

# A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE SOCIOLOGY DEPARTMENT AT THE UNIVERSITY OF OREGON\*

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## The Early Years: 1890s to World War II

### A Sociology Pioneer at Oregon

Sociology began at Oregon in large part through the work of one man—Frederick George Young. Indeed, Young had a major influence on many phases of the university. He served as Professor of Economics and Sociology from 1895 to 1920, as the first Dean of the Graduate School (1900-1920), and as the Dean of the School of Sociology from 1919 until his death in 1929. He was one of the founding members of the Oregon Historical Society and the American Sociological Society. He edited the *Oregon Historical Quarterly* for many years. His contributions to the university and larger community were many, varied and important. He is important to this account because he taught all sociology courses at the UO in the early years.

Young was a farm boy from Wisconsin who graduated from a teachers' college and taught school for a few years before enrolling in the newly founded Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore. He earned his BA there in 1886 and then stayed on for a year of graduate work. At Johns Hopkins he received the most advanced social science training offered then available. Around 1895, after joining the University of Oregon faculty, he began offering the school's first sociology courses. Sociology was a new discipline at American universities. Although sociology courses began to be offered in the 1880s, the first department, at the new University of Chicago, was not founded until the '90s. Young's sociology courses were among the first taught on the West Coast.

The UO Catalog for 1895-96 describes Professor Young's "Sociology 40" course this way:

This course includes the history of sociological theory; an analysis and classification of sociological phenomena; an exposition of the natural evolution of social activities and arrangements from their own beginnings; an exploration of the social forces and laws so far as they are yet apparent. These principles will be applied along the different lines of social reform. Lectures, field-work and report.

Although no sociology course today would attempt such broad coverage, much of American sociology has continued to combine scientific analysis with a concern for social amelioration. Now and then, however, as the history of Oregon's sociology department illustrates, the analytical and ameliorative tendencies in the discipline have come into sharp conflict.

In the 1899-1900 UO Catalog sociology first appears in a department title—the Department of Economics and Sociology. Sociology students took the beginning course in economics and then had a choice of five courses in sociology. These included classes such as “Democracy,” “Anthropology” and “The Debtor Classes.”

The ameliorative thrust of sociology was reflected in Oregon's annual Commonwealth Conferences, which began in 1909 with the active encouragement of Frederick Young. These conferences attempted to bring together influential people from all disciplines around the state who were interested in working systematically for the general welfare. In 1916 the proceedings of the conferences and related articles began being reported in the *Commonwealth Review*, which Young edited until his death. One outcome of these conferences was the founding in 1919 of the UO School of Sociology, whose mission, as the Catalog described it, was one of social analysis and “cooperative commonwealth service.” It had an eight-person faculty from various disciplines, including University President Prince Lucien Campbell. Young served as dean. A division of the School was established in Portland to train professional social workers. Within a few years it had become the Portland School of Social Work, now a part of Portland State University.

Young died in 1929 and soon afterwards the Great Depression brought lean years to the university. Before long, the School of Sociology disappeared and an independent four-person Department of Sociology was established. At the depth of the Depression the university narrowly escaped a transfer of all its faculty and courses to the Oregon State Agricultural College (now Oregon State University) in Corvallis.

### **Department Development in the Post-War Years**

The sociology department struggled through the Depression and war years on a minimum basis. Although sociological analysis was now its major emphasis, until the early 1960s it also offered a concentration in preprofessional social work for majors who intended to enter that profession. With the end of World War II the department, now down to three faculty members, underwent an almost complete change in personnel. Elon H. Moore became head of the department. Jack R. Parsons joined the department in 1945 to teach social work courses. With booming postwar enrollments, Joel V. Berreman and John M. Foskett were appointed in 1946 and Walter T. Martin joined the faculty a year later.

Each faculty member taught four classes a week three terms a year. (The university adopted the quarter system as a wartime measure during World War I and has retained it ever since.) This heavy load was lightened to some extent by the practice of assigning faculty two sections of the same course each term.

During the late 1940s and much of the '50s the UO Department of Sociology was a small, close-knit group of congenial men. While the four class-teaching schedule was heavy and there was a modest expectation of research and publication, there was time for fun. The faculty went out to the College Side Inn (now long demolished) or Taylor's (still in existence) for mid-morning

coffee and often joined for lunch. On a nice day "Pat" Moore might come around seeking a group to take off early for a little golf. Frequently they and their wives would meet at one member's house for dinner and an evening of relaxation. Once a year they joined the department at Corvallis for dinner at one member's house. These customs did not survive the great expansion of enrollments and faculty and the time-consuming emphasis on research that took place after 1960.

### **The Doctoral Program**

The sociology department had produced an occasional master's degree at least since the early 1920s and a number of these students had gone on to earn their doctorates at other institutions. A few of them, e.g., Read Bain and Robert F. Bales, who had taken Ph.D.s elsewhere became well known sociologists. In 1951 Eldon Johnson, dean of the graduate school, obtained the support of the Carnegie Foundation to initiate several new doctoral programs at the university. The sociology faculty was at first hesitant to initiate the doctorate at this stage but in the fall of 1951 got the program under way with Robert L. James and Vernon Malon as Carnegie fellows. The following fall there were four fellows. Two graduate courses were added and a few graduate seminars were also available.

In the spring of 1954 Gladys and Snell Putney were awarded the department's first Ph.D.s. By the end of the '50s seven doctorates in sociology had been granted. The department was fortunate in being able to begin its doctoral program with fellowships that paid enough to attract highly qualified students. From that early group, for example, two were later designated distinguished alumni of the university: Gail Fuller (formerly Gladys Putney) in 1988, who was then president of San Jose State University; and Jack P. Gibbs in 1990, who was then Centennial Professor of Sociology at Vanderbilt University.

By 1956 the Carnegie program no longer existed and continuing development of the graduate program had been slow. However, the department soon entered into a period of rapid growth and development due in large part to outside support. from a different quarter. The success of the Sputnik program in the Soviet Union jarred the US Congress into passing legislation to upgrade science training in American graduate schools. The National Defense Education Act (NDEA) provided choice graduate fellowships and the sociology department was fortunate to receive several of these for about a decade. The department also obtained support from the National Institute for Mental Health (NIMH) for a program in advanced training in research methodology. These very desirable NIMH Fellowships supported four students each year in a program under the direction of William S. Robinson. In addition, there were departmental fellowships for teaching assistants and research fellowships with faculty projects. As a consequence, graduate enrollment grew substantially. In the early 1960s, in order to make the greatest possible use of limited resources, it was decided to stop accepting graduate students who wanted only a master's degree.

In the 1960s funds were also obtained from the National Science Foundation to support an undergraduate program in science education with selected undergraduates working under the direction of Robert Ellis. Alpha Kappa Delta, the national sociology honorary, also under Ellis's

supervision, took into membership each spring those sociology majors graduating with a B average or better. Furthermore, efforts were made to see that majors with top academic grades received letters from the department head recognizing their accomplishments and encouraging them to think about going on to graduate school.

At Oregon, as at most American universities granting the Ph.D., it was customary to require that all doctoral candidates pass a reading comprehension examination in French and German. By the mid-1960s, the Graduate School was allowing students to substitute Spanish or some other language for one of the two. It wasn't long before departments were allowed to substitute some other special skills such as advanced statistics or computer language, an option that sociology made available for a few years. By the early '70s the Graduate School was no longer requiring students to demonstrate competence in foreign languages or other special skills.

An effort was made by the mid-1960s to prepare students for teaching. A special seminar was offered each year by Roy H. Rodgers to provide better preparation and understanding of the department's expectations for those graduates who were planning to teach sections of introductory sociology. Rodgers was also responsible for meeting periodically with graduate students actually teaching classes to help them with any problems they might experience and to make certain that they were providing the best possible service to their students.

### **Tooling up for Research**

In the 1920s and later many sociologists began conducting surveys and using statistical techniques to analyze the results. The changes in research technology from the 1930s on tell much of the story about the department's development, especially at the graduate level. By the late '30s the sociology department had one or two hand-operated calculating machines. By the end of the war these had been replaced with two or three electronic calculators. However, in 1947 the Department of Mathematics managed to require that all calculators on campus be turned over to that department to be maintained in a central computational room available to the entire university. The sociology department had managed to hide an antique Monroe Electric calculator that weighed at least 20 pounds and had a large monitor attached at the rear end. It was one of the earliest electric models and was unbelievably cumbersome, but for a time this was the department's sole equipment for doing statistical analysis. The mathematics department was also working assiduously to prevent any other department from teaching statistics. Happily, mathematics' monopoly was soon broken. By the early 1950s sociology had two new electric calculators and was again providing an elementary course in statistics for its undergraduates.

As late as the mid-1940s the classifying of research cases into different categories was usually done by manually sorting 3" x 5" cards into piles, e.g., by sex, resorting these piles by age groups, and finally sorting again by marital status. Equipment for putting data on punch cards and then sorting these cards automatically existed but the university had no machines that could do this. In 1949, when Walter T. Martin needed to sort subjects by various attributes for his doctoral dissertation, he had to make arrangements with IBM to have the processing done in Portland. (The contract for this operation needed a signature from IBM's home office in New York!) Statistical analysis, even correlation and regression analysis, required hours of work on hand-operated calculators.

In the 1950s the university's business office acquired a card-sorting machine that faculty could use for research purposes at hours when the business office wasn't using it. More electric calculators soon became available to sociology faculty and students, and in 1963 arrangements were made to obtain several card-sorting machines that could be used for teaching and research. By the mid-60s the mathematics department had acquired a mainframe computer, which allowed complex analysis of large data sets at a scale deemed impossible only a few years earlier. Hundreds of correlations could be computed quickly and without effort.

### **Faculty Growth and Development**

In the fall of 1956 the sociology faculty was seven in number. The department was located in a building that later became the southwest corner of what is now known as Gilbert Hall. In 1963, sociology was one of the first departments to move into the newly completed Prince Lucien Campbell Hall (PLC), which at the time was four stories tall. The faculty occupied offices in the basement. A comfortable conference room and a spacious department office were located on the first floor.

The late 1950s and 1960s brought a great increase in the availability of funding for faculty research. Virtually every member of the department was engaged in research and usually in a position to support one, two or several research fellows. The Institute for Community Studies under the direction for Roland J. Pellegrin was bringing onto the campus nearly one million dollars each year for research. This was a multi-discipline organization with the bulk of the funds going to the School of Education, but a number of sociology staff and students were supported in their research. Kenneth Polk's Marion County Youth Study and the Center for Research on Occupational Planning (CROP) under the direction of Robert Ellis also provided important support for selected staff and graduate students.

The department grew considerably in stature during the 1960s. The faculty grew in number. Several nationally known senior sociologists were hired. The volume of faculty publications grew and UO sociologists became more active in the Pacific Sociological Association and the American Sociological Association as officers, committee members and presenters of papers. The increasing stature of the department was also manifest in the professional journals edited by its members during those years. Theodore B. Johannis, Jr., edited the *Family Life Coordinator* in the late 1950s and '60s; the *Pacific Sociological Review* (now *Sociological Perspectives*), the official journal of the Pacific Sociological Association, was initiated by the sociology faculty in 1958 and edited until 1969 by John M. Foscett. Harry Alpert edited the *American Sociological Review*, the official journal of the American Sociological Association, in 1961 and 1962. Additional editing responsibilities were taken on during the early '70s: *Sociometry* (now *Social Psychology Quarterly*), another official journal of the American Sociological Association, was edited here between 1973 and 1975 by Richard J. Hill; from 1972 until 1975 Benton Johnson edited the *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*; and beginning in 1971 *The Insurgent Sociologist* (now *Critical Sociology*) was edited for many years by a collective including non-UO personnel.

It was impossible to carry out all of these academic activities and still continue with the heavy teaching load of earlier years. At first only faculty with major research responsibilities were allowed to drop a class or two, but as outside grant money became available faculty were able to buy off time from teaching. Eventually the teaching load for all faculty was substantially lightened and advanced graduate students were hired to teach some of the basic undergraduate courses for which faculty were no longer available..

In 1960, virtually all faculty at the UO were white males. (As late as 1958 only men were allowed in the Faculty Club and as late as 1959 a summer minstrel show was sponsored by the Erb Memorial Student Union.). As the Civil Rights Movement gained momentum, the department hired one Japanese-American and two African-American faculty members, but they left after a few years. It proved extremely difficult for the university to retain minority faculty during that period. Many of them complained about the lack of racial and ethnic diversity on campus and in the Eugene community. Although very few minority students were in the department's doctoral program, an African-American man was awarded a Ph.D. in 1962.

Women usually outnumbered men among undergraduate sociology majors, but there were more men than women in the doctoral program. Academic employment opportunities for women were still limited, which may account for the fact that women were less likely than men to complete their graduate degree. Some faculty members had reservations about awarding coveted NDEA or NIMH fellowships to incoming women students for fear they would drop out later and never make use of their training.

By 1967, the future of the Department of Sociology and of the university looked bright. The nation was prosperous, university enrollments everywhere had soared as Baby Boomers began reaching college age, outside funding was increasingly available, and state legislatures were supporting higher education more generously than ever before. Oregon's sociology department was gaining an excellent national reputation. It now had 24 faculty members, including some well-known senior people and some very promising younger members, and it seemed likely that the number would exceed 30 in a few years. From a large pool of applicants 25 carefully selected students were admitted into the graduate program each fall. Around 100 were on campus each term and the number of doctorates awarded was increasing each year.

## **1968-1980: Years of Turmoil and Change**

### **The Radical Turn**

The nation's normally tranquil campuses became the scene of strikes, sit-ins, and periodic violence in 1968 as protests against the Vietnam War broadened into a frontal attack on the educational system and the larger system of capitalist imperialism in which it was allegedly embedded. The radical upheaval continued into 1969 and culminated in the nationwide protest against the shootings at Kent State University in the spring of 1970. Hundreds of thousands of students were radicalized and many faculty members, particularly the younger ones, gave them encouragement and support. The University of Oregon and its Sociology Department were

profoundly affected by these developments. In 1969 the ROTC building barely escaped being burned by student protesters and in September 1970 a bomb blast destroyed the offices of several sociology faculty members on the ground floor of PLC. Later that fall, it was revealed that undergraduates enrolled in a student-initiated course authorized by the sociology department were able to receive course credit for participating in rifle practice, presumably to equip themselves for revolutionary action.

In sociology, a coalition of graduate students, upper-division undergraduates, and younger faculty launched a critique of conventional positivistic sociology with its emphasis on value-neutrality and the statistical analysis of quantitative data. Value-neutrality, they contended, was only a mask that obscured the fact that sociology as currently practiced really served the interests of ruling elites. They wanted sociologists to side openly with oppressed peoples in their struggle for justice and equality. Some objected strongly to the emphasis on quantitative analysis and called for a sociology that was humanistic and interpretive. A larger group insisted that Marxist analyses, which modern sociology had more or less neglected, should be the central focus of the discipline.

In sociology, the first sign of organized discontent occurred on Thursday, February 29, 1968, when a notice appeared in the mailboxes of faculty and graduate students. Signed by all 22 students enrolled in a required graduate statistics class taught by a senior professor, it announced the students' intention to boycott the class's final exam unless certain changes were made in the way the class was conducted. Virtually overnight the department split into factions over the issue of how to respond to the boycott. Most senior faculty, including the statistics instructor himself, wanted to penalize the protesting students, but junior faculty and most of the other graduate students sided with the boycotters. Although a settlement of sorts was worked out, the fissures that the boycott had revealed soon became more pronounced. Factionalism, sometimes confrontational, sometimes subdued, disturbed the life of the department for more than a decade. Within a few years five senior professors resigned to take jobs elsewhere and a sixth took retirement before he was 60. Several junior faculty members grew disillusioned with conventional sociology and left the field.

The dissident faction regarded the senior faculty as the chief impediment to changing the focus of sociology at the university, and just before Commencement 1969, soon after the university administration urged departments to allow students a greater voice in decision-making, the sociology faculty voted to allow student representatives, both graduate and undergraduate, to participate as equals in shaping department policy. This decision enabled the new radicals to have a strong influence in the department's development over the next several years.

### **The Department Transformed**

In the fall of 1970, Albert Szymanski, a Marxist sociologist who had recently received his Ph.D. from Columbia University, joined the faculty. He brought with him the newly founded journal of radical sociology, *The Insurgent Sociologist*. Szymanski soon became one of the department's most productive members. Before long, other new radical faculty members were hired. Their presence, and the presence of *The Insurgent Sociologist*, contributed to the growing reputation of

the department as a center of Marxist sociology. Increasingly, applicants for the graduate program and for faculty positions were persons with a radical view of the field.

Although most of the department's conventional sociologists believed that American society had many faults, they lacked a coherent and convincing non-Marxist vision to counteract the rhetorical advantage the Marxists then enjoyed. They felt increasingly disempowered, disillusioned, and isolated. They resented the fact that most of the radicals downgraded their research as trivial and inconsequential. They were disheartened by the fact that the reputation the department had recently earned as a center of research and scholarship suffered grievously as time went on. It was now known both for its radical perspectives and its endless internal conflict.

The conventional sociologists were also embarrassed and embittered by the fact that nationally recognized sociologists were largely ignored when they visited campus unless they had a radical reputation. One professor who had received his Ph.D. at Oregon in the 1950s and had achieved an outstanding international reputation was virtually ostracized when he spent a sabbatical year on campus during the height of the radicals' influence. In his autobiography he complained about Oregon's "revolutionaries" who "confuse an ideology with bad manners and are pathetic excuses for scholars."

### **The Feminist Turn**

During these years perhaps the most significant permanent change in the sociology department was the increase in the number of women faculty and graduate students. By 1970, women had received only three of the many dozens of doctorates the department had awarded. The first female faculty member, Joan Acker, was not appointed until 1967. Very soon, however, the nationwide revival of the feminist movement resulted in an increasing interest in women's issues, with the result that in the early 1970s more women were added to the sociology faculty and in 1972 Acker organized what would become the Center for the Study of Women in Society. For some time, limited funding made it a center in name only, but within a decade it had become the beneficiary of an estate worth several million dollars. At the time it was received, the bequest was the largest single private donation ever made to the university. The reputation of the department as a center for the sociological study of women attracted many female students to the graduate program and resulted in a dramatic increase in the number of doctorates awarded to women.

### **A Changing Job Market**

The '70s were also years of diminished job prospects for students completing their Ph.D.s. During the '60s, as Baby Boomers swelled the enrollments of colleges and universities, jobs were plentiful for young Ph.D.s and starting salaries increased markedly every year. Institutions were so eager for new staff that even research universities hired graduate students who had neither published anything nor completed their doctorates. But by 1972, the supply of new Ph.D.s exceeded the demand, starting salaries stagnated, and universities became much more selective in hiring and in evaluating faculty for promotion and tenure. Moreover, public backlash against



campus radicalism had resulted in decreased financial support for higher education. Research grants were harder to get and less money was available to support graduate education. The economic stagnation that set in around 1973 prolonged this period of underfunding.

### **Toward a More Traditional Structure**

During the tumultuous '70s disagreement in the sociology department was especially intense over faculty hiring and how the graduate curriculum should be structured. Since these decisions were made collectively, much of the overt conflict centered around the "governance issue," i.e., who should have the right to vote in department meetings. Although the faculty itself had made the decision, during the campus unrest of 1969, to enfranchise both graduate and undergraduate representatives, many senior faculty members soon developed serious reservations about the new system. As one of them later put it, "They did not endorse the notion that their judgment on matters of departmental governance and policy should be considered equivalent to the judgment of a twenty year-old sophomore with little experience beyond two or three courses in sociology and a recent exposure to Marxist ideology." Students were aware of this sentiment and on several occasions tried to mobilize department opinion against any attempt to curtail student voting rights and representation on key departmental committees. From time to time they flooded department mailboxes with memos and manifestos, many of which mocked the senior faculty and denounced alleged plots to disfranchise the students. At one department meeting in the early '70s the Graduate Student Forum presented a motion of censure against the department head. As a result, he resigned the headship in anger and frustration and soon took a job at another institution. A year later, his successor also resigned, but enough of his colleagues rallied to his support to persuade him to complete his term. All in all, the '70s were stressful years for the department. Happily, the tensions rarely involved disagreements over recommendations for promotion and tenure, and they seldom involved personal vendettas.

Among the more contentious issues of the first half of the '70s was the structure of the graduate program. On several occasions in the previous decade the faculty had made important changes in degree requirements. Not long before students acquired voting rights in department meetings, the faculty abolished required core courses in basic subjects in favor of several "streams of activity" designed to integrate theory and methods and to allow students to pursue their own interests within very broad limits. Although the faculty member who designed this system was no radical, the new program appealed to the many students who were protesting against the excessive structuring of academic requirements. The program was beset with problems almost from the first. Class attendance dwindled, students postponed completion of projects, and it proved difficult to teach theory and statistics effectively while trying to weave them together in the same course. Although graduate students had numerous complaints about details of the new curriculum, they strongly supported its main features. By 1973, however, tradition-minded faculty were pressing for a return to a more structured program. The next year, after the university's provost issued a directive that only the faculty could make decisions on matters of curriculum and degree requirements, the faculty reviewed the entire graduate program and voted to institute a set of required and elective core courses in theory, methods of statistics, and a formal qualifying examination to be administered by a departmental committee. Soon afterwards

new academic progress requirements were adopted that made it difficult for students to remain in good standing without completing coursework and exams at a reasonable rate.

As the 1970s progressed, the strength and unity of the radical movement on campus waned. By 1973, the year Congress abolished the military draft, the UO campus was as quiet as it had been 10 years earlier, and the organization of sociology majors, which seemed so strong and militant in 1969, had become virtually moribund. Among sociology graduate students and junior faculty tensions had emerged between humanistic Marxists and Marxists who did statistical analyses, between radicals who advocated revolution and radicals who advocated incremental change, and between socialist feminists and feminists who doubted that socialism would completely solve the problem of gender inequality. But despite these conflicts, radical sentiment among faculty and graduate students remained robust.

The culminating confrontation in this long period of turmoil occurred in the spring of 1978, when a few faculty members who had earlier supported the new governance system but were not identified with the radical camp, formed a caucus with departmental traditionalists in blocking the appointment of another radical to the faculty. In the ensuing conflict the department head resigned and one of the caucus members entered the heated race to replace him. The caucus, dubbed the "gang of nine," was censored by the Graduate Student Forum and condemned in a full-page ad in the student newspaper that was signed by 41 of the 45 graduate students in residence. The faculty voted 9 to 8 for the caucus candidate, the dean appointed him as department head, and he went on to serve two full terms. In the process, the governance system was modified so that all major decisions were lodged again in the faculty. The radical faculty, perhaps weary themselves of repeated confrontations, made no serious effort to return to the former system. The GTFF, the officially recognized union of graduate teaching assistants, filed a formal grievance against their loss of effective voting power, but it was denied on appeal. Graduate student political activity within the department quickly subsided, perhaps in recognition that the department's reputation for strife and radicalism was adversely affecting their employment prospects in an already depressed market. In any event, by 1980, the department had entered a more tranquil era.

### **A Sociology Department for the 1990s**

This essay has been concerned with developments and trends in the Sociology Department at the University of Oregon from its beginning up through the 1970s. While a more detailed account of the important developments during the 1980s and later must await some future observer, it should be useful, as the centennial of sociology's appearance on campus approaches, to list what seem to be the major developments in the department during the eighties decade.

A major source of frustration during the 1980s was a continuation of the severe financial restrictions involving both state and federal funds. Unfortunately, the prospects for an improved financial picture are even more dismal as the department looks to the 1990s and beyond. However, despite the tight budget situation a number of developments that occurred during the 1980s must be viewed as positive.

One important trend during the first half of the 1980s was a further retrenchment in the number of faculty, the number of graduate students and the number of doctorates granted. During the 1960s forty-one Ph.D.s were granted by the department, a rate of activity that continued into the first half of the 70s decade: sixty-one degrees were granted during 1970-74 but the only twenty-five for 1975-79, a total of eight-six for the decade. This figure dropped almost by half to forty-eight for the 80s. This decline was inevitable given trends in graduate enrollment. Whereas twenty-five graduate students were admitted each year during the 1960s, only seventeen students were admitted each in 1976 and this figure further declined to six or seven for some years. It can be no surprise that only fourteen Ph.D.s were granted during the last half of the 1980s.

The number of undergraduate majors declined somewhat during the early 80s, from 176 in 1982 to 141 in 1985, but then increased steadily to 395 in 1990. Undergraduate enrollment in sociology classes has been high in recent years.

The size of the staff also dwindled during the first five years of the 1980s along with the decline in availability of state and federal funds. During the last five years of 1980s there was a slow growth in the number of faculty positions related to the UO's dual career-couple employment policy and joint or affiliated positions. By the end of the decade there were twenty faculty members (not counting a member who serves as the dean of the College of Arts and Sciences) representing 18.5 full-time positions.

Perhaps the most exciting single development during the 1980s was the emergence of the Center of the Study of Women in Society as an internationally recognized research and teaching center for the study of gender. In the early 1980s the department's small Center for the Sociological Study of Women was transformed and renamed as the result of the largest private bequest ever made to the University of Oregon. The Center for the Study of Women in Society involves faculty and students from several disciplines while adhering to the bequest's specific restriction that the money be used for teaching and research about the sociology of women.

The increasingly large number of women as faculty and students was to some extent a cause of the development of the Center for the Study of Women in Society but also perhaps, a consequence. This increase was so important that, in recent years, women students have come to outnumber men. Despite the even distribution by gender of the department's first doctorates (two) in 1954, out of forty-eight degrees granted in the 50s and 60s only three (6%) went to women. For the 70s the figure is 10 out of 86 or 12%. During the 1980s more than half of all Ph.D.s granted went to women: 26 out of 48 (54%). During the last five years of that decade eleven of fourteen doctorates (79%) were earned by women. While this latter figure can be seen as a sign of success for the drive to get more women involved in Sociology, it must also be perceived as a red flag warning about future problems if this trend is to continue at length.

In addition to an increase in women during the 1980s, the sociology department became increasingly diverse with increases in racial and ethnic minorities and in the number of students from overseas. The department was successful in getting minority students founded through the ASA's minority funding program and has an enviable reputation for producing quality women minority Ph.D.s and placing them, in academic positions.

After years of acrimony, during the 1980s there was a continuing move toward a more traditional departmental structure and governance system. Early in the decade some faculty protagonists moved away, retired, or died. Student protagonists finally completed their degrees. Temper cooled. Changes toward a more conventional graduate program and governance procedures were made as the majority of faculty came to agree that these changes were necessary.

As of 1990 the graduate student organization (the Graduate Students Forum) and the no-longer active undergraduate organization (the Sociology Student Union), as well as students eligible to teach classes, are each entitled to send three voting representatives to department meetings. In practice, however, the faculty has come to meet most often in faculty meetings. Department meetings are infrequent, the undergraduate organization has been inactive since the early 1980s and graduate student participation is nominal.

In 1984 an amazing event occurred. A new department head was elected unanimously without a single dissenting vote among the faculty or student representatives. Another indication of an improved social environment in the department are the weekly brownbag lunches, which are well attended and have continued over several years. Also suggestive is the change in *The Insurgent Sociologist's* title to *Critical Sociology*. Another indicator of improved working conditions is the generally high level of publication in recent years. Several faculty members have outstanding publication records, both in quality and quantity. Graduate students are more likely to publish before finishing their degrees.

While working conditions have become reasonably peaceful, the old cleavages remain like the unseen fault lines off the Pacific Coast. From time to time old antagonisms along the lines of the 1970s reappeared during the 1980s, usually over matters of promotion and tenure, graduate admissions, and sometimes governance, e.g., a dispute over the appointment of a new department head in 1989. Feelings of alienation continue for some.

In spite of financial restrictions certain aspects of the research and teaching program were strengthened during the 1980s decade—e.g. a new survey research center as well as a policy center are in the works for the social sciences. Furthermore, the department now offers one of the strongest programs in the nation in the study of gender, and graduate students are exposed to a broad and comprehensive coverage of sociological theory, especially Marxist theory, political economy, and sociology of gender. This theoretical emphasis is accompanied by a strong graduate methodology program whose methodological eclecticism provides students with strong doses of an array of methods and statistics.

Along with continuing concern for all minority and low-income students, the 1980s found a renewed interest in giving recognition to the department's best students. All majors had an

assigned faculty advisor and better students were encouraged to enroll in the honors program. The local chapter of the national sociology honorary, Alpha Kappa Delta, was revitalized.

Among the changes occurring in the sociology departments since the turn of the twentieth century none is more important or dramatic than the changes in technology available for doing research, teaching and clerical work. The changes in technology during the 1980s are perhaps the most dramatic of all. The introduction of quite different technologies for communication, data analysis and print reproduction are closely related to or even underlying other changes in the department. In 1983 a loan of fifteen PCs, printers and software was negotiated with IBM for use by sociology, economics and political science. In the mid-1980s the sociology department purchased computers on its own. In 1987 an \$18,000 workstation with all sorts of fancy software was funded for sociology. In 1988 the university provided matching funds for an outside grant in order to purchase two laptop computers which are now available to all faculty and graduate students for field research. In the late 1980s sociology cooperated with other departments to set up the Social Science Instructional Lab on the lower floor of Prince Lucien Campbell. This facility has about 36 microcomputers, pictures, and fancy software, with a staff and half-time director.

Also, in the 1980s, almost all faculty offices became "hardwired" to the mainframe computer so that many faculty now communicate with each other, as well as national and international colleagues, regularly by electronic mail. The secretaries in the sociology department were all provided with computers in the 1980s, and an up-to-date copy machine is available at cost for students and staff.

To put these changes in perspective one should turn back and read anew about the teaching, research and communication technologies available in the department in the 1940s and 50s.

*(to be continued)*

