UC Merced Sociology Graduates
Using their Education in Careers or Education: Results from an Alumni Survey
Sociology Program Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of a BA in Sociology, Students will:

1 - Think critically about the causes and consequences of social inequality.

2 - Design and evaluate empirical sociological research.

3 - Explain and apply the major theoretical perspectives in sociology.

4 - Communicate orally and in writing about sociological concepts.

5 - Use their sociological education outside the undergraduate classroom, particularly in their careers or future study.
We conducted two surveys in August 2014 using Qualtrics.

Survey 1: UC Merced Sociology Alumni

Emailed survey link to 74 Sociology alumni
71% response rate from those who opened email.

Survey 2: Current UC Merced Sociology Majors, Juniors and Seniors

Emailed survey link to 116 current sociology majors
53.4% responded.  N = 62.
Direct Evidence

Alumni Survey – Respondent reports of current activities – job or grad school

Indirect Evidence

Alumni Survey - questions asking how useful various skills and knowledge acquired in sociology courses are to their current job or graduate school

Current Student Survey – similar questions about how useful sociology skills and knowledge are to current activities. – Results not presented today.

Graduating Senior Survey – 44 graduating seniors asked how proficient they are in PLO. – Results not presented today.
Q1. We'd like to get a sense of what you have been doing since receiving your bachelor's degree in sociology. As of the week of May 5, 2014, were you employed, at school, both, or doing something else?

Please select all that apply: (additional instructions to respondent deleted)

- Working at a job or unpaid internship (1)
- Enrolled for classes at a college or university (2)
- Other, please describe (3) ____________________

If Working at a job or unpaid ... Is Not Selected, Then Skip To takeclasses

Q2 How many hours did you usually work during a typical week on the job you held the week of May 5, 2014?______

Q3 What company, organization, or agency employed you during the week of May 5, 2014?

If you had more than one job: record the employer for whom you worked the most hours that week.

- Employer or organization name (1) ____________________
- Department or Division (2) ____________________
- City or town (3) ____________________
- State or foreign country (4) ____________________
- Prefer not to answer (5)
Q4. Employment Activities Which of the following categories best reflects that employer's main business or industry during the week of May 5, 2014?

(Please select only one response. If your employer had more than one type of business, please answer for the type of business primarily performed at the location where you worked.)

- Biotechnology (1)
- Construction or mining (2)
- Education (3)
- Finance, insurance, or real estate services (4)
- Health services (5)
- Information technology or computer services (6)
- Other services (e.g., social, legal, business) (7)
- Manufacturing (8)
- Public administration/government (9)
- Research, please specify: (10) ____________________
- Transportation services, utilities, or communications (11)
- Wholesale or retail trade, including food services (restaurants, bars, night clubs, etc.) (12)
- Other, please specify: (13) ____________________
Q7 How useful are the following sociology-related skills in the performance of your job?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill</th>
<th>Not at all useful (1)</th>
<th>Somewhat Useful (2)</th>
<th>Very useful (3)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Collect data (1)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Use software (EXCEL, SPSS, SAS, STATA) to analyze data (2)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Interpret the results of any type of data gathering (3)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Develop evidence-based arguments (4)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Use the computer to gather information on the results of others' research (5)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Write a report (6)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Give an oral presentation (7)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Engage in discussions at work using concepts or information from sociology classes (8)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Use information about social inequality you learned in sociology classes in your work (9)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Apply theoretical perspectives in sociology to issues at work (10)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Q9 Between completing your bachelor's degree in sociology and the week of May 5, 2014, did you take any college or university courses or enroll in a college or university for any other reason, such as completing a master's PhD, medical, or law degree?
   Yes (1)
   No (2)  
   If No Is Selected, Then Skip To How satisfied are you with the traini...

Q10 Did you obtain a degree?
   Yes (1)
   No, and I do not expect to (2)
   No, but I expect to (3)
   Don't Know (4)
   If No, and I do not expect to Is Selected, Then Skip To How satisfied are you with the traini...

Q11 What degree did you obtain or do you expect to obtain? (Check all that apply.)
   Bachelor's degree (1)
   Post-baccalaureate certificate (2)
   Master's degree (including MBA) (3)
   Post master's certificate (4)
   Doctorate (Ph.D., D.S.C., D.Sc., Ed.D.) (5)
   Other professional degree (JD, LLB, ThD, MD, DDS, etc.), please specify: (6)

Q12 Please describe your primary field of study:______________________________

Q13 From which college or university did you take classes after completing your BA? If you took classes at more than one institution, list that from which you obtained or expect to obtain a degree.
   College or University Name: (1) ____________________
   City/Town (2) ____________________
   State/Foreign Country (3) ____________________

Q14 How useful are the following sociology-related skills in your coursework?
Q16 How satisfied are you with the training supplied by the UC Merced undergraduate sociology program in the following areas?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Very satisfied (1)</th>
<th>Somewhat satisfied (2)</th>
<th>Somewhat dissatisfied (3)</th>
<th>Very dissatisfied (4)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Speaking skills (1)</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing skills (2)</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
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<tr>
<td>Analytical skills (3)</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
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<tr>
<td>Critical thinking skills (4)</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge of sociological theories (5)</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge related to inequality (6)</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Results – Direct Evidence

84% of alumni are currently working

Most common jobs: education (35% of alumni), social and legal services (19%), research (12%), and environmental non-profits (8%).

Employers include school districts across California, various Law Offices, United Way, the University of California at Berkeley and at Merced, and others.
Results

21% of alumni are in graduate school.

They are studying sociology, education, social work and criminology.

Universities include Stanford, UC Irvine, UC Merced, Cal State Fresno and Cal State Stanislaus.
Results – Indirect Evidence
Figure 1. How Useful Are Sociological Skills at Work?

N=24
Figure 2. How Useful are Sociological Skills in Graduate School?

- Collect Data
- Stats Software
- Interpret Results
- Dev Evidence Arguments
- Search for Research
- Write a Report
- Oral Presentation
- Sociological Info
- Inequality Info
- Soc Theory

N=6

Somewhat Useful
Very Useful
Figure 3. Satisfaction with Training Provided by UCM Sociology in...

- Speaking Skills
- Writing Skills
- Analytical Skills
- Critical Thinking
- Knowledge of Sociology
- Knowledge of Inequality

Somewhat Satisfied
Very Satisfied

N=29
Open-ended Question: “What aspects of your sociology education have been most useful to you in your work or further education?”

Research, stats and theories help everyday!

Understanding individuals. I work in personnel/hr and a lot of what I learned in school is useful knowledge for my position.

Understanding the social inequality among the students in a low income school.

Research skills, how to collect and interpret data; how to better interact with diverse populations.

My undergraduate education in Sociology has laid the foundation for my graduate degree in Sociology. It has been useful in developing my scholarly interests and having a solid base of the sociological canon.
Table 1. What Could Be Done to Improve the Sociology Program?
Alumni.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proposal</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Offer More Classes</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide Better Career Training</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide More Internships</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 19
Conclusions and Recommendations

The Sociology Program has been successful with PLO 5:

• The vast majority of our alumni are employed in careers related to sociology or graduate school.

• Over 70% of alumni agree that each of the individual sociological skills or pieces of knowledge provided by our program are useful in their work or graduate school.

• Most of the items are found useful by more than 80% of alums.
Room for Improvement

• Offer more classes
• Provide better career training
• Offer more research and internship opportunities.

Recommendations

• Work with the Sociology Club to offer more career-related workshops.
  E.g., preparing to apply for graduate school workshop; careers in sociology workshop; a session with sociology alumni; etc.

• Hire a new faculty member to start Fall 2015

• Hire an additional lecturer
Thank you!