.*
- 3) The Department might wish to examine whether a part-time graduate program would be useful.*
- 4) PhD courses should be separated from those for MA and senior undergraduates*
- 5) More electives should be added. This would reduce the teaching of independent studies, and offer more faculty the opportunity to teach in their fields of research.*
- 6) The Pro-seminar should be redesigned to provide a context for more informal yet structured engagement between faculty, doctoral and masters students. One possibility would be to turn it into a Colloquium/Pro-Seminar, where students would be required to attend and write response papers to presentations by PhD students, who would present their work at various stages of development, and faculty. Another is to make the Pro-Seminar half professional development and half Departmental colloquium – this would eliminate the need to establish a new colloquium which overworked faculty have no time to do.*
- 7) Ensure that the current PhD students are looked after before adding new numbers*

#### **IV: Research**

##### *1. Quality and Quantity of Research*

The Department's research foci fall in the same five interlinked, interdisciplinary areas as its teaching – namely Globalization and Development; Health; Environment and Science; Knowledge, Culture and Power; Social Justice, Policy, Law and Society; and Women, Gender and Sexuality. The Department's strong interdisciplinarity is showcased by the fact that sociologists and anthropologists are represented in each of these fields.

The quality and quantity of research programs undertaken by faculty in both Sociology and Anthropology are excellent. Fifteen of a total of 25 faculty, plus 2 retired faculty (Adam and McLaren) have ongoing SSHRC, CURA or CIHR funding. This is an amazing record given the very high rejection rates of these particular granting councils, and the fact that much of their research is qualitative, which does not attract – or in some cases need – large research grants. Moreover, since proposals to these agencies are vetted by peers, faculty research in SA is obviously highly ranked by experts in their own fields, the most exacting critics of all. From what we could tell from the documents we had access to, virtually all of the remaining 10 members of the Department have Workshop or conference grants, internal grants, or money

from other external sources. Most are also heavily involved in unfunded research projects, outreach work and/or other activist work in marginalized communities.

Overall research productivity is high. Faculty in SA are continually publishing a very respectable number of books (with solid academic publishers), book chapters, refereed articles (in prestigious high-profile journals) and reports. Many of the established faculty have national and in some cases international profiles; those who do not are generally new hires, at the start of what look like very promising careers. While the cv's varied widely in transparency, breadth and depth – the University might wish to consider making it mandatory for faculty to submit cv's in a universal but user-friendly protocol analogous to the system used by the Ontario Council on Graduate Studies – there did not appear to be any “dead wood” (faculty members doing no significant research or contributing in an equivalent way to pedagogy and/or administration). Even those who are not officially expected to do research, such as senior lecturers, are writing, actively and constructively contributing to public issues and scholarly debates.

What this kind of qualitative and ethnographic research does need, however, is time. Many in the Department commented on the potentially disastrous effects for their research of SSHRC's abolition of the Research Time Stipend. Many sociologists and most of the anthropologists in this Department are doing research that does not need huge grants, expensive equipment or a stable of research assistants. They need relatively small amounts of money, but more than that they need teaching releases or their equivalent. We recommend that the University consider the possibility of establishing annual or biennial internal competitions to provide release time to qualified applicants in the Social Science and Humanities. If the University wishes to retain its excellent national reputation in these fields, such an initiative may be critical. The University might also consider rewarding extraordinary contributions to pedagogy and/or to graduate student supervision with a separate or corollary fund. This competition could be open to all Faculties.

## *2. New and Emerging Areas*

We were asked to comment on the possibility of new and emerging research areas in the Department. While we would be cautious about new initiatives at a time when existing resources are both insufficient and under threat, department members are brimming with enthusiasm, initiative and ideas. As noted in section III, several anthropologists have proposed to build on existing areas of strength – in fieldwork, community-based participatory and action research, in already established collaborations with international NGOs, in domestic community organizations and service agencies – to establish a program in Experimental Ethnography and ultimately an Institute and graduate programs in Public Anthropology. Its initial goals are to teach public and private sector groups (such as NGOs) the technological, creative and critical

intellectual skills they will need to communicate effectively with diverse audiences through text, digital media, and creative forms. While such a proposal clearly has merit, its effects and implications for new faculty, on workloads and on existing graduate and undergraduate programs will need to be carefully assessed and broadly debated before further action is taken.

### *3. Recommendations*

*1. We recommend that the University consider the possibility of establishing annual or biennial internal competitions to provide release time to qualified applicants in the Social Science and Humanities. If the University wishes to retain its excellent national reputation in these fields, such an initiative may be critical. The University might also consider rewarding extraordinary contributions to pedagogy and/or to graduate student supervision with a separate or corollary fund. This competition could be open to all Faculties.*

*2. If any new programs are initiated, their effects and implications for new faculty, on workloads and on existing graduate and undergraduate programs should be carefully assessed and broadly debated.*

### **V: Faculty Renewal, Retention and Succession**

The Sociology and Anthropology Department faces strong challenges in the near future in terms of renewal and retention of faculty. Since its last external review in 2003, the department has lost 9.0 CFL FTE's and added 9.5 CFL FTE's. Although these numbers look balanced, many faculty are cross-appointed or half time: four are jointly appointed with other academic units (Gerontology, first Nations, Political Science and Women's Studies); many are also Associate members of other programs and centres in the University, particularly Latin American Studies which is administered by SA staff. Therefore, while student numbers have grown, actual FTE's have not increased. At present the Department, while hard-pressed, seems to be handling the increased workload quite well. Its ability to do so in the future, however, may be compromised due to its demographic profile. Over the next three years, seven faculty members, a full one-third of the faculty complement, will reach or exceed normal retirement age. If these people retire – and statistically most faculty stay on only two or three years after the age of 65 - they do so in an environment where replacements may not be forthcoming. It is essential that the university develop a plan to keep this Department at or near its present faculty complement.

The Department may also face difficulties in retaining some of its new hires. While departmental morale overall is quite high, due to its democratic decision-making processes and strong leadership, some feel there is there is limited intellectual community. The problem is two-fold. First, due to the absence of consistent and long-term funding for graduate students, some newer faculty fear that the very strongest graduate applicants in their areas of research

will choose universities that offer superior financial packages. Second, there is little of the kind of intellectual life one typically expects in departments with doctoral programs – few colloquia, works-in-progress seminars or guest speakers, few events organized by the graduate students. This is exacerbated by geography – the curse of a commuter university with multiple campuses – and scarce resources: the Department lacks either the funds or the will to organize a regular program of workshops, conferences, colloquia, and visiting scholar presentations. Faculty meet as a group only at departmental meetings, which provide few opportunities for newcomers to develop either insight into the intellectual and research interests of their colleagues, or a sense of community and belonging to the Department as a whole. More senior faculty, most of whom are well integrated into their particular niche, do not seem to realize this is a problem, and/or they are too heavily loaded to spare the time to organize academic (or social) events. This difference in perspective suggests a worrying generational gap that the Department should examine more closely.

#### *Recommendations*

- 1. It is crucial that the Department be permitted to replace some if not all of those who retire. This is especially crucial for the viability of the Anthropology program.*
- 2. The Department should evaluate the level of intellectual engagement occurring at the departmental level. Presentation of graduate student and faculty research should be encouraged along with departmentally sponsored workshops, colloquia, guest speakers, and conferences. This is a matter of faculty retention as well as departmental morale.*

#### **VI: Departmental Governance**

There are few if any problems with the governance of the Department of Sociology and Anthropology. On the contrary, it is a model of how to maintain coherence and collegiality within a university unit. Although there is some lack of cohesion, especially among newer faculty (see section V), the Department has very high morale overall, with no major issues of contention among its members, both faculty and staff. This is due to the Department's leadership and its commitment to a democratic, consensus-based form of decision-making. A number of faculty members spoke to us about the importance of nourishing and retaining this mode of governance, showing a strong allegiance to the democratic decision-making procedures the Department has adopted despite the time and effort required. This commitment is reinforced and fostered by the current chair, who is highly regarded by all members of the faculty who spoke to us.

Another important aspect of the coherence and consensus of the Department is a strong sense of respect between the sociologists and anthropologists. There has apparently

been a merging of the two disciplines such that the Department is not divided into competing factions. Such an accomplishment has major benefits for departmental administration and for streamlining course offerings, however too much willingness to compromise can lead to a certain absence of disciplinary specificity for students wishing to specialize in one discipline or the other (see section II).

We were surprised, however, at the relative lack of integration of one of the Department's potentially best assets, the Canada Research Chair in Community Culture and Health. Part of the problem is geographic, since the nature of the Chair's research demands that she work primarily out of the downtown campus. However, the Department has made less use of her – on committees, in teaching and governance, than it could and should. A departmental Colloquium, previously recommended, would help make her research more visible to SA faculty and to those graduate students not studying with her, as would membership on strategic committees. Another idea would be to have her teach an elective, regularly scheduled graduate course in her research area.

#### **VII: Staff**

The Department of Sociology and Anthropology has 3.5 FTE staff, a Department Manager who also serves as Undergraduate Advisor, a Secretary to the Chair of Sociology/Anthropology and the Director of Latin American Studies, a Secretary to the Graduate Program Chair in both SA and LAS, and a General Office Secretary. Members of staff appear dedicated to the Department, and human relations are generally good among staff members themselves, and between staff and faculty.

However, University cutbacks, offloading of administrative tasks, and increased student numbers have dramatically increased workloads and staff stress. There have been particular problems in the Graduate Studies program since the retirement of the unit's long-time graduate administrator – threats that the position would be reduced to half-time and problems arising from the loss of large chunks of the unit's institutional memory. A full-time Graduate Secretary is essential. Staff in SA are responsible for a number of different programs, each with distinct individual specificities: undergraduate studies in Sociology and Anthropology, graduate studies (MA and PhD) in Sociology and Anthropology, and the Latin American Studies program. Given all of this, the University should consider adding a half time undergraduate advisor to take some of the weight off the Department Manager.

There are also issues of space. Staff have no dedicated space for lunch or breaks. This is particularly important for the General Office Secretary who must eat her lunch in her office, a high traffic area which houses the Department's photocopying and fax machines. While her position requires her to be the "face of the Department", the receptionist who answers general

questions and refers people elsewhere, it does not require her to be on duty during lunch and breaks. A staff room and rotating lunch hours should be considered.

### *Summary*

1. *The University should consider adding a half time undergraduate advisor.*
2. *The University should consider remodelling or renovating existing space to establish a room for staff. The Department should consider the virtues of rotating lunch hours for staff.*

## **SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### ***Undergraduate Studies***

1. *The Department, with university support, should engage in more aggressive recruiting strategies to inform students about the disciplines of sociology and anthropology and about the strengths of the programs at SFU. These strategies should include high school visits and web site design.*
2. *The Department requires a replacement for its outgoing quantitative sociologist to ensure that its community based learning courses and quantitative methods courses are adequately staffed. The Department also needs to hire at least one more Anthropologist to enlarge the number and variety of courses and to compensate for impending retirements in that discipline.*

### ***Graduate Studies***

3. *The number of required courses should be reduced.*
4. *PhD students need more flexibility in their course options and timetables.*
5. *The Department might wish to examine whether a part-time graduate program would be useful.*
6. *PhD courses should be separated from those for MA and senior undergraduates*
7. *More electives should be added. This would reduce the teaching of independent studies, and offer more faculty the opportunity to teach in their fields of research.*
8. *The Pro-seminar should be redesigned to provide a context for more informal yet structured engagement between faculty, doctoral and masters students. One possibility would be to turn it into a Colloquium/Pro-Seminar, where students would be required to attend and write response papers to presentations by PhD students, who would present their work at various stages of development, and faculty. Another is to make the Pro-Seminar half professional development and half Departmental colloquium – this would eliminate the need to establish a new colloquium which overworked faculty have no time to do.*
9. *Ensure that the current PhD students are looked after before adding new numbers*

### ***Research***

10. *We recommend that the University consider the possibility of establishing annual or biennial internal competitions to provide release time to qualified applicants in the Social Science and Humanities. If the University wishes to retain its excellent national reputation in these fields, such an initiative may be critical. The University might also consider rewarding extraordinary contributions to pedagogy and/or to graduate student supervision with a separate or corollary fund. This competition could be open to all Faculties.*
11. *If any new programs are initiated, their effects and implications for new faculty, on workloads and on existing graduate and undergraduate programs should be carefully assessed and broadly debated.*

### **Faculty Retention and Succession**

12. *It is crucial that the Department be permitted to replace some if not all of those who retire. This is especially crucial for the viability of the Anthropology program.*
13. *The Department should evaluate the level of intellectual engagement occurring at the departmental level. Presentation of graduate student and faculty research should be encouraged along with departmentally sponsored workshops, colloquia, guest speakers, and conferences. This is a matter of faculty retention as well as departmental morale.*

### **Staff**

14. *The University should consider adding a half time undergraduate advisor.*
15. *The University should consider remodelling or renovating existing space to establish a room for staff. The Department should consider the virtues of rotating lunch hours for staff.*

Overall the Sociology and Anthropology department at SFU is functioning very well. It has a superb undergraduate program, much more interdisciplinary and writing-intensive than most; a productive faculty, many with national and international reputations; and a level of collegiality, cooperativeness and generosity of spirit that would serve as a model for departments across Canada. Its graduate programs, particularly the PhD, are experiencing growing pains resulting from a level of expansion that leapt ahead of funding and faculty resources, coinciding as it did with cutbacks and loss of faculty (primarily positions left vacant by retirements). It also faces challenges with space and faculty retention. Indeed, it will be unable to offer an adequate range of courses in the two disciplines if its present faculty complement is not at the very least maintained.

## EXTERNAL REVIEW – ACTION PLAN

<b>Section 1 – To be completed by the Responsible Unit Person e.g. Chair or Director</b>				
<b>Unit under review</b>	<b>Date of Review Site visit</b>	<b>Responsible Unit person,</b>	<b>Faculty Dean</b>	
Sociology and Anthropology	March 24-26 2010	Dr. Jane Pulkingham (Chair)	Dr. Lesley Cormack	
<i><b>Note:</b> It is <u>not</u> expected that every recommendation made by the Review Team needs to be included here. The major thrusts of the Report should be identified and some consolidation of the recommendations may be possible while other recommendations of lesser importance may be excluded.</i>				
<b>External Review Recommendation</b>	<b>Unit's response notes/Comments (if any)</b>	<b>Action to be taken</b>	<b>Resource implications (if any)</b>	<b>Expected completion date</b>
<p><b><i>Undergraduate studies</i></b></p> <p><b><i>Recommendation: # 1</i></b></p> <p>The reviewers assess the Sociology/Anthropology undergraduate program as "superb," and "much more interdisciplinary and writing-intensive than most." The reviewers also note that in some respects, for example, experiential/field learning, the department is "clearly ahead of the curve" and "the envy of other Sociology and Anthropology programs."</p> <p>The reviewers recommend that with university support, the department should more widely and actively communicate the strengths of its programs at the</p>	<p>The department is very pleased with the assessment which confirms our strength and distinctive contribution in the area of undergraduate education and training, in particular, in the areas of interdisciplinary teaching, writing/critical thinking centred curriculum, and experiential learning. We look forward to developing these strengths to meet the needs of the new generation of students SFU will see as a result of the reallocation of Provincial funds to the former colleges and the recruitment of international students. Both of these areas require additional resources as SFU recalibrates its transfer programs and adapts to the language support needs of ESL students.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. In collaboration with University planning bodies, the department will continue to develop forward-looking curriculum, in particular, with attention to the new types of students entering the university.</li> <li>2. In consultation with the Assistant Dean of FASS, and the Associate Dean of FASS responsible for student recruitment, the Department UCC will review options for department outreach at high schools and colleges, and develop an action plan accordingly, to complement university and faculty-level recruitment initiatives.</li> <li>3. The Chair of the Department in consultation with the GPC, UCC,</li> </ol>	<p>Potential release for faculty working on relevant development committees.</p> <p>Potential course release for faculty who engage in outreach initiatives.</p> <p>Potential 0.5 Staff position</p>	<p>Fall 2011</p> <p>Fall 2011</p>

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<p>undergraduate level through more aggressive recruiting strategies directed to high school students (visits), and through the web.</p>	<p>With the appropriate university support, we welcome the opportunity to be more proactive in communicating our strengths to potential future students through more aggressive student recruitment initiatives.</p>	<p>Department Manager, will review current staffing functions, staffing functions across units in FASS and the university, to consider alternate ways of organizing staff support for department activities directed at (undergraduate) student recruitment and support (e.g., communications/recruitment officer; undergraduate advisor).</p> <p>4. The UCC, in consultation with the Chair and Department as a whole, will review options for revamping web content and design directed at undergraduate student recruitment, and make recommendations to the department.</p>	<p>Consulting/design fees associated with website re-design. (Amount to be determined)</p>	<p>Fall 2011</p>
<p><b>Faculty succession in Sociology and Anthropology respectively.</b></p> <p><b>Recommendations: # 2 &amp; 12</b></p> <p>The reviewers note the excellence of our unit on many levels; at the same time they underscore the urgency of replacing certain positions (lost due to retirements/resignation) in terms of the ongoing/future viability of the department.</p> <p>Specifically, the reviewers identify (1) the precarious position of the Anthropology program and the</p>	<p>The department is appreciative of the reviewers' determination that Sociology/Anthropology is an "excellent" unit that functions very well, emphasizing in particular the strengths, attractiveness and distinctiveness of our programming at the undergraduate level, its synergistic and efficient interdisciplinary programming at the undergraduate and graduate levels, the productivity of our faculty (many with national and</p>	<p>1. The department will make a request for a <b>1.0 CFL position in Anthropology, to commence in Fall 2011.</b> [Anthropologist with</p>	<p>1.0 CFL tenure track position in Anthropology at the Assistant</p>	<p>Fall 2011</p>

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<p>interdisciplinary experiential learning dimension of the curriculum for Sociology and Anthropology, because of the recent retirement of Marilyn Gates (urban &amp; environmental anthropology, development and experiential learning) and (2) the critical loss to the Sociology program due to the impending resignation of Fernando De Maio (inequality and health, medical sociology, quantitative sociological methodology), the only full-time sociology faculty member qualified to teach quantitative sociological methods at both the undergraduate and graduate levels.</p> <p>The reviewers also note that as the department faces a significant retirement "bulge" in the next 3- 5 years, retirement replacement will continue to be a critical concern.</p>	<p>international reputations), and the collegial, cooperative and generous spirit in which faculty self-govern.</p> <p>The department concurs with the reviewers' assessment of the serious jeopardy to the unit of recent retirements and an impending resignation. In the past two years, the department has lost 3 positions to retirement/modified contract, 2 in Sociology and 1.0 in Anthropology; during this time, the department has gained the equivalent of a 1.2 CFL position (including the very recent conversion of the CRC from a 0.5 to a 1.0 CFL position).</p> <p>By the fall of 2011, the department will lose a further 1.5 CFL positions in Sociology due to resignation (1.0 CFL position) and retirement (0.5 CFL position). <b><i>The net loss of 3.3 CFL positions creates a significant gap in faculty complement.</i></b></p> <p>The department concurs with the reviewers that the faculty complement should remain at its current level, and at the very least in the immediate term, <b>two losses</b> should be replaced without which the ability of the department to maintain the necessary curriculum will be <b>fundamentally jeopardized</b>.</p>	<p>scholarly interests in community-based experiential learning, and community-based research, focusing on issues such as urban social justice, new communication technologies, and/or environment and society.]</p> <p>2. The department will make a request for a <b>1.0 CFL position in Sociology, to commence in January 2012.</b> [Sociologist with a primary scholarly interest in social inequality and health or medical sociology in general, with advanced quantitative skills, and with a strong secondary interest in one or more of the department's thematic areas of specialization: globalization &amp; development; health, science &amp; environment; knowledge, culture and power; social justice, policy, law &amp; society; women, gender &amp; sexuality.]</p>	<p>Professor level</p> <p>1.0 CFL tenure track position in Sociology at the Assistant Professor level</p>	<p>Spring 2012</p>
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<p><b>Graduate studies.</b></p> <p><b>Recommendations: # 3 -9 inclusive &amp; # 13</b></p> <p>The reviewers note the “growing pains” the department is experiencing as a result of the level of expansion of the PhD program recently, relative to the availability of graduate student funding and faculty resources.</p> <p>The reviewers identify a number of areas the department should address at the graduate level pertaining to the number and kind of course offerings, course requirements, forum for intellectual exchange at the unit level, and graduate student support. The reviewers recommend a slower pace of growth, especially at the PhD level, into the future.</p>	<p>The department recognizes the additional strains placed upon the unit as a result of the overall growth in the graduate program, and shift toward PhD admissions.</p> <p>Having restructured the program in response to the 2003 external review, and in the context of SFU graduate education priority mandates, the department will soon have completed the implementation of our new PhD curriculum structure. We have now also achieved the goal of increasing the number of PhD students, and have already leveled off 2010 admissions to this program. We will conduct a general evaluation of the recently implemented curriculum in 2011-2012, with attention to the areas identified in the current external review, and in particular with an eye to rebalancing the ratio of MA/PhD admissions.</p> <p>As members of a variety of other SFU programs and centres (e.g., the Centre for Political Global Economy, the Latin American Studies Program, Gender, Sexuality and Women’s Studies,</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. In consultation with faculty, and in planning and assigning teaching duties, the Chair of the Department will redirect faculty teaching resources to the graduate program level in order to ensure that more regularly scheduled (non Directed Readings) elective courses are offered on a regular rather than episodic basis. These will be organized around the five key thematic areas of research/teaching strength identified in the Department’s External Review Self-Report and current Three Year Plan, as well as annual graduate admissions.</li> <li>2. In addition, the chair of the department will actively work with other cognate disciplines, and other units with sociology/anthropology faculty, to explore opportunities for synergetic cross-listing of graduate courses.</li> <li>3. After two PhD cohorts have fully completed the coursework associated with the first two years</li> </ol>	<p>Cost to the undergraduate program through a small reduction in the number of undergraduate course offerings</p> <p>No cost: may create savings</p> <p>No cost</p>	<p>Spring 2011</p> <p>Fall 2010</p> <p>Fall 2011- Summer 2012</p>
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	<p>Gerontology, Political Science, First Nations), as well as other research networks based at SFU and other universities, individual faculty members are very active in scholarly exchange; in recent years, these activities have been undertaken in lieu of a formal unit-level forum for intellectual exchange. This form of intellectual exchange makes it more challenging for graduate students as a whole to identify a locus for engaging in disciplinary intellectual exchange with SA faculty, as well as other students in the program.</p>	<p>plus one term of the program, the GPC, in consultation with Department constituents, will undertake a review the current graduate program at the MA and PhD levels, focusing on the latter in particular, to identify ways to strengthen the program and address areas of concern.</p> <p>4. The department will reinstitute a unit level seminar for intellectual exchange, to be held once per month, as part of the regular graduate pro-dev seminar.</p>	<p>Dedicated portion of department annual operating budget (Amount to be determined).</p>	<p>Fall 2010</p>
<p><b>Research</b></p> <p><b>Recommendation: # 10 &amp; 11</b></p> <p>The reviewers underscore the excellence of the quality and quantity of the research programs undertaken by faculty in both disciplines in the department, and the “amazing” record of peer reviewed research funding.</p> <p>The reviewers are concerned, however, that the university’s excellent national reputation in the fields of sociology and anthropology (and sub-disciplinary areas) will be jeopardized now that</p>	<p>The department is very proud of the reviewers’ endorsement of the high quality, volume, and integration of SA faculty research productivity, work accomplished by a fully engaged complement of the whole faculty rather than by a smaller subset. The highly competitive funding track record, and quality of publication venues has positioned the department as a national and international leader in several areas of study.</p>	<p>1. The Chair will initiate discussions at the level of FASS and the VP Research regarding institutional mechanisms for supporting intensive research efforts on the part of individual faculty through, for example, the development of a</p>	<p>Dedicated funding: amount to be determined pending approval and implementation</p>	<p>Fall 2010</p> <p>Fall 2010</p>

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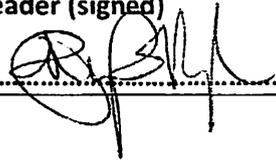
<p>SSHRC (the major funder of SA faculty research), and the university is no longer in the business of cost-shared funding of teaching release (RTS) for most of its research awards.</p> <p>The reviewers urge SFU to continue to direct resources to support intensive research efforts on the part of faculty by developing a university level funding competition to support teaching release for research purposes.</p> <p>The reviewers' recommend that any new initiatives by way of research and/or programmatic innovations that will require department and/or university resources, be debated broadly and deliberated carefully before action is taken, given resource constraints.</p>	<p>There are a number of innovative research/teaching initiatives SA faculty members have begun to explore including targeted international teaching/research exchanges, a Centre for Experimental Ethnography, and an Institute for Public Anthropology. These initiatives are at the preliminary "ideas" stage only and will be pursued with due caution and diligence, with careful attention to their faculty and programmatic resource implications.</p>	<p>university level funding competition that provides stipends for teaching release for research purposes. A portion of CTEF funds might be dedicated to such an initiative.</p>	<p>of the proposal.</p>	
<p><b>Staff</b></p> <p><b>Recommendations: # 14 &amp; 15</b></p> <p>The reviewers note the dramatic increase in workload and stress associated with two staffing functions– that of the department</p>	<p>The department is one of the more efficient, and understaffed, units in FASS, especially when factoring into the staffing function equation (which</p>	<p>1. As indicated above, the Chair of the Department in consultation with the GPC, UCC, Department Manager, will review current staffing functions,</p>	<p>0.5 Staff position</p>	<p>Fall 2011</p>

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<p>manager and the graduate program secretary – because of staffing cutbacks, administrative downloading, and rising student numbers.</p> <p>The reviewers recommend that</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) the graduate secretary position be returned to full-time (having been reduced to a half-time position during the period of the hiring freeze), and</li> <li>2) the department manager be relieved of one area of her duties, that of undergraduate advising, by creating a separate 0.5 position dedicated to undergraduate advising.</li> </ol>	<p>IRP data does not) administrative responsibility for the Latin American Studies Program that operates both undergraduate and graduate degree programs.</p> <p>Since the external review site visit, the graduate program secretary position was increased from part-to full-time status, and the department has recently appointed a new person to this position. The department is relieved to be able to have a full-time staff person performing this important support function and we are very pleased with the recent hire.</p> <p>The manager's role continues to be over-laden.</p>	<p>staffing functions across units in FASS and the university, to consider alternate ways of organizing staff support for department activities directed at (undergraduate) student recruitment and support, paying particular attention to redistributing the current support functions performed by the department manager, perhaps by creating a part-time 0.5 undergraduate advisor position.</p>		
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The above action plan has been considered by the Unit under review and has been discussed and agreed to by the Dean.

<p>Unit Leader (signed)</p> <p>Name <u></u></p>	<p>Title <u>Professor &amp; Chair</u></p>	<p>Date <u>July 9, 2010</u></p>
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## Section 2 - Dean's comments and endorsement of the Action Plan :

I am delighted to read such a strong external review of an excellent department. In the areas of collegiality and governance, research productivity, and innovative teaching, particularly, the external reviewers have drawn our attention to the major strengths of this department.

With regards to the recommendations listed above:

1. FASS has already begun to work with recruitment in Student Services to ensure that FASS programs receive appropriate recognition. We would be pleased to work with SA to develop options for outreach that they might undertake.
2. Staffing and faculty positions. All departments and schools in FASS have lean staffing levels; SA is no exception. FASS worked with SA this year to reinstate a lost .5 position in the area of the graduate secretary. It is unlikely that there will be further increases to SA staffing in the immediate future.

In terms of faculty positions, the arguments made by the external reviewers and reiterated by the Department are valid.

+Anthropology, particularly, has a heavy load as the much smaller portion of the Department and the loss of Dr. De Maio to the Sociology program will be significant, since he was responsible for required quantitative sociology courses. We are therefore sympathetic to the request for these two positions. Unfortunately, for the next three or four years, FASS may have to surrender all or most of the positions vacated through retirement just to make the anticipated cuts to budget. I would anticipate that Dr. De Maio's position will have a high priority in a faculty renewal plan, but it is not clear that there will be any positions funded in that plan.

3. Graduate students. The recommendations of the external review team are thoughtful and I would leave it to the department to work through them, as they appear to be doing.
4. Research. FASS has just inaugurated the Shadbolt Fellowship program, which will give up to 3 faculty members teaching release for a year in order to concentrate on their research. This responds in part to the issue about the end of RTS from SSHRC. As well, FASS would be happy to work with SA on a proposal for some central funds that might help researchers find the time they need to complete research.

	<p>Date July 6/10</p>	<p>Faculty Déan Bridget Carty</p>
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