

Program Assessment: *Annual Report*

Program(s): Undergraduate Psychology B.S. Major

Department: Psychology

College/School: College of Arts & Sciences

Date: June 24, 2020

Primary Assessment Contact: Lisa Willoughby

1. Which program student learning outcomes were assessed in this annual assessment cycle?

The student learning outcomes assessed during 2019-2020 were:

SLO 1: Students will demonstrate their knowledge of psychology concepts, principles, and overarching themes that constitute the empirical knowledge base in the domains of memory and cognition, neuroscience, and research methodology.

SLO 2: Students will demonstrate their ability to apply psychological concepts, principles and skills to their capstone projects.

We received feedback from the assessment office team during the 2018/19 academic year and were not able to review and revise. This will be addressed during the 20/21 academic year if competing priorities do not exist.

2. What data/artifacts of student learning were collected for each assessed outcome? Were Madrid student artifacts included?

For SLO 1, we administered our Graduating Senior Exit Survey (indirect) in May 2020.

For SLO 2, (a) administered the Empirical Article Assessment to assess application in the domain of research methodology and (b) capstone project posters completed by students enrolled in our PSY 4960 and PSY 4967 capstone courses.

Madrid student artifacts are not included.

This was the first year we used our revised the Capstone Judges' ratings form to identify more detailed outcomes that could be used to identify specific activities to enhance in our curriculum. Revised judge ratings forms are attached.

3. How did you analyze the assessment data? What was the process? Who was involved?

NOTE: If you used rubrics as part of your analysis, please include them in an appendix.

For SLO 1, descriptive statistics were computed for self-report items on the survey we administered. A graduate student assistant entered and analyzed the data under the supervision of the Undergraduate Program Coordinator.

For SLO 2:

- The PSY 4960 instructor administered the Empirical Article Assessment (sample attached) to students enrolled in two sections of this capstone course and reported results to the Undergraduate Program Coordinator. Students read an empirical journal article provided

by the instructor and then respond in writing to 10 items (see attached). Scores range from 0 to 27. Minimum competence corresponds to scores from 7 to 13; Proficiency is defined as a score from 14 to 19; and Mastery corresponds to an overall score of 20 or higher.

- **For SLO 2**, for each capstone course, two judges (a faculty member and a graduate student) completed ratings of posters during our annual Psychology Capstone Symposium. Scores for judges' ratings for PSY 4960 and PSY 4967 were averaged to yield mean total poster ratings for each rating item.

4. What did you learn from the data? Summarize the major findings of your analysis for each assessed outcome.

NOTE: If necessary, include any tables, charts, or graphs in an appendix.

1. Graduating Senior Exit Survey: This survey has been administered each spring for more than a decade. However, this year we faced the COVID-19 pandemic and all on-campus student activities were shut down. This made connecting with our students more difficult than ever. As a result, we only had 16 graduating seniors (including both B.A. and B.S. majors) complete the survey. Seventeen items address students' perceptions of the extent to which psychology courses contributed to their knowledge, skills and personal development, and for which ratings were made from 1 (Not at all) to 5 (Very much). The mean rating for this section was **4.41**. Thus, students' satisfaction with their own learning was high. This result is similar to the ratings from Spring 2019 ($M = 4.3$).

An additional 15 items measure students' satisfaction with the psychology curriculum, also rated from 1 (Not at all) to 5 (Very much). The mean rating for this section was **4.30**, suggesting that students are generally satisfied. Average students' ratings for the "overall quality or caliber of instruction" they received was 4.56. This result also was slightly higher than in Spring 2019, but is representative of the overall trend since 2007. No average ratings fell below 4.00 in this section.

Additionally, 67% of respondents reported completing a psychology-related field practicum. Regarding research experiences, **67%** reported working as a research assistant in the department and **53%** reported earning course credit (PSY 3060, PSY 4010, PSY 4880) for designing and conducting their own research. Finally, **20%** of the respondents applied to graduate programs in psychology, of which **33%** were accepted, which is lower than in previous years. This may be due to COVID-related reductions in admissions and assistantship support. Furthermore, **47%** of graduating seniors applied to professional or graduate programs other than psychology, with **71%** of those students reporting acceptance. This is the second year we are tracking plans to take "gap" years. Over half (**56%**) reported they plan on taking a gap year with **44%** of those students indicating they will pursue a graduate psychology degree. This is similar to trends from previous years.

2. Empirical Article Assessment (SLO2): A total of 36 students completed this assessment. The mean total score was 18.89 (70% average correct). Therefore, as a group, students demonstrated Proficiency of research methodology as assessed by this measure. Although this outcome is acceptable, it is noticeably lower than in past years and is likely due to the COVID impact. Students in PSY4960 were unable to complete their coursework, in full, with their own data collection (and thus data analysis and presentation experiences) adversely impacted.

3. Capstone Judges' Ratings: Due to COVID, we held a virtual capstone symposium and, in the interest of protecting students' privacy concerns, students were given the option to participate in the judging portion of the event. Although all capstone symposium students submitted a static poster representing their project, only students who provided an audio-visual oral presentation of their projects were included in the judging portion. Each eligible 13 posters (12 of 12 for PSY4960 and 1 of 2 for PSY4967) were evaluated by a team of judges comprised of one faculty member

and two graduate students (one team per capstone course). Although one item (C4) specifically addressed **SLO2** and 1 out of the 6 of the capstone projects exceeded the minimum standards (achieved and average score of 6 or higher), no project received an average score less than 4.0. Overall, judge ratings were lower than in past years, with over half of the projects impaired from no or limited data collection due to the abrupt halt of on-campus activities, including human subjects research in the Spring sections of these courses. The additional impact of COVID on students' lives and the abrupt shift in the symposium format (in-person dynamic presentation to virtual static presentation) also likely contributed to the lower judge ratings.

5. How did your analysis inform meaningful change? How did you *use the analyzed data to make or implement recommendations for change* in pedagogy, curriculum design, or your assessment plan?

The analysis and results this year were impaired by COVID. However, what remains clear is that our assessment approach will need to be reviewed for the possibility that this academic year may result in restricted campus access. The UG Program Coordinator will share the AY 2019-2020 results with the Undergraduate Program Committee and the department. Dialogue at that time will yield recommendations for changes deemed warranted.

6. Did you follow up (“close the loop”) on past assessment work? If so, what did you learn? (*For example, has that curriculum change you made two years ago manifested in improved student learning today, as evidenced in your recent assessment data and analysis?*)

During the Fall 2019 semester, the UG Program Coordinator shared the previous year's results. There was concern raised about the relatively lower student satisfaction in the career mentoring questions from the Senior Exit Survey in the previous years, and thus we included sessions hosted by the Career Services, sessions for more advanced students, and sessions likely relevant to students not interested in professional psychology. We are in the process of reviewing attendee reactions. Additionally, we have continued to develop accessible resources to all Psychology majors (and minors) about exploring Psychology in our semester newsletter and on the program Google site.

We are working toward a full curriculum review to ensure that we are meeting our stated goals in the areas of diversity and science training. If time permits, we will be working toward developing career-specific major roadmaps to help students with specific career interests select coursework likely to optimize support of their career interests.

We are likely facing some critical challenges with COVID and social distancing practices. Preparing faculty and program administration to address student needs due to increased distance learning, remote engagement, and more will require a high-level of attention.

IMPORTANT: Please submit any revised/updated assessment plans to the University Assessment Coordinator along with this report.