Dear Prospective Sociology Student:

As you choose a major that reflects your interests and career goals, we hope that you will consider Sociology. Here is some information that might answer questions you have about majoring in this subject. Sociology is a core social science that will provide you with a broad range of conceptual and technical skills to expand your understanding of how individuals are influenced by social, economic, political, educational, and religious institutions and how to improve these institutions as well. Majors in Sociology are prepared to follow a variety of career paths after graduation because the major provides the skills, concepts, and knowledge that undergraduate students need to enter the job market successfully or go on to graduate school.

**What is Sociology?**

Sociology is the study of the interplay of individual behavior and social institutions such as the family, politics, religion, work, leisure, law and law enforcement, education, and health care. Sociologists study a broad range of topics. A sociology major might study something small-scale, such as how people manage the impressions they make on others, or something of a much larger scale, such as the causes and consequences of immigration or changes in family patterns. Students who major in sociology find concepts such as culture, emotions, inequality, social problems, deviant behavior, political movements, health disparities, and urbanization to be fascinating topics. Approaches sociologists use to study these and other topics include surveys, experiments, focus groups, people watching, and in-depth interviews.

Sociology has the highest percentage of undergraduates who are the first in their families to attend college and from under-represented minority groups in the United States.

**Why do students major in Sociology?**

Students major in sociology for many reasons. A four-year study of majors, conducted by the American Sociological Association, shows that almost all students who take a Sociology course are excited by the concepts that they learn. Some students chose to major in Sociology because they have a strong desire to improve the society around them by better understanding the relationships between individuals and social issues. Other students focus on employment, graduate or professional school. They see Sociology as a major that will prepare them for the job they want or prepare them to continue their education. What attracts most students to sociology are the wide range of challenging questions and evidence-based answers about the social world that Sociology explores. Students emerge from the major with conceptual skills, research skills, computer skills, and interpersonal skills, and they use what they have learned in Sociology on the job. According to a former sociology major, now a college recruiter:

> One of our goals… is to recruit a diverse student body and so understanding the history and cause and effect of racism in the United States... is a ... concept that I don’t think I would have gotten... in another major. Even gender, I took a great class in gender roles, so that comes into play.

**What career opportunities do Sociology majors have after graduation?**

The four-year study of sociology majors found that more than half of majors go into the workforce directly after graduation, rather than pursuing additional schooling. In fact, the graduate with a Sociology major can succeed in a variety of careers without pursuing an additional degree. When we
interviewed them 18 months after graduation, we found that more than 9 out of 10 sociology majors who were not full-time graduate students held paid jobs. Former majors reported finding jobs in many different fields, including case and group workers, non-profit administrators, paralegals, crime scene technicians, human rights advocates, managers, computer consultants, marketing researchers, teachers, and survey workers. These are job categories that are expected to grow, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Sociology majors also report finding these careers very satisfying, especially when the work is closely related to what they learned as a sociology majors. By four years after graduation, 80 percent of those majors who entered the labor market have changed jobs, although often staying in the same field. These job changes frequently reflect promotions, salary increases, more responsibility, and increasingly interesting work.

**Will I be prepared to pursue further degrees?**

About half of Sociology majors pursue advanced degrees, directly after undergraduate school or after working for a while. They are awarded master’s or doctoral degrees in sociology, social work, education, psychology, law, business, criminology, health care, public policy, and communications. Many of these degrees lead to job and career advancement. The Sociology major leads to these advanced degrees for all types of students, especially those who achieve a higher grade point average in college, regardless of the undergraduate institution they attended or the level of education achieved by their parents. Students who go on to graduate school do so for idealistic reasons as well as to pursue specific career goals. According to a former sociology major, now a lawyer:

> I like that I am able to refer back to some of the skills that I learned through fulfilling my sociology degree and to apply some of the socio-economic differences and their effects on the law.

You are on the road to success and your choices in the near future will have a great impact on your life. We hope you will choose a major that excites you, enhances your opportunity to contribute to society, and leads to a satisfying career. For many undergraduates, the choice to major in Sociology provides all of these outcomes. Perhaps it will for you. In considering your choice of a major, consider whether the Sociology major will contribute to your college experience and your preparation for the future. The American Sociological Association’s web site provides additional information about Sociology. There is a special section for students that you might want to visit. Go to: [http://www.asanet.org/students/resources_majors.cfm](http://www.asanet.org/students/resources_majors.cfm)

Good luck.

Cordially,

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