

Promoting  
Promoting  
Diversity and  
Diversity  
Excellence



Promoting and  
Diversity in Higher

and Excellence

Excellence in Higher Education

through

through Department Change

Department  
Change

Change

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# **Promoting Diversity and Excellence in Higher Education through Department Change**

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**Carla B. Howery**

**Alfonso R. Latoni-Rodríguez**

**Minority Opportunities  
through School Transformation  
(MOST) Program**

**American Sociological Association**

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# Preface

In the 1993-94 academic year, the American Sociological Association (ASA) began an innovative effort to foster diversity and excellence in higher education by working with sociology departments on a program of systemic change. Over the life of this initiative, the Association has provided leadership and direction to participating institutions as they articulated goals and operating plans in five core areas: curriculum, mentoring, research training, climate, and pipeline.

This program, called Minority Opportunities through School Transformation (MOST), is built on the premise that progress toward greater inclusiveness requires an intentional, department-wide commitment to change. This report describes the creative and energetic work done in the MOST program, analyzes how departments made change or faced challenges, and presents accomplishments and results. The report also includes an appendix with case studies detailing the work of the 11 participating departments.

This report was initially released in a pre-publication edition as background to an ASA conference on “Transforming Higher Education: New Ways for Academic Departments to Advance Excellence and Inclusiveness” held in Washington, DC on June 6-7, 2002. The ASA convened the conference to engage a distinguished group of college and university administrators, academics, public and private foundation leaders, and representatives of various learned societies and educational organizations in examining the MOST program and exploring how to transport its lessons. This final edition reflects the benefit of that discussion and dialogue and also includes an epilogue reporting specifically on the conference.

An initiative of some eight years could not have moved forward without the substantial commitment and help of so many institutions and people. The Ford Foundation deserves special thanks for embracing this initiative as one with promise of promoting diversity on college and university campuses and expanding the presence of persons of color in faculties of the future. Among the many persons at the Ford Foundation deserving recognition, none merits it more than Edgar Beckham, former program officer, who encouraged the ASA to devise a strategy that could advance diversity by changing “business as usual” practices in the day-to-day education of students and, in particular, of minority students.

All of those who comprised the MOST team at the national level and at each participating department are acknowledged in the listing that follows. Their efforts to rethink how best to achieve excellence and inclusiveness in departments not only took on different forms but also required a level of sustained engagement on a common project that is rare in any department. Even those departments that were distracted by the daily workload or by unexpected challenges made observable, department-wide gains in attitude and action. For *all* of our participating MOST departments, we owe our deep appreciation for sharing the vision that transformations are possible, that departments are indeed the critical locus of change, and that intentional efforts can and do matter.

Felice J. Levine  
Principal Investigator, MOST  
Executive Officer, American Sociological  
Association, 1991-May 2002

Executive Director, American Educational  
Research Association, May 2002-



# American Sociological Association National MOST Team 1993–2002

Felice J. Levine	1993-2002	Alfonso R. Latoni-Rodríguez	2000-02
Havidán Rodríguez	1995-2002	Edward Murguía	1998-2000
Carla B. Howery	1993-2002	Ramon Torrecilha	1993-95

## MOST Coordinators and Department Chairs 1994–2002

### Augusta State University\*

#### Chair

Allen Scarboro 1997-2002

#### MOST Coordinators

Kimberly Davies 2001-02

Allen Scarboro 1997-2001

\*The MOST Program initially worked with Allen Scarboro, then with the Associated Colleges of the South (ACS), to provide information and guidance to ACS departments. After Scarboro became chair of the Department of Sociology at Augusta State University, this department began working on MOST objectives and was officially added as a MOST Department in 1997.

### University of California, Santa Barbara

#### Chairs

Beth Schneider 1997-2002

William Bielby 1994-96

#### MOST Coordinators

William Bielby 1994-96, 1997-2002

Kum Kum Bhavnani 1996-97

### Grinnell College

#### Chair

Christopher Hunter 1994-2002

#### MOST Coordinator

Christopher Hunter 1994-2002

### University of Nebraska, Lincoln

#### Chairs

Al Williams 1998-2002

Helen A. Moore 1994-98

#### MOST Coordinators

Lynn K. White 2001-02

Miguel A. Carranza 1999-2001

Hugh P. Whitt 1998-99

Thomas Calhoun 1995-98

Keith Parker 1994-95

### Pennsylvania State University

#### Chairs

Glenn Firebaugh 2001-02

Barrett A. Lee 1996-2001

Frank Clemente 1994-96

#### MOST Coordinators

Marylee C. Taylor 1998-2002

Barrett A. Lee 1994-96

R. Salvador Oropesa 1994-98

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### **Pitzer College**

#### **Field Group Coordinators**

Phil Zuckerman	2001-02
Ann Stromberg	2000-01
Rudi Volti	1999-2000
Peter Nardi, José Z. Calderon, and Betty Farrell	served at various times from 1996-99*

#### **MOST Coordinator**

José Z. Calderon	1994-2002
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\*Pitzer College sociology faculty function as a field group rather than as a department; coordinators may not serve set terms.

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### **University of Puerto Rico, Mayagüez**

#### **Chairs**

Walter Diaz	2001-02
Joseph Aguero	1999-2000
Maria Barbot	1996-99
Jaime Ramirez Barbot	1995-96
Havidán Rodríguez	1994-95

#### **MOST Coordinators**

Havidán Rodríguez	1994-96, 2000-02
Alfonso R. Latoni-Rodríguez	1998-2000
Jaime Gutierrez	1996-98

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### **Southwestern University**

#### **Chairs**

Dan Hilliard	1998-2002
Edward L. Kain	1994-98

#### **MOST Coordinators**

Edward L. Kain	1995-2002
Maria Lowe	1994-95

---

### **Texas A & M University**

#### **Chairs**

Rogelio Saenz	1997-2002
Dudley Poston	1995-97

#### **MOST Coordinators**

Rogelio Saenz	1995-97, 1999-2002
Benigno E. Aguirre	1997-99

---

### **University of Texas, El Paso**

#### **Chairs**

David Carmichael	2001-02
Fernando Rodríguez	1997-2001
Cheryl Howard	1996-97
Howard C. Daudistel	1994-96

#### **MOST Coordinators**

Manuela Romero	1999-2002
Martha Smithey	1996-99
Fernando Rodríguez	1994-97

---

### **William Paterson University**

#### **Chairs**

Vincent N. Parrillo	1994-99, 2000-02
William Willis	1999-2000

#### **MOST Coordinators**

Enrique Pumar	2001-02
Mark Ellis	1997-2001
Charley Flint	1994-97

# Executive Summary

In the 1993-94 academic year, the American Sociological Association (ASA) launched the Minority Opportunities through School Transformation (MOST) program, with the goal of achieving excellence and inclusiveness in higher education by fostering intentional and systemic change at the department level at colleges and universities. The multi-year effort, made possible by the support of the Ford Foundation, broke new and important ground, and its accomplishments hold important lessons for those engaged in work to promote diversity in higher education and elsewhere.

A key distinction between the MOST program and other diversity-related projects is its focus on the academic department as the instrument of systemic, institutional change. Rather than working student-by-student, or at the institution-wide level, the ASA located MOST at the department level where education and training occur. Structurally, it is the department that is the locus of student learning and development. MOST took advantage of the unique role and capacity of departments—their direct contact with students, their degree of control over their curricula and co-curricula, their sustainable commitment to diversity, their ability to alter their climate, their interaction with various institution-wide offices, and their capacity to initiate and follow through on their own recruitment and training efforts.

Over the eight-year life of the program, the ASA guided the 11 participating MOST departments to implement a rich and creative set of reforms, affecting what students are taught, how they interact with one another and with faculty members, and how they are recruited to the institution and to the major or advanced degree program. Just as significantly,

the reforms initiated as a result of MOST changed the departments themselves. By refocusing the dialogues within the departments on diversity goals and on what excellence means, the program succeeded in institutionalizing MOST practices for years to come.

## The MOST Method

Eleven sociology departments, selected on a competitive basis by ASA, and representing a diverse sample of American higher education, participated in all eight years of the program. Seven of the departments confer bachelor's or master's degrees; four also are Ph.D.-conferring. The 11 are:

- Augusta State University
- University of California, Santa Barbara (Ph.D.-conferring)
- Grinnell College
- University of Nebraska, Lincoln (Ph.D.-conferring)
- Pennsylvania State University (Ph.D.-conferring)
- Pitzer College
- University of Puerto Rico, Mayagüez
- Southwestern University
- University of Texas, El Paso
- Texas A&M University (Ph.D.-conferring)
- William Paterson University

ASA designed the program to focus on five key elements of the educational process:

**1. Curriculum.** The MOST program was dedicated to re-evaluating curriculum in order to better prepare students for graduate training and subsequent careers. MOST emphasized increased rigor in scientific methods; direct research experience; and the substantive integration of race, ethnicity, class, and gender.

**2. Research.** The MOST program aimed to improve research training for all students so that they could develop the scientific reasoning skills, interest, and knowledge necessary for successful careers. Research training provides students with methodological competence and hands-on research experience under the guidance of faculty mentors.

**3. Mentoring.** The MOST program emphasized mentoring of students as one of the most effective ways to engage students in education. Mentoring fosters broad-based knowledge and understanding, enhances students' intellectual and social skills, and develops their professional identity. In the MOST program, mentoring was the responsibility of all faculty for all students.

**4. Climate.** The MOST program worked to create a departmental climate that was sensitive to issues of diversity and multiculturalism and that contributed to the development and growth of all students.

**5. Pipeline.** The MOST program was committed to increasing the number of scholars of color throughout the academic pipeline, enhancing the education of diverse talent pools, and preparing minority students for future leadership roles in the academy or beyond.

In the field, these five program elements often overlapped. For example, research in the curriculum often led or in some way related to research outside the classroom. Research opportunities often brought students into close contact with potential mentors. MOST departments devised a broad range of approaches to accomplish their ambitions in these domains.

Work on curriculum included:

- Providing a stronger theoretical and research foundation for sociology majors by re-sequencing the curriculum, adding courses and requirements, and requiring that certain foundational and methods courses be taken earlier in the major;

- Adding diversity issues to existing courses;
- Adding new courses focused on diversity; and
- Adding a capstone course that brings together the various threads of students' sociological training.

Efforts to enhance research training included:

- Adding research methods courses and a research requirement for majors, and moving research coursework earlier in the major;
- Creating new co-curricular research opportunities;
- Devising new approaches to independent and upper-level research; and
- Showcasing and encouraging undergraduate research.

Work on mentoring included:

- Creating formal, systemic mentoring programs;
- Creating professional opportunities for students that brought students into contact with others in the field;
- Reinvigorating informal mentoring efforts; and
- Creating peer-mentoring opportunities.

Efforts to foster healthy departmental climates included:

- Demonstrating departmental commitment through community service projects;
- Creating new opportunities for student interaction;
- Making extra efforts to encourage minority students to take advantage of department-wide opportunities;
- Creating diversity-related events; and
- Improving communication between and among students and faculty.

Initiatives to fill the pipeline with future sociologists, included:

- Recruiting secondary school students to the institution and then to the major;

- Recruiting undergraduate students to graduate school and the profession;
- Exposing students to regional and national professional meetings as a way for them to network and become informed about the discipline; and
- Teaching and demonstrating the sociology career path.

### Program Results

Taken as a group, the MOST institutions achieved important results, particularly in areas related to curriculum, research training, and recruitment of minority majors and minority faculty.

Over the course of the program, the ASA tracked the course offerings of MOST departments, gauging two important issues: the number of courses that explicitly deal with diversity issues, and the number of non-methods courses that specifically incorporate research experiences. On both points, MOST departments showed marked change. At the outset of MOST, one-quarter of the courses dealt with diversity, but by 2000-01 more than 50 percent did. Similarly, the overall number of non-methods courses that included research experiences increased from 10 to nearly 25 percent.

In addition, MOST departments tracked the number of graduating minority majors over the life of the project. Again there was a dramatic rise across departments from 18 to 33 percent. Departments reported similar results with respect to minorities on the faculty. In 1993-94, departments overall reported 22 percent of their faculties to be minority, but, by 2000-01, the proportion increased to almost 30 percent.

The program's success cannot be fully understood from the numbers alone, however, nor even from an examination of the individual initiatives. Perhaps the single most important conclusion to be drawn from the MOST experience is that deliberate change, aimed at the department level in institutions of higher

learning, can be accomplished. Despite the institutional and individual tendency to resist new approaches and priorities, MOST accomplished lasting institutional change.

Significantly, MOST succeeded at the various institutions despite their differences—working in institutions large and small, public and private, with or without Ph.D.-conferring programs, majority minority or not, and so on.

Equally important, very little about what led to MOST's success was related to its having been conducted in sociology departments. The program's lessons for those engaged in work to promote diversity in higher education are therefore germane to all departments, faculties in other fields and disciplines, college and university administrators, learned societies, and the public and private foundation community. MOST points the way to a change model that is readily transportable from sociology to other disciplines because it demonstrated that, by focusing on deliberate approaches to problems often regarded as beyond the control of faculty, or even intractable, departments can achieve fundamental change.

Finally, MOST has had a discernible and important impact on the sociology profession. In response to repeated requests from members, ASA's annual meetings regularly feature workshops and speeches on MOST goals, and ASA receives regular inquiries from sociology departments across the country about how they might adopt MOST program elements. There are other indicators of MOST's recognition and esteem within the profession. The ASA Council, for example, adopted a resolution in January 2002 institutionalizing student research roundtables at annual meetings, and naming them for the MOST program.

### The Best Practices of MOST

The eight-year experience with MOST offers ten best practices for institutions and individual departments contemplating a similar effort aimed at diversity.

- 
1. Important curricular change can occur deliberately, yet incrementally.
  2. Traditionally informal processes, such as mentoring students, need not be left to chance. Departments can put in place systemic ways to ensure that mentoring reaches *all* students.
  3. Student engagement is essential.
  4. Department chairs, department committees, and other university administrators must be engaged in the process of reform in order to achieve lasting change.
  5. Students need to see the connections between what they do in class, what they are studying, and what underlies this work.
  6. Modeling of professional behavior draws students into the profession.
  7. Minority recruitment requires intentional outreach and persistence.
  8. Physical space and informal opportunities matter greatly to department climate.
  9. Multi-year, long-term projects can make lasting changes in the culture and mindset of a department.
  10. Scientific and scholarly societies are an important source of leadership and support. Public and private foundations too have a valuable role.

Case studies highlighting each of the 11 institutions' MOST programs are included in Appendix A.

# Introduction

The challenge to promote diversity in higher education has bedeviled educators and policy-makers for decades. Almost all segments of American society have grappled with diversity issues over the years, but few so publicly and with as much attendant controversy as higher education.

In 1993, the American Sociological Association (ASA) broke new ground in this long-running effort by launching the Minority Opportunities through School Transformation (MOST) program. The program's goal was to achieve excellence and inclusiveness in higher education by fostering intentional and systemic change at the department level. This multi-year effort, made possible with the support of the Ford Foundation, focused 11 sociology departments—from B.A.- to Ph.D.-conferring—on the challenge of breaking the “business-as-usual” habits that discourage minority students from pursuing education and advanced degree training for a career.

A key distinction between the MOST program and other diversity-related projects was its focus on the academic department as the instrument of systemic, institutional change. Rather than working student-by-student, or at the institution-wide level, ASA located MOST at the department level where education and training occur. Structurally it is the department that is the locus of student learning and development. MOST took advantage of the unique role and capacity of departments—their direct contact with students, their degree of control over their curricula and co-curricula, their sustainable commitment to diversity, their ability to alter their climate, their interaction with various institution-wide offices, and their capacity to initiate and follow through on their own recruitment and training efforts.

## About the American Sociological Association

Founded in 1905, the American Sociological Association (ASA) is a nonprofit membership association dedicated to advancing sociology as a scientific discipline and profession serving the public good. ASA's approximately 13,000 members include faculty members at colleges and universities, researchers, practitioners, and students. About 20 percent of ASA's members work in government, business, or non-profit organizations.

The MOST program holds important lessons for those engaged in work to promote diversity in higher education and elsewhere. These lessons are not unique to sociology. They are similarly germane to all departments, faculties in other fields and disciplines, college and university administrators, learned societies, and the public and private foundation community.

## The Path to MOST

America of the 21<sup>st</sup> century will be increasingly diverse. Over the decade of the 1990s, the minority population of the U.S. grew substantially in comparison to the growth of the non-Hispanic white populations. Consistent with this trend, the color of higher education has also changed. In 1980, approximately 80 percent of the population was white and some 88 percent received bachelor's degrees. By 2000, just under 70 percent of the population was white and accounted for approximately 77 percent of those receiving undergraduate degrees.

As these patterns suggest, over the years, America's colleges and universities have traveled a great distance from the days when the vast majority of students were white, male, and born to families of financial means. Indeed, today's typical student body is far more diverse than it was just 25 years ago—the result of a variety of programs and

initiatives intended specifically to foster diversity. Some of this progress was accomplished by legislation prohibiting discrimination. And, when that avenue of reform proved less than entirely effective, university and college administrators turned to affirmative action as a mechanism to remedy the vestiges of past discrimination.

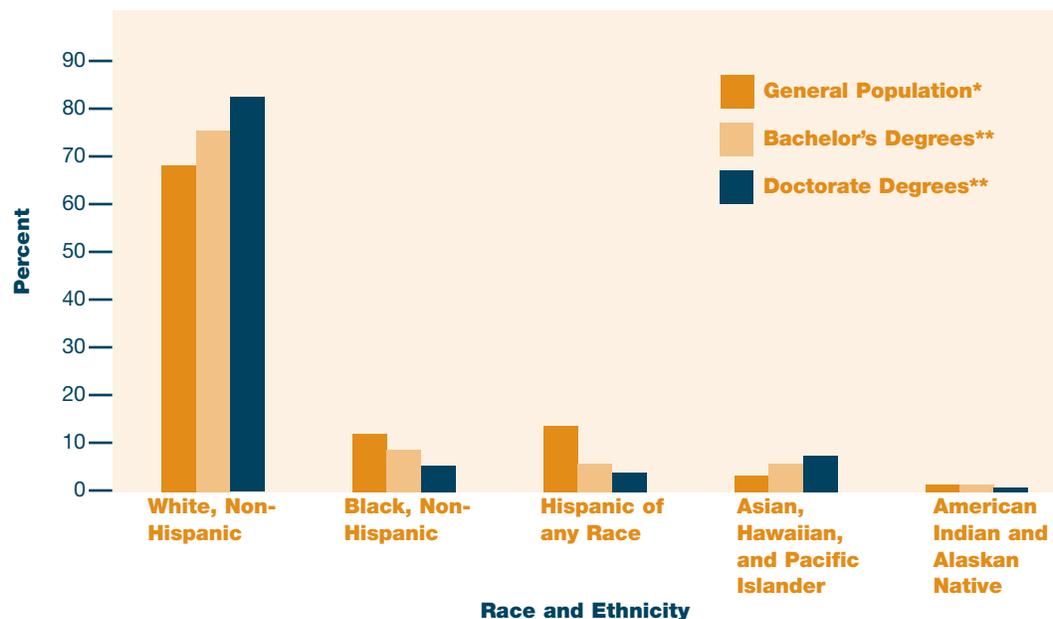
These and other ongoing efforts reflect the value placed on equal opportunity and the recognition that diverse student bodies and faculties are critically important to the future of higher education and to the quality of American life. Racially and ethnically diverse colleges and universities serve minority *and* majority students better than homogenous campuses. Students benefit from a wider range of ideas and are more likely to develop critical thinking skills as a result of exposure to different backgrounds, views, attitudes, and

sources of learning. Diversity on campus is thus better education and better prepares all students for life in an increasingly diverse America.

Despite gains in the presence of minorities in higher education by 2000, the data show that much work remains. African Americans and Hispanic Americans continue to be underrepresented in higher education. African Americans are just over 12 percent of the U.S. population, but receive only 9 percent of undergraduate degrees and just 6 percent of doctorates. By 2000, Hispanics were 12.6 percent of the population, were growing at a rate faster than any other segment of the population, and yet received only 6.3 percent of undergraduate degrees and 3.8 percent of the doctorates.

The MOST program evolved in this context. It sought to transform the academic climate to better achieve excellence and inclusiveness in

**Figure 1.**  
**Race and Ethnicity in Higher Education, Comparison to U.S. General Population, 2000 Data**



**Sources:**

\* Census 2000 analyzed by the Social Science Data Analysis Network (SSDAN).

\*\* National Center for Education Statistics, 2002, *Digest of Education Statistics 2001*, Tables 207 and 274.

higher education, to put in place strategies that enable all students to pursue and complete their degrees, and to confront the disparities that exist among those pursuing undergraduate and graduate education. Also, the “path that led to MOST,” reflects a commitment to nurture a well-trained talent pool of students, and in particular underrepresented minorities, to pursue careers as future faculty and as trained scholars and scientists in this field. While MOST was located within sociology and had the ambition of altering education within this field, it was as much about learning how departments irrespective of discipline could effectively address the challenges of diversity and do better than they had done before.

### **ASA's Ongoing Commitment**

For many years—indeed, since long before the attacks on affirmative action—the American Sociological Association has played an important role in promoting diversity. In 1974, for example, the Association established its Minority Fellowship Program (MFP), with major and sustained funding from the National Institute of Mental Health. This pre-doctoral training program is designed to attract and prepare underrepresented minorities in sociology for scientific careers. Nearly 30 years later, the MFP continues to deliver a national training program for minority students engaged in graduate programs of higher education throughout the United States. In addition to fellowship stipends, MFP provides support in the areas of recruitment, placement, training, mentoring, and monitoring, and aims to complement and extend the education and professional development provided to graduate students in their home departments.

In 1990, the ASA launched a program of summer research institutes for minority undergraduate students. The **Minority Opportunities through Summer Training** program (MOST I) was held in the summers of 1990 and 1991 at

the University of Delaware and the University of Wisconsin, Madison, and in the summers of 1992 and 1993 at the University of Michigan and the University of California, Berkeley. Also funded by the Ford Foundation, MOST I's purpose was to promote quality training in sociology as a means to attract undergraduates of color to graduate education. ASA built the institutes around three key approaches: relevant and rigorous curriculum, research-based training, and faculty mentoring of undergraduates.

The project ended in 1993, after compiling an impressive record. Approximately 45 percent of students who attended the summer institutes went on to graduate school in the social sciences—most in sociology. Moreover, these students were undoubtedly much better prepared for graduate school because of their enhanced research experience and the insights gained from the mentoring experience.

In evaluating the results of the project, the ASA concluded that it held important lessons for future programming efforts. First, the project demonstrated that the sometimes tacit assumption that faculty can have little impact on the graduate school interests of undergraduates is incorrect. In fact, faculty plays a critical role in attracting students to graduate study and careers. Second, the experience suggested that intentional mechanisms could be devised to drive what is often presumed to be an “around the edges” sort of academic relationship—mentoring of students by faculty. The research institutes created the means and opportunity for hands-on research experiences and for mentoring, and faculty and students took deliberate advantage.

These insights led ASA to begin planning the most ambitious diversity program in its history, the **Minority Opportunities through School Transformation** program (MOST). After an initial development year in 1993-94 to plan and to recruit and select departments, MOST launched its work in May 1994 with a workshop of all participating MOST department

chairs and coordinators. The program began with a compelling set of interlocking goals; that is, to:

- Create lasting institutional change that would foster diversity and excellence in higher education;
- Attract students of color to the pursuit of graduate careers;
- Engender more diverse and inclusive academic communities;
- Focus on the academic department as the instrument of change; and
- Develop a model or models of change that could be transported from sociology to other academic disciplines in a variety of institutional settings.

### **Departments as the Instrument of Change**

ASA's decision to focus on the department as the instrument of change was an innovation of significance. Academic departments are at the center of the learning and educational experience of students. The vision of MOST was to motivate departments to experiment with structural change to better achieve excellence and inclusiveness in their programs. While departments operate with varying degrees of autonomy, depending on their institutions and their leadership, all exercise a measure of control over their direction and, therefore, all were positioned to adopt the MOST framework and to commit faculty to its successful implementation.

For students and faculty, departments constitute the learning and scholarly community. Departments are also small enough units that the individuals who participate in MOST planning are the same ones called on to implement the resulting plans. They are the mentors, curriculum builders, research advisors, and recruiters whose commitment, leadership, and ownership are fundamental to the program's success.

In addition, departments are capable of implementing systemic change in ways individual faculty members are not. The premise of MOST is that departments themselves are ongoing, dynamic organizations. Faculty members retire or move on to other institutions, but departments are institutional entities and capable of change. Therefore, specific reform efforts can survive the departure of individual faculty members. Indeed, while individual leadership on diversity issues within the department is critical, systemic change can be sustained in the face of leadership transitions.

Departments also play leadership roles at the institutional level, and can serve as models for other departments situated elsewhere in an institution. ASA intended that other departments could learn from and emulate the successes of MOST departments at their institutions, avoiding any pitfalls that MOST departments may have encountered.

In short, ASA's vision for MOST saw departments as the agent of institutional change. ASA recognized in the academic department an opportunity to change "business as usual" practices in the academy in a meaningful way; to make reforms institutionally relevant to students and the life of the department; to ensure that best practices did not just reside with the well meaning, more motivated, or better attuned faculty members; and to sustain change beyond the tenure of any given faculty member or chair.

### **MOST Begins**

ASA sought and received support from the Ford Foundation to launch MOST as a five-year program, with funding beginning in 1994. (Subsequently, Ford extended the program's funding for three additional years.) ASA selected participating institutions for the program by application. In making selections, ASA sought to include a diverse set of institu-

tions, thereby creating a pool of colleges and universities that reflected the broad scope of higher education in the United States. Participants included very large universities and very small colleges; institutions with little diversity, those that were already diverse, as well as historically black colleges and a university in Puerto Rico; public and private institutions; Ph.D.-conferring programs and those that offered only bachelor's or master's degrees; and colleges and universities that were geographically and demographically diverse.

ASA notified participants of their selection in 1994, and thereafter provided support for a range of assistance, including:

- An annual conference for MOST department coordinators and chairs;
- Ongoing technical assistance from ASA staff, including telephone support and site visits;
- Specialized training sessions at national conferences;
- Workshops for representatives of participating departments at ASA meetings;
- Sponsorship of student participation in a summer research institute for the early years of the program;
- Summer workshops for MOST department faculties;
- Funding and support for students presenting research papers at ASA annual meetings; and
- ASA participation in departmental retreats.

ASA also created a structure to facilitate departments' working together to support one another, to learn across contexts, and to be open and frank about barriers and problems in making change. Departments participated in each other's events and borrowed successful strategies from each other, including specific curriculum changes, the concept of student-driven conferences, and other innovations. Therefore, beyond the significant direct support from ASA to individual MOST

departments, the MOST program also established a supportive community, a "safe haven," and a source of ideas and strategies.

### **Resources and the Structure of Support for MOST**

The leadership and material support from the American Sociological Association and funding from the Ford Foundation were essential in creating MOST and launching an operating program. MOST, however, was quite intentionally not an initiative built or dependent on a foundation of funds. The Ford grant to ASA did not result in large sums of money going to ASA or to participating colleges and universities. It provided strategic resources for technical assistance and training, for student support, and for seeding experiments in change. By design, the 11 MOST sociology departments had to invent ways to promote excellence and inclusiveness without significant outside funding. By doing so, they achieved one of the program's primary goals—to develop strategies and tactics that would transform departments and could be sustained, for the most part using existing resources.

Part of being an effective department that is capable of change is the development of skills in garnering support and persuasively making a case. Over time, MOST departments developed remarkable resourcefulness in attracting support services, funds from within their institutions and communities, and recognition for their innovative work. Typically, for example, departments received small grants or matching funds from their institutions to support student research conferences, student travel to professional meetings, student research experiences, and other functions. These financial contributions were modest but, as Southwestern University reports, critical to the success of its MOST program. Participating institutions also provided material resources, such as staff support,

audio-visual equipment, computers, materials, and supplies, and even physical spaces and facilities for student functions and needs.

Levels of support vary across MOST departments, but all contributions are important in symbolic and real terms. For example, Pitzer College provides resources for an annual student-faculty book retreat that enables an off-site meeting and the presence of the author of this scholarly work. At Grinnell College and the University of Nebraska, Lincoln, release-time from teaching permits faculty to devote more attention to student research training. At William Patterson University, the Provost's Office has committed \$10,000 per year as core funds to advance the department's MOST goals.

### **Five Core Elements**

The MOST program focused on five key elements of the educational process.

#### **Curriculum**

The MOST program was dedicated to re-evaluating curriculum in order to better prepare students for graduate training and subsequent careers. MOST emphasized increased rigor in scientific methods; direct research experience; and the substantive integration of race, ethnicity, class, and gender.

ASA encouraged MOST institutions to review and revise their curricula to include more courses specifically addressing diversity issues, and to include diversity issues in a broader range of courses. Students respond to coursework they find meaningful. Therefore, building curricula that helps students of color and those from non-majority ethnic backgrounds see their own histories and challenges encourages learning and rigorous thinking in a familiar domain. Such course designs also make for better sociology. The substance of a curriculum that is more diverse provides a framework for *all* students to examine and analyze more complex issues and problems. In addition, ASA

encouraged MOST institutions to review and revise their curricula to create an orderly sequencing of courses for sociology majors. At its best, such a sequence begins with a solid foundation in theory and in research methodology, includes hands-on research experiences for students, and ends with a "capstone" course that calls on students to put what they learned in their introductory courses to work in a research project and in a written report and/or oral presentation.

#### **Research**

The MOST program aimed to improve research training for all students so that they could develop the scientific reasoning skills, interest, and knowledge necessary for successful careers. Research training provides students with methodological competence and hands-on experience under the guidance of faculty mentors.

Participation in research outside the classroom can be extremely important to students. Direct research experiences provide an operational understanding of methods and modes of inquiry, and help students comprehend the processes of a given field. In such situations, students develop rigorous skills, understand the complexities of applying classroom learning to real-world settings, and connect to a network of professors and others as mentors and professional contacts. Therefore, ASA encouraged MOST institutions to enhance their research training inside as well as beyond the classroom for all students, and to encourage minority students toward those opportunities.

#### **Mentoring**

The MOST program emphasized mentoring of students as one of the most effective ways to engage students in education. Mentoring fosters broad-based knowledge and understanding, enhances students' intellectual and social skills, and develops their professional identity. In the MOST program, mentoring

was the responsibility of all faculty for all students, but minority students are particularly well served by an intentional approach to mentoring by their professors.

Typically, mentoring relationships between students and faculty develop informally and are driven by personal affinities and the common interests and experiences that a given professor and student may share. For example, students who are more assertive or who enjoy more social capital traditionally receive more mentoring during their careers. MOST sought to make mentoring deliberate and widespread so that departments broadened the scope, commitment, and reach of their mentoring. Under such circumstances, minority students would have ready access to effective mentoring, whether or not the faculty itself was diverse.

### **Climate**

The MOST program worked to create a departmental climate that was sensitive to issues of diversity and multiculturalism and that contributed to the development and growth of all students.

Students disenchanted with their departments are more apt to change majors, or to simply accumulate credit hours without exploring the full range of curricular and co-curricular offerings. Race and ethnicity are often factors in departmental tensions, not necessarily as a result of racism or intolerance, but sometimes as the product of a disconnection or uncertainty created by unfamiliar or new contexts. MOST departments developed intentional approaches to fostering a healthy and constructive environment for all students.

### **Pipeline**

The MOST program was committed to increasing the number of scholars of color throughout the academic pipeline, enhancing the education of diverse talent pools, and preparing minority students for leadership roles in the academy and beyond.

Tomorrow's generation of sociology majors are in high school today; tomorrow's graduate students are now deciding on their undergraduate major; and tomorrow's sociology professors and professionals are contemplating whether or not to attend graduate school and in what field. ASA encouraged MOST departments to reach out deliberately to students in all phases of the sociology "pipeline" in order to ensure a sufficient and sufficiently diverse future supply of sociology majors, graduate students, and professionals. In addition, the ASA encouraged MOST institutions to teach students about the *science and profession* of sociology—how it is taught and studied in the academy and how researchers and other professionals in the field conduct it.

In reality, these five program goals overlapped. Research in the classroom often led to or in some way related to independent study or co-curricular research. Research opportunities often brought students into close contact with potential mentors. Similarly, the success of the curriculum and research components of the program had a bearing on departmental climate and on the departments' capacity to fill the pipeline with future students and professionals.

### **Greater than the Sum of the Parts**

Just as important as the five specific program areas, however, was the overall impact that inclusion in the MOST program had on the participating departments. Chosen by a competitive application process, and committed after their selection to a searching look at their entire curriculum, mentoring practices, research program, climate, and recruitment efforts, MOST departments developed and steadily reinforced a new set of values and priorities. The promotion of diversity and excellence came to be a lens through which departments viewed all of their activities.

In addition, over the course of MOST, the program gained considerable visibility in profes-

sional circles. MOST was the subject of presentations at national conferences and articles in scholarly journals. Participating departments found themselves sought out by others in the profession interested in learning more about MOST or seeking feedback on their own diversity initiatives. The result was that MOST program participants—the individuals and their departments—shared in the program’s visibility. That, too, served to reinforce commitment to the program’s goals and methods.

### **Tracking MOST Program Results**

ASA carefully tracked the work of the participating departments, seeking not merely to ensure accountability, but also to identify innovations and creative approaches that could be shared with other MOST institutions. ASA staff also worked to identify opportunities for the wise use of “venture capital”—promising opportunities that could be created with an infusion of money and from which valuable learning could be gained.

ASA’s data collection throughout the program often coincided with technical assistance. For example, telephone conversations about how to overcome a particular institutional barrier were also opportunities for ASA program staff to learn more about the details of a department’s work on MOST. But, in addition to telephone calls, site visits, reverse site visits (department MOST leaders visiting ASA program staff in Washington), conference sessions, and other communications, ASA required annual reporting from the MOST institutions, as well as a final report in which departments assessed their work and produced concrete data on their accomplishments.

The MOST program began as a five-year project, with the ASA competitively selecting 18 departments to participate. After the program’s fifth year, the Ford Foundation renewed its support for an additional three

years—through the end of the 2001-02 academic year. For this second phase of the program, ASA decided to place additional emphasis on the program’s mentoring and research training. Eleven of the original 18 departments participated in this second phase:

- Augusta State University
- University of California, Santa Barbara
- Grinnell College
- University of Nebraska, Lincoln
- Pennsylvania State University
- Pitzer College
- University of Puerto Rico, Mayagüez
- Southwestern University
- University of Texas, El Paso
- Texas A&M University
- William Paterson University

The seven institutions that participated in the first phase, but not the second, were:

- Hampton University
- LeMoyné-Owen College
- University of Massachusetts, Amherst
- Michigan State University
- Our Lady of the Lake
- Pomona College
- San Jose State University

As with any truly innovative program, MOST tested a range of approaches and ideas. Overall, the MOST program, particularly at the 11 institutions that continued with the program until its end, demonstrated conclusively that deliberate institutional change, implemented at the department level, is both possible and effective.

### **Challenges Confronting MOST**

When it began, the MOST program, like indeed any effort to promote diversity in institutions of higher learning, faced a number of significant challenges.

First, MOST was launched and has operated during a complex time for education. The controversy over affirmative action in colleges

and universities that surfaced and has raged over the last decade prompted many institutions to alter their practices and procedures. For many institutions, this transition has been difficult, at least as measured by minority enrollment numbers. Irrespective of how this debate is resolved, MOST has emerged on the scene during a period when new and effective approaches to diversity and inclusiveness are eagerly sought.

Nevertheless, the emergence of MOST and other approaches requires precisely the sort of institutional change that institutions find difficult. Bureaucratic inertia and academic turf battles are almost inevitable in such circumstances, and MOST was not insulated from these pressures. Change, particularly systemic change, requires hard work and shared commitment. MOST made demands on all members of the department and on leaders throughout the institution, without providing significant new resources to help them learn new ways of recruiting, educating, and graduating students.

Because MOST was aimed at department-wide change, it also required “sign-on” by the department as an entity, rather than depending on the charisma and commitment of a few individuals. Another set of challenges for the departments involved the nature of sociology instruction. Due to the paucity of sociological study at the high school level, instruction in the “doing” of sociology is often left to the middle and later years of undergraduate programs. The result is that sociology departments often have less time to develop and train their majors into sociologists, for the simple reason that they start on the major track later in their academic careers than do other majors.

The general absence of high school instruction in sociology has a particular impact on minority students. What instruction in sociology does take place in secondary schools is most likely to be in suburban public schools or in private, college preparatory schools.

Minority students are far less likely than their white counterparts to be in such institutions, clustering as they do in urban and rural communities. As a result, recruiting minorities to sociology early in their education is much more difficult.

Another challenge that colleges and universities generally face in building a diverse class of students is the difficulty of recruiting and then retaining minority students. Generally speaking, minority students are more likely to leave college earlier than their white counterparts. MOST sought to work on issues of pipeline and climate to improve retention. Here MOST is fundamentally sociological in its emphasis on “institutional change” rather than “remediation” of individuals.

In large institutions and sometimes in small ones, another dynamic operates as well. It can be easy for minority students to feel isolated in a setting where they may see few faces like their own, and where they confront, sometimes for the first time, a dominant culture that is unfamiliar. The resulting sense of isolation can take a toll on students’ attainment.

Sociology departments face this challenge, although they often bring to it certain advantages. First, minority students are often over-represented in the sociology major, in comparison to their numbers in the institution as a whole. That allows sociology departments to build deliberate communities of students and to devise strategies for keeping those students in the major and in school. Second, sociology courses often focus on issues related to race, ethnicity, and gender, leading students not only to useful insights, but also to deeper learning and to rigorous analysis. This kind of “connected knowing” can change pedagogy and help students become more powerful learners.

### **Overcoming the Challenges**

Overcoming these challenges in the context of the five key elements of the educational



process—curriculum, research, mentoring, climate, and pipeline—required creativity and persistence on the part of participating departments.

Before exploring some of the departments' individual efforts, it bears repeating that MOST required departments to embrace the five arenas for change and put in place practices that fit their circumstances, resource base, and needs. Accordingly, almost all of the initiatives undertaken touched on more than one element of change simultaneously. Students who engaged in independent research projects commonly develop mentoring relationships with the faculty supervising their work. Efforts to improve departmental climate generally pay dividends in terms of filling the pipeline of majors and graduate students. And, curriculum reform frequently has a bearing on the availability of research projects for students.

An initiative of the University of California, Santa Barbara (UCSB) demonstrates the point. Early in its participation in the MOST program, UCSB's sociology department developed and implemented the "MOST Research Training in Sociology" course, a two-year sequence aimed specifically at students of color. In students' first year of participation, they took part in a three-quarter research-training seminar; in their second, they embarked on an independent research project, under the supervision of a faculty mentor. In teaching the course and in their supervision of the follow-up independent research, faculty as well as graduate teaching assistants sought out opportunities to steer students toward graduate schools and toward professional careers in sociology. Along the way, faculty also sought feedback from students on the department's course offerings, and on students' general impressions of the department, its course offerings, and its related programs. What faculty learned was of great value in assessing the department's climate for minority

students, from the students' perspective. At the same time, the MOST entity created a cohort of students who, by virtue of having taken several courses together, grew into a learning and professional community—one where they were comfortable and felt "they belonged."

In short, the department developed an initiative that addressed its goals across all five areas—curriculum reform, research, mentoring, climate, and the pipeline into the profession of sociology.

The pages that follow discuss MOST departments' work on each of the five program goals separately.

# Curriculum

Curriculum reform played a vital role in the MOST program. Participating departments took a variety of approaches to examining and, where necessary, revising their curricula. Significantly, such effort required that departments consider their course offerings as a curriculum, rather than as a mix of courses from which students could pick and choose. This frame of reference in itself constituted a departure from the approach that many institutions take.

ASA's emphasis in the area of curriculum reform went beyond adding elements reflecting diversity to existing courses or even adding new courses focused on the subject. Certainly these efforts were important, and many institutions undertook them. The more challenging task, however, that ASA urged on departments, and that MOST sought to implement, was to structure their curricula so as to prepare students for comprehending sociology as a discipline and as a potential career. Therefore, in addition to adding material and new courses reflecting diversity, departments strengthened their instruction in the "doing" of sociology, moved such methodological and theoretical study earlier in the curriculum, worked to coordinate their curricula with co-curricular research opportunities, and added capstone courses that synthesized the various elements of the curriculum into a research-based education and training program.

The MOST departments' initiatives clustered into several areas.

## **1. Providing a stronger and earlier theoretical and research foundation for sociology majors by re-sequencing the curriculum and adding courses and major requirements**

All of the participating departments reviewed their curricula for its coverage of the theory and

ASA's emphasis in the area of curriculum reform went beyond adding elements reflecting diversity. The more challenging task that ASA urged on departments was to structure their curricula so as to prepare students for comprehending sociology as a discipline and a potential career.

practice of sociology. Some effected sweeping change. At Augusta State University, MOST coincided with a university-wide transition from a quarter-system to a semester-system. Sociology faculty seized the opportunity to revise all department courses, catalog descriptions, major requirements, concentrations within the major, and specific course syllabi. The revisions allowed the faculty to place greater emphasis on research in the curriculum, particularly in the introductory courses.

Similarly, at William Paterson University, the faculty thoroughly revamped the requirements for the sociology major, developed new graduate courses, and extensively revised its introductory course for undergraduates. In addition, in an effort to provide students with a thorough grounding in the methods of sociology, majors are now required to take a full year of methodology courses instead of a single semester. Faculty also added a requirement for a social statistics course and created a new capstone course that requires a research project and that otherwise builds on skills learned in previous sociology courses.

At the University of Nebraska, Lincoln, the department's participation in MOST inspired faculty to conduct a transcript audit, from which they learned that only a quarter of sociology majors took the introduction to sociology course early in their studies. The department has since made the introductory course an early major requirement. The audit also revealed that a disappointingly small

number of majors were taking the department's methods and research courses, and faculty are now working to encourage students along that track as well.

## **2. Adding scholarship on diversity to existing courses**

Departments made a concentrated effort to weave discussion of diversity issues into existing courses. That sometimes led to broad revisions in a given course and sometimes to more subtle changes. At the University of California, Santa Barbara, for example, a number of courses were significantly revised, several had new units added, and in one course that did not directly relate to diversity, a professor selected new slides featuring a more diverse set of photo subjects for a presentation on the socialization of children, among other things.

For many of the departments, the cumulative effect of these changes to existing courses was quite significant. At the outset of the program, 10 of Augusta State University's 71 sociology courses focused on topics of race, ethnicity, class, or gender; by the 2000-01 academic year, 52 of 54 department courses integrated such considerations.

## **3. Adding new courses focused on diversity**

Many departments went beyond revising existing courses, to develop and implement new courses tightly focused on issues of race, ethnicity, and gender. Augusta State added several such courses, many of which also included research elements. The University's new courses include: an upper-level course on urban social problems where student teams conduct qualitative and quantitative research in the Augusta area; a demography course that requires students to gather, analyze, and interpret data from secondary sources; a course called "Violence and the South," where students undertake an empirical research project and then present their findings at a

campus-wide conference; a course examining African-American communities in Augusta that meets at a community center in the heart of Augusta; and a very popular course on African-American religions.

Texas A&M University added a number of diversity-related courses as well, including "Global Social Trends," "Introduction to Gender and Society," "Sociology of Black Americans," "Pacific Rim Business Behavior," and "Sociology of Migration." Complementing existing courses, these new offerings permit students to connect demography and diversity as substantive issues of scholarly significance.

## **4. Adding a capstone course that brings together the various threads of students' sociological training**

Several institutions added capstone courses to their major requirements. Many of these courses lean heavily on hands-on research, often in the neighboring community. Southwestern University's new senior capstone course requires that students do more than just read about the research of others or conduct a pre-packaged research project. Students must design and execute a research project, and then prepare detailed findings and analyses. Southwestern also revised its research training in the lower division courses so that majors have a strong research foundation by the time they take the capstone course.

In the new capstone course at Pennsylvania State University (Penn State), students design and carry out an analysis of existing social survey data, and then prepare an article-length paper and conference-style oral presentation.

Pitzer College's new capstone requirement gives students a choice between a senior seminar and a senior thesis. Many of the thesis writers conduct research projects that follow up on work they initially did as part of the MOST summer research program. Students



who opt for the seminar write grant proposals and present their work—in some cases to the community organizations where they undertook their projects and in other instances to peers or at scholarly meetings.

### **The Result**

In the end, almost all participating departments made significant changes to their curricula—reforms that strengthen instruction on diversity issues for students of all races, backgrounds, and ethnicities and that offer students a considerably more solid grounding in the fundamentals of sociological research. Faculty members know that curriculum change and integration require many reviews by many stakeholders. The MOST departments took these steps and, as a result, have enduring transformations.



# Research Training

Research is at the heart of sociology. For students to develop the skills necessary to be proficient sociologists, or even simply to understand the field, they must begin their training in research and sociological inquiry early in their studies. Many institutions incorporate research opportunities into their core sociology curriculum. Indeed, ASA strongly encouraged MOST departments to strengthen the integration of research into the classroom, so that students learn about research methodology and analysis, as well as put these lessons to work by examining existing data or implementing research projects.

To get the most out of their sociology studies, however, students are well advised to engage in research projects beyond those assigned in a course or class. Such opportunities help students develop analytic skills and understand the scientific or scholarly enterprise. Also, for all students and particularly for minority students, additional research experiences afford an explicit opportunity to work more closely with professors and, depending on the institution, with advanced graduate students. Thus, beyond the training, co-curricular research opportunities are a gateway to effective mentorship and to the professional development and support that goes with that.

The MOST departments embraced the research training objective, augmenting their curricular research instruction, and creating a range of new research opportunities—in the form of summer institutes, research assistantships and internships, special research projects, and so forth. In the process, many of the departments forged new relationships, or built on existing ones, with a variety of public and private institutions, greatly enhancing the range of available opportunities for students.

The MOST departments' work clustered into five areas.

## **1. Adding research methods courses, adding a research requirement for majors, or moving research earlier in the major**

After reviewing their curricula, a number of the MOST institutions concluded that their student majors were either missing research courses or taking them too late in their studies. Pennsylvania State University was one such institution. In addition to creating a new research-based capstone course, as described earlier, the department added a lower-division methods course to its offerings. The course requires that students conduct hands-on research, including developing interviewing and observation skills. In addition, Penn State added a requirement for an upper-level statistics course.

The sociology department of the University of Nebraska, Lincoln developed a new two-semester course called “Doing Sociology” open only to sociology majors who had completed the required methods sequence. While the focus of the course varies with different instructors, the fundamental objective is to provide students with a substantive core of knowledge and the opportunity to review and refine their skills through an extensive applied research experience.

Southwestern University added a lab component to its research methods course. Students are now required to complete 20 different laboratory assignments, introducing them to a range of research methodologies, including content analysis, analysis of datasets using SPSS, analysis of existing statistics, and interview skills. In addition, students in upper-level courses are required to collect and analyze

data in a variety of settings and with varying methodology.

## **2. Devising new approaches to independent and upper-level research**

Several institutions developed new approaches to research projects for upper-level students. Pitzer College's senior seminar, a capstone course, had long required a research project of students, typically stemming from initial research conducted at MOST summer institutes or in earlier courses. In the 2000-01 capstone course, the focus was on students undertaking community-based research. Students drafted a proposal on behalf of a specific community group for a specific foundation funder. One such proposal secured funding from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to support a program at a local battered women's shelter to serve victims of domestic abuse with substance abuse problems—a population that could not otherwise be accommodated at the shelter. Other proposals have been funded as well.

Grinnell College created an Undergraduate Research Fellows Program to match students with faculty conducting research, and an internship program to place students with organizations outside of the College.

Similarly, at the University of Puerto Rico, Mayagüez, the Center for Applied Social Research (CISA) serves as a clearinghouse to link students with faculty research projects, as well as to connect students with research funding. In addition, a new certification program in applied social science research builds on the department's and CISA's research emphases. Students selected for participation in the program must take a complement of courses that includes methods, computer technology, and research offerings. In addition, students develop a research proposal, implement it under the guidance of a faculty mentor, and present their findings at a regional or national confer-

ence. Also, the department works to identify summer internship opportunities and to encourage students to participate. The effort includes a spring workshop on internships and a new website that shares specific internship listings.

At the University of Nebraska, Lincoln, the department created the new position of Undergraduate Research Coordinator, a faculty member who works to identify students, particularly minority students, interested in doing research. The coordinator then matches students to faculty conducting projects on topics of interest to the students.

## **3. Creating co-curricular research opportunities**

Another common approach that departments pursued was to identify research internships or create new co-curricular research projects for students. While research assistantships are available during the academic year, many of these opportunities take the form of summer research institutes or internships. Southwestern University created one such summer institute, giving students a structured opportunity to conduct research under the direction of faculty mentors.

Grinnell adopted the practice of creating summer research internships funded by the College for students working in the Grinnell community. Typically, students work in research teams led by a faculty member for community-based organizations or social service agencies.

Similarly, Texas A&M University has organized summer research institutes with funding from the National Science Foundation to train undergraduate students from various universities in the state of Texas, most of which are part of the University of Texas System. The program links students in majority minority institutions in these universities with Texas

A&M faculty. The department reports that the program has helped recruit graduate students to the department.

#### **4. Encouraging and showcasing undergraduate research**

All of the MOST departments worked to encourage undergraduates to take part in professional conferences and symposia—both to enhance their skills, knowledge, and experiences and to foster their potential interest in graduate training and a career in the field. Research experiences and enhancing the pipeline go hand-in-hand. Successful experiences come to fruition with a paper or product that can later be formally presented. In addition to working with students to present their work at meetings, several MOST institutions also launched undergraduate research conferences of their own.

The University of Puerto Rico, Mayagüez created a model that helped spur other MOST departments to sponsor their own such events. Directed by the Student Sociology Organization with support from the department and the University's Center for Applied Social Research, the UPRM Student Research Symposium is a rare initiative and the only one of its kind in Puerto Rico. The symposium follows a professional meeting model, with students submitting abstracts of their research, and selection of speakers conducted on a competitive basis. The event features participants from throughout the United States. Thus far, over the course of the MOST program, 250 social science students presented their research at the symposium.

Several other departments hosted such efforts, including those of Grinnell, Pitzer, Augusta State, and Texas A&M.

In addition to its curriculum changes, William Paterson University developed a smaller-scale platform for promoting student research—re-initiating a long forgotten departmental newsletter called *Sociogram*, in

which faculty now reprint particularly good examples of student research papers. The newsletter is distributed to the department's upper-level students.

#### **5. Directing student organizations toward promotion of research opportunities**

Two MOST departments made important progress in promoting research by focusing student organizations on the challenge. In the fall of 1999, the University of Texas, El Paso sociology department added a research-experience course to its offerings. To faculty members' great disappointment, the course received insufficient enrollment to continue and was disbanded in its first semester. The students who had enrolled, however, went on to form a Sociology and Anthropology Research Group (SARG), which now meets monthly with faculty and has engaged in a series of research projects on such topics as HIV/AIDS-positive Hispanic women and sex workers, battered immigrant women, serial murders, office worker mobility, and so forth.

Similarly, in 1998, Augusta State's sociology department established a faculty-student group called the "Moral Maximalists." Created as an offshoot of an urban social problems course and a follow-up workshop on environmental injustice in Augusta, the group studies, learns, and writes about Augusta community-based organizations' work in addressing social, economic, and political injustice in the community. Faculty members work with students to design and implement research programs aimed at helping community groups learn more about the problems they confront.

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Based on this effort, the group has made almost a dozen professional presentations at state, regional, and national sociology meetings.

### **The Result**

The development of new and creative research opportunities for students was an important accomplishment for the MOST program. Significantly, as with curricular revisions described earlier, the initiatives are for the most part systemic in nature. That is no small accomplishment given that the typical student research project is built around a specific professor's current research work. By creating new institutional relationships and by devising new structures to drive the creation of student research opportunities, the MOST departments were able to effect systemic change at the core of the departments' programs.

# Mentoring

In many colleges and universities, students are rarely able to forge mentoring relationships with their professors. Where such relationships are built, they are typically the product of informal processes—students and professors who happen to strike up a relationship, either as a byproduct of the student taking a professor’s class or serving as a research assistant on a professor’s project.

The challenge for the MOST departments was to transform this typically informal process of creating mentoring relationships into a deliberate initiative, supported by procedures and structures designed to sustain mentoring.

Many, but not all, of the MOST departments were successful in this effort, thereby providing their students with a greatly enhanced educational and developmental experience. Minority students benefit particularly from such intentional mentoring efforts, because it is they who are most likely to be left out of informal mentoring processes. Left to traditional processes—that is to say, left largely to chance—mentoring relationships are most likely to flourish between students and professors of the same race or ethnicity. By making mentoring a deliberate and accessible activity, MOST departments were able to break down this invisible wall, providing opportunities for all students.

The MOST departments’ efforts clustered into three areas:

## 1. Creating a formal mentoring program

Many institutions decided to formalize their mentoring processes to the extent feasible. Augusta State University developed a comprehensive approach. All sociology faculty mentor students, and mentoring work is a criterion during formal evaluations of faculty members.

Minority students benefit particularly from intentional mentoring efforts, because it is they who are most likely to be left out of informal mentoring processes.

In addition, the department developed a formal apprentice program, in which undergraduates work closely with faculty as apprentice teachers. The students, typically upper-division students who have excelled in a given course, work with professors to develop syllabi, prepare classroom presentations, tutor, lead discussion groups, and so forth.

William Paterson University also implemented a mentoring plan that requires faculty to chart and steer student progress. Early in the MOST program, faculty mentored informally, but, as the program developed, the department moved to this more systematic method.

## 2. Reinvigorating or transforming informal mentoring

For some institutions, particularly the larger ones with many majors, formal mentoring programs posed a more difficult challenge. These institutions opted instead to make their mentoring a deliberate form of outreach to students or to institutionalize it as part of a class or course.

At the University of California, Santa Barbara, the innovative two-year course sequence entitled “MOST Research Training in Sociology” provides mentors as part of the process of education. Mentoring in terms of supervision, support, and development is intentionally designed and key to the success of this course.

The University of Texas, El Paso (UTEP) engages undergraduate teaching assistants to perform duties similar to those of graduate

teaching assistants. The department found that the practice encourages valuable mentoring. Similarly, UTEP's Sociology and Anthropology Research Group provides an ideal opportunity to create mentoring relationships.

The same is true of Augusta State's Moral Maximalist group. Faculty work closely with students, aiming not just to guide their research on behalf of community-based organizations but also to guide students' development as sociologists.

### 3. Encouraging peer mentoring

In addition to mentoring by faculty, a number of departments encouraged graduate or upper-level students to serve as mentors. Pennsylvania State University arranges for graduate students to serve as peer mentors for newly arrived graduate students and some undergraduates. Augusta State University arranges for advanced undergraduate students to tutor their classmates and lead discussion groups. Similarly, at the University of Puerto Rico, Mayagüez, advanced undergraduate students serve as peer mentors to more junior students, introducing them to research projects and helping them develop applications for summer research support to prepare presentations for the institution's student-research symposium.

Students often maintain relationships with their faculty mentors for many years beyond graduation. Among other things, students and graduates frequently call on their former mentors for guidance, for feedback on work in progress, for letters of recommendation, and for help in establishing networks of contacts in the profession.

## The Result

Mentoring relationships contributed to the development of both students and faculty. These relationships provide students in some combination with advice, support, supervision, coaching, and sponsorship. They offer an invaluable gateway to the discipline and profession of sociology. Indeed, students often maintain relationships with their faculty mentors for many years beyond graduation. Among other things, students and graduates frequently call on their former mentors for guidance, for feedback on work in progress, for letters of recommendation, and for help in establishing networks of contacts in the profession.

The departments' intentional efforts to expand access to mentoring relationships effectively opened doors to minority students that they will be able to pass through well into the future. And, again, because many of the MOST departments created formal programs, the enhancement of mentoring opportunities at the institutions is likely also to be sustained for years.

# Climate

Building a departmental climate where students feel supported and valued—and where matters of race, gender, and ethnicity are subjects of study and not barriers to communication—is an important but difficult task.

The climate for minority students in an academic department is sometimes difficult for faculty to gauge. Students can be reluctant to voice complaints, either because they feel intimidated or because they think complaints will go unheard. Whether it is recognized or not, a negative climate can discourage students from continuing their educational development and pursuing the full range of departmental offerings. The quality of life in a department can even prompt students to leave a major for other disciplines or rethink more fundamentally whether they wish to be in school.

While climate considerations can be less concrete, they are no less important to address. Accordingly, MOST departments engaged in systematic reflection and a series of creative efforts to strengthen the sense of community within their environments—between faculty and students, students and students, and faculty and faculty.

The MOST departments' initiatives clustered into five areas.

## **1. Demonstrating departmental commitment through community service projects**

Several departments noted that service-learning components of courses communicated the faculty's ongoing commitment to strengthening the community—a signal that spoke volumes to minority students. The sociology department at the University of Nebraska, Lincoln participates in a campus-wide initiative called the Alpha Diversity Program, a one-year, non-residential learning community for first-year undergrad-

uate students. The effort is aimed at improving the retention rates for freshman, and more than half of the 13 participants were students of color in the most recent class. The sociology department developed a seminar for the program that included study of diversity topics, a research project, and a service-learning component at a local community center. Following their service, students developed a presentation and wrote papers. The program succeeded in its retention goals; all students were still enrolled in the University the following fall. And it is a measure of students' perceptions of the department's climate that four new sociology majors were recruited from the group, three of whom are students of color.

Whether it is recognized or not, a negative climate can discourage students from continuing their educational development and pursuing the full range of departmental offerings. The quality of life in a department can even prompt students to leave a major for other disciplines or rethink more fundamentally whether they wish to be in school.

Pitzer College's sociology faculty, as part of the college's educational objectives on "social responsibility," has ensured that all students take at least one class that includes a community service component. The Pitzer students are considered "regulars" at meetings of several farm-worker organizations in the Los Angeles area. The ongoing relationship with a handful of particular organizations has helped forge real connections between students and the organizations, and many students continue to volunteer after their semester of service ends. Faculty members report that this service-learning initiative has made the curriculum more attractive to minority students, in part because it is the minority students who are most familiar with the communities being served and thus take on leadership roles in the effort. The

project also helps demonstrate the department's commitment to sociological work on issues of interest and importance to students.

## **2. Creating opportunities for student interaction**

In at least two cases, MOST departments addressed the challenge of developing a friendlier climate by deliberately creating vehicles for student interaction.

The University of Texas, El Paso used a planned remodeling of an older building to create a space that would foster student integration into department life. The resulting computer center, in the middle of a large space ringed by faculty offices, has greatly increased the level of student-faculty interaction. In addition, while space allocations matter generally, this intentionally selected location facilitates students' sense of "social" centrality in the department.

William Paterson University also put its computer facilities to work in its climate efforts. Using facilities already available in the department computer room, faculty arranged to train minority students in various computer skills, and then engaged the students in teaching their newfound skills to majority students in an area designated as the MOST lounge. Faculty observed that the approach "put minority students at an advantage, increased their self-confidence because majority students were dependent on them, [and] reduced otherwise existing social distance. . . ." The approach was deemed sufficiently successful that the University's Institute for Research and Technology has adopted it as well.

## **3. Making extra efforts to encourage minority students to take advantage of department-wide opportunities**

While many of the departments created opportunities specifically designed to meet the needs of minority students—the University of

California, Santa Barbara's "MOST Research Training in Sociology" sequence, for example—typically they also focused on increasing minority student participation in department-wide opportunities. Intentional outreach to students of color can send just the right message of a department's genuine interest in inclusiveness. At Pitzer College, the sociology faculty makes deliberate efforts to reach out to minority students in their classes, issuing, for example, individualized invitations to minority students to participate in various events that are open to all students—conferences and summer research opportunities, departmental gatherings, and so on.

## **4. Creating diversity-related events**

Pennsylvania State University was one of several institutions to create events for students that highlighted the diversity of the curriculum, faculty, and student body. At one stage in the MOST program, Penn State noted that race- and ethnicity-related tensions appeared to be on the rise among the department's students, and responded with a number of new initiatives, including a "Heritage Potluck" meal at which students, faculty, and staff share diverse food offerings. In addition, a lunchtime race/ethnicity study group meets several times a semester. The department also sponsors a number of colloquia and special events that contribute to the departmental climate. In recent years, these have included a pair of colloquia on "Making It as a Scholar of Color."

## **5. Faculty Climate Initiatives**

Not all progress on department climate resulted from initiatives aimed at students. Augusta State University was one of several MOST departments to identify and address occasional tensions among faculty in the department, and the department credits the MOST program with being a catalyst for progress. Faculty began their comprehensive revision of the curriculum with a series of



lengthy departmental discussions, a process that led to predictable and healthy disagreements over goals and methods and eventually to consensus. Skilled department leadership managed to use the curriculum redesign as an opportunity to improve relationships within the department.

### **The Result**

In final reports to ASA, all of the MOST departments described their climates in positive terms and concluded that their intentional ambitions and efforts during the MOST program had been a constructive force. Given the difficulties of self-evaluating departmental climate, it may be that results were somewhat less successful than the departments' conclusions would indicate. Nevertheless, it is reasonable to believe that the various efforts undertaken by the departments to help build a sense of community had a generally positive effect, particularly for minority students.



# Pipeline

The fifth objective of MOST dealt with attracting students into the “pipeline” leading to a career in sociology. Having a diverse talent pool of future scholars, scientists, and faculty is an important goal and by-product of a quality educational experience. MOST takes the view that addressing the pipeline is a developmental objective that includes attracting secondary school students to undergraduate education and to sociology courses; majors from those who take introductory sociology classes; graduate students from sociology majors; and professionals from sociology graduate students.

ASA encouraged MOST departments to undertake deliberate outreach to students in all phases of the sociology pipeline in order to ensure a sufficient and sufficiently diverse future supply of sociology majors, graduate students, and professionals. In addition, ASA encouraged MOST institutions to engender in students understanding and learning about the profession of sociology—how it is conducted, taught, and studied.

The MOST departments’ work clustered into three areas.

## **1. Recruiting secondary school students to the major**

MOST departments launched special recruitment efforts aimed not just at attracting students to the institution, but to leading them to major in sociology. Since departments are rarely equipped to conduct large recruitment efforts, many pursued strategies that focused tightly on specific cohort groups—students attending minority high schools, students who had indicated some interest in sociology on their applications, and others.

Several of the institutions made particular efforts to recruit minority students to their

schools, and to their departments’ courses and major programs in particular.

For many departments—the University of Puerto Rico, Mayagüez; William Paterson University; and the University of Nebraska, Lincoln, for example—outreach activity involved recruiting trips to secondary schools by students, under the direction and mentorship of a faculty member and with departmental funding. These departments noted that minority undergraduate students were generally their most effective recruiters.

Texas A&M University faculty participate in University-sponsored recruiting trips in areas of the state with large minority populations. In addition, students who indicate an interest in sociology on their undergraduate applications, and who are subsequently accepted for admission, receive letters from the department head and the undergraduate advisor encouraging them to come to Texas A&M and offering useful information about the department and the major. Furthermore, the department participates in a program that brings junior and senior high school students from underrepresented groups to campus.

## **2. Recruiting undergraduate students to graduate school and the profession**

The MOST departments also devised ways to recruit minority students to their undergraduate programs. Texas A&M, for example, applies considerable energy to its graduate school recruitment efforts. The department head, graduate advisor, and certain faculty place personal phone calls to prospective graduate school applicants, in addition to sending letters and other materials—attentive to attracting students of color. Also, the department is engaged in summer institutes, funded by the National Science Foundation,

In the MOST program, the pipeline into a graduate career is very much shaped by the quality of students' educational experiences realized through all of the MOST goals. In that sense, output into the graduate pipeline is not an end in itself. Instead, capacity building is part of a larger goal of building an excellent and inclusive field.

that link selected institutions in the state of Texas, most of which are part of the University of Texas System, with the department for a two-month program. The department reports that the program has helped recruit a number of minority students to the graduate program.

Penn State University has attracted an increasing number of minority undergraduates and graduate students during the MOST years, and has found that current graduate students of color are particularly effective recruiters. Students host prospective enrollees when they visit the campus, and visit undergraduate classes in small multi-racial teams to discuss their ongoing research projects.

Penn State's sociology department also takes part in recruiting trips to historically black colleges and universities, and works to ensure that favorable funding packages are offered to prospective graduate students of color.

### **3. Developing and demonstrating the sociology career path**

In the MOST program, the pipeline into a graduate career is very much shaped by the quality of students' educational experiences realized through all of the MOST goals. In that sense, output into the graduate pipeline is not an end in itself. Instead, capacity building is part of a larger goal of building an excellent and inclusive field.

An approach, for example, used by all of the MOST departments was to encourage, mentor, and fund students to take part in professional meetings as well as regional, state, and campus-wide conferences. MOST departments see in

these settings an opportunity to introduce students to the substance and methods of professional interaction. Beyond the developmental advantages of these experiences, such exposure is also a selling point for sociology as a career.

That said, MOST departments also went to some length to be certain that their majoring students, and majors of color in particular, were exposed to specific information about how and why to pursue careers in sociology. The University of Puerto Rico, Mayagüez, for example, conducts seminars on strategies and methods for applying to graduate school. The University of California, Santa Barbara's MOST course devotes time to graduate school selection and application as well.

William Paterson University's efforts include a regular "Crunch and Munch" series, so named for the light refreshments served. At the sessions, teams of sociology faculty discuss such topics as how to apply to graduate school and write strong resumes. The sessions are open to all students, but minority students are particularly encouraged to attend.

### **The Result**

Of these three areas, it was the latter—developing and demonstrating the sociology career path—that attracted the most activity from participating departments. Some departments reported that they simply could not overcome institutional or resource barriers to conduct active outreach to high school students or to undergraduates at other institutions. By contrast, almost all MOST departments sought to create professional opportunities for their students and to acquaint them with the hands-on profession of sociology as a science and career.

For minority students, such efforts were particularly important because they provided the final linkage between classroom study and



a career—a link that in many institutions relies more on students’ family connections and backgrounds, factors more likely to favor majority students. MOST departments’ deliberate efforts to expose students to conferences, to connect them with internships, and to pursue other such initiatives were a welcome departure from standard practice. These efforts both enhanced the educational experience of students and seeded their interest in continuing into graduate careers.



# MOST Results

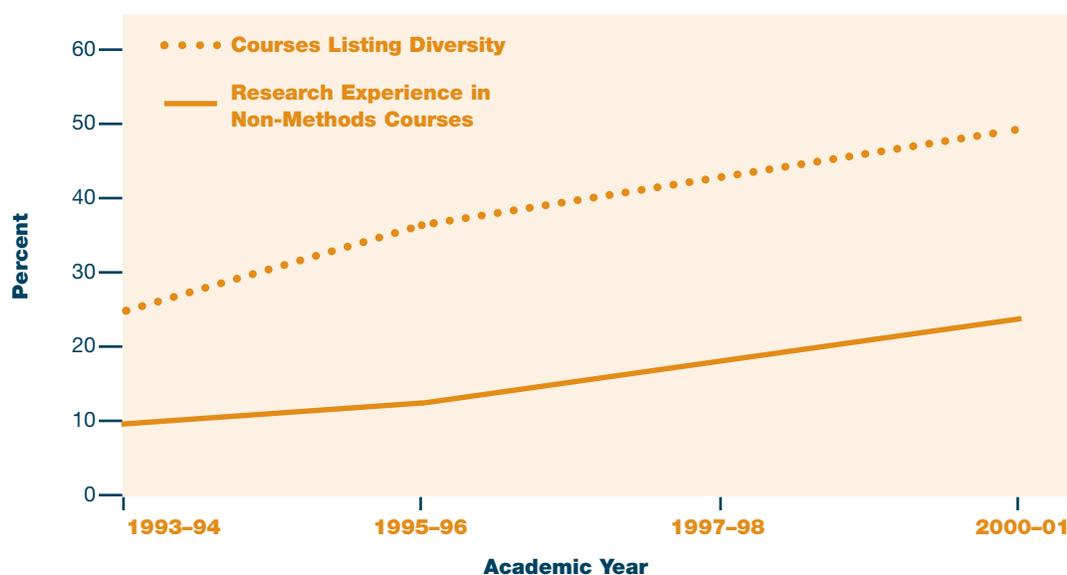
Taken as a group, the MOST institutions achieved important results, particularly in areas related to curriculum, research training, recruitment of minority students to the major, and recruitment of minority faculty. The following analyses are based on data from the first seven years of the MOST program, using the 1993-94 academic year—the last year before MOST reforms began—as the benchmark. Data for the last year of MOST, 2001-02, are not yet available.

## Indicators of Change

Over the life of the program, ASA tracked MOST departments' course offerings, gauging two important issues: the number of courses

that explicitly deal with diversity, and the number of non-methods courses that specifically incorporate research experiences. On both points, MOST departments showed marked change. In academic year 1993-94, departments reported that about one quarter of their course offerings explicitly dealt with diversity. By the 2000-01 academic year, the number of courses with explicit listings of diversity doubled to more than 50 percent. Similarly, the number of non-methods courses that specifically incorporated research experiences grew substantially from about 10 percent in 1993-94 to nearly 25 percent in the 2000-01 academic year.

**Figure 2.**  
**Curriculum Changes in MOST Departments, 1993-94 to 2000-01**



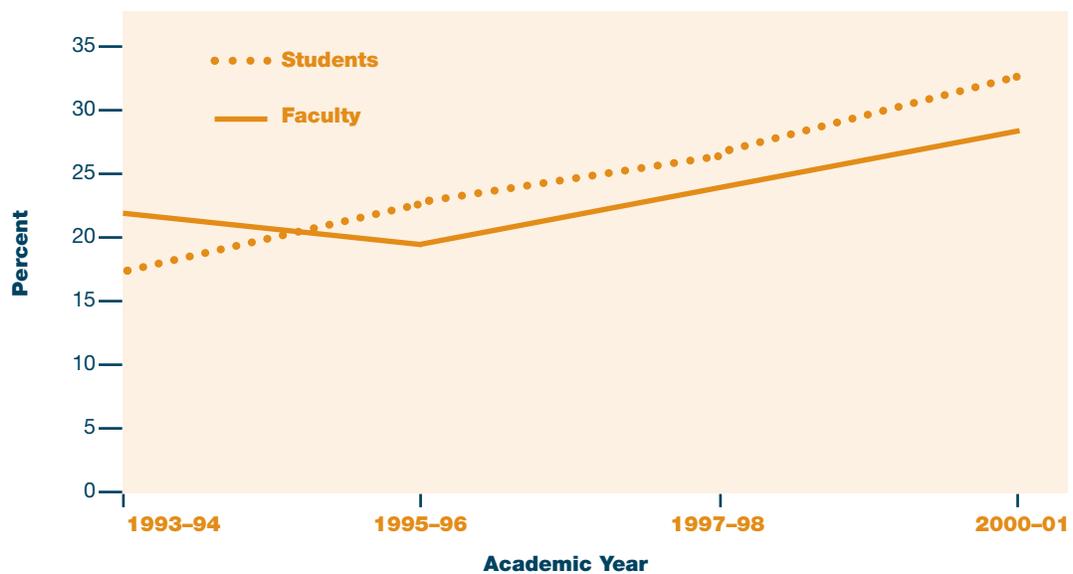
Note: Percentages are based on a variable number of schools reporting.

There is also concrete evidence that the number of majors of color in departments has increased significantly over the span of the MOST program. In the 1993-94 academic year, participating institutions reported 120 graduating majors of color, or about 18 percent of the total number of sociology majors at these schools. By the 2000-01 academic year, this figure nearly doubled to 239 reported minority majors, or about 33 percent of the total number.

While student engagement in such experiences is low relative to the overall number of majors, a change from under one-half percent to eight percent is a measurable gain.

Finally, while diversifying the faculty was not an explicit goal of MOST, participating departments also enhanced their recruitment efforts and the presence of minority faculty among their ranks. Overall, departments reported that about 22 percent of their faculties were persons

**Figure 3.**  
**Presence of Minority Students and Faculty, 1993-94 to 2000-01**



Note: Percentages are based on a variable number of schools reporting.

In addition, students in MOST institutions took opportunities to develop professional skills and networks in significant numbers. In 1993, few students were engaged in research presentations, with departments reporting only six students presenting papers at regional or national meetings. By the 2000-01 academic year, the numbers increased tenfold to 60 students presenting at scholarly meetings.

of color prior to the official launch of the MOST program in 1993-94. The proportion increased to almost 30 percent by the 2000-01 academic year.

### Consequences of MOST

The data indicate that MOST was a success in changing business as usual practices in departments. As a unique experiment in addressing

the challenge of diversity through department-wide change, the transformations in teaching and learning as well as the developmental experiences now available to students are indicators of its success. MOST was aimed at altering how departments function to achieve excellence and inclusiveness. In the five key elements of the educational process, department practices and student experiences measurably changed.

As a program in systemic change, MOST focused on what was occurring “inside the black box” and how to improve it, rather than primarily emphasizing “inputs” and “outputs.” Despite the emphasis on making and sustaining change in departments, it is important to trace the consequences for students who are learning in these environments. MOST departments reported a pattern of different experiences and different career paths for their majors and graduates.

Augusta State University (ASU), for example, reports that, when the MOST program began, students and faculty held modest expectations that students would go on to graduate school in sociology. In the several years before the inception of MOST, no ASU student entered a graduate program in sociology. MOST, however, shifted expectations. ASU greatly expanded research opportunities for all students and initiated a series of collaborative faculty-student research projects. Faculty encouraged students to present the results of their research at professional meetings and to use those meetings to talk with sociologists from departments across the nation, to compare themselves with other undergraduates, and to talk with representatives from graduate departments. These and related efforts paid off. Currently, 13 Augusta State sociology graduates are enrolled in doctoral programs with generous funding, and six are students of color.

Southwestern University also reports compelling data about the impact of MOST. Before MOST, students went on to complete

professional degrees (in social work, public health, law, and divinity), but very few went on to get academic degrees in sociology. While department information on graduates may not be fully complete, of the 138 graduates between 1980 and 1994, only 6 (4.3 percent) went on for graduate degrees in sociology. After MOST, students were much more likely to attend graduate school in sociology. Of the 85 graduates between 1995 and 2001, at least 12 (14.1 percent) have pursued graduate education in sociology, and fully half of these are students of color (two African American, two Hispanic, and two Asian).

The MOST departments that confer graduate degrees are attentive to pipeline issues with respect to both their undergraduate and graduate programs. Pennsylvania State University, for example, reports steady success that is different from pre-MOST patterns. Since MOST, one Penn State undergraduate who received MOST summer training in 1966 entered graduate school in sociology a year later. Another B.A. recipient, who was a student member of the Penn State MOST committee, took a position at the Urban Institute before beginning graduate study at the University of California. Yet another recent, African-American B.A. recipient is conducting research at the University of Michigan and looking ahead to graduate training. One more is about to complete her doctorate at the University of Pennsylvania.

Robert Montenegro, B.A. 2000 from Pitzer College, is in his second year of a Ph.D. program in sociology at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA). His undergraduate thesis research, which examined how monolingualism affects the quality of health care, helped earn him a Predoctoral Minority Fellowship (MFP) from ASA. Montenegro credits MOST with helping him develop the skills and capacity to compete successfully for an MFP Fellowship. He plans also to attend medical school and pursue a research career attuned to the medical needs and challenges in his hometown community of East Los Angeles.

Since MOST, a solid number of minority students also completed graduate degrees at Penn State. One African-American and one Mexican-American graduate student, who had been MOST undergraduates at other institutions, earned M.A. degrees at Penn State and continued their doctoral study at the University of North Carolina and the University of Texas. Another undergraduate alumnae of MOST is currently completing her doctoral studies and plans a research career. One recent Ph.D., an African American, holds a research position at the University of Pennsylvania, and two other minority students completing their doctorates took faculty positions at Florida State University and Georgia State University. Currently eight students of color are in residence as Ph.D. candidates.

From these data and the other institutions' reports, two conclusions emerge. First, all majors, and in particular students of color, in MOST departments are now receiving the education and developmental experiences they need to prepare and attract them to graduate education. And, as importantly, students coming from MOST departments are successfully navigating careers in graduate school.

### **Independent Evaluation of MOST**

An independent evaluation of the MOST program, conducted in the spring semester of 1998 with funding from the Ford Foundation, offered a number of important observations about MOST. Dr. Robert A. Ibarra, now Assistant Vice Chancellor Emeritus of the University of Wisconsin, Madison, conducted site visits and a series of interviews with MOST students and faculty, reviewed a range of materials, and participated in a MOST Coordinator's Conference. His very positive evaluation of the program made several key

points. First, Ibarra noted students' widespread support for MOST. As he put it:

All of the students were enthusiastic about the program, and they seemed exceptionally well prepared for graduate work. Many commented how they now "feel comfortable" in their classes as a result of the MOST program. Rather than avoid the often difficult research and theory classes, many undergraduates now consider them strong and attractive programs in their departments. There is a distinct preference for applied programs among all MOST students in the programs visited, and many plan to pursue their interests in graduate school. This preference is partially due to the close ties many of them have to a local community, which they admit is hard to leave. Thus, their support for the program runs deep. As one student expressed it, "I wish I had the MOST program in high school."<sup>1</sup>

Ibarra also stressed the importance of strong support for MOST efforts from top administrators to make systemic change:

[T]he MOST program will not be as successful, or will not achieve its full potential, without top administrators becoming stakeholders and directly support[ing] the values and the mission of the program. Academic culture change will be difficult to accomplish without administrative support. Recognition must be given that MOST Program departments are undertaking systemic change that could ultimately benefit and add value to the entire institution. That was clear in some site visits where successful MOST programs, with enthusiastic students, faculty, and coordinators, met with reluctance from top administrators for

<sup>1</sup>Ibarra, Robert A., "Consultant's Report Submitted to the Ford Foundation; Review of the Minority Opportunities through School Transformation Program," Madison, Wisconsin, May 27, 1998, p. 4.

their requests for support. If MOST initiatives cannot be institutionalized, or lack support, then faculty will feel overworked and unrecognized for their efforts. The program intends to generate systemic change, consequently, the system should be involved, or at least supportive of the efforts and possible needs. This is a critical factor for program success that should be an important consideration for any future MOST program.<sup>2</sup>

And finally, Ibarra overall described MOST as a model of program design. He thought that the intentional, but flexible strategies for change had much to commend to all departments.

In general, the greatest strength [of MOST] appears to be the strong program design. It is in a class by itself—thorough, complex, extensive, and aimed in the right direction. This is very important given the current changing conditions for diversity in higher education... MOST addresses the issue of changing academic culture, and should be a model for the next phase of diversity in higher education.”<sup>3</sup>

"...[U]nlike other programs with a similar mission, [MOST's] basic premise is that the success of traditional pipeline models rests on the ability to create institutional transformation...by changing the academic culture of a discipline, by working with the department's faculty."

Robert A. Ibarra, *Beyond Affirmative Action: Reframing the Context of Higher Education*, Robert A. Ibarra, 2001, University of Wisconsin Press, Madison, Wisconsin.

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<sup>2</sup> Ibarra, pp. 11-12.

<sup>3</sup> Ibarra, p. 17.



# A Change Model

MOST demonstrated something far more significant than the success of a number of specific approaches to diversity in sociology departments. Perhaps the single most important conclusion to be drawn from the MOST experience is that deliberate change, aimed at the department level in institutions of higher learning, can indeed be accomplished.

It is also worth noting that MOST prospered in the various institutions despite their differences. The large universities participating in MOST had both the advantage and disadvantage of numbers—more students to attract and more to teach, more faculty to invest and keep involved, more course sections to work with and more to keep track of. Small institutions had their own advantages and disadvantages—greater flexibility at the department level, fewer students to track, but less in the way of resources to accomplish their mission. All succeeded in MOST, finding ways to work within their individual institutions to overcome the barriers before them.

Importantly, MOST succeeded even at the graduate level. Four of the participating institutions are Ph.D.-conferring and sought to examine graduate as well as undergraduate training. As an additional activity, MOST coordinators and department chairs from these departments met and worked separately on addressing diversity issues in their graduate programs. Many of their graduate students became thoroughly engaged in MOST and in working with undergraduates. Also, the departments' recruiting strategies were significantly affected by the program.

Moreover, MOST had a discernible and important impact on the sociology profession. In response to repeated requests from members, ASA's annual meetings regularly feature work-

shops and presentations on MOST goals, and ASA receives regular inquiries from sociology departments across the country about how they might adopt MOST program elements. There are other indicators of MOST's recognition and esteem within the profession. The ASA Council, for example, adopted a resolution in January 2002 institutionalizing student research roundtables at annual meetings, and naming them for the MOST program.

MOST points the way to a change model that is readily transportable from sociology to other disciplines. Whether to enhance the liberal arts education of students or the training of future social and behavioral scientists, or other scientists and scholars, MOST provides a set of aspirations and a plan of action that matters.

To a certain degree, the success of MOST and its department-level focus has already begun to shape the thinking of related efforts within the profession, and particularly at MOST institutions. The University of Puerto Rico, Mayagüez, for example, has recently launched new programs aimed at expanding research opportunities and helping students participate in professional development workshops. Similarly, Texas A&M University has received funding from the National Science Foundation's Alliance for Minority Participation and Research Experience for Undergraduates programs to support summer institutes, the presentation of student research at regional meetings, mentored research training, and other related activities. The programs serve students from several minority institutions in the University of Texas System, creating lasting linkages between the Texas A&M sociology department and the participating students and their institutions. The programs are directed to training students of color statewide and mentoring them to pursue graduate education.

From the outset, the ASA recognized that MOST was about academic change. Its five elements were intended to be transportable: Diversity issues have a role across the entire university *curriculum*. Rigorous instruction in *research* and the fundamentals of a given discipline will help minority and other students succeed academically regardless of the subject matter. Active *mentoring* and a healthy *climate* are universally important for majors and graduate students, and are important components of a vigorous academic community. Aggressive *outreach* to minority students is important for all academic departments in order to attract and include a rich and diverse talent pool.

The specific approaches that MOST departments used to accomplish these objectives are not really sociology-specific. Departments in all disciplines can and do convene events where their students can present their research; other departments could develop mentoring programs along the lines of the innovations from MOST departments, to name just two examples.

Learned or professional societies can and should play a leadership role in leading, encouraging, and working with departments and institutions of higher education in transforming the discipline, as well as in devising effective approaches to diversity, curriculum transformation, research training, and mentoring. The ASA's MOST program provided the leadership, resources, legitimacy, and commitment that allowed departments to become a success. MOST provides a concrete example of how professional associations can interact, collaborate, and form partnerships with departments in order to produce sustainable and systemic change that benefits students, faculty, and the discipline. While departments can undertake this work independent of scientific or learned societies, the presence of the latter importantly supports and enables these forms of rethinking and change.

In short, MOST points the way to a change model that is readily transportable from sociology to other disciplines. Whether to enhance the liberal arts education of students or the training of future social and behavioral scientists, or other scientists and scholars, MOST provides a set of aspirations and a plan of action that matters. By focusing on deliberate approaches to problems often regarded as intractable, and by tailoring approaches to the specific capacities and opportunities available at a given institution, *all* departments can fundamentally alter what they achieve as educational units.

The eight-year experience with MOST suggests ten best practices for institutions and individual departments contemplating a similar effort aimed at diversity.

**1. Important curriculum change can occur deliberately, yet incrementally.** All of the MOST departments achieved some meaningful form of curriculum revision—from a full-scale restructuring to the infusion of diversity issues or more rigorous methods in courses that had not previously included these components.

**2. Traditionally informal processes, such as mentoring students, need not be left to chance. Departments can put in place systemic ways to ensure that mentoring reaches *all* students.** Department after department approached mentoring as a deliberate activity, some even going so far as to make its accomplishment a criterion for faculty review. The result was a series of approaches that made mentoring commonplace, rather than exceptional, and made certain that the students who received mentoring were not just the ones who resembled the faculty. The change in department ethos created a climate where students at a number of institutions even felt comfortable seeking mentoring when it was needed or not provided.

**3. Student engagement is essential.** MOST departments that actively engaged students as peer mentors, co-planners of events, and members of committees produced more sustainable change both by having more “hands” participating in activities and by involving students as junior collaborators. Student organizations and activities that were explicitly inclusive of students of color had a positive impact on departmental climate and peer relationships for *all* students.

**4. Department chairs, department committees, and other university administrators must be engaged in the process of reform in order to achieve lasting change.** Working department-wide on objectives and plans can and does produce sustainable transformations. Commitment can and must be encouraged and sought at all levels.

**5. Students need to see the connections between what they do in class, what they are studying, and what underlies this work.** One reason that the creation of research opportunities for students was so important to MOST’s success is that direct research experiences develop operational skills, show the links between theory and knowledge, and encourage students to make the connection between their undergraduate studies and a career path. Research bridges the gap between study and practice.

**6. Modeling professional behavior draws students into the profession.** Research-based experience with ongoing mentoring was key to the development of professional skills and attraction to future faculty and research careers. Also, all of the MOST departments encouraged students to take part in professional or academic events, or in campus-wide symposia modeled after such events. Students found that these activities enhanced their understanding of how professionals relate to one another, how they test each other’s thinking, and how they resolve (or fail to

resolve) differences. In short, such opportunities give students a sense of the contours of professional life.

**7. Minority recruitment requires intentional outreach and persistence.** Successful strategies for recruiting minority students to the major or to a graduate program rely on a number of factors, but the key to all of them is identification of and effective outreach to pools of minority students—in minority majority high schools, in historically black colleges and other minority-serving institutions, and in community colleges and other institutions. For MOST departments, that involved recruiting trips, letters, follow-up phone calls, arranging hosting with current students, among other activities. For other departments, other specific strategies might make sense. But the core approach—to identify opportunities for smart outreach and then deliver a message of inclusion—should be the same.

**8. Physical space and informal opportunities matter to department climate.** Several departments were reminded that the physical arrangement of facilities—a computer workroom, in one example—can make a huge difference in the kind of interaction that takes place. Similarly, opportunities matter. Commuter campuses had to create both opportunities and spaces for students and faculty to be together outside of the classroom. Other institutions created informal opportunities over a snack or social event.

**9. Multi-year projects can make lasting changes in the culture and mindset of a department.** Academic departments have long thought in deliberate terms about curriculum and recruitment. For the institutions involved in MOST, the program also put the need for research opportunities and the importance of intentional approaches to mentoring and climate foremost in their thinking. In short, MOST changed the way a



department examined its work, its priorities, and even its culture.

**10. Scientific and scholarly societies are an important source of leadership and support. Public and private foundations, too, have a valuable role.** Efforts like MOST can be led by departments seeking to make sustainable change. Yet, national societies can provide leadership—directly and indirectly—as well as opportunities to engender change and best practices in departments. The support of public and private institutions can help as well to assist materially and symbolically in enabling change.

Case studies highlighting each of the 11 institutions' MOST programs are included in Appendix A.

# Epilogue

On June 6-7, 2002, approximately 100 academic administrators, private foundation representatives, federal agency officials, learned and scientific society leaders, and education and diversity experts attended an invitational conference in Washington, DC to review and discuss the lessons learned from the MOST program and to consider the implications of this effort for higher education. By design, attendees were provided with a pre-release report so that the feedback and exchange at this meeting could help to shape the final edition. A key objective of MOST was to develop strategies and recommendations that could be transported to other fields and to other colleges and universities. In many respects, this capstone conference was intended as the first major step to that end.

Participants at “Transforming Higher Education: New Ways for Academic Departments to Advance Excellence and Inclusiveness” heard from a range of experts and joined in a series of vigorous dialogues and discussion sessions. The conference agenda is included as Appendix B.

## Overall Perspective

All attendees were knowledgeable about higher education, teaching, training, and issues of diversity. The consensus among them was palpable. They indicated that, despite the variety of successful specialized programs, the time was ripe for systemic change and for strengthening the connections between excellence and inclusiveness in higher education. Participants reaffirmed that education continues to be a core arena for equal access and opportunity. As important, they emphasized that diversity is essential to education because teaching and learning, as well as the advancement of knowledge, require wide-ranging perspectives, reframing of questions, and rethinking of ideas.

“Diversity and excellence are at the heart of the efforts of the departments involved in the ASA’s wonderful experiment in systemic change in the MOST program. This is the crossroad of transition from thinking that diversity is fully and foremost a matter of access and opportunity (although this is a key piece of the puzzle)...to thinking that diversity and institutional excellence are inextricably bound and fundamentally a part of fulfilling our central mission as a public good.”

*Nancy Cantor, Chancellor*

*University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign*

## The MOST Approach: Pioneering New Solutions

Conference attendees found the conception of MOST to be engaging, and they framed penetrating questions. While some participants were aware of MOST and its ambitions, few had previously been exposed to the theory motivating the program or how it took form in different institutions and contexts. As to its merits, speakers and attendees found the program to be innovative, its focus on intentional and sustainable activity at the department level to be well targeted, and its results compelling. They also saw MOST as generic in its applicability (well beyond sociology) and “transportable” across fields and disciplines. Indeed, much of the conference focused on the sustainability and transportability of MOST.

Conference speakers and attendees emphasized that the fundamental principles of MOST offered an effective model for institutional change. They embraced as key that MOST:

- Makes diversity the “day job,” not an “add on”;
- Ties excellence to inclusiveness;
- Links diversity objectives to the benefit of *all*;
- Demystifies the process of education by making it accessible and transparent;

- Is attentive to the pipeline (from high school through postgraduate career);
- Is intergenerational (stimulates new interactions between students and faculty) and contextual (“bridges” internal and external environments and “stakeholders”);
- Is systemic and organizational (in the case of MOST, at the department level);
- Is dynamic and flexible;
- Is purposeful and intentional; and
- Is core, not peripheral.

“The research and mentoring experiences of MOST and its emphasis on staged learning of research methods demystifies graduate school for students so that they have a better comprehension of what graduate school is and how they would learn in it and gain from it. MOST reduces uncertainty.”

*Teresa A. Sullivan, Vice President and Graduate Dean  
The University of Texas, Austin*

### **MOST: A Portable Model for Diversity and Excellence**

Participants concurred that the success of the MOST program over the past eight years is not just a function of its being situated in sociology departments. Rather, the change model that emerges from MOST is directly transportable to other disciplines at a variety of institutions. From the outset, MOST was an experiment in educational change that was intended to be broad in its reach—despite the fact that levels of openness to change may vary by field or by institution. That MOST had this wider purpose and goal was apparent to conference attendees and met with their support.

Attendees indicated that transporting MOST to other academic departments and beyond can have an important impact on other fields and a multiplier effect on an entire institution. They converged on at least four core reasons for transporting the MOST model as a strategy for addressing excellence and inclusiveness in other academic locations: (1) It explicitly addresses

the “supply” problem for persons of color in scholarly and scientific fields and in building faculties of the future while enhancing the education and training of all students; (2) it locates responsibility at the organizational level (e.g., departments) rather than the individual level (faculty) and thus is more likely to produce institutionalized change; (3) it shows the feasibility of making and sustaining change through shifting the level of intervention; and (4) it shows the need to work with even larger academic units to transform campuses and higher education more generally.

While the discussion of institutional change was broader than any one department and thus any one field, conference attendees saw the value of the MOST “lesson”—that is, working department by department. Attendees concurred that, with the support of the academic leadership on a campus, efforts could be made to seed MOST and MOST-like initiatives at the heart of where scholarly energy and action live. The MOST program itself demonstrates the value of “not playing it safe,” but working even with departments that see themselves as having less need or impulse to change. The group emphasized that this lesson also translates into working with academic programs and scholarly or scientific fields that need more encouragement or prodding.

### **Ingredients for Successful Change**

In sustaining and transporting MOST, a climate of support is key. Conference participants could see that departments most engaged in MOST recognized the role of department-wide commitment in the short- and long-term. Conferees heard the message of MOST. As one of the chairs from a MOST Ph.D.-conferring department put it, “there are problems and impediments; the process is hardly linear. But, when it became department-wide, it really began to work.”

The group recognized that there are commonalities in the ingredients for success based on

the results and strategies of MOST. Participants emphasized that, in making and sustaining systemic change, successful departments and institutions need to:

- Design plans appropriate to institution, department, and circumstances;
- Take account of lack of engagement in or ambivalence about change;
- Identify resources—even small amounts of money—to create incentives or provide affirmations of support;
- Engender broad-based human commitment;
- Enhance visibility; and
- Attract support systems and advocates (in internal and external environment)

### **Support and Embedding Change in Larger Contexts**

As conference participants were aware, MOST was developed and led by the ASA which sent out a call to departments to participate in this enterprise (based on a competitive selection). In that sense, MOST departments commenced their involvement with external legitimation. However, as the MOST model is transported to other fields and disciplines, and to other colleges and universities, the impetus for such innovations will be more various—from other departments themselves learning about MOST, from other scholarly or scientific societies, from higher education leaders at colleges or universities, or from private or public funding sources. Attendees recognized that the context of support was central to sustaining MOST and emphasized that context also matters in transporting and sustaining similar efforts of change.

### **The Internal Environment**

To that end, higher education leaders play a central role. As chancellors, presidents, deans, chairs, faculty members, and others talked, it became clear that single-site MOST efforts would require hospitable, even proactive, locale environments absent tangible and

symbolic external support. From the vantage of departments seeking to change or higher education officials seeking to change departments, it can make a difference when academic leaders (1) explicitly define diversity objectives, (2) promote the articulation of goals and operating plans, (3) reallocate “venture” capital resources, (4) showcase best practices and achievements, and (5) generate attention and connections with other institutions beyond the immediate campus.

### **The External Environment**

The nature of external support is an important element in the mix. Participants readily noted the value of ASA guidance and direction as well as the involvement of the Ford Foundation in the MOST enterprise. Conference participants recognized that external organizations and institutions can facilitate MOST and MOST-like efforts and that these organizations are themselves stakeholders with an interest in enhancing the pipeline of students of color and the quality of training for all students. They emphasized that (1) leadership from learned societies and higher education associations matters; (2) private foundations, large and small, can make a difference for education; (3) federal investments in educational change are essential; and (4) the business sector also benefits from diversity in education and might allocate resources.

Attendees saw the desirability, but also the challenge of mobilizing active and sustainable support from these groups. They hoped that reports like this one might raise awareness of the important role of diverse stakeholders in academic change. Some stakeholders like the National Science Foundation (NSF) articulate a role and responsibility—at least for scientific fields, including the social and behavioral sciences. The NSF, for example, sees itself as an appropriate source of support for higher education initiatives directed to intentional and sustainable change and to capacity building.



Other stakeholders may need to be encouraged to initiate or continue playing a part and defining a niche (e.g., from sessions or workshops at annual meetings of scholarly and educational associations to more explicit partnerships).

### **Conclusion—The Road from Here**

While conference participants appreciated the challenge and the level of effort required to make change, they also indicated that this was a time of opportunity and need where a project like MOST could be seeded more broadly. The group concurred that MOST has produced significant results at the 11 participating institutions. Attendees also recognized that, with appropriate support and translation to other circumstances, programs modeled after MOST hold extraordinary promise for advancing excellence and inclusiveness across a range of disciplines and fields.

“I am for more MOST—more MOST with its emphasis on intentionality. Positive transitions are not likely to happen by accident. Intentional change needs to be constructed by departments and by institutions and integrated into the core mission...Such efforts should be central, not ancillary. This is about ideas, research training, and what people are going to do with their lives. If we want to engage our colleagues about what needs to happen, we need to engage them by ideas and mission.”

*Christopher Edley, Jr., Professor, Harvard Law School, and Member, Civil Rights Commission*

# Appendix A

# Case Studies

**The following are brief case studies  
of each of the 11 participating  
MOST departments' work.**



# Augusta State University

Located in Augusta, Georgia, Augusta State University (ASU) is a public institution enrolling approximately 5,000 students, 25 to 30 percent of whom are minorities. The University confers associate, bachelor, master, and specialist degrees, as well as doctorates in education awarded cooperatively with another institution. Most students live in the immediate Augusta area; indeed, the campus has no residence halls.

Augusta State's sociology department awards separate bachelor's degrees in sociology and criminal justice, as well as associate degrees in criminal justice. Seven professors make up the department faculty. Over the course of the past eight years, the number of graduating sociology majors has doubled, from 32 in the 1993-94 academic year to 66 in 2000-01. The percentage of minority sociology majors has grown as well, from 28 percent in 1993-94 to 60 percent in 2000-01.

The following are highlights of Augusta State's MOST program.

## Curriculum

The department focused considerable energy on MOST goals related to curriculum, taking advantage of an institution-wide transition from a quarter-system to a semester-system. Faculty revised all department courses, catalog descriptions, major requirements, concentrations within the major, and specific course syllabi. The revision allowed the faculty to emphasize research in the curriculum, particularly in the introductory courses.

The MOST program also inspired important revisions in the department's theory and methods courses. The theory course now features increased emphasis on multicultural issues and writing skills. The department's two methods courses now require students to

"Mentoring has become a department mantra, shading all our efforts."

Augusta State University  
MOST Report to ASA

conduct actual research—as opposed to reviewing existing research—and include training in statistics, formerly taught outside the department. As a result, methods students now conceptualize research projects; generate hypotheses; conduct research; gather, enter and analyze resulting data; and write and disseminate a report on their findings. The department also added a capstone course in the fall of 2001.

In addition, faculty decided to drop a long-standing course on marriage and the family, and replace it with one on multiculturalism. A variety of other new courses were added to the curriculum as well, at the initiation of individual faculty members. Many of these courses focus on issues of diversity and engage students in research or research-related tasks. They include an upper-level course on urban social problems in which student teams conduct qualitative and quantitative research in the Augusta area; a demography course that requires students to gather, analyze, and interpret secondary-source data; a course called "Violence and the South," in which students conduct an empirical research project and then present findings at a campus-wide conference; a course examining African-American communities in Augusta; a popular course on African-American religions; and courses exploring the sociology of medicine and mental health.

## Research

As noted, research has been thoroughly integrated into coursework, and the two-course methods sequence has been revised with

heavy emphasis on research. In addition, the department has significantly increased undergraduate involvement in faculty research projects, and worked to increase student participation in professional and academic conferences as well as in the writing and publication of articles and reports.

Another important research development was the 1998 founding of a faculty-student group called the “Moral Maximalists.” The group studies, learns, and writes about how Augusta community-based organizations’ work in addressing social, economic, and political injustice in the community. Faculty members work with students to design and implement research programs aimed at helping groups learn more about the problems they confront. The group also sponsors an on-campus conference to present their research to community members. The Moral Maximalists was created as an offshoot of an urban social problems course and a follow-up workshop on environmental injustice in Augusta. The group has made almost a dozen presentations at state, regional, and national sociological meetings.

### **Mentoring**

All sociology faculty members at Augusta State mentor students, and mentoring work is

Augusta State’s participation in MOST shifted expectations about students’ post-baccalaureate goals and increased support for students entering sociology graduate programs. For example, ASU’s teaching apprentice program, which now includes more than 30 undergraduates, invites high-achieving students into the teaching role and establishes strong mentoring relationships to attract students to see themselves as faculty of the future. Efforts like these pay off. Currently, 13 Augusta State sociology graduates are enrolled in doctoral programs, and six are students of color. In addition, ASU graduates are enrolling in law school, public administration and public health programs, and graduate programs in social work. ASU undergraduates now expect faculty to encourage and facilitate their aspirations for graduate work in sociology.

considered during faculty evaluations. Indeed, the department has developed a formal apprentice program in which undergraduates work closely with faculty as apprentice teachers. The students, typically upper-division students who have excelled in a course, work with professors to develop syllabi, prepare classroom presentations, tutor, lead discussion groups, and so forth.

The Moral Maximalist group is another example of Augusta State’s deliberate commitment to mentoring. Several faculty members have participated in the group’s work by guiding and training students.

### **Climate**

The department reports that the MOST program provided a framework to address two faculty-identified problems within the department—a generally weak structure for joint activity on social justice issues, and a degree of mistrust among colleagues. As part of the MOST-driven reassessment of the curriculum, a new department chair launched an extensive series of department meetings that provided rich opportunities for discussion, dispute, and eventual consensus-building.

### **Pipeline**

The department cites its extensive mentoring efforts, its apprenticeship program, and its commitment to undergraduate research as important factors in its efforts to encourage students to pursue advanced sociology degrees. Approximately 40 of the department’s majors have gone on to advanced programs since the inception of MOST, which the department views as a striking success. Because most of the students are local and want or need to remain in the Augusta area, graduate school options are limited. The department has forged relationships with several graduate programs in the geographic region to make it more possible for students to pursue graduate training in sociology.

# University of California, Santa Barbara

Nestled along the Pacific Coast approximately 100 miles north of Los Angeles, the University of California, Santa Barbara (UCSB) enrolls just under 19,000 students, offering a wide range of undergraduate and graduate degrees. About 94 percent of students are Californians. Approximately 30 percent of undergraduates and 16 percent of graduate students are minorities.

The sociology department awarded 416 bachelor's degrees in the 2000-01 academic year, nearly 100 more than it did in 1993-94. The department's proportion of graduating students of color has increased during that period as well, from 22 percent to 40 percent. By comparison, 31 percent of all undergraduates at UCSB are minorities. Of the department's current 27 tenure-track faculty positions, minorities hold six.

The following are highlights of the UCSB MOST program.

## Curriculum

The department developed several new diversity-focused courses as a result of its participation in MOST. These include "African-Americans and 'Other' European Americans: A Study of Conflict and Cooperation," "Betwixt and Between: Multiracial Identity in the United States," "African-Americans and 'Other' Americans of Color: Towards Conflict or Cooperation," "Girl's Culture," "Sexuality, Race, Gender and Class," "Discrimination in Organizations," and "Women, Culture and Development." New courses were also added to the undergraduate theory sequence that include "Theories of Race and Ethnic Relations," "Theories of Gender and Gender Inequality," and "Power in Social Institutions."

In addition, faculty significantly revised a number of existing courses to enhance their focus on diversity. That effort took many different forms—from restructuring courses and adding new units, to the more micro-level processes of a professor selecting new slides with a more diverse group of subjects for a presentation on the socialization of children. The transformed courses included, among many others, "Sociology of Work," "Contemporary Women's Movements," "Social Movements," "Sociology of Education," and "Sociology of Art and Literature."

In 1997, the department introduced a two-year sequence aimed specifically at students from underrepresented racial and ethnic groups. This innovative curriculum transformation provides quality education and training and creates a "cohort" of students learning and working together. The "MOST Research Training in Sociology" sequence involves a three-quarter seminar in the first year, followed by a research project in the second year, conducted under the supervision of a faculty mentor. The faculty also uses the seminar as a chance to get feedback from students on the department's course offerings, and to offer advice on graduate schools and professional careers in sociology.

The department has changed at the graduate level as well. Graduate students may elect to take a series of courses in "Race, Ethnicity, Nation" to demonstrate competency in the area. Graduate students are also an integral part of the undergraduate teaching program. Under their leadership, the department now has a Teaching Assistant (TA)-training workshop and pedagogy series to complement the professional training sequences offered yearly. Each year for the last several, "teaching about social justice" and "dealing with difficult topics like sexual difference and racism" have been staples of the curriculum.

## Research

Because of the very large number of majors, much of the department's focus on research training took the form of curriculum revisions. The department developed a number of small seminars following up on the research aspects of lower-level courses. For example, a faculty member teaching an introductory sociology of law course in one quarter would offer a follow-up seminar in the following quarter to conduct related research.

In addition, in recent years, the department developed two new courses, one a second-year course in which students would design a research project, and the other a research and writing course to be taken by students conducting mentored independent study projects.

As discussed above, the two-year MOST sequence in research training for students of color is both a curriculum reform as well as an explicit context for research experience. This exposure provides for rigorous training. Also, many more students doing honors theses or independent study undertake scientific research under faculty guidance. As a consequence of MOST, faculty encourage research, and students increasingly pursue such options.

## Mentoring

The research seminars provide an apt and inclusive context for mentoring students. Also, the department's "MOST Research Training in Sociology" seminar sequence provides exceptional mentoring opportunities, specifically for minority students. In addition to a faculty mentor, the MOST students are also assigned a graduate student mentor. Both mentors are chosen after considering the students' research interests.

Initially, in addition to the faculty member teaching this course, as many as 15 faculty members were formally involved in the mentoring of MOST students. The depart-

ment, however, concluded that a group of six or seven mentors would provide more consistent and extensive mentoring.

## Climate

The "MOST Research Training in Sociology" seminar has played an important role in affecting the department's climate by creating a cohort of minority students who share a set of common classroom and research experiences. This course forges a learning and professional community in which students receive excellent education and training as well as feel "they belong."

The department characterizes its climate as "reasonably welcoming." The faculty reports that students are generally satisfied with the coursework and with teaching styles of their instructors, but some feel dissatisfied in the areas of course availability and advising. While the department continues to work on these problems, it faces the challenge of a very large group of majors and the necessity of providing course slots to non-majors as well. The department has committed to develop a position for a Faculty Undergraduate Advisor who would work on some of these issues.

## Pipeline

The department is proactive in spreading the word about the sociology program and its ambition to be inclusive through intentional outreach in general studies courses. Also, the two-year MOST seminar-research project cycle provides faculty with an important opportunity to steer students interested in further sociology training toward appropriate graduate school and professional opportunities. Faculty members report that these issues are frequent topics of conversation in the seminar sessions, and that the conversation extends to discussion of such specifics as identifying likely authors of letters of recommendation. Two of UCSB's cohort from the MOST Research Training in Sociology seminar in 2000-01 are

beginning their second year in Ph.D. programs in sociology. Others are now pursuing professional degrees in related disciplines such as social work and public policy.

Professional associations and meetings are another common topic of conversation in the MOST seminars. Faculty members encourage students to attend regional meetings and present papers, and many students have done so. In the past two years, many more students than in the past gave papers at the American Sociological Association and the Pacific Sociological Association meetings, and three students have attended the Undergraduate Research Symposium at the University of Puerto Rico, Mayagüez.

The Department of Sociology at UCSB sends majors to a wide range of graduate and professional schools for advanced training. The introduction of the MOST research and training experience in the last three years is beginning to increase the numbers of students going on to seek a Ph.D. in sociology. For example, two Chicanas—both the first in their families to go to college—began graduate training in 2001-02 after completing the research sequence and giving talks at ASA meetings in 2001. At those same meetings, seven students from UCSB gave papers at the MOST roundtables. Twelve UCSB undergraduate MOST students will give papers at the 2002 meetings. History suggests that none of these students would have had the opportunity to participate in national meetings or would have considered graduate school in sociology without these experiences.



# Grinnell College

Located in Grinnell, Iowa, Grinnell College is a small liberal arts institution with approximately 1,300 students. Founded in 1846, it awards bachelor's degrees across a range of disciplines. The College's mission statement, revised in 1989, declares that Grinnell "strives to be a multicultural residential community open to the intellectually qualified." In furtherance of that goal, Grinnell offers admission to students deemed academically qualified, whether they are able to pay admission or not. As a result, 70 percent of the College's students receive need-based financial aid. In 1994, approximately 12 percent of the College's student body were minorities, and an additional 10 percent were nonresident aliens.

The sociology department generally graduates between 15 to 20 majors per year, and has historically been a popular major with Grinnell minority students. The faculty had four tenure-track positions at the beginning of the MOST program, and added one such slot during the life of the program. Minorities hold two of those positions.

The following are highlights of Grinnell's MOST program.

## Curriculum

The department identified four curriculum-related areas for particular attention during the program: revising the structure of the sociology major, developing a new approach to internships and service-learning experiences, increasing attention to diversity issues in the curriculum, and developing more opportunities for student research.

All sociology majors are now required to take two senior-level seminars designed to provide intensive and advanced work. Several of the available seminars integrate themes of race,

class, and gender into the substantive matter of the course. In addition, the sequencing of courses for majors was streamlined, moving theory and research courses to an earlier point in students' careers, so that these courses are normally completed prior to the advanced seminars.

The substance of the department's current course offerings also reflects the influence of MOST. At the outset of Grinnell's participation in the MOST program in the fall of 1994, just two of the department's six courses specifically focused on topics of race, class, or gender; by fall of 2000, seven of eight department courses did so.

The department also added an internship practicum, providing hands-on research experiences for students. However, department faculty expressed disappointment at not having been able to infuse research components into more courses—a problem attributed to the press of other responsibilities.

## Research

Over the course of MOST, the department worked to ensure that their graduates had sufficient research experience. In individual courses, that commitment involves having students analyze existing research, design and then conduct original research, and take part in an internship program. In addition, the department focuses coursework on a phase of the research process its faculty regard as often overlooked in undergraduate studies: writing and presenting findings and conclusions. In some classes, students are required to write and present papers in conference-like settings, and then to comment on other students' papers and presentations, thus providing experience in peer review.

Since the inception of Grinnell's MOST program, sociology graduates have gone on to graduate programs in sociology as well as programs in social work, law, medicine, public health, education, and other fields. Currently, Grinnell sociology graduates are studying at a variety of institutions, including University of California, Los Angeles; University of Minnesota; University of Iowa; University of Massachusetts, Amherst; University of California, Berkeley; and DePaul University.

The department's approach to its curriculum is particularly well suited to a focus on research in an important way: students use case studies, not textbooks. That approach allows discussions of theory and technique to grow out of substantive issue conversations, which the department believes that students find more engaging.

Outside the classroom, the department has funded approximately six internships per summer in the Grinnell area, with faculty funded to oversee students' work. These student internships typically involve research projects on behalf of community organizations or social service agencies. In all phases of the project—from design through analysis—students learn the rigors of research and analytic thinking under the guidance of faculty.

Over the years as a MOST department, the faculty increasingly emphasized research and student presentation of research. In recent years, Grinnell College has recently placed more emphasis on student research as an institutional commitment. The sociology department is already far ahead.

### **Mentoring**

Even with the more personal aspects of a small liberal arts college, a department needs to engage in intentional mentoring. The department introduced a practicum seminar for all students taking internships as part of their major. This seminar provides a framework for

enhancing the rigor of the internships and to institutionalize mentoring “moments” about these professional development experiences.

Much of the department's mentoring work grows out of student research overseen by faculty—either in class, the summer program, or in individualized research projects. In addition, a number of students have attended national sociology conferences, either to present papers or simply to learn more about the field by attending sessions. The department has worked to use these trips as mentoring opportunities.

### **Climate**

The faculty describes the department climate as positive throughout the MOST program. Their approach has included coursework that demonstrates the department's commitment to diversity issues, cooperation with campus groups of students of color, and a faculty “open door” policy that keeps faculty available for interaction with undergraduates.

### **Pipeline**

The department does not conduct separate recruitment activities, but faculty members participate in the College's efforts. In addition, the faculty works informally to recruit students to the major in lower-level courses—talking to them privately about their interests. The faculty is also engaged in mentoring students about graduate school possibilities after the bachelor's degree.

The department's attention to pipeline issues extends to faculty hiring. On the faculty diversity front, the department has made two tenure-track hires during the MOST years and has hired women of color into both of these positions. The second of these appointments begins in the fall of 2002.

# University of Nebraska, Lincoln

Founded in 1869, the University of Nebraska, Lincoln is a land grant university with students from every state of the union and more than 100 nations. The Lincoln campus enrolls more than 22,000 students in 15 colleges, and confers both undergraduate and graduate degrees.

Diversity is a particular challenge for the University in a largely white state. According to the University's fall 2001 enrollment data, 6.5 percent of students are minorities, excluding non-resident aliens, who make up another 3.5 percent. Just 485 of the University's 22,000 students are African American, and 404 are Hispanic. Similar issues confront the effort to build a diverse faculty. Of the 1,500 members of the faculty, 11.3 percent are minorities. The University has only two African-American and four Hispanic tenured professors, and 35 African Americans and 43 Hispanics at any level of the faculty. More than half of the minority faculty is Asian American.

The sociology department is housed in the College of Arts and Sciences, with a 14 tenure-track faculty—three of whom are minority. The department's complement of graduating majors increased over the course of the MOST program, from 26 in 1993-94 to 46 in 2000-01. Meanwhile the percentage of minority graduates increased as well—from less than 8 percent in 1993-94 to 24 percent in 2000-01.

The following are highlights of the University of Nebraska, Lincoln MOST program.

## Curriculum

The faculty focused considerable attention on curriculum issues. The department now participates in a campus-wide initiative called the Alpha Diversity Program, a one-year, non-residential learning community for first-year undergraduate students. The effort is aimed at

The MOST pipeline began with a series of National Science Foundation-sponsored summer programs (Research Experiences for Undergraduates) focused on minority students along with the ASA MOST summer research institutes. These activities started a pipeline of minority undergraduates flowing into graduate programs in sociology. These programs also created the opportunity for faculty members to learn about curriculum development, department climate, and mentoring strategies. A key lesson was that faculty needed to coordinate recruitment, curriculum goals, and faculty development around more inclusive teaching and learning strategies for undergraduates.

The department's efforts effectively enhanced the University's commitments. The University's pipeline has several stages that focus on research development and minority recruitment. The first stage includes the College of Arts and Sciences' Alpha Diversity Program. In sociology, this year-long course provides an introduction to the discipline, an overview of inequality studies (race/class/ gender), and basic research skills in the context of community service learning projects. A second stage activity includes the "Doing Sociology" course for juniors and seniors who have completed one or more research methods and statistics courses. Finally, the pipeline is strengthened by the recruitment of diverse students with MOST backgrounds into graduate education.

To boost these activities, the faculty has established two annual awards: the Vanetta Aaron Outstanding Undergraduate Paper on the topic of Race/Class/Gender; and the Alan Bates Award for Outstanding Graduating Seniors. Four of the last five recipients of these awards have been students of color. The current honoree, Katherine Morgan, a member of the Lakota tribe, won both the Aaron and the Bates awards, illustrating the intersection of MOST with other undergraduate program goals.

improving retention rates for freshmen, about 25 percent of whom leave the University before their sophomore year. More than half of the 13 participants were students of color in the most recent class.

The department conducted a seminar for the program that included intensive study of

diversity topics and a research project. The course also included a service-learning component at a local community center, after which students developed a presentation and wrote papers. The program succeeded in its retention goals; all students were still enrolled at the University the following fall.

Within the sociology department itself, the faculty worked throughout the course of the MOST program to revise the curriculum in several ways. The department added a “Doing Sociology” course available only to sociology majors who have completed a required research-methods sequence in the department. Students in the course carry out their own community-based research from design through data collection and analysis, writing, and dissemination of findings. A key element of the course is that it combines research with community activism. It is designed for students who intend to stay in the community rather than for prospective graduate students. This last year, the “Doing Sociology” students assisted with a City/County Health Department project focusing on health care access.

In addition, the department’s participation in MOST inspired faculty to conduct a transcript audit, from which they learned that only a quarter of sociology majors took the introduction to sociology course early in their studies. The department has since made the introductory course an early major requirement. The audit also revealed that a disappointingly small number of majors are taking the department’s methods and research courses before their last year and, as a result, the faculty is now working to encourage students along that track.

Faculty also worked to increase the visibility of diversity issues in their courses, incorporating new material on the subject.

### **Research**

The department also made important progress in its effort to expose students to research

opportunities. A number of new lower-level courses have been added to the curriculum that includes study of research issues. In addition, the department has worked to strengthen its computer lab and to put its computer facilities to more aggressive use in sociology courses. One key to that effort was to hire student lab assistants for the evening hours.

In addition, the department has an ongoing relationship with the Gallup Organization in the form of a joint endeavor called the Gallup Research Center. A sociology faculty member directs the Center, which provides university students access to Gallup’s 60 years of data, as well as to the ongoing collection of new data. The department’s relationship with Gallup also gives students access to Gallup’s Youth Leadership and Summer Fellowship programs.

The department also created the new position of Undergraduate Research Coordinator, a faculty member who works to identify students, particularly minority students, interested in doing research. The faculty member then matches students to faculty conducting projects on topics of interest to the students. In 2002, the department also added an undergraduate research assistant program that matches undergraduates with advanced graduate students and faculty members.

### **Mentoring**

The department estimates that 60 percent of faculty engage in mentoring activities, and that approximately a quarter of sociology majors are mentored. However, mentoring is also conducted informally, often the result of interactions around research projects.

### **Climate**

The department describes its climate as positive, but notes that MOST has pressed faculty to make an intentional effort to establish goals and objectives in this area. That has led to the practice of allocating at least one graduate

assistantship per year for a student of color, which in turn has brought more students of color into the program.

One priority for future work on the department's climate is to address the need for a sociology student lounge, or some other comparable facility where majors can gather for informal meetings and student-group meetings.

### **Pipeline**

Department faculty members occasionally accompany admissions staff on recruiting trips targeting high school students of color. However, the department finds that its best ambassadors for the department major are current majors.

The department's participation in the University's Alpha Diversity Program was helpful to its minority-student recruitment efforts: The department recruited four majors from the group, three of whom are students of color.

One important pipeline activity for the sociology department was its October 1999 hosting of the Nebraska Undergraduate Sociology Symposium—an annual event sponsored by colleges and universities in the state at which students present research findings. Everyone on the faculty was heavily involved in the event, regarded it as an important opportunity to highlight and encourage student research, and saw it as a chance to engage students in the possibility of future work in sociology.



# Pennsylvania State University

Chartered in 1855 as the Agricultural College of Pennsylvania, Pennsylvania State University (Penn State) is now a multi-campus, public land grant university with more than 80,000 students—half at the main campus in University Park and half in 20 satellite or affiliated campuses across the state. The college of liberal arts has more than 5,000 students.

In the sociology department, students may pursue either a B.A. or B.S. degree, with concentrations in sociology or in crime, law, and justice. The latter area of concentration accounts for the great majority of majors. In all, the department generally awards about 200 undergraduate degrees each year. In addition, the department confers M.A. and Ph.D. degrees, in the same areas of study.

Diversity has been a longstanding concern at Penn State. The department described the extent of the challenge in its initial application to participate in MOST: “To be truly successful... we must confront a troubling historical fact: the lack of racial and ethnic diversity in the department. While interest has often been expressed in making the faculty and student body more inclusive, substantial obstacles... have slowed progress.” The cited obstacles include the lack of a graduate specialization in the area, and the overwhelmingly homogeneous community context of University Park—94 percent white. The department’s nearly 30 faculty members worked diligently to address these and related issues throughout the MOST program.

The following are highlights of Pennsylvania State University’s MOST program.

## Curriculum

Much of this MOST department’s effort in the curriculum area involved focusing coursework on diversity-related issues. Over time,

substantial gains were evident. By the fall semester of 2000-01, the number of sociology or crime, law, and justice courses centered on diversity issues had significantly increased.

In the graduate program, the department developed new courses in race and ethnic relations, race/ethnicity and family policy, feminist sociology, neighborhoods and family life with emphasis on inner-city settings, and inequality in the labor market. Graduate students and faculty are working to enrich the graduate teaching seminar, so that the next generation of faculty will be better prepared to teach racially-diverse groups of students and to build diversity into course content. The undergraduate program offers a broad range of courses addressing diversity issues as well, including an introductory course in race and ethnicity that enrolls approximately 1,000 students per year.

Over the course of the MOST program, the department worked to bolster methodological instruction in its course offerings. That effort included the creation of a lower-division methods course that provides hands-on experiences with interviewing and observational techniques, and a new capstone course in which students design and carry out their own analysis of existing social survey data and then prepare an article-length paper and conference-style presentation. Also, an upper-level statistics course was made mandatory for majors.

## Research

Beyond the new methodological courses, research experiences reoccur throughout the undergraduate curriculum. At the graduate level, students are required to take two semesters of statistics and one of quantitative research methods. In addition, graduate students’ assistantships or fellowships require that students spend approximately 20 hours

per week performing research or teaching activities. Students are assigned to faculty with common research interests, with the expectation that they will collaborate on projects.

Graduate research training also includes a formal program of colloquia and lectures on various topics. In recent years, programs have included attention to diversity issues. The Population Research Institute, housed at Pennsylvania State University, conducts an annual summer workshop run by students that features prominent scholars discussing methodological issues.

Undergraduates also have research opportunities outside the classroom, including research and teaching assistantships, independent study, internships, participation in professional meetings, and study abroad.

The Pennsylvania State University sociology department has prepared undergraduate majors of color to go on to graduate school, and minority graduate students and a postdoctoral fellow to become researchers and university professors.

One B.A. recipient, an undergraduate member of the Penn State MOST committee, took a position at the Urban Institute before beginning graduate study at the University of California. Another African-American B.A. recipient from Penn State is about to complete her doctorate at the University of Pennsylvania.

At the graduate level, a number of minority students completed graduate degrees and advanced in the sociology pipeline. One Penn State Ph.D., an African American, holds a research position at the University of Pennsylvania. Two other minority students, recently completing their doctorates, took faculty positions at Florida State University and Georgia State University. The pipeline for building strong research and teaching faculty for the future continues with eight students of color, along with a number of international students, currently in residence as graduate degree candidates at Penn State.

Finally, an African-American postdoctoral fellow who worked with the Penn State MOST summer training program moved on to join the faculty at Ohio State, where he was recently tenured.

## Mentoring

As a result of MOST, incoming graduate students in Penn State's sociology department are now assigned two mentors—one faculty and one advanced graduate student. This approach has led to many lasting relationships. Undergraduates receive academic advising from a full-time staff of advisors. Also, in the crime, law, and justice program, the department has established a one-credit study skills course and a peer tutoring, mentoring program pairing students who need extra help with high achieving students.

## Climate

The department describes the overall climate for students and faculty of color as quite positive, but notes that tension arose a few years ago over perceived special “advantages” for students of color. The faculty responded with a number of new initiatives, including a “Heritage Potluck” meal at which students, faculty, and staff share diverse food offerings, and a lunchtime race/ethnicity study group that meets several times a semester. The department also sponsors a number of colloquia and special events that contribute to an inclusive climate at Penn State. In recent years, these have included a pair of colloquia on “Making It as a Scholar of Color,” aimed at graduate students from across the university.

## Pipeline

The department has attracted an increasing number of minority students during the MOST years. The department has worked to recruit graduate students of color by involving current graduate students in hosting prospective recruits during visits to the campus. The department also collaborates in recruiting trips to historically black colleges and universities, working to bring more graduate students of color into the pipeline. In addition, the department makes special efforts to be sure that



favorable funding packages are offered to prospective graduate students of color, and is very attentive to additional supportive mentoring when circumstances require. Currently, the department is developing a document that describes resources for scholars of color, to be available to Pennsylvania State University departments in all disciplines as they work to attract graduate students and faculty.

At the undergraduate level, a protocol is being developed so that minority freshmen and sophomores who perform well in introductory sociology courses are contacted by their professors and invited to consider the sociology major. Also, teams of graduate students visit undergraduate courses to discuss their research work. The department takes care to ensure that the teams are racially and ethnically mixed and to communicate the department's commitment to diversity, thereby encouraging students of color to adopt sociology as their major.



# Pitzer College

Pitzer College is a private liberal arts institution in Claremont, California, a member of the five-college and one graduate university consortia known collectively as the Claremont Colleges. Pitzer enrolls more than 900 students and offers undergraduate degrees in 42 fields of study. Approximately 37 percent of students in the 2000-01 entering class were minorities—somewhat lower than its peak of 43 percent in the 1993-94 academic year.

Pitzer's sociology "field group" offers approximately 30 courses a year, taught by a faculty that includes six tenure-track or tenured members, two of whom are minorities and in joint appointments with the Chicano Studies and Black Studies field groups. Next year, the field group will be filling a position for a joint appointment in sociology and Asian American Studies. Since sociology at Pitzer became a MOST "field group," the number of majors has ranged from 14 to 46, with the percentage of minority sociology majors never dipping below 50 percent. In 2000-01, for example, 53 percent of the majors (9 of 17) were students of color. Presently, the number of sociology students majoring in sociology has increased to 46—making the sociology major the largest of any field group at Pitzer College.

The following are highlights of Pitzer's MOST program.

## Curriculum

Pitzer's field group began with the MOST program soon after completing a revision of its sociology curriculum. In the 1995-96 school year, two years into MOST, the faculty implemented a revised structure, grouping courses into three categories: "Foundations of Sociology" (courses that are essential to any undergraduate sociology program); "Social Issues and Policies" (courses that reflect the

specific areas of expertise of the faculty, but that might not be found in all undergraduate curricula); and "Practicing the Craft of Sociology" (upper level coursework, including a senior seminar, a senior honors thesis, and advanced independent study). Majors are required to take at least one theory course, two methodology courses, one of several courses focused on specific issue areas, and one of the upper level "Craft of Sociology" courses.

Since the inception of MOST, the field group has made a focused effort to emphasize diversity issues in its coursework, with dramatic results. In the spring semester of 1993, the last semester before MOST, 3 of 17 sociology courses focused on race, gender, and class issues; in the 2000-01 spring semester, 17 of 29 courses focused on these areas.

The faculty also made it a priority to incorporate research into non-methods courses, again with impressive results. In 1993-94, seven such courses incorporated research, but by 2000-01, 20 courses did so.

The 2000-01 academic year also saw a change in the way the upper-level senior seminar and the lower-level theory courses were taught. In past years, student research projects for the senior seminar generally grew out of research conducted during MOST summer sessions, or out of earlier coursework. The approach pioneered in 2000-01 required that students, some individually and some in groups, draft a foundation proposal on behalf of a local community group and for a specific funder. One such proposal resulted in funding from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to support a program at a local battered women's shelter to serve violence victims with substance abuse problems—a population that could not otherwise be accommodated at the shelter. Other proposals have been funded as well.

MOST fosters special recruitment efforts aimed not just at attracting students to the institution, but to leading them toward sociology as a major. Pipeline strategies at Pitzer focus tightly on specific cohorts—including students attending minority high schools and students who had indicated some interest in sociology on their applications—and are paying off.

The impact of MOST is evident from the careers of recent graduates. Among the students to benefit from Pitzer being a MOST “field group” are:

- Juan de Lara, part of the first MOST cohort, was selected as a Rhodes Scholar and is now pursuing a Ph.D. in Urban Planning and Policy at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA).
- Robert Montenegro, '00, is in his second year in the sociology Ph.D. program at UCLA. Montenegro credits MOST with helping him develop the skills and capacity to compete successfully for a predoctoral Minority Fellowship (MFP) from ASA. He plans also to attend medical school. With benefit of two degrees, he will pursue a research career addressed to the needs and challenges in his hometown community of East Los Angeles.
- Joey Mata, '01, is in a Ph.D. program at Indiana University, Bloomington. He attributes the sociological foundations that he received at Pitzer with helping to prepare him for the graduate experience in Bloomington.
- Jesse Diaz, '02, a former gang member, has used his experiences to write a thesis on gang members and families in the Los Angeles region. This research helped Jesse win a scholarship to the Ph.D. sociology program at the University of California, Irvine.

Two lower-level theory courses were also restructured, so that the study of contemporary and classical sociological theory is organized around contemporary issues. The previous course divided the two approaches into separate semesters, even though majors were required to take only one theory course. In this altered way, students are exposed to both approaches, in the context of issues and societal problems that are readily grasped.

### Research

As noted, research has become an integral part of the curriculum, not just in research courses,

but in most others as well. The sociology major's capstone course—actually a choice between a senior seminar and a senior thesis—was also a product of MOST. Students who choose to write senior theses rather than participate in the senior seminar have had their experiences shaped by MOST in an additional way: Many of their chosen topics grow out of research undertaken in MOST summer research projects. Also, several students received MOST-funded stipends to conduct their summer research.

Beyond providing research training for individual students, the field group decided to take a lead role in organizing an undergraduate research conference on campus. That decision was shaped by the aspirations of MOST. The conference is open to all disciplines, but sociology majors help with planning and organizing the event.

### Mentoring

The field group's mentoring at Pitzer flows out of its rigorous student advising process, as well as from collaboration on research. Advisors are required to meet twice a year with students to plan their individual curricula, with an eye not just on meeting major requirements but also on selecting the courses students will need to prepare them for sociological research projects and internships in the community.

The faculty also encourages students to engage in independent research and provides mentoring in this context. In addition, considerable direct mentoring occurs as students pursue their honors theses or research in “Practicing the Craft of Sociology.”

The field group also sponsors or participates in a series of activities aimed at directly guiding students' learning about the profession of sociology. These activities include a monthly “Meet the Faculty” luncheon series, an annual faculty/alumni/student dinner, and several “Meet the Author” retreats where

authors discuss in depth their research with students. In the fall of 1999, the field group introduced a meeting for junior and senior majors and a sequence of steps to encourage consideration of graduate school.

Also, sociology faculty members encourage and facilitate student participation in professional meetings. In proportion to the size of the major, large numbers of students have presented papers at such meetings or participated in panel discussions.

### **Climate**

The sociology field group reports that the re-sequencing of courses, and the addition of a research-oriented capstone course have helped foster a more positive climate. Other efforts stand out as well. The field group has recently instituted a requirement that students take at least one class involving community service. The faculty believes the service-learning practice has made the curriculum more attractive to minority students and helped demonstrate the field group's commitment to issues of interest to students.

Another important climate factor at Pitzer was the decision to include students in certain sociology field group meetings. In addition, the planning processes for the various formal events and the informal interaction discussed under mentoring have enhanced the climate of the department.

### **Pipeline**

The sociology field group's efforts to fill the pipeline with sociology majors and professionals have been both formal and informal. Informally, faculty members make a deliberate effort to reach out to minority students in their classes. Formally, the faculty makes a systematic effort to invite minority students individually to participate in various events open to all students—conferences and summer research opportunities, for example.

The Pitzer field group has also instituted a number of events it describes as “recruitment minded.” These include a graduate school information lunch series, the “Meet the Author” retreats noted earlier, the undergraduate research symposium, and an alumni dinner. These activities, now institutionalized as part of the co-curriculum, are key to the process of encouraging students to consider graduate training. Such events coupled with individual guidance from faculty members reduce the apprehension of students about graduate school admissions and provide the knowledge and advice helpful in making choices to continue education beyond the bachelor's degree.



# University of Puerto Rico, Mayagüez

The University of Puerto Rico, Mayagüez (UPRM) was established in 1911 as a land grant college, with a curricular focus on undergraduate agriculture and engineering. In the mid-1960s its offerings expanded to include the natural sciences, social sciences, and humanities, and a graduate program was established. Instruction is primarily in Spanish, and the student body is primarily Puerto Rican. Nearly 13,000 students now attend UPRM, up from 11,000 at the beginning of MOST.

Sociology instruction is conducted by the University's Department of Social Sciences, a multidisciplinary department offering degrees in political science, psychology, general social sciences, and history, in addition to sociology. At the outset of the MOST program, much of the University's focus was on agriculture and engineering, and, as a result, the department offered "service" courses to students from other colleges of the University. The MOST program, however, substantially enhanced the rigors of the curriculum, and its research training component. As a consequence, students both seek to major in social science and to take courses in it.

A significant resource to the department is UPRM's Center for Applied Social Research (CISA), which promotes and coordinates the practical application of faculty expertise in the social sciences to a variety of social problems. CISA drives research on a variety of issues, including natural hazards, mental health issues, drug-abuse education, land-use in coastal areas, natural resource management, political participation, HIV/AIDS in Puerto Rico, and so forth.

The following are highlights of UPRM's MOST program.

## Curriculum

During its participation in MOST, the department worked to enhance the curriculum's emphasis on issues of race, class, and gender, and to focus more on research and research training. Faculty added two courses to the department's offerings, one dealing with the sociological and psychological aspects of gender in society, the other an independent study course that channels students into hands-on research activities. In addition, students in the "Research Methods Course" must now develop a research proposal, and students taking the department's seminar course must carry out a research project.

Overall, 13 of this MOST department's 33 sociology/anthropology courses focus on topics of race, class, or gender, and nine of the non-methods courses incorporate research experiences.

## Research

The department's efforts to increase student-research opportunities have involved several initiatives. The University's Center for Applied Social Research (CISA) serves as a clearinghouse, linking students with faculty research projects and connecting faculty with research funding. In addition, a new certification program in applied social science research builds on the department's and CISA's research emphases. Students selected for participation in the program must complete 12 academic credits (i.e., research methods, statistics, and two independent research courses), develop a research proposal, implement it under the guidance of a faculty mentor, and present their findings at a regional or national conference. Further, they must participate in a series of professional development workshops throughout the

academic year. They subsequently receive a certificate documenting their preparation in social science research. The impact of the new programs is impressive: All ten students who completed the program in 2001-02 applied to graduate programs, and all presented their research at UPRM's student-research symposium or at the American Sociological Association annual meeting, among others.

Within the main curriculum, new independent study courses, instituted since MOST's inception, have created many new research opportunities for students. Also, the department works to identify summer internship opportunities and to encourage students to participate. The effort includes a spring workshop on internships and a new website that shares specific listings.

In 2001, a faculty member secured funding to create a series of training workshops for other faculty called "Complementing Teaching through the Internet." Many sociology faculty have participated in the workshops, which the department expects will help faculty better integrate the internet's research offerings into coursework. The University provided special funds for faculty development and training because it was impressed with the opportunity of this initiative. Further, a new professional development project, funded by the Vice President's Office for Academic Affairs and Research, was initiated in 2001 to provide training to better prepare faculty to generate competitive research proposals and articles to be submitted and published in peer-reviewed journals, and in order to enhance research training for undergraduate students.

Finally, the department showcases undergraduate research at an annual Undergraduate Student Research Symposium, directed by the Student Sociology Organization with support from the department and CISA. Initiated in

1993, the symposium is the only one of its kind in Puerto Rico and is rare nationally. Over the course of the MOST program, the symposium has grown substantially. Now 500 students and faculty attend, and approximately 25 students present their work. In total, 250 social science students have presented their research at the symposium during the MOST years.

In order to strengthen research initiatives and to provide students with greater opportunities for research participation, the department focused on hiring more research-oriented faculty. The most recent position announcements for sociology have included the following statement: "Applicants should have a strong commitment to teaching, research, and mentoring of undergraduate students. Newly hired faculty are expected to actively collaborate in interdisciplinary research at the Center for Applied Social Research (CISA)."

In order to enhance student's research and internship opportunities, the Department of Social Sciences and CISA are now part of a joint Certificate Program in International Population and Development with the Population Fellows Program at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. Four undergraduate students were selected to participate in this program in 2002.

The presence of CISA and the Certification Program in Applied Social Research among other initiatives has allowed this MOST department to become one of the most innovative and proactive departments at UPRM and in the University of Puerto Rico system in terms of research training and mentoring for undergraduate students.

### **Mentoring**

Much of the mentoring accomplished in the department is a byproduct of the extensive research activities involving students and

faculty. Advising is formally the responsibility of three faculty members, although others offer counsel informally. A new faculty research training initiative in CISA encourages faculty to mentor students as part of research work. Providing research training and mentoring to undergraduate students is a top priority of CISA and its researchers.

### **Climate**

The department describes its climate as positive, although not without its occasional challenges. A number of student associations help keep students invested in the life of the department, and CISA's work to encourage student research also contributes.

### **Pipeline**

The department and CISA work collaboratively to recruit students to the social sciences. Their efforts include recruiting trips to high schools, including with the participation of undergraduate representatives of student organizations.

In addition, the department conducts seminars on graduate school opportunities and works to interest students in careers in sociology—by helping to identify internship opportunities, often in the mainland United States, and by encouraging their participation at national professional meetings.

MOST inspired initiatives have resulted in a large increase in student demand for research opportunities and mentoring at UPRM. For example, many of the workshops offered through the Certification Program in Applied Social Research are open to all students because of the interest they generated. Furthermore, a positive attitude toward undergraduate research mentoring has become a “de facto” requirement during the faculty recruitment process. These and the other core elements of MOST are having an impact on the pipeline into sociology as a major and into sociology and the social sciences as a career trajectory.

During the MOST years, the sociology program had the second fastest growth rate in the department. Enrollment increased from 76 students in 1995 to 97 in 2001. Freshmen enrollment doubled from 14 in 1995 to 26 in 2001. Approximately 60 UPRM students have entered graduate programs in the social sciences in the mainland United States and Puerto Rico during this period. This is unprecedented and is attributable to faculty mentoring, research training, and other MOST-related efforts.



# Southwestern University

Located in Georgetown, Texas, Southwestern University is a small, private liberal arts institution, with 1,300 undergraduates and no graduate program. It was the first institution of higher learning to be chartered in Texas, by the Republic of Texas in 1840, and more than 90 percent of its students originate in-state.

Southwestern's minority enrollment at the outset of the MOST program was just under 20 percent, with Hispanic students accounting for more than half of that number. Minority enrollment had experienced steady growth in the preceding two decades from approximately six percent in the fall of 1976. The Department of Sociology and Anthropology had four full-time faculty at the outset of MOST, growing by the 2000-01 academic year to five, two of whom are minorities. The department graduates approximately ten majors per year.

The following are highlights of Southwestern University's MOST program.

## Curriculum

Over the course of its participation in the MOST program, the department conducted an extensive transformation of its sociology and anthropology curriculum. The revisions were intended to create a sequence of courses arranged in four levels, from introductory to capstone coursework; to train students in a variety of research skills; and to incorporate materials related to diversity throughout the curriculum.

Sociology majors are required to take research methods and theory courses early in their studies, and are expected to fulfill the capstone requirement with a senior-year research seminar. In addition, the department reconfigured its research methods course as a four-hour course with a new lab component, hiring

"We are fortunate that all of the faculty in our small department are committed both to increasing student research training and to increasing attention to diversity in the curriculum. The major barrier to transformation has been, and will continue to be, lack of faculty time."

Southwestern University MOST Report to ASA

upper-level students to serve in newly created lab assistant positions.

Anthropology offerings at the beginning of the MOST program were considerably more limited than the sociology catalog, because the department had only one tenure-track anthropologist. In the estimation of the department, the most significant curriculum development over the life of the MOST program was the addition of a second tenure-track anthropology position, bringing the department to its current complement of five tenure-track positions and clearing the way for a revision of the anthropology curriculum. The resulting curriculum presents anthropology and sociology as complementary disciplines, and its courses devote ample attention to diversity issues, including race, class, gender, sexuality, and culture.

Other curriculum changes driven by MOST include:

- The addition of a new experiential learning course, "A Journey through the Civil Rights Movement," added as an upper-level course.
- The redesign of a social psychology course, now designated as a second-level course.
- The creation of a departmental handbook for students and adjunct faculty, that among other things, describes in detail the required sequence of sociology courses.

Five of the six students who participated in the first three summer MOST research institutes went on to graduate or professional school. Three of those went on in sociology. Of the remaining two, one completed a law degree, and the other completed a Ph.D. in Latin American Studies.

Among those in the second cohort of MOST students who participated in the summer research experiences was a psychology major who became interested in sociology because of the emphasis on diversity in the curriculum and the availability of a summer research experience. After completing the summer program at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, she solidified her interest in attending graduate school. She has completed all of her coursework for a Ph.D. in sociology at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA). In the fall of 2002, she will return to Southwestern as a dissertation fellow, researching the experience of women of color in higher education and teaching one course during the spring semester.

### Research

The addition of a lab component to the research methods course has had a significant impact. Students are now required to complete 20 different laboratory assignments, introducing them to a range of research methodologies, including content analysis, analysis of datasets using SPSS, analysis of existing statistics, and interview skills. In addition, all third-level courses require students to collect and analyze data in a variety of settings and with varying methodology, sequenced according to the four-tier research training curriculum described above. Finally, the new senior capstone course requires that students design and execute a research project.

In addition to these formal requirements, Southwestern's sociology majors are encouraged by their advisors and other faculty to participate in research projects with faculty. Also, the department has instituted a summer research program, in which students work with professors on ongoing projects. Such collaboration is also common during the regular school year, and students who do not participate in the summer program are encouraged

to participate in other institutions' summer research activities, including National Science Foundation-sponsored research programs.

### Mentoring

Although the department has no formal mentoring program, the faculty is nevertheless expected by the department and the University to provide mentoring. Indeed, mentoring relationships frequently blossom as a result of the department's active student research programs, including the summer program. Students are encouraged to present papers at the annual on-campus undergraduate research symposium, and have been very successful in having papers accepted for presentation at regional and national professional meetings. At Southwestern, student work on research and on paper presentations is pervasive and a key context for mentoring students.

Significant proportions of students have this experience—in two recent graduating cohorts, all of the graduating seniors had presented at least one paper at a regional or national professional meeting. Students have presented papers at a wide range of conferences, including the American Sociological Association, the Southern Sociological Society, the American Association for Higher Education, and the National Council on Family Relations. Before students present their papers at professional meetings, they participate in a department colloquium that prepares them for this experience. The department also regularly brings alumni back to campus to talk about the graduate school experience.

### Climate

The department reports that the climate for minority faculty and students is positive, both before and after MOST. Students of color at Southwestern graduate at a slightly higher rate than Anglo students reflecting, at least in part, this positive climate. The curriculum transformation, described above, has enhanced this

environment. In addition, the department homepage opens with a photograph of W.E.B. DuBois, and highlights the shared commitment to MOST goals and principles. Catalog copy was also revised to explicitly highlight diversity content in the curriculum.

### Pipeline

The faculty participates actively in the University's extensive recruitment efforts, taking part in luncheons and information sessions for prospective students and their parents, allowing prospective students to visit classes, and inviting students to visit with them during office hours. The department has been successful in increasing the number of majors who are students of color. In the first three graduating cohorts of MOST, the department graduated as many majors of color (eight) as it had in the previous twelve years combined. This was replicated in the next three years (1999-2001), when eight more students of color graduated with majors in sociology.

The department has been particularly successful in increasing the pipeline of students who continue on to graduate school in sociology. Southwestern University has always had a significant proportion of graduates go on to complete professional degrees. Alumni surveys (both those conducted by the University in general, and those specifically done by the department) indicate that about two-thirds of alumni go on to complete some type of graduate or professional degree. Since MOST, however, students are going into graduate school in sociology, students of color are pursuing advanced degrees, and students are taking a national perspective in choosing graduate degree programs.

Three major transformations have resulted from MOST.

- Before MOST, students went on to complete professional degrees (in social work, public health, law, and divinity), but very few went on to get academic degrees in sociology. Available data indicate that, of the 138 graduates between 1980 and 1994, only six (4.3 percent) went on for graduate degrees in sociology. Four of those six have completed Ph.D.'s in sociology, and four of six graduated in the last three years of that period. After MOST, students were much more likely to attend graduate school in sociology. Of the 85 graduates between 1995 and 2001, at least 12 (14.1 percent) have gone on to graduate school in sociology.
- Before MOST, none of the students who went on to graduate school in sociology were students of color; all six of the students were Anglo. Fully half of the students who pursued advanced degrees in sociology between 1995 and 2001 are students of color (two African American, two Hispanic, and two Asian).
- Before MOST, students who pursued graduate degrees were most likely to do so within the state of Texas (four of the six). After MOST, the probability of attending graduate programs outside of the state increased. Half of the post-MOST students attended sociology graduate programs outside of the state (University of Arizona, Pennsylvania State University, UC-Santa Barbara, UCLA, and University of Washington).



# Texas A&M University

The Agricultural and Mechanical College of Texas opened its doors in 1876, a land grant college offering a limited but vital course of study. Nearly 90 years of expansion later, the institution was renamed Texas A&M University and today serves approximately 44,000 students at its College Station campus. The University offers degrees in nearly 160 courses of study in ten colleges. Approximately 10 percent of students are Latino or African American.

Texas A&M's sociology department conferred 78 bachelor's degrees in the 2000-01 academic year, 15 percent of those to minority students—a percentage virtually unchanged since the beginning of the MOST program. The department also awards M.S. and Ph.D. degrees, and had more than 60 graduate students enrolled during the 2001-02 academic year. The department has 26 tenure-track faculty positions, six of which are held by minorities, one more than in the 1993-94 academic year.

The following are highlights of the Texas A&M MOST program.

## Curriculum

The department's participation in MOST triggered a thorough review of the curriculum with a focus on diversity issues. The result was a concerted effort to increase the number of courses focused on diversity as well as to increase coverage of diversity issues in other courses. The percentage of courses dealing with diversity issues increased from 33 percent in 1993-94 to a steady 40 to 50 percent in the latter years of the program. New or revived courses included "Global Social Trends," "Introduction to Gender and Society," "Sociology of Black Americans," "Pacific Rim Business Behavior," "Sociology of Migration," "Demographic Forecasting," and "Qualitative Methods."

"MOST has been the major driving force behind the changes in the curriculum."

Texas A&M University MOST

In addition, the department added three certificate programs dealing with diversity issues: Race and Ethnic Relations, Gender, and Global Sociology.

The department also strengthened its curricular training in research. In addition to research methods courses, several substantive courses now incorporate research training or direct research experiences.

## Research

In order to increase the number and scope of research opportunities available to students outside the classroom, the department created an Undergraduate Research Fellows Program to match students with faculty conducting research, and an internship program to place students with organizations outside of the University. In the 1995-96 academic year, only five of the internships involved a research experience; in 2001-02, 55 internships had a research focus.

At the end of the program, the department convenes a research symposium for students participating in the internship program. Also, the University stages a campus-wide symposium at which department interns present papers on their internship experiences.

## Mentoring

Mentoring is conducted informally in the department, with relationships between students and faculty generally growing out of research projects or classroom experiences. All faculty members engage in mentoring,

The department's internship program has helped many students pursue graduate degrees, get jobs immediately after graduating, and experience academic success. A Latino male who held an internship with the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) was recently accepted into a highly prestigious and selective special Air Force intelligence training program—the first student from Texas A&M ever admitted into this program. A Mexican-American female student who had not given much thought to pursuing a graduate degree decided to pursue one in social work after an internship with Child Protective Services (CPS). Furthermore, two nontraditional students of color (an African-American single parent with a baby and a pregnant, married Mexican-American woman with two children) benefited tremendously from their internships. Each was overwhelmed trying to balance the multiple roles associated with school and family. These two students interned with Mental Health and Mental Retardation's (MHMR) Early Childhood Intervention Program, where they excelled. Both were hired after they graduated, and both intend to pursue graduate degrees.

according to the department, and, as a result, the intern and research fellows programs have fostered a number of productive mentoring relationships.

The department also works to keep majors informed about various departmental activities and opportunities. That effort includes sponsorship of a sociology club, whose meetings the department's graduate advisor and internship director sometimes attend. Also, the department maintains an undergraduate listserv that it uses to alert majors to departmental lectures, faculty interviews, and the like.

Finally, faculty work one-on-one to encourage students to take advantage of opportunities to present their work at professional and academic conferences, and then work with students to help them prepare and polish the actual presentations.

### **Climate**

The department reports significant progress during the MOST years in fostering a healthy environment for students. According to the department, at the outset of the program,

faculty and undergraduate students were seen to be “disconnected” from one another. Faculty members were thought to be paying considerably more attention to graduate students. In addition, the department's number of majors was on the decline.

Since then, the department reports that the climate has improved significantly. One contributing factor was a decision by the faculty to teach more regularly at the undergraduate level. In addition, the various other MOST-related efforts—the research fellows and intern programs, as well as revisions to the curriculum—are thought to have contributed to improving the climate. Affirming the department's view, the number of majors increased by one-third between 1997 and 2001.

### **Pipeline**

The department has been very active in recruiting students to the major and then working, where appropriate, to encourage them toward graduate school and even careers in sociology. The activities have focused particularly, but not exclusively, on minority students. For example, faculty members join in University-sponsored recruitment trips in areas of the state with large minority populations. Students who indicate an interest in sociology on their undergraduate applications and who are subsequently accepted for admission, receive letters from the department head and the undergraduate advisor encouraging them to come to Texas A&M and offering useful information about the department and the major. In addition, the department participates in the Center for Academic Excellence Program, which brings junior and senior high school students from underrepresented groups to campus.

The department works just as diligently to recruit graduate students. The department head, graduate advisor, and certain faculty place personal phone calls to prospective appli-

cants. Also, the department has received a sequence of major funding from the National Science Foundation (through the Alliance for Minority Participation and especially through the Research Experience for Undergraduate initiative) to commence two-month summer institutes that link selected institutions in the state of Texas, most of which are part of the University of Texas System, with the department. These programs are directed to training students from underrepresented groups statewide and mentoring them to pursue graduate education. These initiatives enhance Texas A&M as a MOST department and also reflect the department's commitment to transport what it does. Also, the department reports that the program has helped recruit graduate students.

Since MOST, the Department of Sociology at Texas A&M University has contributed to the pipeline of students of color into sociology and related disciplines. Over the last several years, one African-American and three Mexican-American female students with B.S. degrees have enrolled in graduate programs in sociology. One received her M.S. in sociology from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst; the other three are pursuing M.S. degrees in sociology at Texas A&M.

Numerous other students of color completing the undergraduate program have pursued graduate and professional degrees in such areas as geography, law, management, public policy, social work, and urban planning. An undergraduate Mexican-American male student who found himself without an academic home was quickly attracted to sociology. He benefited immensely from participating in a MOST summer institute, gaining confidence that brought a major improvement in his academic standing. After graduating from the department, he took an advanced degree at the University of Texas LBJ School for Public Policy and now works for the Social Security Administration.

The department has also had success in producing M.S. and Ph.D. level sociologists of color. Since the summer of 1999, the department has produced three African-American Ph.D.'s, three African-American M.S. graduates, two Mexican-American M.S. graduates, and one Vietnamese-American M.S. graduate. Among these individuals, one African-American female who completed her doctoral degree helped the department with the MOST and NSF Alliance for Minority Participation (AMP) programs. She is currently an assistant professor in a state university in the Midwest. Other recent graduates of color hold research positions in the private and public sectors, have teaching appointments, or are pursuing doctoral degrees.



# University of Texas, El Paso

Situated just a few hundred yards from the U.S./Mexico border, the University of Texas, El Paso (UTEP) enrolls some 15,000 students, more than three-quarters of whom are Hispanic. The vast majority of students commute to campus, with fewer than five percent living in university residence halls.

UTEP's Department of Sociology and Anthropology awards B.A. and M.A. degrees in sociology and a B.A. in anthropology. In the spring semester preceding UTEP's participation in the MOST program, the department awarded 14 undergraduate diplomas; by 2000-01, that number had more than doubled. By and large, these students declared their majors very late in their academic careers, many waiting until their senior year to declare formally. One result, according to the department, is difficulty ensuring that majors take a sequence of courses that exposes them to the "nuts and bolts" of the craft of sociology. Taking advantage of the institution's location, the department's 62 courses focus on regional U.S.-Mexico border issues. Five of the current 13 tenure-track faculty are minorities, as compared with three of 12 in 1993-94.

The following are highlights of the UTEP MOST program.

## Curriculum

Over the course of MOST, the department bolstered its requirements for both undergraduate and graduate students. The department added an undergraduate level course, "Methods and Inference in Social Research," as well as an undergraduate statistics requirement and new graduate level statistics and theory requirements.

The department added a research-experience course in the fall of 1999 as a two-semester sequence, but the course received insufficient

"Since the inception of MOST, the department has engaged in an aggressive campaign to institutionalize a research experience for all of our undergraduates...[T]he department is currently offering four courses that give students the opportunity to work with community members in addressing problems identified by the community. In this form, the professor and students are able to fulfill the research experience component while providing the community with academic expertise in solving community challenges."

University of Texas, El Paso MOST Report to ASA

enrollment to continue and was dropped from the department's offerings. The students who had enrolled, however, went on to form a Sociology and Anthropology Research Group, which meets monthly with faculty and has engaged in a series of research projects on such topics as HIV/AIDS-positive Hispanic women and sex workers, battered immigrant women, serial murders, office worker mobility, and so forth.

## Research

Among the more striking changes at UTEP was the integration of research into the curriculum—both in terms of new research-related courses and in terms of new research components in existing courses. In addition, the department reports that more faculty are now involved with undergraduate students in research projects and that more students are presenting papers and research at regional and national conferences. Moreover, much of the faculty research is with and for community-based organizations, affording participating students an opportunity to engage in hands-on research aimed at understanding real-world problems in their community.

## Mentoring

All faculty mentor students, and the department estimates that 50 percent of its majors are

mentored by at least one faculty member. Two significant challenges confronted the department in their effort to increase the level of mentoring. First, since the vast majority of students commute to school, many of them are simply not around the department frequently or long enough to permit the sort of interaction with faculty that helps develop relationships. Second, heavy teaching demands on faculty and the scarcity of release time under University rules presents another barrier to the development of student-faculty relationships. As a rule, mentoring relationships therefore develop either through funded research initiatives or through the existing advisor process.

One explicit approach that the department took to encourage mentoring was to use MOST funds to hire undergraduate teaching assistants whose duties are similar to graduate teaching assistants. The department found that students' exposure to this role encouraged valuable interaction and important mentoring opportunities with faculty. By introducing this change within the department, new practices evolved.

### **Climate**

The department focused its climate efforts on encouraging interaction between faculty and undergraduate students. Mindful that the great majority of students are minorities, the department concluded that a conscious effort to connect students in general with faculty could not help but serve the MOST goal of strengthening the climate for minorities in particular. The department succeeded in fostering increased interaction, generally in the form of faculty involving undergraduates in their research. At the beginning of MOST, undergraduate involvement was atypical; today, the majority of faculty members have undergraduate research assistants.

The department also took advantage of the planned remodeling of an older building to create a space that would foster student inte-

gration in department life. The creation of a computer center in the middle of a large space ringed by faculty offices has greatly increased the level of student-faculty interaction.

### **Pipeline**

The department viewed its various efforts to enhance research opportunities for students, as described earlier, as a way also to enrich the pipeline of sociology students and professionals. In addition, the department has worked aggressively through both formal and informal avenues to ensure that hiring pools for faculty positions include candidates of color. As a result, even while the department's complement of tenure-track faculty has decreased over the course of the MOST program, the department has the same number of minority tenure-track faculty that it did in 1993.

# William Paterson University

Located 20 miles from New York City in Paterson, New Jersey, William Paterson University is a public institution that was founded in 1855. In the fall of 2001, William Paterson enrolled nearly 11,000 students, approximately 9,000 undergraduates and 2,000 graduate students. It offers 30 undergraduate and 18 graduate programs in its five colleges.

The sociology department offers undergraduate concentrations in criminal justice, social services, sociological practice, and general sociology, and it has more than 700 majors. It offers master's degrees with concentrations in diversity studies, and crime and justice studies. The department has 20 tenure-track faculty positions, five of which are held by minorities. The department also houses the Administrative offices of the Eastern Sociological Society.

The MOST program was recently institutionalized with a \$10,000 line budget from the University Provost.

The following are highlights of William Paterson University's MOST program.

## Curriculum

In a systemic effort to build diversity into the curriculum, faculty thoroughly revamped the requirements for the sociology major, developed new graduate courses, and extensively revised its introductory course for undergraduates. The department also aligned its curriculum with the university's new international focus.

In addition, to provide students with a solid grounding in the methods of sociology, majors are now required to take a full year of methodology courses instead of a single semester. Faculty added a requirement for a social statistics course as well. Finally, the department established a capstone course that requires a

research project building on skills learned in previous sociology courses. Since the inception of MOST, the department has also designed new courses in the areas of sociology of women, minority groups in America, global sociology, and Muslims and Islamic Institutions.

## Research

William Paterson's effort to increase research opportunities for students extends outside the classroom as well. The faculty encourages students to participate in summer institutes, which are followed by independent research projects. In addition, the department instituted a faculty colloquia series, at which faculty members make presentations to students on their own research. The department also re-launched its departmental newsletter, *Sociogram*, in which it publishes exceptional student research papers. This newsletter is routinely distributed in senior seminars, again for the purpose of encouraging student participation in research activities.

Every year, the department takes about ten students to the annual meeting of the Eastern Sociological Society where students present their research. Students also present their research papers at several university-sponsored conferences throughout the year and at the annual meeting of the American Sociological Association.

With financial support from the Student Government and the MOST program, students who attend the Eastern Sociological Society annual meeting visit the research archives of a major research university located in the city where the Eastern Sociological Society meetings are held. Students recently visited the Harvard University Archives and studied the private papers of Talcott Parsons. Such exposure

makes vivid the value of the scholarly enterprise and enhances students' own experiences in the doing of research.

### **Mentoring**

Much of the department's mentoring is conducted in relation to research projects, particularly for students participating in summer institutes, and for a number of students who continue research work begun at those institutes. Early in the MOST program, faculty attempted to carry out mentoring informally, but, as the program developed, the faculty moved to a more systematic approach. The new procedures involve charting student progress toward completion of research projects and the subsequent dissemination of findings.

Mentoring activity at William Patterson University is an extension of faculty advising. All faculty members are assigned between 40 and 45 students, and meet with each several times during the academic year. During these visits for advice on routine course-selection, faculty members mentor students on their professional growth, and help identify opportunities for independent study, fellowships, professional presentations, funding, employment, and so forth.

In this commuter-school environment, the department seeks ways to build a sense of community among its 700-plus majors and 20 faculty members. That ongoing effort also includes group mentoring to foster professional identity and skills in students. For example, a "Crunch and Munch" colloquium series features faculty presentations on research topics of interest to students.

### **Climate**

William Paterson took a unique approach to bolstering the climate for students by identifying a "place" where students could gather, talk, and develop an identity as sociology students. The new MOST lounge, situated in a

computer facility, became an important gathering place. The department trained minority students in various computer skills, and then required that the students teach those skills to non-minority students. Faculty observed that the approach "put minority students at an advantage, increased their self-confidence because majority students were dependent on them, [and] reduced otherwise existing social distance..." The approach was deemed sufficiently successful that the University's Institute for Research and Technology has adopted it as well.

The department's MOST program also sought to build campus visibility for its efforts, sponsoring or cosponsoring workshops, speakers, and charitable activities.

### **Pipeline**

The department has worked to recruit minority students to the practice of sociology in several ways. First, students participating in MOST activities have accompanied university admissions office recruiters to area high schools, and then visited the admissions office to make follow-up telephone calls to encourage successful minority applicants to attend the University.

Faculty work to recruit students, particularly minority students, to the major by reaching out to solid candidates in lower-level courses. In addition, the department is working to develop a stronger advising program—one that will help identify students who need extra help and match them with the needed assistance. This approach would augment the existing "early alert" system that is designed to permit the University's Office of Minority Education to know when minority students are falling behind.

Finally, the department works to steer qualified students toward graduate study and even careers in sociology. That effort includes the regular "Crunch and Munch" series, so named



for the light refreshments served. At the sessions, teams of sociology faculty members discuss such topics as how to apply to graduate school and resume writing. The sessions are open to all students, but minority students are particularly encouraged to attend. In addition, the department has made a deliberate effort to bring students to professional meetings, in some cases to present research findings.

More than half the department's students attend graduate schools in applied sociology, criminal justice, and law and other professional schools. Many students do not start their graduate school education until after they have been working for four or five years. In addition, about eight students regularly attend Ph.D. granting institutions after graduation. Students from the department have enrolled in graduate programs at Rutgers University, John Jay College of the City University of New York, and New York University.





# **Appendix B**

# **MOST Capstone**

# **Conference**



# Conference Agenda

**Washington, DC**  
**June 6–7, 2002**

## **Transforming Higher Education**

**New Ways for Academic Departments To Advance Excellence & Inclusiveness:  
Lessons on Promoting Diversity from the MOST Program**

### **June 6**

6:30 PM **Reception**

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7:15 PM **Dinner Address**  
**New Ways of Thinking about Diversity and Affirmative Action**

**Chair**

**Felice J. Levine**

American Sociological Association and American Educational Research Association

**Teresa A. Sullivan**

University of Texas, Austin

### **June 7**

8:00 AM **Registration and Continental Breakfast**

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8:30 AM **Overview of the MOST Program—Origin, Goals, Accomplishments**

**Felice J. Levine**

American Sociological Association and American Educational Research Association

**Beth Schneider**

University of California, Santa Barbara

**Jose Z. Calderon**

Pitzer College

9:30 AM **Higher Education at a Crossroad—The Vantage of Academic Presidents**

**What is the mission of colleges and universities today, and how do the lessons of the MOST program support that work?**

**Chair**

**Carla B. Howery**

American Sociological Association

**Nancy Cantor**

University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign

**Joyce A. Ladner**

The Brookings Institution

**Patricia A. McGuire**

Trinity College

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11:15 AM **Sharing the Knowledge. Break Out Sessions**

Led by MOST Coordinators and Department Chairs

**Climate Breakout Session:**

What are the elements of an intentional strategy to improve the climate for students and faculty, department- and institution-wide?

**Manuela Romero**

University of Texas, El Paso

**Alfonso Latoni-Rodríguez**

National Institute on Aging

**Curriculum Breakout Session:**

What revisions to the curriculum best advance the goals of excellence and diversity? How can the lessons of MOST be adapted to your department?

**Edward L. Kain**

Southwestern University

**Beth Schneider**

University of California, Santa Barbara

**Research Training Breakout Session:**

What is the role of research training in promoting diversity and excellence? How can the MOST experience shape future research training?

**Havidán Rodríguez**

University of Puerto Rico, Mayagüez

**Lisa Avalos**

Grinnell College

**Mentoring Breakout Session:**

How can mentoring be made intentional? What are the lessons of MOST for faculty and peer mentoring?

**Allen Scarboro**

Augusta State University

**Carla B. Howery**

American Sociological Association

**Pipeline Breakout Session:**

What can departments do to fill the pipeline with minority scholars? What are the lessons of MOST?

**Rogelio Saenz**

Texas A&M University

**Marylee Taylor**

Pennsylvania State University

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12:30 PM

**Luncheon Address**

**Achieving Diversity and Strategies for Social Change in Higher Education**

**Chair**

**Sally T. Hillsman**

American Sociological Association

**Troy Duster**

New York University and the University of California, Berkeley

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2:30 PM

**The Role of the Public and Private Sectors in Fostering Higher Education Change**

**What support exists to continue this work? How do higher education leaders access this support?**

**Chair:**

**Teresa A. Sullivan**

University of Texas, Austin

**Craig Calhoun**

Social Science Research Council

**Kenneth Prewitt**

New School University

**Judith A. Ramaley**

National Science Foundation

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4:00 PM

**The Road from Here**

**How can conference participants share the lessons of MOST with the broader higher education community? What is the strategic role of departments as the locus of educational training, leadership, and change?**

**Chair**

**Margaret L. Andersen**

University of Delaware

**Christopher Edley, Jr.,**

Harvard Law School and U.S. Civil Rights Commission

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5:00 PM

**Closing Comments and Next Steps**

**What are the next steps in sharing the knowledge and continuing the progress?**

**Felice J. Levine**

American Sociological Association and American Educational Research Association







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