Using the Bachelor's and Beyond Project to Help Launch Students in Careers

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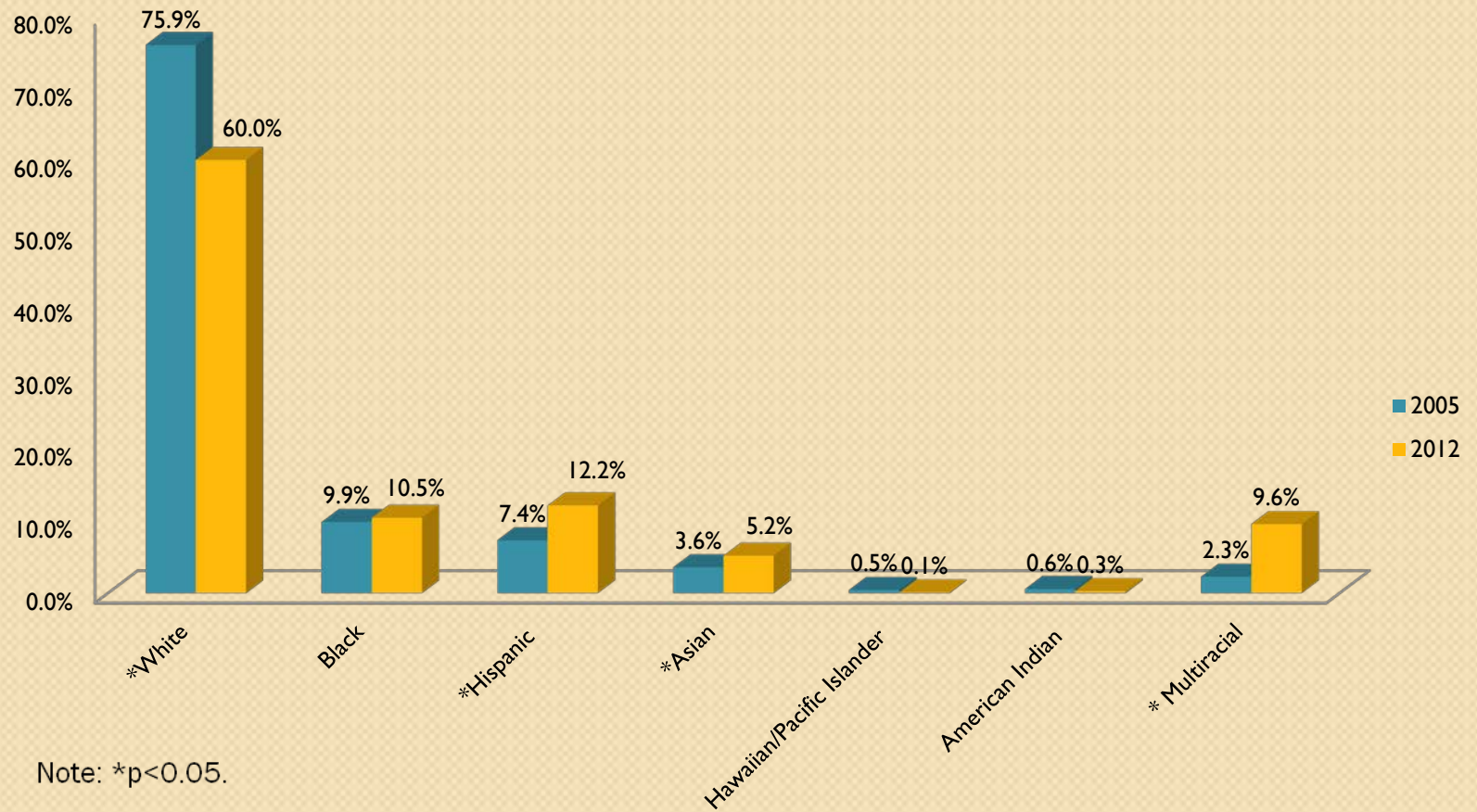
Overview

- Sociology is a **scientific, non-vocational major** that concentrates on **concepts and skills**. Yet, for undergraduate majors, relatively few jobs are listed for "sociologists." Thus, sociology majors, their parents, and educators often ask, **"What can bachelors-level graduates do with their degrees in sociology?"** The skills and concepts that sociology majors learn are **useful for a wide variety of jobs**.

Surveying Sociology Majors: Before and After Graduation

- *What Can I Do With a Bachelor's Degree in Sociology?*
  - In this longitudinal survey, we followed the post-graduation paths of sociology baccalaureates from the class of 2005 as they prepared for careers, graduate and professional degree programs, or both.
- *Social Capital, Organizational Context, and the Job Market for Sociology Majors*
  - In May 2012, we completed the first wave of a new longitudinal survey focused on the job search strategies used by sociology baccalaureates from the class of 2012, including their contacts and connections, and marketing of sociological skills and concepts.
  - In March 2013 we completed the second wave, including job types.
- Learn more about these surveys, view findings, and download questionnaires:
  - http://www.asanet.org/research/bacc_survey/bachelorsandbeyond.cfm
  - http://www.asanet.org/research/bacc_survey/jobs_for_sociology_majors.cfm

FIGURE 1. Racial/Ethnic Distribution

Race/Ethnic Comparison of B&B Studies: 2005 and 2012
(percent)

Note: *p<0.05.

Table 1a. Most Common Skills Learned by Type of Institution

(percent responding 'a great deal')

	Doctoral	Masters	Baccalaureate	Total
Gather information to make an argument based on evidence*	68.2	68.2	78.5	**69.3**
Identify ethical issues in sociological research***	66.9	71.7	74.9	**69.3**
Work with people who differ in race, ethnicity, gender, or class	66.0	70.8	65.4	**67.5**
Write a report that can be understood by non-sociologists***	60.6	65.9	74.3	**63.8**
Use computers to find information to develop a bibliography or a list of references***	56.9	64.7	70.8	**60.9**
Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of different research methods *	58.6	62.7	67.6	**60.9**
Create a hypothesis with independent and dependent variables***	54.9	60.0	65.0	**57.7**
Interpret the results of different types of data gathering***	53.7	57.8	66.5	**56.4**

*p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001.

Source: 2012. ASA Research and Development Department. *Social Capital, Organizational Capital, and the Job Market for New Sociology Graduates Survey, 2012.*

Table 1b. Least Common Skills Learned by Type of Institution
(percent responding 'a great deal')

	Doctoral	Masters	Baccalaureate	Total
Make presentations using software such as PowerPoint***	43.3	58.8	54.5	**49.7**
Use standard software packages, such as SPSS, SAS, and Stata, to analyze data***	35.5	42.1	44.3	**38.7**
Describe percentages and statistics in a two variable table*	35.8	38.4	39.2	**37.0**
Graphically display data**	31.0	33.5	39.6	**32.8**
Write a résumé***	26.0	41.9	31.1	**32.1**
Write research or grant proposals**	28.4	34.8	33.8	**31.2**
Use qualitative data analysis packages, such as NVivo, Atlas.ti, or Ethnograph	24.6	24.6	24.6	**24.6**

*p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001.

Source: 2012. ASA Research and Development Department. *Social Capital, Organizational Capital, and the Job Market for New Sociology Graduates Survey, 2012.*

Table 2. Sociological Concepts Learned by Type of Institution
(percent responding 'yes definitely')

	Doctoral	Masters	Baccalaureate	Total
Explain basic concepts in sociology	86.1	87.8	86.6	**86.7**
Explain important differences in the life experiences of people as they vary	85.5	87.8	88.9	**86.7**
Present sociological explanations about current social issues	78.3	81.7	80.4	**79.6**
Discuss basic sociological theories or theoretical orientations	77.4	77.7	84.2	**78.2**
Discuss what is meant by a social institution and give examples of their impact on individuals	76.6	78.1	82.8	**77.7**
Identify the impact and consequences of social policy*	62.9	65.5	56.9	**63.1**

*p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001.

Source: 2012. ASA Research and Development Department. *Social Capital, Organizational Capital, and the Job Market for New Sociology Graduates Survey, 2012.*

Table 3. Satisfaction Levels by Reason for Majoring in Sociology: Mean Scores (t-tests).

Why did you major in Sociology?	Mean Satisfaction Scores	
	Important	*Not Important*
I heard good things about the sociology department at this school.	10.06	9.31***
I thought it would prepare me for graduate or professional school.	9.86	9.48***
I thought it would prepare me to do different kinds of research.	9.83	9.47***
I enjoyed the first course I had in sociology.	9.79	8.90***
I thought it would help me understand my life.	9.78	9.35***
I thought it would prepare me to understand how individuals function in different socio-economic situations.	9.77	9.04***
I thought it would prepare me to help me to change society.	9.75	9.49*
I thought it would prepare me for the job I want.	9.73	9.61
I found that the concepts interested me.	9.73	8.10***
I found that I could add it without adding many more credit hours.	9.53	9.75*
I found that the major required fewer credit hours than others I could have chosen.	9.46	9.75*

*p < .001; **p < .05.

Source: 2012. ASA Research and Development Department. *Social Capital, Organizational Capital, and the Job Market for New Sociology Graduates Survey, 2012.*

Figure 2. Current Labor Market
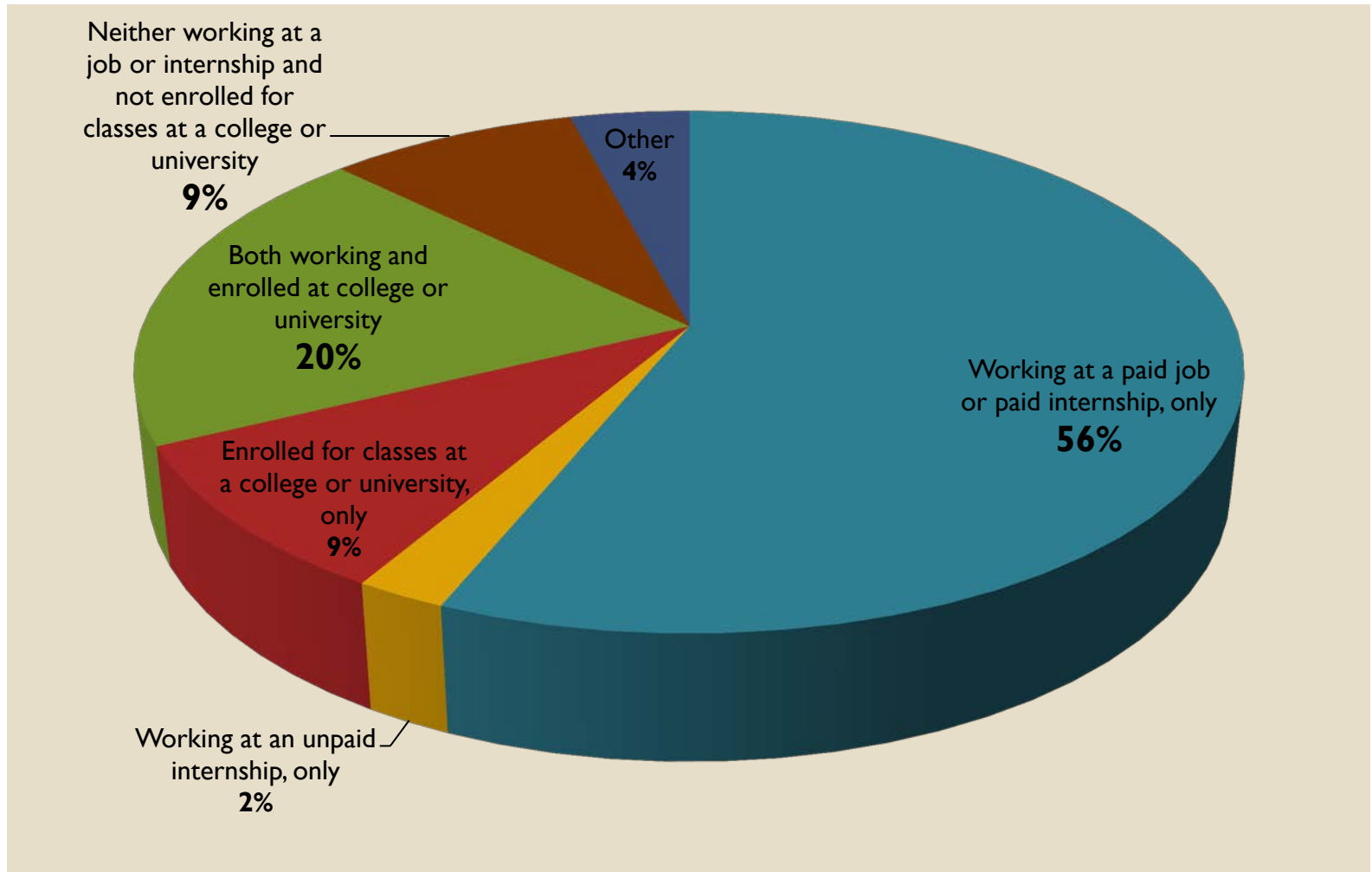
Source: 2013. ASA Research and Development Department. *Social Capital, Organizational Capital, and the Job Market for New Sociology Graduates Survey, Wave II 2013.*

Table 4. Most used Methods in Job Search by Type of Institution
(percent responding 'have used/intend to use')

	Doctoral	Masters	Baccalaureate	Total
Informal channel (e.g., colleague, family or friend)	74.0	73.8	80.9	**74.7**
Publicly available job advertisements (e.g. Monster.com, USAjobs.gov, newspaper advertisements, etc.)***	67.4	74.9	61.9	**69.3**
Job advertisements discovered through networks (e.g. LinkedIn, email list serve, etc.)	62.3	61.5	63.2	**62.1**
Sending unsolicited résumé to prospective employer*	56.9	63.3	61.1	**59.6**
Internship***	45.4	54.0	56.6	**49.6**

*p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001.

Source: 2012. ASA Research and Development Department. *Social Capital, Organizational Capital, and the Job Market for New Sociology Graduates Survey, 2012.*

Table 5. Least Used Job Search Methods by Type of Institution
(percent responding 'have not used/intend not to use')

	Doctoral	Masters	Baccalaureate	Total
Employer through former job or position	32.1	34.1	37.0	**33.3**
Current job (other than an internship)*	25.7	32.2	29.4	**28.3**
Employment agency*	26.8	29.2	18.7	**26.6**
Activities/assignments in capstone seminar in sociology***	17.3	32.9	25.2	**23.5**
Other method	14.9	12.7	10.2	**13.5**

*p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001.

Source: 2012. ASA Research and Development Department. *Social Capital, Organizational Capital, and the Job Market for New Sociology Graduates Survey, 2012.*

Table 6. Top 7 Activities
(percent responding 'yes, participated')

| Activity	Percent
Group or team projects	92.0
Study groups for a class	81.5
Received mentoring advice from a faculty member	70.1
Community or other volunteer activity other than an internship or class project	63.5
Saw a career advisor	56.0
Job fairs, on-campus interviews by firms, career-related mentorship programs, or other networking opportunities	52.5
Internship	50.9
Work with a group advocating some cause	50.7

Source: 2012. ASA Research and Development Department. *Social Capital, Organizational Capital, and the Job Market for New Sociology Graduates Survey, Wave I 2012.*

Table 7. What Types of Jobs Do They Have Post Graduation?

	Frequency	Percent	Career Job
Management-related occupations	18	2.40%	100.00%
Editors, public relations specialists, writers	4	0.50%	100.00%
Program assistants	29	3.80%	89.70%
Social and human services workers	94	12.30%	82.20%
Research associates, analysts, or assistants	32	4.10%	80.00%
Marketing	25	3.30%	79.20%
Counselors (educational and vocational)	36	4.70%	73.50%
Teachers	90	11.80%	67.90%
Religious workers	4	0.50%	66.70%
Computer occupations (e.g. searching data bases, finding information online)	18	2.40%	61.10%
Other occupations not listed	147	19.30%	56.30%
Health occupations (including technicians, aides)	18	2.40%	52.90%
Clerical/administrative support	103	13.50%	50.00%
Sales	78	10.20%	25.00%
Service occupations (except health or welfare), such as cooks, waitresses, police, and guards	66	8.70%	16.70%
Sociologists	1	0.10%	0.00%
Total	763	100.0%	58.80%

Source: 2013. ASA Research and Development Department. *Social Capital, Organizational Capital, and the Job Market for New Sociology Graduates Survey, Wave II 2013.*

Figure 3. Pathways to Job Satisfaction: 2007
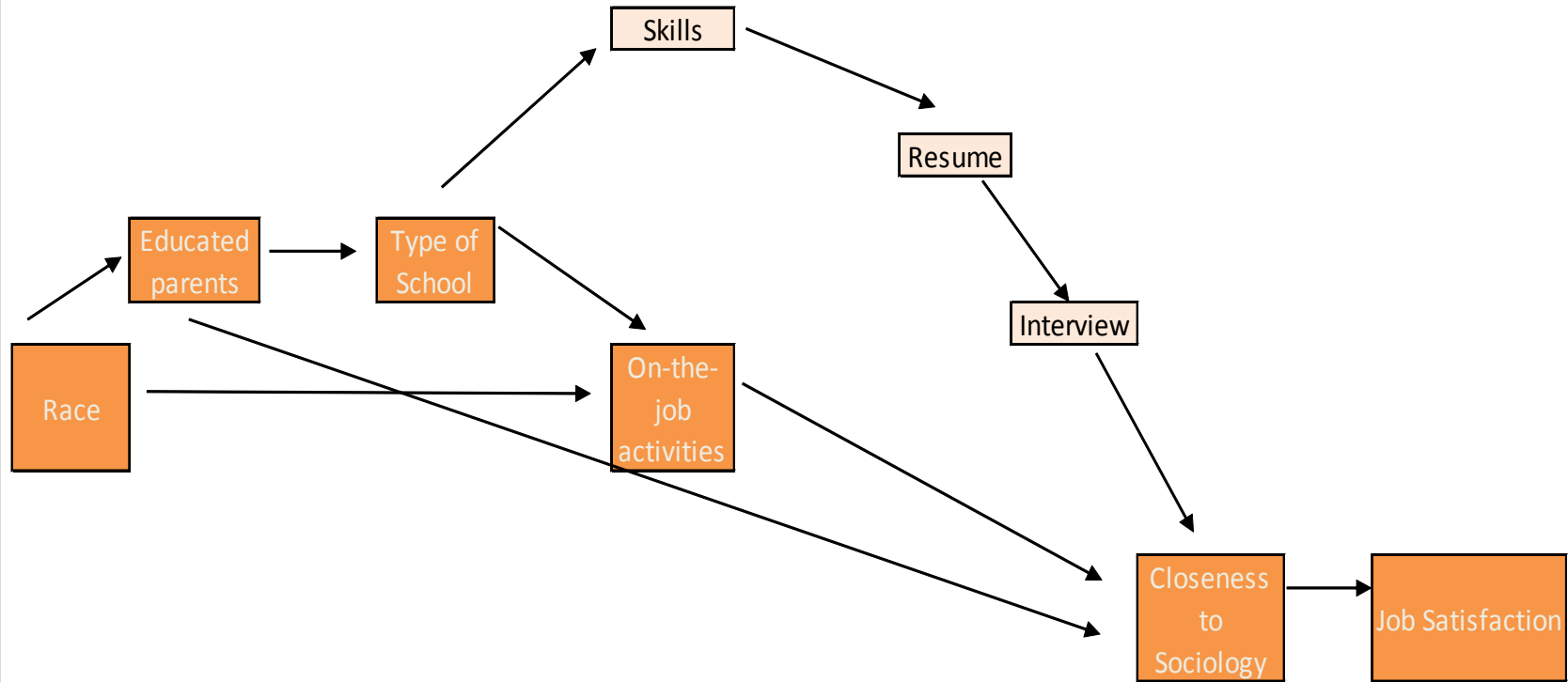
Source: 2007. ASA Research and Development Department, *What Can I do With a Bachelor's in Sociology? A National Survey of Seniors Majoring in Sociology Wave I, and Wave II.*

Why is providing help to launch majors important for departments?

- Need to maintain departments in an era of cutbacks
- Growth of professional majors
- Pressures for assessment and evaluation from administrators, accrediting bodies, legislators, and Department of Education
- Need to answer questions about "what students do after graduation?"

How can faculty and departments help students?

- Students face a daunting job market and high student debt.
- Faculty may want to help, but do <u>not</u> want to become job counselors!
- Satisfaction with departments and faculty is high, but is low with career counseling.

Departments can provide resources

- Use ASA Careers materials

21st Century Careers
with an Undergraduate Degree
in Sociology
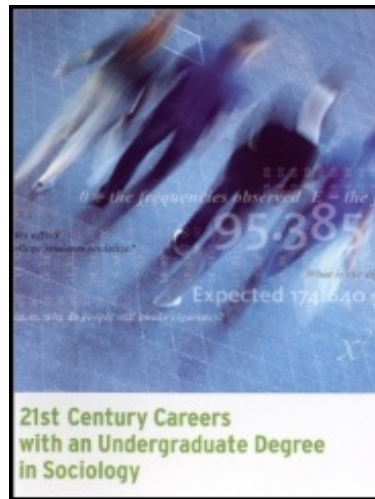
- **Searching for a Job with an Undergraduate Degree in Sociology in *Footnotes*** *by Margaret Weigers Vitullo, ASA Academic and Professional Affairs*

- Borrow from other departments with web sites promoting real world applications, peer networks and career information

Table 8. Sample of Sociology Departments' Websites Promoting Career Information

Institution	Activities Mentioned
Butler University Department of Sociology and Criminology	Experiential learning (internships, service learning, research opportunities), link to ASA resources, alumni tracking, Alpha Kappa Delta information (sociology undergraduate honorary society) Website: http://www.butler.edu/sociology-criminology/
Humboldt State University Department of Sociology	Link to Bachelors and Beyond brief and other ASA resources, service learning mentioned in newsletter, links for potential employers and organizations, link to university career services, professional development guide Website: http://www.humboldt.edu/sociology/index.html
Radford University Department of Sociology	List of graduate placements; potential employers/job tracks; list of websites/resources for job search including ASA; internships page/links to organizations and search engines; alumni tracking/newsletter Website: http://www.radford.edu/content/chbs/home/sociology.html
Southwestern University Department of Sociology and Anthropology	Capstone requirement, internship information including links, ASA information, AKD information, link to Alumni placement, link to university career services Website: http://www.southwestern.edu/departments/sociologyanthropology/
Texas A&M Department of Sociology	Internship opportunity info page, "Choosing Courses for the Job You Want" page, undergraduate publication opportunities Website: http://sociweb.tamu.edu/
University of Texas at Austin Department of Sociology	General career information, possible job tracks, links to career services and ASA site, resources links - how to's for resumes and cover letters, AKD and Sociology in Action information Website: http://www.utexas.edu/cola/depts/sociology/

Now available as a free download

- *Launching Majors into Satisfying Careers: A Faculty Manual with a Student Dataset* (in pdf format)

  http://www.asanet.org/documents/research/pdfs/ASA_Launching_Majors_Faculty_Manual_2010.pdf

  Includes summaries of research briefs, career websites, print materials on careers, PowerPoint for recruiting, questionnaire for seniors, student dataset, dataset assignments

Improved Advising

- Invite alumni back to campus for panels
- Survey your alumni for information on your graduates and for assessment
- Create better links to Career Services; need to educate Career Services
- Provide résumé examples and workshops

Examples of résumé components

HONORS

- Dean's List: Fall 2009, Spring 2010, Fall, 2010
- Elected to Alpha Kappa Delta, International Sociology Honor Society
- Best Undergraduate Sociology Paper Award, 2010

COMPUTER AND LANGUAGE SKILLS

- Communications Software: Microsoft Word and PowerPoint
- Statistical Software: Microsoft Excel and SPSS
- Qualitative Analysis Software: NVivo

Examples of résumé components cont.

INTERNSHIP: Services for Youth, Little Town, Mystate

- *Program Intern*, January 2010 - August 2010
- Assisted with the design of new program for youth at risk for some social problem
- Designed and managed methods used to track and report service delivery
- Updated agency website and created web-based client satisfaction survey

Examples of résumé components cont.

INVOLVEMENTS

Mycounty Council on Aging Fundraisier (Service learning project associated with Medical Sociology course)

- Raised $10,000 for programs for seniors (the largest amount ever raised by students in the county)

Presenter, Annual MyState University Conference on Social Issues

- Promoting the Diverse University: A Study of Student Attitudes and Experiences''

Vice President, Sociology Club

- Increased active membership by 35%
- Created nine-part documentary series for campus audience, averaging an attendance of 85 persons per showing

Student Liaison to Sociology Department, 2009-10

- Elected by fellow students to represent their interests to the 20-person department and to the department chair

Departmental Promotion of Students

- Develop awards for students (e.g., best undergraduate paper; best service learning project)
- Undergraduate poster conference or mini-conference from capstone course
- AKD and Sociology Clubs
- Letters to parents; invitations to events; notify deans

Proseminar for Sophomores

- Introduction to campus resources—library and computer skills
- Introduction to faculty/departmental resources—service learning, internships
- Career exploration
- Résumé/job interviewing skills
- Discussion of minors/cognates

Career-Building Assignments in Courses

- Assignments with Occupational Outlook Handbook (medians, percent change)
- Locate labor market data (computer search, table construction, measurement)
- Article reviews—ASA research briefs on careers (summary of empirical material, review of methods)
- Analyze 2005 B&B data (SPSS, hypothesis testing, graphs)
- Interview practitioners (qualitative methods, income inequality, family/work balance)
- Alumni surveys in methods classes (survey construction, quantitative analysis)

Enhanced Application/Integration

- More applied activities such as service learning, community-based research, and internships
- Capstone courses as "venue" for such activities
- Some capstones include unit on job/graduate school searches
- Make explicit across the curriculum the link between "skills" and student assignments

Information for Administrators

- Consider ways in which data on high student satisfaction can be used by departments for recruitment and to satisfy administrators.

- Use skills and careers information for purposes of accountability, program review, and assessment.

- Use national questionnaires and data to facilitate your own study of your students' learning.

Use of B&B questionnaire by Hunter College (Mike Wood)

- Replication of most questions from B&B Phase I questionnaire using Survey Monkey
- Links survey administration to required final graduation audit appointment (high response rate)
- Computers available--ease of access for students
- Addition of <u>objective</u> questions focused on theory and methods (as well as GPA)
- Addition of questions required by administrators

Contact us

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