

## **Strategic Plan 2020**

October 2020

### **Mission**

The Department of Sociology strives to be an exemplar of an academic unit focused on social justice. Our mission is to maintain excellence and further strengthen our national and global reputation in and across four specialty areas: Criminology, Environmental Sociology, Globalization and Political Economy, and Critical Race and Ethnic Studies. Of these specialty areas, three are not commonly found in US Sociology departments, and the combination of the four is not found in any. This distinction provides a unique identity and supports our determination to recruit and retain highly capable and motivated graduate students from around the nation and the world who are committed to advancing the kind of knowledge the department stands for and is pursuing. In addition, this identity presents an array of unique opportunities to our students. We are dedicated to collaboration across those core areas.

Our four specialty areas allow us to address questions of social justice and injustice by examining institutions and practices that are at the root of both. Social justice requires rigorous examination of data and focused theoretical analysis of the structural causes of injustice, harm and hardship. Our research directly translates into continuous enhancement of teaching and learning, formulation of public policies (especially in our four specialty areas), and organizing forums dedicated to promoting a just society. Opportunities should be determined according to abilities and drive rather than locations within the social structures into which people are born. Furthermore, in a just society, the interests of nonhumans would be promoted along with the interests of humans.

The Department of Sociology aims to exemplify the value and benefits of diversity. In both our work and our departmental community we endeavor to foster: diversity, remediation of persistent inequalities suffered by those who are oppressed and marginalized, and qualitative social transformation, and to actively participate in such transformation as teachers and researchers. We consciously work toward understanding the roots of oppression, and we conscientiously use this knowledge to recruit, attract and retain faculty and students from diverse populations and marginalized and oppressed groups.

### **Values**

We value collaboration, innovation, diversity, community, and perseverance.

### **Aims**

We work to foster:

- 1) excellent engagement with the sociological research enterprise that results in publication of excellent findings designed to create a more just society;
- 2) an inclusive, diverse, and vibrant workplace for stellar faculty and staff who strive for excellence;
- 3) a national reputation for high quality, active, and engaged scholarship;
- 4) a high-quality education for undergraduates who use their sociological imagination to help them understand how society shapes them and how they can shape society;

- 5) curriculum development that ensures that every student graduating with a Sociology degree has a solid foundation in Sociology;
- 6) a high-quality graduate experience that integrates academic sociology with concerns for social justice and the potential to enter a wide variety of sociological careers; and
- 7) successful career placement of graduate students in government, academic, non-profit, and private sector positions.

### **Priorities**

- 1) an expanded resource base through development funds;
- 2) increase quality and number of applications to external funders;
- 3) develop an MA program in Applied Sociology;
- 4) expand international and intercultural opportunities by promoting study abroad and intercultural experiences and creating other international and intercultural links
- 5) Offer master classes from visiting faculty;
- 6) Work with community groups to help them address critical issues, provide research opportunities for graduate students, and expose graduate students to alternative careers;
- 7) Increase pursuit of graduate fellowships, both from internal and external sources;