Assessment Report


Program(s) Assessed: Psychology B.A., B.S., Minor

Assessment Coordinator: Martin P. Gooden, Ph.D.

I. Assessment measures employed

A. Learning objectives for both the Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) and Bachelor of Science (B.S.) degrees were assessed using the online survey tool, SurveyMonkey™. Psychology majors were asked to rate the degree to which the undergraduate curriculum provided opportunities to meet each learning objective. Links to the survey were emailed to seniors taking their second capstone course. Approximately 26 majors responded.

B. Program outcomes were also assessed measuring enrollment in post-graduate education, employment status, and the application of psychological knowledge to life experiences. Links to the survey were emailed to psychology graduates following graduation. Three graduates responded.

C. The degree to which students demonstrated select knowledge, skills, and abilities was assessed via paper and pencil surveys given to faculty. Evaluations for 64 B.S. students were obtained from faculty teaching a special topics research methods course, while 98 seniors were evaluated while completing their second capstone course.

D. The degree to which the curriculum provided psychology minors opportunities to gain knowledge of psychology and to apply that knowledge was assessed via surveys mailed to minors following graduation. No minors responded.

II. Assessment findings

A. Students earning either a B.A. or B.S. degree in psychology were asked to indicate how much (1 = not at all through 5 = very much) the curriculum provided opportunities to achieve each program learning objective (N=26).

Objective 1: Be familiar with current theory and research in diverse areas of psychology.
Response: Approximately 24% of the respondents answered 4 or 5 (M=3.33, SD=1.04) indicating they agreed the curriculum provided opportunities to accomplish this outcome. Mean comparisons from the previous year (2011-2012) reveal no change (M=3.30, SD=.98, N=46), t(69)=.12, p=.90 for this objective.
Outcome 2: Have fundamental research design and mathematical/statistical skills needed to understand psychological science.

Response: Approximately 24% of the respondents answered 4 or 5 ($M=3.75$, $SD=1.21$) indicating they agreed the curriculum provided opportunities to accomplish this outcome. Mean comparisons from 2011-2012 suggests no significant difference ($M=3.36$, $SD=.93$, $N=46$), $t(70)= 1.53$, $p=.13$.

Outcome 3: Have skills in integrating and communicating about knowledge in self-selected areas of psychology.

Response: Approximately 36% of the respondents answered 4 or 5 ($M=3.82$, $SD=1.08$) indicating they agreed the curriculum provided opportunities to accomplish this outcome. Mean ratings from 2011-2012 show no change ($M=3.63$, $SD=.99$, $N=46$), $t(70)= .76$, $p=.45$.

Outcome 4: Have skills in effective oral and written communication.

Response: Forty percent of the respondents answered 4 or 5 ($M=3.86$, $SD=1.12$) indicating they agreed the curriculum provided opportunities to accomplish this outcome. Comparisons to mean ratings from 2011-2012 showed a marginally significant increase ($M=3.33$, $SD= 1.05$, $N=46$), $t(69)= 1.98$, $p<.051$.

Outcome 5: (B.S. students only, $N=8$): Have advanced research design, mathematical/statistical, and computing skills needed to critically evaluate and conduct research in a self-selected area of interest.

Response: Fifty percent of respondents answered 4 or 5 ($M=3.63$, $SD=1.06$) indicating they agreed the curriculum provided opportunities to accomplish this outcome. Mean ratings from 2011-2012 reveal no change ($M=3.65$, $SD=.76$, $N=29$), $t(35)= -.03$, $p=.97$.

Suggestions for improvements

Over this past year, student reactions to Learning Outcomes 1 through 3, and 5 have remained virtually constant with the previous year. Reactions to Outcome #4 however evidence some improvement. Although only marginally significant, students who responded report that the undergraduate curriculum provided greater opportunities to improve their oral and written communication skills. Given the importance of effective communication as students prepare for jobs and careers, it is encouraging that students believe there are opportunities for them to develop this skill.
Table 1: Average Ratings of Curriculum Outcomes 2007-2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term/Year</th>
<th>Outcome #1</th>
<th>Outcome #2</th>
<th>Outcome #3</th>
<th>Outcome #4</th>
<th>Outcome #5 BS Only</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007-2008</td>
<td>4.44</td>
<td>4.22</td>
<td>4.45</td>
<td>4.48</td>
<td>4.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008-2009</td>
<td>4.22</td>
<td>4.08</td>
<td>4.36</td>
<td>4.28</td>
<td>4.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009-2010</td>
<td>4.41</td>
<td>4.29</td>
<td>4.56</td>
<td>4.53</td>
<td>3.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010-2011</td>
<td>4.06</td>
<td>4.03</td>
<td>4.36</td>
<td>4.19</td>
<td>3.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011-2012</td>
<td>3.30</td>
<td>3.36</td>
<td>3.63</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>3.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012-2013</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>3.82</td>
<td>3.86</td>
<td>3.63</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Enrollments Selecting B.A. vs. the B.S. Degree

As noted in previous assessments, the trend towards the BS degree appears to be continuing. An examination of the number of students enrolled within the major, and the distribution across the 2 degree-types (B.A. vs. B.S.) reveals a continual increase in the number of students pursuing the B.S. degree (see Table 2). This trend reverses however upon graduation as students are more likely to graduate with a BA compared with a BS degree (63% vs. 37%). Beyond the trends observed in the degree-type, enrollment figures appear to be on the increase. According to Fall 2013 figures, the number of students enrolled appears to be increasing from Fall 2012.

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term/Year</th>
<th>B.A.</th>
<th>B.A. Intent</th>
<th>B.A. Total</th>
<th>B.S.</th>
<th>B.S. Intent</th>
<th>B.S. Total</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>% of BA among total</th>
<th>% of BS among total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>F06</td>
<td>410</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>459</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>638</td>
<td>71.94%</td>
<td>28.06%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F07</td>
<td>329</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>359</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>303</td>
<td>662</td>
<td>54.23%</td>
<td>45.77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F08</td>
<td>279</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>328</td>
<td>234</td>
<td>183</td>
<td>417</td>
<td>745</td>
<td>44.03%</td>
<td>55.97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F09</td>
<td>259</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>303</td>
<td>299</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>459</td>
<td>762</td>
<td>39.76%</td>
<td>60.24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F10</td>
<td>309</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>384</td>
<td>327</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>479</td>
<td>863</td>
<td>44.50%</td>
<td>55.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F11</td>
<td>273</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>310</td>
<td>355</td>
<td>189</td>
<td>544</td>
<td>854</td>
<td>36.30%</td>
<td>63.70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F12</td>
<td>274</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>310</td>
<td>323</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>370</td>
<td>680</td>
<td>45.59%</td>
<td>54.41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F13</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>270</td>
<td>313</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>442</td>
<td>712</td>
<td>37.9%</td>
<td>62.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

B. Findings regarding B.A. and B.S. program outcomes based on the post-graduation survey.

Graduate School/Employment (N=3): Approximately 17% of students reported they are currently enrolled or have been admitted to a graduate or professional school or had received and accepted an employment offer.

Application of Knowledge (N=6): About 23% of respondents answered 4 or 5 ($M=3.44, SD=1.10$) indicating they agreed they have been able to apply their knowledge of psychology to the issues they have confronted in education,
employment, and interpersonal relations. A comparison of the mean ratings from 2011-2012 indicate no significant change ($M=2.92$, $SD=.90$, $N=7$, $t(11)=.93$, $p=.37$).

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C. Findings regarding learning outcomes based on faculty rating the degree ($1= not at all; 3= satisfactory; 5= excellent$) to which each student demonstrated specific knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSA) acquired in previous courses.

Faculty instructing advanced special topics methods courses rated B.S. students.

KSA 1: Be able to design a sound psychological study ($N=64$).
Response: Faculty rated 51.6% of the students as 4 or 5 indicating they had sufficiently met this objective ($M=4.07$, $SD=.69$). Comparisons to mean ratings from 2011-2012 showed a significant change ($M=3.76$, $SD=.78$, $N=94$), $t(158)=2.57$, $p<.01$, $d=.42$).

KSA 2: Be able to analyze data ($N=64$).
Response: Faculty rated 42.2% of the students as 4 or 5 indicating they had sufficiently met this objective ($M=4.03$, $SD=.79$). Comparisons to ratings from 2011-2012 showed no change ($M=3.57$, $SD=0.82$, $N=94$), $t(158)=3.53$, $p<.0001$, $d=.57$).

KSA 3: Ability to communicate findings effectively ($N=64$).
Response: Faculty rated 78.1% of the students as 4 or 5 indicating they had sufficiently met this objective ($M=4.01$, $SD=.64$). Comparisons to ratings from 2011-2012 also showed a significant change ($M=3.74$, $SD=0.82$, $N=94$), $t(158)=2.22$, $p<.027$, $d=.37$).

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Faculty instructing capstone courses across 2012-2013 rated 98 students taking their second capstone class.

KSA 1: Have knowledge of current theory and research in diverse areas of psychology.
Response: Faculty rated 33.6% of the students as 4 or 5 indicating they had sufficiently met this objective ($M=3.91$, $SD=0.68$). Comparisons to ratings from 2011-2012 showed significant change ($M=4.07$, $SD=0.61$, $N=94$), $t(190)=-1.71$, $p=.09$.

KSA 2: Fundamental skills in critically evaluating theoretical concepts, research design, and data analysis.
Response: Faculty rated 36.7% of the students as 4 or 5 indicating they had sufficiently met this objective ($M=3.93$, $SD=0.77$). Comparisons of mean ratings from 2011-2012 indicate no change, ($M=3.99$, $SD=0.67$, $N=94$), $t(190)=-.58$, $p=.57$.

KSA 3: Effective communication skills including skills for writing literature reviews and empirical research reports following the American Psychological Association Manual of Style, and skills for participating in seminars and making oral presentations following accepted standards for scientific conferences. **Response:** Faculty rated 66.3% of the students as 4 or 5 indicating they had sufficiently met this objective ($M=3.87$, $SD=0.80$). Comparisons to mean ratings from 2011-2012 indicate a significant change ($M=4.10$, $SD=.66$, $N=94$), $t(190)=-2.17$, $p=.03$, $d=.31$.

Suggestions for improvements

Over this past year, faculty evaluations of students in the special topics methods course showed significant improvements while ratings of students in the capstone courses remained unchanged or diminished. These findings may suggest better performance among BS degree-seeking students, as they alone are ones being evaluated in the special topics methods courses, whereas the capstone courses include all students. These findings may also indicate more effective instruction, greater student involvement, or both in the methods courses. Since the special topics methods courses are also writing intensive, it could be the case that the added workload is contributing to greater learning outcomes for BS students. An investigation would be needed to validate these assumptions.

D. Findings for the psychology minor.

Objectives: Graduates earning a minor in psychology were asked to indicate how much ($1 = \text{not at all}$ through $5 = \text{very much}$) the curriculum provided opportunities to be familiar with current theory and research in self-selected areas of psychology. They were also asked to indicate how much ($1 = \text{not at all}$ through $5 = \text{very much}$) they had been able to apply their knowledge of psychology to issues in education, employment, and interpersonal relations. Unfortunately, none of the minor students responded.

III. Program Changes

In August 2013, the Psychology Undergraduate Program (PUP) Office replaced Jennifer Papadakis with Sarah Cicora as a new academic advisor for the department. Jenny returned to the College of Science and Math Dean’s Office to assist as a liaison with local community colleges. Sarah Cicora brings new energy and skill to the PUP office. As a trained Clinical Mental Health Counselor, Sarah
also has experience teaching courses in psychology. Her expertise will add greater flexibility to the PUP Office staff both in terms of advising support as well as academic instruction. The PUP Office plans to expand the advising staff by hiring 1 academic advisor during Spring 2014.

IV. Development for 2013-2014 Assessment

Improving Student Response Rates
To address the low response rate, future assessments will re-introduce the paper survey and will administer the instrument to students in class towards the end of the semester. In order to ensure feedback from soon-to-be graduates, students will be informed during their final advising session (where approval for graduation is granted) that a survey will be sent to them after they graduate. An incentive will be offered in the hopes of increasing their individual response rate. Minor students will also be contacted via email and sent a paper survey, along with an incentive, to increase their compliance.

Measuring University Level Outcomes
Plans for next year’s assessment will continue to focus on and measure the following university level outcomes: (1) effective communication, and (2) applying the methods of scientific inquiry.

Central to the undergraduate program in psychology at Wright State are opportunities for students to develop skills in oral and written communication, and acquire knowledge of the applications of research methodology to behavioral phenomena. All students, both Bachelor of Art and Science must complete at least 4 integrative writing courses within the major, 2 of which also offer formal instruction on experimental and non-experimental design, hypothesis testing, data collection, and analysis. Together these skills and this knowledge will help to prepare students for the next phase of their lives, whether that involves employment or career opportunities, or additional education such as graduate or professional school.

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