

## Program Assessment Plan (revised--September 2005)

**Program Names:** Major in Psychology

**Department:** Psychology

**Assessment Year:** Fall 2005 - Spring 2006

**Plan Contributors:**

Psychology Assessment Committee:

- Doug Maynard, Chair
- Glenn Geher
- Melanie Hill

### **Step One: Who are you and how do you do what you do?**

#### *I.A. Mission Statement: (Who are you and what do you do?)*

The Department of Psychology is dedicated to understanding the complexity of the human mind and behavior. The Psychology faculty is comprised of scholars with expertise in diverse areas who are actively engaged in the discovery of new knowledge and its application, the education of undergraduate and graduate students, and serving the needs of the larger community. In fulfilling these objectives, the Psychology Department is guided by the following core values: developing a conceptual framework that encourages lifelong learning, promoting critical thinking about “popular” psychology as well as the scientific literature, encouraging the discovery of self-knowledge and understanding, and raising awareness about how gender, race, ethnicity, and class affect human behavior and perspectives.

Instruction in the methods and content of the field of psychology is provided within the Liberal Arts and Sciences tradition of encouraging intellectual and personal development. The curriculum offers a diversity of learning situations and includes many opportunities for writing. The undergraduate program prepares students for graduate study or entry-level employment. The graduate program is designed for those who intend to continue at the doctoral level, to gain employment in applied or scientific settings, or to obtain advanced training related to present employment. The Department is committed to the ongoing assessment of its programs.

Both undergraduate and graduate students are required to study research methods and statistics in order to comprehend the empirical nature of psychology. The ethical principles of the field are stressed, so that students come to value the dignity of the individual, the importance of promoting human welfare, and the maintenance of scientific, academic, and professional integrity. We focus the educational experience on information students can take with them and use for the rest of their lives. Critical to this is the development of transferable skills. To this end, we provide opportunities for students to collaborate with faculty on research and to engage in a variety of fieldwork experiences.

#### *I.B. Scope of your program(s): (What are the boundaries of your program?)*

The psychology major provides broad exposure to major areas of the discipline, but does not provide concentrated study in a specialized sub-discipline of psychology, whereas our two

concentrations (in psychobiology and industrial-organizational psychology) combine this broad exposure with a moderate degree of specialization in a particular sub-discipline. Our program offers fieldwork, independent studies, and other practical experiences, but does not provide intensive, comprehensive clinical or research training. Finally, the program is supported by faculty whose expertise represents most major sub-disciplines of psychology; however, not all areas of psychology are represented (e.g., forensic psychology, school psychology).

I.C. *What activities/processes contribute to the program(s)? (How do you do what you do?)*

Our undergraduate major, concentrations, and minors all include basic, foundation courses and choices of courses in several specialty areas. To provide students in the major with a strong background in psychology, our general major (which we recently revised to improve our students' academic experiences) includes a foundation of General Psychology, Psychological Statistics, and Research Methods, which provides an introduction both to the broad content that underlies our discipline and the scientific methods used to uncover knowledge about human behavior. Students are also required to take courses that represent the content-based areas of (a) *physiology, learning, and cognition*, (b) *personality and abnormal psychology*, (c) *social/developmental/history of psychology*, and (d) *applied psychology*. Finally, students take a seminar in psychology as a capstone experience and are exposed first-hand to research activities through at least 6 hours of 'experiential credit'. Our concentrations add to this structure via several discipline-specific course requirements (e.g., several biology courses for the psychobiology concentration).

We also explicitly encourage and support student participation in out-of-classroom activities, such as membership in one of our undergraduate psychology organizations (the Undergraduate Psychology Association and our chapter of Psi Chi, the National Honor Society in Psychology), both of which sponsor frequent research colloquia and career-related events. Further, we aim to foster research collaborations between faculty and students, primarily through student enrollment in independent study courses, research activities engaged in with faculty members, and support presentation of student research at campus and professional conferences.

## **Step Two: Where are you heading and what performances show your progress?**

II. A. *What are your priority goals for the next five years (5-8 total)?*

1. *What do you want graduates to know? Be able to do? To believe?*

We want graduates to:

- Have knowledge in the theory and content of psychology, research methodology and statistical analyses, scientific reasoning and critical thinking skills, applications of psychology, and values in psychology.
- Be able to utilize literature databases (e.g., PsycINFO) and write scientific research reports clearly and effectively in APA format.
- Be able to communicate effectively in interpersonal situations.
- Understand how sociocultural contexts affect human behavior.
- Be able to reflect on the meaning and value of their own personal experiences.
- Know how to engage in career planning and development in psychology.

2. *What goals do you have for your program? (e.g. out of class experiences, advising, curriculum, faculty development)*

To improve this program we wish to:

- Improve the diversity and representativeness of the courses that students complete for the psychology major.
- Ensure that students gain both discipline-specific and transferable skills and values (e.g., information literacy, communication skills).
- Increase the number of students who are actively involved in collaborative faculty-student research and present at professional conferences.
- Increase the availability of psychology-related events and experiences outside of the classroom (e.g., research colloquia and brown bags, guest speakers, and applied fieldwork and practicum experiences).
- Develop a sense of community and connectedness among students and faculty.
- Ensure that faculty and staff are available for students, and that departmental governance, advising, and committee work is equitably shared among faculty.
- Ensure that students receive appropriate and valuable academic and career guidance.

## II. B. *What is the performance you desire to gauge your progress?*

### 1. *Student Learning Performances (outcomes)*

- Students can compare and contrast different psychological theories and research methods, identify the major concepts that theorists employ in psychology to explain human behavior, critically evaluate the results of psychological research studies, and appreciate how sociocultural contexts affect human behavior.
- Students can utilize literature databases (e.g., PsycINFO)
- Students can write scientific research reports clearly and effectively.

### 2. *Program Performances*

- Faculty equitably share responsibilities for course coverage to provide a diverse range of courses that are offered regularly and representative of the field of psychology.
- Students have opportunities to gain practical experience (via fieldwork) and/or research experience (via collaborative research with faculty). Students who collaborate with faculty on research present this research at professional conferences.
- Students in the undergraduate program have numerous opportunities to participate in psychology-related events and experiences outside of their normal course work (e.g., research colloquia, guest speakers) that allow them to actively apply their knowledge and to engage with faculty and peers.
- Faculty and staff contribute equitably to advising and related departmental work in order to provide students with available, appropriate, and valuable academic and career guidance.
- Fully qualified graduate students are consistently able to find jobs in the field or are accepted in graduate schools of choice because of their documented abilities to engage in critical thinking and effective problem solving and communication through both their core coursework as well as independent studies and other academic experiences.

### Step Three: Describe your methodology

<b>II. B. 1 and 2</b> <i>Desired Performance (from previous step)</i>	<b>III. A.</b> <i>What aspects of the performance are critical to measure?</i>	<b>III. B.</b> <i>How (by what means) will you gather the data?</i>	<b>III. C.</b> <i>When will Assessment Begin?</i>	<b>III. C.</b> <i>Who is Responsible for What?</i>
<u>Student Performance #1.</u> Students can compare and contrast different psychological theories and research methods, identify the major concepts that theorists employ in psychology to explain human behavior, critically evaluate the results of psychological research studies, and appreciate how sociocultural contexts affect human behavior	a. Statistical and methodological knowledge	Random sample of student assignments from Seminar in Psychology and/or Psychological Research Methods	Spring 2007 (develop plan & rubric in Spring 2006)	80311 and 80498 Instructors
	b. Theory and content knowledge	Random sample of student assignments from Seminar in Psychology and/or Psychological Research Methods	Spring 2007 (develop plan & rubric in Spring 2006)	80311 and 80498 Instructors
<u>Student Performance #2.</u> Students can utilize literature databases (e.g., PsycINFO) and write scientific research reports clearly and effectively	a. High quality APA-style scientific paper	Random sample of student papers from Psychological Research Methods and/or Seminar in Psychology	Spring 2007 (develop plan & rubric in Spring 2006)	80311 and 80498 Instructors
<u>Student Performance #3.</u> Fully qualified graduate students are consistently able to find jobs in the field or are accepted in graduate schools of choice because of their documented abilities to engage in critical thinking and effective problem solving and communication through both their core coursework as well as independent studies and other academic experiences	a. Placement success (graduate school or employment)	- Online alumni survey	Fall 2006	Departmental Assessment Committee
	b. Value of coursework and other experiences in meeting career goals	- Online alumni survey	Fall 2006	Departmental Assessment Committee

<b>II. B. 1 and 2</b> <i>Desired Performance (from previous step)</i>	<b>III. A.</b> <i>What aspects of the performance are critical to measure?</i>	<b>III. B.</b> <i>How (by what means) will you gather the data?</i>	<b>III. C.</b> <i>When will Assessment Begin?</i>	<b>III. C.</b> <i>Who is Responsible for What?</i>
<p><u>Program Performance #1.</u> Faculty equitably share responsibilities for course coverage to provide a diverse range of courses that are offered regularly and representative of the field of psychology</p>	<p>a. Diverse and representative course offerings</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Online graduating senior survey</li> <li>- Schedules of classes</li> <li>- Curriculum Matrix</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Fall 2005</li> <li>- Spring 2006</li> <li>- Spring 2008</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Departmental Assessment Committee</li> <li>- Department Chair</li> <li>- Departmental Assessment Committee</li> </ul>
	<p>b. Equitable sharing of course coverage among faculty</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Schedules of classes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Spring 2006</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Department Chair</li> </ul>
<p><u>Program Performance #2.</u> Students have opportunities to gain practical experience (via fieldwork) and/or research experience (via collaborative research with faculty). Students who collaborate with faculty on research present this research at professional conferences</p>	<p>a. Availability and awareness of practical and research opportunities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Online graduating senior survey</li> <li>- Faculty Annual Reports (# of independ. studies)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Fall 2005</li> <li>- Spring 2006</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Departmental Assessment Committee</li> <li>- Department Chair</li> </ul>
	<p>b. Student presentation of research at conferences</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Online graduating senior survey</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Fall 2005</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Departmental Assessment Committee</li> </ul>

<b>II. B. 1 and 2</b> <i>Desired Performance (from previous step)</i>	<b>III. A.</b> <i>What aspects of the performance are critical to measure?</i>	<b>III. B.</b> <i>How (by what means) will you gather the data?</i>	<b>III. C.</b> <i>When will Assessment Begin?</i>	<b>III. C.</b> <i>Who is Responsible for What?</i>
<u>Program Performance #3.</u> Students in the undergraduate program have numerous opportunities to participate in psychology-related events and experiences outside of their normal course work (e.g., research colloquia, guest speakers) that allow them to actively apply their knowledge and to engage with faculty and peers	a. Regular offering of discipline-relevant experiences outside class	- Information requested from UPA - Psi Chi Annual Reports	- Fall 2006	- UPA & Psi Chi Advisors
	b. Participation in Undergraduate Psychology Association and Psi Chi	- Information requested from UPA - Psi Chi Annual Reports	- Fall 2006	- UPA & Psi Chi Advisors
	c. Attendance at psychology conferences	- Online graduating senior survey	- Fall 2005	- Departmental Assessment Committee
<u>Program Performance #4.</u> Faculty and staff contribute equitably to advising and related departmental work in order to provide students with available, appropriate, and valuable academic and career guidance	a. Availability and quality of departmental advising	- Online graduating senior survey	- Fall 2005	- Departmental Assessment Committee
	b. Availability and quality of departmental support services	- Online graduating senior survey - Evaluation of support services	- Fall 2005 - Fall 2007	Departmental Assessment Committee (both)

*D. What additional resources will you need to complete your plan?*

Our current secretarial support is not sufficient to properly assist with outcomes assessment initiatives. We will also some form of support (e.g., paid graduate student assistance, faculty release time) for the more time-intensive assessment activities, such as the collection and assessment of student research papers.

On a slightly different note, we expect that the results of these assessment activities will identify other areas of resource need for the department (e.g., faculty lines to increase diversity of course offerings, additional funding for student research activities and conference presentation).