

**Staff Analysis**  
**University of Central Florida Proposed Ph.D. in Sociology**

**Estimated Costs:**

	Total	% & \$ Current	% & \$ New	% & \$ C&G	Cost per FTE
Year 1	\$204,285	37% \$75,285	52% \$106,000	11% 23,000	\$25,426
Year 5	\$364,222	27% \$99,222	32% \$115,500	41% \$149,500	\$9,539

**Projected FTE and headcount are:**

	Projected Headcount	Student FTE
<b>First Year</b>	12	7.13
<b>Second Year</b>	24	14.25
<b>Third Year</b>	36	21.38
<b>Fourth Year</b>	38	21.94
<b>Fifth Year</b>	40	22.51

**Analysis**

*On April 30, 2003, the Florida Board of Governors approved eight criteria, divided into the two categories of Readiness and Accountability, by which implementation authorization of new doctorates were to be assessed. The following is an analysis of the University's proposal based on further delineations of those eight criteria.*

**Evidence that the proposed program is listed in the current State University System Master Plan, and/or that the goals of the proposed program relate to the institutional mission statement as contained in the Master Plan.**

The proposed program was added as "Applied Sociology" (CIP Code 45.1101) to the State University System Master Plan by the Board of Regents in May, 2001. By initiating an area of study at the doctoral-level where few similar programs exist nationally, while meeting the developing research specializations directly relevant to the Orlando metropolitan area, the program supports the University of Central Florida Strategic Plan to "increase prominence in graduate studies" and "foster excellence in research." The proposed program's partnerships with public and private sector stakeholders will serve the University's goals of promoting the "social health" and "economic development" of the region.

Dr. William B. Bankston, Professor and Chair of the Louisiana State University Department of

Sociology, was contracted to conduct an external review of the proposal. He noted that the program “will contribute much to the realization of the university’s mission to achieve national prominence . . . the department will quickly find a niche to the top tier of Ph.D. granting departments in Applied Sociology.”

### **Evidence of a relationship to specific institutional strengths**

Because of its emphasis on applied research, the proposed program involves forming partnerships with agencies and organizations in the Greater Orlando Area. This linkage is a major component and strength of several other UCF academic programs, including Political Science, Nursing, Social Work, Public Administration, and Criminal Justice. The implementation of a doctoral program in sociology will facilitate cooperative work with other departments and enhance the chances of securing external funding. The four areas of concentration (criminology and deviant behavior, social diversity, domestic violence, and urban and environmental sociology) will provide students with the opportunity for interdisciplinary study. Partnerships with the Metropolitan Center for Regional Studies and the Institute for Social and Behavioral Science will provide research and training opportunities for Ph.D. candidates.

Consultant William Bankston indicated that the Institute of Social Behavior Science (ISBS) and its Survey Research Laboratory “is an excellent resource.” He went on to note that, “It provides the organizational structure to enhance the capability of the faculty to seek and secure external research funding. . . . Second, the presence of the ISBS provides a vital pedagogical resource for training students experienced in conducting social research.”

### **Evidence that planning for the proposed program has been a collaborative process involving academic units and offices of planning and budgeting at the institutional level, as well as external consultants, representatives of the community, etc.**

This degree program has been in the planning stages since 1994, and represents a collaborative effort on the part of the Department of Sociology and Anthropology, College of Arts and Sciences, and UCF administrators, with guidance from external consultants and others. The planning process involved collaboration, consensus building, data collection, and expansion of faculty. Non-Sociology faculty contributed to the development of program requirements, the inclusion of new courses, and the identification of specializations. Throughout the planning process, the views and advice of numerous sociologists with an “applied” focus have been sought.

### **Evidence of an appropriate timetable of events leading to the implementation of the proposed program**

Following authorization of the program, the first cohort of doctoral students will be admitted in the spring of 2005. The inaugural class will begin coursework fall semester, 2005. It is anticipated that full-time students will progress through the 60-credit program of study within three years. Upon full implementation of the program, the Sociology faculty will undertake an extensive review of the program with input from community members and academics from other universities.

**Evidence that progress has been made in implementing the recommendations from program reviews or accreditation activities in the discipline pertinent to the proposed program**

The B.A. and M.A. programs in Sociology were evaluated as part of a Social Science Program Review undertaken by the Florida Board of Regents in 1994-95. Three goals were recommended at that time: securing two faculty lines, continued support and strengthening of the Master of Arts in Applied Sociology, and additional structure for the undergraduate internship to enhance marketability in private and public sectors. The B.A. and M.A. in Sociology were reviewed again by an external consultant in November 2003, providing evidence that those goals were strongly addressed.

**Evidence of an appropriate, sequenced, and fully described course of study**

The proposal provides a detailed curriculum overview, course descriptions, and course of study. The degree consists of 45 credit hours of course work beyond the master's degree and a minimum of 15 hours of dissertation work. The program involves taking 21 hours of required core courses; two qualifying examinations that will screen for research ability, technical skills, and mastery of the discipline's core content; 12 hours of restricted electives in a major area of concentration; one major area examination; 12 unrestricted electives; and a dissertation. Students, especially those seeking employment in research positions in public and private agencies, will be encouraged to participate in a 6-semester-hour directed research experience in a non-academic setting. The applied research practicum hours will count as unrestricted electives. The proposal provides details concerning the institutional effectiveness assessment plan for the proposed program.

Consultant Bankston noted that, "Though 'applied sociology' is a very heterogeneous category of sociological activity, the core areas of concentration within the proposed curriculum will focus training in a way that will enhance the market demand for graduates." He went on to further note, "The content of the curriculum...reflects an integration of general training in theory and research methods with applied aspects that will provide the foundation for success both within and without academia." Dr. Bankston indicated that, "The structure of the proposed program is typical in general form to that found in most programs (i.e., credit hours, examinations in theory and methods/statistics, major area examination, and independent dissertation research) and provides assurance of the competency of graduates. A particular strength of the proposed curriculum is the integration of core course requirements...with substantive area concentrations, and research experience in the form of a research practicum."

**Evidence that, if appropriate, the institution anticipates seeking accreditation for the proposed program**

There are no associations maintaining accreditation for sociology programs at the bachelor's or master's levels.

**Evidence that the proposed institution has analyzed the feasibility of providing all or a portion of the proposed program through distance learning technologies via its own technological capabilities as well as through collaboration with other universities**

The proposal indicates that the basic delivery system for doctoral programs in sociology is the

seminar. The faculty considered adaptations of courses and concluded that, with few exceptions, it would not be possible without a substantial loss in the benefits of the seminar format. Statistics courses and some methods courses for the doctoral program may be offered in a mixed-mode format including components on the Web. It is also likely that selected courses will be provided at the Daytona and Brevard Campuses. Chairs of Ph.D.-granting sociology departments were contacted regarding the possibility of shared courses using distance learning technologies.

**Evidence that there is a critical mass of faculty available to initiate the program based on estimated enrollments**

There are 16 faculty projected to be teaching during the fifth year when there are to be an estimated 40 students (22.51 FTE). Consultant Bankston indicated that, “The size of the faculty body will be sufficient to support the new program. It will be comparable to other doctoral granting departments... with similar enrollment.” He further noted that, “This is a relatively young faculty and is not top-heavy in the full ranks, even with the acquisition of two full professors. This will be an asset, as it will contribute to future stability and continuity.”

**Evidence that the faculty in aggregate have the necessary experience and research activity to sustain the program**

Faculty have demonstrated leadership nationally through their involvement in professional organizations, as editors of publications, and as members of editorial boards of refereed journals in sociology and other social sciences. All faculty have published in refereed journals. Dr. James Wright is one of the most prolific scholars in the field of sociology, publishing over 150 books, articles, and chapters. All faculty are involved in research. A majority of the faculty have directed masters theses to completion, and five faculty members have served as dissertation committee members.

Consultant Bankston noted that, “The composition of the faculty is consistent with the organization of the curriculum in that there is a balanced distribution of the faculty’s specialty areas and expertise across the proposed areas of specialization.” He noted that, “Both primary indicators of research productivity, publication and grant acquisition, suggest this is a highly involved and successful group.” He concluded that, “...such research activity and the new doctoral program will be mutually supporting as the presence of the doctoral program will enhance the capacity of the faculty to obtain funding, and the research funding will enhance the department’s capacity to attract and support students.”

**Evidence that, if appropriate, there is a commitment to hire additional faculty in later years, based on estimated enrollments**

It is anticipated that ongoing searches will fill three vacant lines beginning fall 2004. Once filled, there will be 19 faculty in the Department. A survey of public universities in the Southeast offering the Ph.D. in Sociology found the mean number of faculty to be 20.

**Evidence that library volumes and serials are sufficient to initiate the program**

Consultant Bankston noted that, “Library resources are adequate for the current program, but

holdings must be enhanced for the doctoral program, particularly with respect to serials. Future acquisitions should focus on building holdings in applied sociology and in the specialty areas proposed.” The University will provide \$25,000 in each of the first two years of the doctoral program in order to strengthen holdings in Sociology. The UCF library currently contains 12,499 books and 139 journals subscribed to and cataloged in relevant subject headings.

**Evidence that classroom, teaching laboratory, research laboratory, office, and any other type of space that is necessary for the proposed program is sufficient to initiate the program**

There will be a need for additional space due to an increase in faculty and student offices and research project areas. The program will also require a computer lab. Space for these needs is currently being occupied by the Psychology Department and will be transferred in 2005-06 upon the opening of the Psychology Building. Consultant Bankston indicated that, “...existing space would seem inadequate, but the problem will be remedied with the expected acquisitions described.”

**Evidence that necessary and sufficient equipment to initiate the program is available**

The College of Arts and Sciences will provide \$20,000 for the estimated cost to equip the computer laboratory. An estimated increase of \$12,000 to \$15,000 to the department’s non-salary base budget will be added to cover additional expenses such as replacement of equipment, office supplies and other items. Consultant Bankston noted that, “Expansion of equipment in the form of both hardware and software is needed and recognized. The amount estimated (\$20,000) to equip the computer laboratory...will accomplish the goal initially, but there will be recurring costs, foreseen in the proposal, to update, maintain, and perhaps expand as the doctoral student enrollment increases.”

**Evidence that, if appropriate, fellowships, scholarships, and graduate assistantships are sufficient to initiate the program**

All full-time students are expected to be supported once the program is fully implemented. The College of Arts and Sciences will provide 13 assistantships in the program’s fifth year. In addition to the expected full tuition remission for full-time students in the program, the program will be supported through research assistantships, university and national fellowships, and paid internships and practicum placements.

Consultant Bankston highlighted that, “The most critical expenditures will come in the form of graduate stipends. Existing stipends and fellowships are far too low to be competitive with other regional doctoral programs. The projected stipend level of \$11,500 (with tuition remission) will suffice initially, but likely will have to be supplemented in the future to remain competitive.” He further noted that, “Ultimately, the success of the program, as the Department recognizes, will depend on the faculty’s ability to secure funding for assistants through external sources.” He concluded, “...given the quality of the faculty and their research productivity, this very likely will occur.”

**Evidence that, if appropriate, clinical and internship sites have been arranged**

Letters of support expressing interest in doctoral students pursuing a research practicum included

in the proposal are from key representatives from the City of Orlando, Orange County Government, Youth and Family Services Division of Orange County, Coalition for the Homeless, Association to Preserve the Eatonville Community, Harbor House, and Orange County Victim Services. The Department has a strong history of collaboration with many other agencies, including the Department of Children and Family Services, Orlando Housing Authority, Coalition for the Homeless, Center for Drug Free Living, City of Oviedo Fire Department, City of Oviedo Planning Department, City of Oviedo Recreation Department, and Lake County Community Center. The research practicum is planned as part of the second year in the program; this will allow enough time for additional partnerships, with the Metropolitan Center serving as the liaison for these arrangements.

**Evidence that there is a need for more people to be educated in this program at this level**

The proposal contains significant evidence that there is a need for a Ph.D. with a focus on Applied Sociology. A projected demand exists for Sociology faculty at various universities due to an increase in projected retirements. The proposal indicates that, nationally, there is a growing need to prepare Ph.D. students for careers for other than traditional research and teaching careers. Detail is presented concerning the wide variety of job titles of sociologists working in applied settings. Data are provided to indicate that Florida has a need for more doctoral graduates in Applied Sociology. Employment rates of new Ph.D.s are noted as high in two recent national studies. The proposal includes letters of support from various government officials and local community groups in the Greater Orlando Area.

Consultant Bankston noted that, “Both in the private and public sectors, these (i.e., core areas of program concentration) are areas where policy research and application of sociological knowledge are of high value.” He further noted that, “The sparsity of competing programs, none which produce high volumes of doctoral degrees or are located in Florida or the southeast states, will serve to enhance the successful placement of graduates. Based on my knowledge of trends in the discipline and the supporting evidence in the proposal document, I believe the demand for the program’s graduates is amply sufficient to justify its establishment.”

**Evidence that the proposed program does not duplicate other SUS or independent college offerings or, otherwise, provides an adequate rationale for doing so**

Although there are Ph.D. programs in sociology already at three state (UF, FSU, and FIU) and one private university (University of Miami), none of the four offer a degree that emphasizes applied research according to information provided from the American Sociological Association, which noted areas of concentration in the different programs.

**Evidence of reasonable estimates of student headcount and FTE who will major in the proposed program, and commitment to achieve a diverse student body**

Although headcount projection is slightly higher than those of other Florida programs, the uniqueness of the proposed doctorate may be an added draw for students. There is evidence that there has been an effort to establish relationships with feeder programs. The Equal Employment Opportunity statement is included and provides details for attracting a diverse population.

Consultant Bankston recognized that, “Assessing this (i.e., student demand) accurately is

somewhat difficult as there is not necessarily a direct correspondence between demand for graduates and the level of interest in a program on the part of potential students.” He continues, “...data do suggest that there is sufficient demand to establish a viable entering cohort of students.” The consultant noted that, “there are several fundamental advantages UCF’s sociology department will have in its future recruitment efforts. One is the growing proportion of sociology graduate students nationwide who are interested in non-academic careers with an applied focus....Another recruitment advantage is found in the network of ties the faculty has established in the private and governmental sectors of the community.... This is a recruitment pool not actively exploited by traditional graduate programs, but the uniqueness of this proposed program should be quite attractive to them.” The consultant concluded, “The sociology faculty at UCF is a highly active and visible group through their research, and through participation in regional and national professional associations. They should have little difficulty locating and recruiting qualified students. In sum, I believe their enrollment projection of 40 students by the 2009-2010 academic year is reasonable, perhaps even conservative.”

**Evidence of a budget for the program that is complete, reasonable, comparable to the budgets of similar programs at other SUS institutions, and reflective of the proposal’s text**

The proposed budget is complete, including information concerning all of the first five years of the program. A strength of the proposed budget is the estimated dollars received from contracts and grants. Contract and grant monies are included for all years, growing to a projected forty-one percent of the total budget in year five. The estimated cost per student FTE for the proposed program in its fifth year is \$9,539. This estimated cost is significantly lower than the Social Science’s discipline costs for graduate level II programs as noted in the *State University System of Florida Expenditure Analysis 2001-2002*.

**Evidence that, in the event that resources within the institution are redirected to support the new program, such a redirection will not have a negative impact on undergraduate education**

The proposal provides evidence that the proposed program will have potential positive impacts on undergraduate instruction through the increased opportunities for undergraduate majors to participate in ongoing research studies and the acquisition of additional computer lab and library resources. Faculty are anticipated to infuse data analysis components, service learning, and other innovative strategies that will enhance undergraduate education. Due to the interdisciplinary interests of sociology doctoral students in other programs, there may be growth in the areas of Statistics, Political Science, Economics, Criminal Justice and Public Administration. There is no anticipated reduction in the number of undergraduate courses taught by tenured and tenure-track faculty.

**Evidence that the academic unit(s) associated with this new degree have been productive in teaching, research, and service**

The proposal includes detailed information concerning productivity in teaching, research, and service. Student credit-hour production has increased significantly over the past five years, growing from 480 graduate Student Credit Hours to 895. Over a four-year period, faculty

obtained more than \$600,000 of grant money. Faculty are active in national and regional organizations while also serving the University and community.

Consultant Bankston recognized that, “Collectively, the faculty have produced 25 books and over 350 articles and book chapters. This is an impressive record relative to the number of faculty, and one equal to or above most doctoral degree granting sociology departments.” He acknowledged that, “Equally important to the success of the program, perhaps more so, is the capacity of the faculty to secure external funding. The current has an excellent record here, and again, one that would surpass most comparable departments with Ph.D. programs. Over a third have externally supported research, and in dollar amounts this support surpasses most departments, even those with larger faculties.”