Survey of Graduates of the Social Science MA program for Feedback during the SOSA MA Program 5 Year Review

To get feedback on the program, the graduate coordinator surveyed graduates of the program that could be reached. The attached email was sent to graduates (for whom email addresses were identified) for the five year review in February 2006. Some were contacted by telephone and asked the same questions verbally. A summary of responses follows.

Dear …

It has been a little while since we talked. I hope all is going well for you since graduation.

I am currently involved in doing a program review of the Social Science MA program and wondered if you would update me a little on what you are doing following your MA graduation and any ideas you have for improving the MA program. If so, could you respond to the below? Any input would be greatly appreciated. You can answer 1, part, or all of the questions below.

1. Did you continue your education beyond the MA you completed at CSU Chico? If so, where & what kind of program?

2. What kind of work are you doing? Also please indicate other jobs since you graduated.

3. What problems did you encounter in the MA program?

4. Do you have any suggestions for changes in the program?

I look forward to hearing from you.

Gwen Sheldon

Summary of Responses to 2006 Survey of Graduates

1. Did you continue your education beyond the MA you completed at CSU Chico? If so, where & what kind of program?

One student went on to complete a second MA at CSU, Chico in psychology, and two of the 18 graduates are in programs. One is finishing the PhD in Sociology this spring at Kansas State University; the other has begun a PhD in Sociology this year at the University of Central Florida, Orlando. In the Graduate Survey conducted by Institutional Research, 63% of the students reported intentions of obtaining a professional or doctor’s degree. Conversations with graduates confirmed this rate to be true. Information on the graduates working is given in number 10 below. One graduate has begun the Reading & Language Arts Certificate program at CSU, Chico (which allows one to teach reading at community colleges). Another is currently applying to law school.

2. What kind of work are you doing? Also please indicate other jobs since you graduated.
3. What problems did you encounter in the MA program?

The graduates noted that the factor liked most about the program was the flexibility of the program which allowed them to create specialized niches of expertise by combining coursework from different departments. Problems encountered also related to the interdisciplinary nature of the program. One effect is that developing a sense of community among the grad students is more difficult, given that there is not a common core of courses taken by all students. Another problem is that in taking courses from other departments, it was sometimes difficult to get into courses in those departments that have large graduate programs. Priority given to their own students sometimes meant department did not have space for interdisciplinary students. However, most programs in the College of Behavioral and Social Science are not so large that this was a problem and those departments often benefit from having Social Science students in their small graduate courses. It not only adds FTE that can make a difference in justifying small courses, but also adds diversity of viewpoint to course discussions to have students with interdisciplinary backgrounds.

4. Do you have any suggestions for changes in the program?

Suggestions included:

1. Connecting SOSC grad students with other students in the program to develop a sense of community.

2. Putting more specific course names on the transcripts for Independent Studies so that universities with PhD programs could see the topics covered.

3. Purchasing video equipment for the students to use or better cooperation from other departments with video taping facilities.