

**CENTRAL OREGON**  
community college

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June 9, 2026

Sociology Program  
Central Oregon Community College

Dear Sociology Faculty:

Thank you for taking part in Department & Program Review (DPR) this year. The DPR process reveals critical connections that link your strengths, needs, values, priorities, and plans to those of the College. Further, it supports our commitment to innovation through continual improvement. We commend your dedication to empowering our students, engaging our communities, and supporting our values.

## Successes

The Sociology program has shown thoughtful responsiveness to changes in the world and in student needs over the past several years. Moving more classes online and offering hybrid courses on the branch campuses are important steps you have taken to provide access to students, even with limited staffing. We also commend your timely curricular updates, including the development of SOC 208 (Sociology of the Environment), your involvement in instituting the College's first two focus awards (Social Justice and Sustainability), and your incorporation of contemporary social issues into your courses.

We appreciate your efforts to complete required institutional assessments for all Sociology courses in advance of the end of our current assessment cycle and pleased to learn that you have been able to make meaningful curricular adjustments based on the outcomes of those assessments.

Finally, we would like to highlight your recent collaboration with the High Desert Museum to bring students and community members together for important conversations about the interactions between humans and nature, while also setting up a pathway for interested students to earn college credit.

## Challenges

We discussed the challenges outlined in your DPR, including staffing shortages and the difficulties encountered in recruiting, hiring, and retaining faculty from underrepresented populations. We encourage you to continue to seek out qualified candidates as Tom also prepares for his eventual retirement.

We recommend that you continue to monitor the unexplained rate of attrition of female students in Sociology courses which you observed in the data. Perhaps further analysis of the data, such as comparing delivery formats, will help illuminate this trend: e.g., is attrition greater in online courses than in face-to-face courses?

We were pleased to see how you transformed the challenge of student AI use into an opportunity for encouraging critical thinking and redesigning coursework and assessments. Tom's use of videos to explain the value of independent work to students is one example, along with changes to assignments towards the

application of concepts, of these efforts. We anticipate that the program will need to continue monitoring AI evolution and its impact on teaching and learning.

Similarly, given the decrease of in-person classes overall due to lower staffing and popularity of online classes, we anticipate that the program will need to continue to track its offerings and their delivery formats to ensure students' needs are being met.

## Goals and needs

Your report names four goals, all of which are logical and do not require significant financial investment but do represent the centrality of faculty in the work of building and maintaining a strong curriculum and student-centered course delivery methods.

1. **Continuation of curriculum evaluation and revision.** Ongoing curriculum evaluation and revision remain central to the health of the sociology program. This includes staying responsive to assessment data, adapting to evolving student behaviors such as AI use in ways that push students toward deeper critical thinking. You have done a laudable job of this, remaining current on assessment of sociology courses and using your findings to adjust your instruction for greater student learning. In addition, you have deliberately revised assignments to require students to engage with materials presented in class materials and to demonstrate original thought and application of sociology principles.
2. **Evaluation of the mix of instructional formats (online and in-person) every term to best ensure that student needs are met.** Thanks for your ongoing efforts to serve students throughout the district by offering classes at branch campuses (normally in hybrid format) as well as online. We encourage you to continue to work with your dean to identify ways to meet student needs in this variety of delivery modes.
3. **Increase student success rates for those taking online sociology courses.** Increasing student success rates in online sociology courses is a natural extension of the two goals above, and we support your continued collaboration with eLearning. Drawing upon their instructional design expertise is a strong avenue for continuous improvement.
4. **Recruitment of faculty from underrepresented groups.** Intentional recruitment of faculty from underrepresented groups will strengthen the program, and outreach through the Equity and Well-being department, and Human Resources represents a promising and well-considered approach to that goal. Be sure to reach out to your dean for help as you seek to achieve this goal, which we share as well.

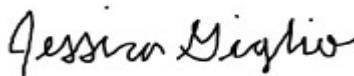
Thank you for your ongoing dedication to student readiness. Together, we can build on our achievements, address the challenges ahead, and meet the evolving needs of our students.

If you have any questions or need further clarification, please reach out. We look forward to working collaboratively to enhance the quality and impact of the Sociology program.

Sincerely yours,



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Vice President of Academic Affairs



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