

Program Assessment Report

Unit: Psychology

Program name: Undergraduate (BA)

Completed by: Albert F. Smith

July 7, 2009

Over the past several years, the Psychology Undergraduate Program Committee (UPC) has continued to development five well goals for student learning and skill development for CSU psychology majors. These goals were last reaffirmed by the faculty in a departmental retreat on August 2005. Below is a list of the goals, outcomes, findings, reviews, and actions that have been taken in past years and during the most recent year, and any improvements that have been observed.

Goal #1

Majors will develop a broad knowledge of the fundamental areas of psychology (as exemplified by the outline of a typical introductory psychology textbook).

Outcome measure #1: Majors will demonstrate knowledge of psychology by completing at least 36 credit hours of Psychology courses with grades of at least "C".

Research completed: Major requirements have been compared to those of other Ohio state supported universities.

Findings: Curriculum requirements have been found to be comparable to or slightly below those of most other Ohio state-supported universities.

Review: UPC has discussed findings and discussed increasing the number of credit hours for majors. However, since CSU psychology majors average 9.4 psychology courses taken at CSU and over half of the students transfer in some psychology coursework from other universities, the UPC has, in the past, decided not to increase the number of credit hours for majors.

Actions: Requirements have been retained.

Improvements: Not applicable

Future actions: The comparison of requirements to those of other Ohio state supported universities will be repeated. The UPC will reconsider whether credits earned in Introduction to Psychology should be among the 36 required for the major. The UPC will continue to consider developing a BS major.

Outcome measure #2: Majors will demonstrate knowledge in a wide variety of areas of psychology that form the traditional core taught at most universities.

Research completed: Comparisons of required and typical elective psychology courses taken by CSU students with items on Advanced GRE have been made.

Findings: Majority of GRE items are covered by required and elective courses taken by most majors.

Review: UPC and Department have discussed findings.

Actions: Major advisors are informed that students should be advised to take a wide variety of traditional psychology courses if applying to psychology graduate programs.

Improvements: A review of the textbooks used by different professors was undertaken, and part-time faculty who did not adhere to the aforementioned outcome were asked to change their curricula and related teaching materials.

Outcome measure #3: Graduating majors will demonstrate significantly greater knowledge of fundamental areas than students who have not taken psychology courses.

[] is used as the criterion to determine significant enhancement of knowledge or learning [that was included in the 2006 report].)

Research completed in 2005: Department exam has been administered to majors and to introductory psychology students.

Findings: Majors with > 9 CSU psychology courses demonstrated significantly more knowledge (Cohen's $d > 2$) in psychology than introductory students.

Review: UPC has discussed implications and Department has been informed of findings.

Actions: For further evidence that this goal has been achieved, beginning in Fall, 2005, the Psychology Department has required that majors take an Exit Evaluation, consisting of an objective examination covering essential psychological science, as a graduation requirement.

Improvements: For students who took the exit evaluation exam during various time periods, numbers of students and mean scores are shown the the following table:

Time period	Number of students	Mean Score
2005-2006	62	56%
2006-2007	173	52%
Spring 2008	62	55%
Spring 2009*	77	52%

*Data collected in Fall 2008 not yet available.

For students in each group, means are considerably above chance (20%).

Outcome measure #4: Students completing psychology courses will display significantly more knowledge/skills in area (Cohen's $d > 0.8$) than students starting the course.

Research completed: Between 2002 – 2004, most full time faculty who regularly taught undergraduate psychology courses conducted pre-test vs. post-test evaluations of students in their courses or compared performance of students completing course with that of students who have not taken the course.

Findings: All faculty reported significant improvement or higher levels of knowledge of the students in their courses.

Review: The UPC has discussed the findings and reported these to the department faculty.

Actions: After introducing the exit evaluation for all majors, we no longer asked all faculty to conduct pre-test/post-test evaluations or conduct comparisons of their students completing their courses with those students who have not..

Improvements: No additional data of this sort are available at present.

Goal # 2

Majors will acquire advanced knowledge in at least three core-areas of psychology ([A. Abnormal, Social, Personality] [B.Learning, Cognition, Perception, History][C.Biological Foundations of Behavior]).

Outcome measure #1: In at least one course in each of these core areas, a psychology major must demonstrate sufficient knowledge to earn a grade of at least C .

Research completed: Major requirements have been compared with other Ohio state-supported universities.

Findings: Curriculum requirements have been found to be comparable to state supported other universities.

Review: The UPC has discussed the findings.

Actions: Comparison to requirements of those of other institutions will be repeated.

Improvements: Not applicable.

Outcome measure #2: Graduating majors will demonstrate significantly greater (Cohen's $d > 0.8$) knowledge in a minimum of three core areas in psychology than students who have not completed major requirements.

Research completed: Department exam was administered to psychology majors and to introductory students in 2001-2002 and to 2002-2003 graduating classes.

Findings: Majors with more than 9 CSU psychology courses demonstrated significantly more knowledge (Cohen's $d > 1$) in all core areas than introductory students.

Review: Department was informed of findings and UPC discussed implications; gathering of

Actions: Beginning in Fall, 2005, all graduating psychology majors have been required to take an Exit Examination covering the core areas in psychology (those specifically covered in the Advanced GRE for psychology).

Improvements: Exit Evaluation exam was administered and the data were collected. Preliminary analyses established body of knowledge. Additional analysis showed a significant correlation between GPAs and the Exit exam test scores among those who wanted feedback ($r=.57$, $p<0.01$).

Goal #3

Majors will learn basic methodological and statistical procedures typically used in conducting psychological research.

Outcome measure #1: Majors must demonstrate sufficient knowledge of statistics and methodology to complete courses in Behavioral Science Statistics and Laboratory Procedures with grades of at least "C".

Research completed: Program requirements were compared with similar programs at other Ohio state-supported universities.

Findings: Requirements have been found to be comparable to those of other Ohio state-supported universities.

Review: The UPC discussed the findings.

Actions: Curriculum requirements were retained.

Improvements: Not applicable.

Outcome measure #2: Students completing statistics course will display significantly more knowledge/skills (Cohen's $d > 0.8$) in area than students starting the course.

Research completed: In Fall, 2005 all faculty teaching the statistics courses were asked to conduct pre-test vs. post-test evaluations of students in their statistics course.

Findings: Results from one section were obtained. Significant learning was evidenced.

Review: UPC has discussed findings.

Actions: Beginning in Fall, 2006, faculty teaching the statistics courses were asked to conduct pre-test vs. post-test evaluations of students in their statistics course.

Improvements: Instructors of PSY 311 have not provided pre-test/post-test evaluations of their students to the UPC. The UPC will discuss how to obtain better compliance with this request or will develop another approach in gathering data from students of individual courses

Outcome measure #3: Students completing statistics course will display significantly more (Cohen's $d > 0.8$) knowledge/skills in area than students who have not taken course.

Research completed: Department exam containing questions pertaining to statistics and methodology was administered to psychology majors and to introductory students in 2001-

2002. The Exit Exam containing questions pertaining to statistics and methodology has been administered to graduating psychology majors, who are required to complete statistics and methodology courses (PSY 311, PSY 412).

Findings: Students who have taken statistics course demonstrated significantly more knowledge (Cohen's $d > 2$) in statistics than introductory students. Students who have taken the most recent Exit Exam (and wanted to know their results) scored higher on statistics/methodology questions (66.7%) than students who have not taken PSY 311 or PSY 412 (39.3%) (Cohen's $d > 2$).

Review: UPC has discussed findings. Although graduating majors scored significantly higher than introductory students on statistics/methodology questions in the Exit Exam, the 66.7% scores suggest that greater expertise in this area is warranted.

Actions: In 2008, the UPC concluded that the current course, PSY 311, is inadequate for developing the statistical skills needed for undergraduate majors, as it attempts to cover too many important concepts in a single semester. The UPC recommended that the course be divided into two courses, a two-credit hour course covering descriptive statistics and a four-credit hour course covering inferential statistics. Neither this recommendation nor an alternate recommendation subsequently discussed by the department have yet been adopted. This matter will return to the Psychology Department agenda in Fall, 2009.

Improvements: NA

Goal # 4

Majors will learn how to write APA style conceptual and empirical research reports.

Outcome measure # 1: Majors must demonstrate sufficient knowledge of APA style to earn a grade of at least C on at least one empirical APA style report in PSY 412.

Research completed: Syllabi of all PSY 412 courses have been examined to insure that this is required.

Findings: All sections of PSY 412 were determined to meet this outcome.

Review: The UPC discussed the inadequacy of this requirement for determining proficiency in writing empirical research reports.

Action: A standard set of rubrics was developed in 2005 to assess the quality of empirical papers written in PSY 412.

Improvements: A more objective method of assessing the quality of the separate sections of empirical APA style reports was established.

Outcome measure #2: Majors will demonstrate proficiency in writing APA style conceptual and empirical reports.

Research completed: Representative student papers from psychology Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) courses and from PSY 412 were collected and were evaluated for quality

via standardized rubrics in 2001-2002. In the Spring, 2005, Fall, 2005, and Spring, 2006 semesters, all faculty teaching PSY 412 were asked to submit a random sample

Improvements: NA

Outcome measure #2: At least 90% of psychology students will be personally satisfied with their psychology coursework and will indicate that the faculty was successful in meeting the educational needs of students.

Research completed: The College of Science Student Evaluation of Instruction Questionnaire (SEIQ) is administered in each course. A simplified course and instructor evaluation form was also developed and filled out by student volunteers in 10 undergraduate courses both prior to the end of the Fall, 2004, semester and shortly after that semester ended. Starting in the Spring of 2006, graduating majors were also asked, as part of the Exit Evaluation, to complete a departmental survey that includes questions about satisfaction with coursework.

Findings: A departmental aggregate of SEIQ ratings for undergraduate psychology course instructors for AY 2006-07 indicated that over 60% of the instructors received ratings at or above the College of Science means. However, the evaluation scores in the SEI surveys have been

overall evaluation). course the higher the

The Exit Evaluation survey results indicated that: 1) 9.4% of the students were not satisfied with the program, and 72.2% were satisfied or very satisfied; 2) 6.6% of the students did not feel the faculty successfully met their needs, whereas 75.2% felt that faculty were successful to very successful in meeting their needs; and 3) 9.7% of the students would not recommend CSU for a psychology major to others, whereas 71.4% of students would recommend to highly recommend CSU for a psychology major. Satisfaction in the exit survey has been determined to be highly co

Because many psychology majors are transfer students, an analysis of most valuable courses as a function of course level was conducted. This analysis indicated that for 2006 and 2007, of the courses endorsed as most valuable, 58% and 54%, respectively, were 300-level courses. The 400 level courses were endorsed by 32% and 24%, respectively. Specific courses that were most valuable for 2006 included: PSY 412, 481, 487, 385, 349, and 311. The most valuable courses for 2007 included: PSY 412, 396, 372, 311, 342, and 385.

Data collected in 2008-2009 have not yet been tabulated or analyzed.

Review: Department has been informed of SEIQ results and UPC has discussed implications. Findings from the most recent Exit Evaluation survey have not yet been discussed by UPC.

Action: Exit survey results will continue to be analyzed. Although approximately three quarters of graduating majors report being personally satisfied with their psychology coursework and believe the faculty succeeded in helping students reach their educational goals, this is considerably below our goal of at least 90% satisfaction.

Improvements: NA

Outcome measure #3: At least 75% of psychology graduates will be satisfied that their educational experience in psychology provided them with tangible benefits.

Research completed: Surveys were sent to 2001-2002 grads asking their degree of satisfaction about their experience as a major. The Exit Evaluation survey also asks questions regarding their satisfaction with their psychology coursework at CSU.

Findings: Through 2008, 318 graduating majors completed the Exit Evaluation survey. Students completed an average of 9.4 of the psychology courses at CSU, with an average overall GPA of 3.25, and psychology GPA of 3.37. 22.2% of them applied for a psychology related job, and 19.5% of them applied to graduate level programs. 44.1% of those who applied for psychology related jobs were hired, and 60% of those who applied to graduate training programs were accepted. Only 15% of the students reported taking the GRE and only 12% reported their GRE scores, with mean scores of 553 for the quantitative test (38th percentile), 485 for the verbal test (56th percentile), and 648 for the subject test. Only 7.6% of the students reported the coursework at CSU was not challenging, 9.4% reported that they were not satisfied with their experiences in the psychology undergraduate program at CSU, 6.6% reported that the faculty did not satisfy their educational needs, and 9.7% would not recommend CSU for a psychology major to others. However, 72.2% reported being satisfied to extremely satisfied with their experience as a major.

Review: UPC has discussed implications of earlier survey results and Department faculty has been informed. The most recent Exit Evaluation results have not been discussed by UPC.

Action: The Exit Evaluation survey will continue in subsequent semesters, with analysis and review of results.

Improvements: To be determined