

**SPECIAL REPORT**  
**OF THE**  
**ACADEMIC MATTERS, ACADEMIC PRIORITIES AND**  
**PROGRAM AND BUDGET COUNCILS**

concerning a

**CERTIFICATE IN SOCIAL RESEARCH ANALYSIS**

Presented at the  
759<sup>th</sup> Regular Meeting of the Faculty Senate  
May 5, 2016

**COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP**

**ACADEMIC MATTERS COUNCIL**

Neal Abraham, Wesley Autio, Martha Baker, Carol Barr, Bryan Beck, Marcy Clark, Sharon Domier, Elizabeth Dumont, Diane Flaherty, Laura Francis, John Hagen, Jennifer Heuer, Patrick Kelly, Nancy Lamb, Clare Lamontagne, John Lenzi, Meredith Lind, Linda Lowry, Ryan Mahan, Pamela Marsh-Williams, Ruthanne Paradise, MJ Peterson, Linda Shea (Chair), Kelly Smiaroski, Kregg Strehorn, Patrick Sullivan, Ruth Verock-O'Loughlin, Tom Weston, Jack Wileden

**ACADEMIC PRIORITIES COUNCIL**

Faune Albert, Richard Bogartz (Chair), Nicholas Bromell, Elizabeth Chilton, Suzanne Daly, Kathleen Debevec, Jean DeMartinis, Piper Gaubatz, Bryan Harvey, Masoud Hashemi, Deborah Henson, A Yemisi Jimoh, Sangeeta Kamat, Nancy Lamb, Stephen Magner, Ernest May, Katherine Newman, MJ Peterson, Monroe Rabin, James Rinderle, Peter Stern, Jack Wileden, Donna Zucker

**PROGRAM AND BUDGET COUNCIL**

William Richards Adrion, Joseph Bartolomeo, William Brown, D. Anthony Butterfield, Genevieve Chandler, Elizabeth Chang, Nancy Cohen, Patricia Galvis-Assmus, Deborah Gould, Bryan Harvey, Christopher Hollot, Eddie Hull, Moira Inghilleri, Michael Leto, Lisa Liebowitz, Mark Lindhult, Andrew Mangels, John McCarthy, Lynn McKenna, Anthony Paik, MJ Peterson, Alex Phillips, Jay Schafer, Stephen Schreiber, Anurag Sharma (Chair), Andrew Stewart, Donna Zucker

ACADEMIC MATTERS COUNCIL

The Sociology Department is proposing to create a certificate in Social Research Analysis. The certificate will include three required courses in statistics, data collection and analysis, and field research methods; and one elective drawn from a list of approved courses. Students will also be encouraged to pursue a research-based internship/practicum. The certificate is intended to help students master basic qualitative and quantitative research skills used to gather and analyze data, and to provide a foundation for students who plan to undertake graduate work in social sciences.

At its meeting on April 20, 2016, the Academic Matters Council voted unanimously to recommend Faculty Senate approval of the Certificate in Social Research Analysis. It was submitted as proposal #2392 in the Course and Curriculum Management System.

ACADEMIC PRIORITIES COUNCIL

At its February 25, 2016 meeting, the APC voted to endorse proposal #2392 that proposes a Certificate in Social Research Analysis. “Students pursuing the Certificate will gain valuable quantitative and qualitative research skills as well as hands-on research training with a faculty member that will engage students in the process of research in a sustained, meaningful way.”

PROGRAM AND BUDGET COUNCIL

The Program Subcommittee of the Program and Budget Council met on April 13, 2016, reviewed the Certificate in Social Research Analysis proposal and recommended it for approval.

At its meeting on April 20, 2016, the Program and Budget Council unanimously approved the Certificate in Social Research Analysis, Proposal #2392 in the Course and Curriculum Management System.

**MOTION:** That the Faculty Senate approve the Certificate in Social Research Analysis, as presented in Sen. Doc. No. 16-071.  
33-16

*Briefly describe the Certificate.*

The Sociology Department currently offers a Letter in Social Research Analysis (called Undergraduate Traineeships in Social Research Analysis or UTSRA) and is converting the existing program to a formal undergraduate certificate. The purpose of the certificate is to master basic qualitative and quantitative research skills used to gather and analyze data. Students completing the certificate will be prepared to obtain entry-level jobs in environments where research is conducted while providing a strong foundation for students wishing to pursue graduate work in fields like sociology, survey research, public health, program evaluation, market research, public policy and public administration, and other disciplines within the social sciences.

*Provide a brief overview of the process for developing this Certificate.*

The Sociology Department has internally administered the Letter in Social Research Analysis for over a decade. The Sociology Undergraduate Program Committee is in the process of a larger undergraduate program review to update and refresh the curriculum and undergraduate programs. Through this process, the Letter in Social Research Analysis has been identified as an important tool that will encourage and formalize research opportunities at the undergraduate level. In order to provide consistency and more formally reward student effort, the sociology department has decided to convert the Letter into a Certificate. Our revision process began in 2014 with a review of required coursework, course content, and an examination of the required six credit applied research component and has been further developed in consultation with sociology faculty.

*Describe the Certificate's purpose and the particular knowledge and skills that will be acquired by participating students.*

Students pursuing the Certificate will gain valuable quantitative and qualitative research skills as well as hands-on research training with a faculty member that will engage students in the process of research in a sustained, meaningful way.

*If this proposal requires no additional resources, say so and briefly explain why. If this proposal requires additional resources, explain how they will be paid for. For proposals involving instruction, indicate how many new enrollments are expected and whether the courses have room to accommodate them.*

This certificate program will require no additional resources since it already exists in the form of a departmental letter. The Sociology department has a sufficient number of faculty to cover required coursework and an academic advisor who dedicates part of their time to students pursuing the letter.

*Please describe the curriculum for this Certificate, listing all required courses and possible electives, any prerequisites or GPA requirements, the recommended order or coursework and any other pertinent information. You may attach additional materials related to the curriculum at the end of this section.*

Students take three required courses, one approved elective course and 6 credits of graded internship. To receive the letter, a cumulative GPA of 2.0 is required over the 18 credits.

1. SOCIOL 212 Statistics (an introductory statistics course in another department may be substituted)
2. SOCIOL 213 Data Collection and Analysis
3. SOCIOL 314 Field Research Methods or another approved Qualitative Research course

#### 4. Elective Methodology Course

To be certain of receiving credit, students must consult the Faculty Coordinator when choosing their elective. Possibilities include advanced courses in research methods in the Sociology Department as well as in other departments. Potentially acceptable choices include:

**SOCIOL 313 Survey Design and Analysis**

**PSYCH 241 Methods of Inquiry in Psychology**

**HONORS 495K Research Gets Real: Principles and Practices of Community Engaged Research**

**LEGAL 450 Legal Research and Writing**

**MARKETNG 412 Marketing Research**

**POLISCI 394RI Political Polling and Survey Research**

**RES-ECON 313 Quantitative Methods in Applied Economics**

**GEO-SCI 352 Computer Mapping**

**PUBHLTH 324 Epidemiology in Public Health**

**COMM 355 Behavioral Research in Communication**

#### **Research Practicum (6 credits)**

In ordinary circumstances, students will enroll in two three-credit research practica divided between two consecutive semesters, under the same faculty sponsor. The certificate advisor will help students locate appropriate sponsors that include faculty members in the Sociology Department, faculty and professional staff registered with the Office of Undergraduate Research and Scholarship (1001 Du Bois Library), or agencies registered with the Field Experience Office (Goodell 511). Internships will appear as SOCIOL 397: Research Mentorship on students' records.

*Explain how these courses represent a coherent course of study.*

The courses were chosen to provide students with 1) basic research skills, 2) an opportunity to apply these skills to an active research project, and 3) to develop a mentor relationship with a faculty member or professional researcher around a research project. The certificate will also develop the soft skills (working collaboratively, communicating effectively, etc.) that translate to a professional research setting.

*Describe how there is a clear educational objective that can be achieved in an efficient and well-defined manner.*

The educational objective is to gain a deeper understanding of the content and process of research for students wishing to pursue entry-level research positions or a Masters program in fields like sociology, survey research, public health, program evaluation, market research, public policy and public administration. It can also provide a good foundation for students who wish to continue on to a PhD program in the social sciences.

*Explain how the course sequence offers a clear objective at the appropriate educational level.*

The set of courses required for the certificate build on one another ultimately providing the skills and background for students to meaningfully participate in an applied research experience. An introductory statistics course is the prerequisite for entry into the Data Collection and Analysis course which precedes the SOCIOL 314 field research requirement (or appropriate substitute). These core courses should ideally be taken prior to enrollment in an upper-level elective research course (though some of the suggested elective courses may have their own prerequisite coursework). Students will work with a certificate advisor to develop a program that is appropriate for individual student goals and objectives.

*Describe the perceived need for this Certificate.*

The Sociology Department (and the University more broadly) has increasingly focused on connecting departmental structures and curricula with opportunities to engage undergraduate students in research. The development of an undergraduate certificate in Social Research Analysis will draw students into this process and reward them with a meaningful credential in the process. Currently, the Letter in Social Research Analysis attracts 4-5 students each year though many more students complete course requirements and/or conduct independent research with faculty. The Social Research Analysis certificate would create a more visible mechanism for students to communicate a research skill set to potential graduate programs and employers.

*If the courses that comprise the Certificate have been or currently are being offered, describe their schedule of availability. If the Certificate is comprised of new courses, describe their planned availability.*

The courses required for the certificate are currently offered at least once a year either in the Fall, Spring, or both. Currently, there is not a need to develop new courses specifically for the certificate.

*If the Certificate requires or includes courses from outside the sponsoring department, provide evidence of agreement(s) with the unit(s) offering those courses. You may attach any memoranda of understanding below.*

The certificate does not require courses from outside of the sociology department though students may request to substitute a relevant course from another department to the certificate. No special arrangements need to be made with the departments of these substitute courses since students enroll through the usual registration process.

*If applicable, please attach any memoranda of understanding from other departments or colleges below.*

*None at this time.*

*If the requirements for this Certificate overlap with those of another certificate or a degree or a degree program, describe that overlap.*

*(Note that if a student who has completed a certificate seeks clearance for a degree program that overlaps with that certificate program, the Registrar will note on the transcript that the certificate has been superseded by the degree.)*

Many of the courses required for the Social Research Analysis overlap with core and elective courses that may be applied to the Sociology Major. Currently, students are able to pursue both the sociology major and receive the Social Research Analysis Letter since they allow students to focus their sociology coursework on social science research.

*What type of student is allowed to participate in this certificate program? (e.g., matriculated UMass students, non-matriculated CPE students, Five College students, graduate students, students in a specific degree program, etc.)*

Matriculated students, non-matriculated CPE, Five College students, UWW.

*What role will this Certificate play in relation to other departments or degree programs on campus? Certificates vary widely across campus and may represent a subset of an existing degree program, a multidisciplinary program, or an entirely free-standing area of focus.*

The certificate could be a subset of the Sociology BA program and might appeal to students pursuing Public Health, Psychology, or another major in the Social Sciences.

*Is this a transitional certificate program?*

*(Transitional certificate programs are comprised of core courses from specific degree programs and may act as stepping stones into those programs. If a student who has completed a transitional certificate matriculates to the University and completes the degree program associated with that certificate, the transcript will note that the certificate has been superseded by the degree.)*

**No.**

*If applicable, please attach any additional material relating to the certificate (such as requirement check sheets for students, etc.) below.*

**None at this time.**