I. Mission
To help students acquire knowledge in the field of sociology during their baccalaureate level academic preparation which will lead to success in sociology-related careers and/or further studies in sociology at advanced levels.

II. Goals
1. Provide a rigorous academic program to enable students build a solid foundation in sociology at the baccalaureate level.

2. Guide students through the use of proven effective social science pedagogy towards understanding and application of sociological concepts and theories.

3. Help students develop appropriate analytical and critical thinking skills as essential tools for problem-solving.

4. Help students cultivate the academic background and competence necessary to enable them to pursue advanced studies in the field of sociology successfully.

III. Student learning outcomes
1. Define and apply basic sociological concepts appropriately.

2. Demonstrate familiarity with the contributions of the founding fathers of sociology (Comte, Spencer, Martineau, Marx, Durkheim, Weber, Simmel, and the pioneer scholars of the Chicago School), as well as those of leading contemporary sociologists to the development of sociology as an academic discipline.

3. Explain the assumptions and core ideas of the major sociological theories (Functionalism, Conflict, and Interactionism), and apply them appropriately.

4. Depict causal relationships among social phenomena accurately.

5. Design and conduct basic sociological research using the established social research methodology.

6. Demonstrate competence in analysis and interpretation of research data, demographic data, U.S. Census Bureau data, and depiction of social trends in the U.S. as well as globally.

7. Demonstrate competence in writing sociological reports such that sociologists as well as
non-sociologists can read and understand.

8. Demonstrate competence in reading, comprehension, and critique of scholarly works in various areas of the sociological literature found in books, professional journals, etc.

IV. Course map

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COURSE</th>
<th>SLO #1</th>
<th>SLO #2</th>
<th>SLO #3</th>
<th>SLO #4</th>
<th>SLO #5</th>
<th>SLO #6</th>
<th>SLO #7</th>
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</tbody>
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V. **Assessment tools**  
1. Direct method of assessment: SLO #s 1, 2, 3, 5, 7).  
2. Indirect method of assessment: SLO #s 4, 6, 8)  

VI. **Summary of findings/Level of achievement of student learning outcomes**  
1. Define and apply basic sociological concepts appropriately.  
   Students of the 2013-14 sociology graduating class were often able to define and explain the basic sociological concepts introduced in the various sociology courses they took satisfactorily on their answers to objective test and short-answer essay questions, as well as orally during class discussions. Occasionally, a few of them had difficulty with the appropriateness of definitions the first time they are encountered, as in cases of closely related terminology which have only subtle differences in meaning and usage.  

2. Demonstrate familiarity with the contributions of the founding fathers of sociology to sociology as an academic discipline.  
   All 2013-14 sociology graduates achieved this student learning outcome very satisfactorily as was evident from the high quality of the assigned “Biographical Sketch” papers in the Sociological Theory course which entailed detailed research on the lives, times, and works of the founding fathers and other leading sociology scholars, and student-led oral presentation and discussion of findings in class.  

3. Explain the assumptions and core ideas of the major sociological theories (Functionalism, Conflict, and Interactionism), and apply them appropriately.  
   All the 2013-14 sociology graduates came to Missouri Valley College from different community colleges with very little background in sociology. As such, grasping the essence of the assumptions, core ideas, and appropriate application of these three commonly used sociological theories was a gradual process. However, because these theories are encountered repeatedly in nearly every course in the sociology program by virtue of their wide-ranging applicability, they all demonstrated by the end of their final year here that they have gained mastery of these theories at a highly satisfactory level as a learning outcome.  

4. Depict causal relationships among social phenomena accurately.  
   The sociology graduating class of 2013-14 was evenly divided on achievement levels of this student learning outcome with two students performing satisfactorily while the other two demonstrated considerable difficulty as was evident from assigned research papers and the senior thesis in their final year. For the two who did not achieve a satisfactory level of this student learning outcome, the main problem was inability to write evidentiary statements meaningfully so as to show causality clearly. They tended to be more interested in citing lengthy direct quotations (often out of context) from sources rather that establishing relationships and teasing out evidence from the sources to support their statements.
5. Design and conduct basic sociological research using the established social research methodology.
Because the required senior thesis part of the Senior Seminar is designed to assess this student learning outcome as a matter of priority, and because heavy emphasis was placed on its achievement, all four 2013-14 sociology graduates achieved it satisfactorily as was evident in the senior thesis papers submitted, albeit with some differences in quality. To achieve that satisfactory level, parts of the senior thesis papers had to be rewritten, in some cases, several times over as required by the instructor.

6. Demonstrate competence in analysis and interpretation of research data, demographic data, U.S. Census Bureau data, and depiction of social trends in the U.S. and globally.
The 2013-14 sociology graduates have demonstrated through objective tests, written short-answer essays, written research papers, written article summaries, reading assignments, and in-class oral presentations which they have had to do repeatedly over the course of the sociology program, and the capstone senior seminar that they have systematically gained considerable proficiency in the collection, processing, and using data to depict and make sense of social trends in the U.S. and globally.

7. Demonstrate competence in writing sociological reports such that sociologists as well as non-sociologists can read and understand.
At the time of graduation, there was ample evidence to suggest that the 2013-14 sociology graduates have acquired modest capabilities (in varying degrees) of “writing in the discipline” (of sociology). Clearly, they all need improvement in this regard. Perhaps the best way to enhance their chances of achieving this student learning outcome satisfactorily is to read the general sociological literature more extensively beyond just what is assigned in classes and thereby familiarize themselves with the scholarly styles of sociologists trained in the various traditions of research and writing in the discipline.

8. Demonstrate competence in reading, comprehension, and critique of scholarly works in various areas of the sociological literature found in books, professional journals, etc.
There was ample evidence of deficiency on the part of the 2013-14 sociology graduates in the achievement of this student learning outcome as demonstrated in two of the four senior thesis papers submitted. It appeared that those students did not quite understand some (not necessarily all) of the material they read. It also became evident that they failed to critique the works of the authors they read even when the necessity clearly existed because of the ways in which the authors addressed highly controversial issues. This deficiency is inexcusable because throughout the program, students were taught to refrain from agreeing or disagreeing with the views of authors they read without providing reasons why.

VII. Analysis/Interpretation
This program assessment report revealed both strengths and weaknesses of the sociology program during the 2013-14 academic year. It showed that compared to previous years achievement levels of student learning outcomes #s 1, 2, 3, 5, and 6 have risen to satisfactory levels (see summary of findings in Section VI above). These improvements may be attributed to the impact of changes in teaching methods with a focus on ensuring student learning outcomes. The report also showed that some areas of weakness – student learning outcomes #s 4, 7 and 8 - still persist and more and more targeted efforts are required to address them in future. Variations in level of academic performance of the 2013-14 sociology graduates were also reflected in the results of
the assessment of levels of their achievement of the student learning outcomes.

It was also evident that the two existing assessment methods for the sociology program, namely; the ETS Major Field Test in Sociology, and the Senior Thesis component of the Senior Seminar did not precisely measure each and every student learning outcome of the program. Whereas the Senior Thesis served as a “direct measure” for some of the student learning outcomes only, the ETS Major Field Test in Sociology was used as an “indirect,” and therefore an ineffective measure. One problem of relying on the ETS Major Field Test in sociology as tool of assessment of the student learning outcomes of the Missouri Valley college sociology program is that this year (as in past years), only four sociology major graduating seniors took the ETS Major Field Test in Sociology, which is too few to use to make any meaningful comparison of the program with other programs nationally and draw solid conclusions using the test scores as indicators.

VIII. Action plan/Closing the loop

The findings from this program have revealed some weaknesses that need to be addressed in order to improve achievement levels of the student learning outcomes and make assessment of the program more effective. Actions to be taken in this regard by the current program faculty beginning in the fall semester of 2014-2015 are:

1. Replace the external ETS Major Field Test in Sociology as an assessment tool with an in-house comprehensive exit exam to be taken by all graduating sociology majors. Rubrics of the in-house comprehensive exit exam will be designed through collaboration of all three current program faculty and used together with the senior thesis as direct tools of assessment.

2. Require a grade of “C” or better in Introduction to Sociology (SC 100) as a prerequisite for all upper level sociology courses as well as upper level courses in other disciplinary areas for which SC 100 is designated as a prerequisite. This change is intended to strengthen the students’ background and competency needed for achieving the sociology program learning outcomes more satisfactorily.

3. Reorient students towards the realizing the importance of the student learning outcomes of the program and their role in achieving those learning outcomes.

4. Intensify efforts to grow the program by working closely with the admissions office to increase awareness of the sociology program on their recruitment circuits, and campus-wide, especially to in-coming freshmen and prospective students by apprising them on what one can do with a bachelor’s degree in sociology and the current upward trends in the job market for new sociology graduates.
IX. Faculty/Student information

Table 1. Program Faculty
Program faculty are those who taught at least one course in the program in the past year.

FULL-TIME*
*The definition of ‘full-time’ for this table coincides with our standard MVC definition. Include all full-time faculty who taught in the program regardless of their division affiliation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Division</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Joshua Tetteh</td>
<td>Social Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marilyn Milovich</td>
<td>Math and Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charles Guthrey</td>
<td>Education</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

ADJUNCT
Include all adjunct faculty who taught at least one course in the program in the past year regardless of their division affiliation.
(No list of names required.)

Number of adjunct: 0

Table 2. Student Profile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th>Spring</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Minors</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduating seniors</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

X. List of individuals who assisted in the completion of this report
1. Joshua Tetteh
2. Charles Guthrey
XI. **OPTIONAL:** You may respond to any or all of the criteria below.

**Ten Criteria for Prioritizing Academic Programs**

1) History, development, and expectations of the program  
2) External demand for the program  
3) Internal demand for the program  
4) Quality of program inputs and processes  
5) Quality of program outcomes  
6) Size, scope, and productivity of program  
7) Revenue and other resources generated by the program  
8) Costs and other expenses associated with the program  
9) Impact, justification, and overall essentiality of the program  
10) Opportunity analysis of the program

Updated 4/7/14