DIVERSITY STATEMENT

STATEMENT OF VALUES

The Department of Sociology at the University of Washington values diversity, equality, and inclusivity in our community. We define diversity broadly, as differences in social categories like race, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexuality, socio-economic status, nationality and citizenship, veteran and parental status, body size, ability, age and experience. These categories – the meanings and significance of which intersect, change over time, and vary by context and situation – are profoundly important aspects of our faculty, staff, and students’ identities and lives. Such social differences are something we celebrate and seek to promote, because they are the foundation for a diversity of perspectives that enrich our classrooms, our professional lives, and our research.

Realizing these core values requires that we redress the exclusion of historically underrepresented groups in higher education. Deeply entrenched structural, cultural, and institutional systems have resulted in the accumulation of advantages for some members of our community at the expense of others. This is especially true in the field of higher education, which has a long history of excluding African Americans, Native Americans, Latinos, people of low socio-economic status, women, and others. This legacy of exclusion stands in opposition to our commitment to diversity. We therefore seek to collectively identify and redress such institutional and interpersonal barriers within our community on an ongoing basis.

The classroom is a shared space for the exchange of ideas, learning, and dialogue across cultures. It is more than a physical space in which lectures and seminars are held, and includes the conversations, interactions, and experiences we share in the cultivation of our understanding of sociological topics at the University of Washington. In the classroom, as elsewhere, the Department of Sociology values all our community members’ differences.

Whatever our social background, whatever our chosen areas of work, each of us benefits from being in a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive community. This is nowhere truer than in a sociology department, because our discipline seeks to understand social life in its varied and diverse forms. It is with that in mind that the Department of Sociology at the University of Washington affirms the importance of diversity, equality, and inclusivity, not simply as aspects of our work, but as central to our identity as a department, core values that affect all that we do, and essential components of our mission to produce sociological research of the highest caliber.

To protect and promote diversity within our department and university, the members of the department work to provide a safe and welcoming academic environment, free from the abuse of power differentials or hostile acts, including harassment or discrimination based on race, gender identity or gender expression, age, sexual orientation, disAbility, veteran status, socioeconomic status, or family status.

Statement of Goals

The Department of Sociology at the University of Washington seeks to promote equality, diversity, and inclusivity through the ongoing pursuit of the following goals:

- Recruit and retain members from diverse communities for our student body, staff, and faculty;
- Facilitate access to departmental, campus-wide and external resources that support diverse communities, both socially and financially;
- Create opportunities for all members of our community to participate in the scholarly and professional life of the department without threat of harassment;
- Seek out best practices for promoting equality and inclusivity in our classrooms, meetings, and events, creating an environment free from harassment, both on an institutional and an interpersonal level;
- Seek out best practices for identifying and addressing barriers to equality and inclusivity in our
Collectively participate in the above efforts, recognizing that we are all responsible for supporting diversity, equality, and inclusivity in our community.

Departmental efforts are not limited to the above list. Through periodic surveys and meetings, we will continue to solicit input about the well-being and needs of our community members, and to identify concrete measures that might be taken to promote diversity, equality, and inclusivity in our department.

STATEMENT OF PRACTICES

The Department of Sociology’s commitment to promoting diversity, both at the University of Washington and in the larger communities in which we live and work, takes a variety of forms.

- **Protection against harassment.** Members of the department abide by norms of professional respect. Further, as a community, we work to improve practices that help to prevent and/or minimize harm caused by acts that are demeaning or abusive, or create a hostile professional environment.

- **Cutting-edge research and inclusive coursework.** Our faculty includes preeminent scholars who do cutting-edge research on race and ethnicity, gender and sexuality, and social inequality. This expertise is realized not just in our research, but also our curricula. Our department specializes in offering classes that reflect the diversity of social life and that introduce students to the study of social stratification and inequality around the globe, and we are committed to offering courses that meet the University’s diversity requirement. To ensure that our classrooms are welcoming environments to all students, especially those from systematically marginalized groups, harassment will not be tolerated in the classroom or other instructional spaces. If students use language or gestures that undermine the learning of another student, they may be asked to leave the classroom. Any student who has concerns or questions about the appropriateness of the behavior of others in their classroom is encouraged to bring these concerns to the attention of the Sociology Department, either by discussing this with their TA, Professor, a Sociology advisor, or one of the members of the Department’s Diversity Committee.

- **Community involvement.** Our faculty members regularly contribute to local and national conversations on issues like race and class, and for over fifteen years the sociology department has offered majors the chance to participate in our service learning and community engagement programs.

- **Diversity in hiring and admissions.** Both our graduate student admissions and new faculty recruitment committees include a member of our standing diversity committee.

- **Endowed fellowships.** As of 2014 the department has a new faculty-sponsored fellowship for the recruitment of scholars studying issues of gender and sexuality. Additionally, the department of sociology has two sources of dedicated funding for graduate students from underrepresented minority groups: The Hubert M. Blalock Fellowship, which provides supplemental funding for competitive first-year students, and the recently pledged Sociology Graduate Opportunity Fellowship.

- **Events and training.** Department-sponsored events range from inclusivity training and diversity-themed retreats to “return visits” in which former students of color, who are now faculty elsewhere, to discuss their research and experiences in academia. This is in addition to our regular series of talks that offer all members of our community a chance to experience the breadth of research undertaken in sociology today.

- **Graduate student recruitment and support.** Support for a diverse graduate student body starts with our recruitment and orientation events, which provide informal question-and-answer sessions alongside informational panels about on- and off-campus resources. This includes on campus centers devoted to racial, ethnic and gender diversity on campus, like Go-MAP, the Q-Center, and the Women’s Center; local resources for research and funding, including the Center for Studies in Demography and Ecology; and national opportunities, such as the Ford Diversity Fellowship, the American Sociological Association’s Minority Fellowship, and the financial support from the American Association of University Women.

- **Peer-to-peer mentoring.** The sociology department’s active Graduate Student Association has taken the lead in developing new ways to support students through the course of their graduate education. Graduate students are working with the diversity committee to pilot a peer-mentorship program that seeks, among other primary goals, to support students from historically underrepresented groups. Graduate students have also developed a website where they share advice, resources, and suggestions with one another.

- **Reflection and communication.** Through periodic surveys, town-hall meetings, retreats, and working groups, the department’s Executive and Diversity Committees regularly seek feedback from students, faculty and staff about the needs of the department.