

Detailed Assessment Report
As of: 10/05/2012 09:19 AM EST
2011-2012 Psychology BA/BS*

Psychology is the study of human behavior, and application of that knowledge for the betterment of humankind. Accordingly, students learn to think like scientists within a broad-based liberal arts tradition. Throughout the program, students develop effective communication skills and demonstrate technological competence. Graduates are prepared for a wide range of career opportunities, as well as advanced degrees in psychology, law, and business

Student Learning Outcomes/Objectives, with Any Associations and Related Measures, Targets, Findings, and Action Plans

SLO 1: Knowledge Base of Psychology

Students will demonstrate familiarity with the major concepts, theoretical perspectives, and empirical findings in psychology.

Related Measures:

M 1: Capstone Research Paper - PSY 418

Capstone students (PSY 418) will write an integrative research paper highlighting their knowledge of major psychological theories and critical research within a historical context.

Source of Evidence: Academic direct measure of learning - other

Target:

70% of students will score 3 and above (out of 5) on a holistic rubric.

Findings (2011-2012) - Target: Met

Hattiesburg Campus: 79.63% of Capstone students (86 of 108) scored 3 and higher on a standard holistic rubric. Gulf Coast Campus: 75.0% of Capstone students (15 of 20) scored 3 and higher on a standard holistic rubric.

M 2: Competency Exit Exam

As part of the senior sequence, students will take a locally developed competency test designed to assess all pertinent domains in the program. Questions consist of varying difficulty levels- average, above average, and excellent.

Target:

70% of students taking the test will score 70% and above on the exit exam.

Findings (2011-2012) - Target: Partially Met

Hattiesburg Campus: 71.30% of Capstone students (77 of 108) scored 70% and higher on a standard exit exam. Gulf Coast Campus: 45.00% of Capstone students (9 of 20) scored 70% and higher on a standard exit exam.

Related Action Plans (by Established cycle, then alpha):

For full information, see the *Details of Action Plans* section of this report.

Knowledge Base

Established in Cycle: 2011-2012

The undergraduate coordinator will begin the task of 1) ensuring better coordination between GC and Hattiesburg campus, 2) consi...

M 11: Senior Survey - Courses and Content

Capstone students respond to a Senior Survey that measures degree of agreement with statements regarding each of the department's objectives.

Source of Evidence: Academic indirect indicator of learning - other

Target:

70% of students responding will indicate that they agree "strongly" or "somewhat" that there is adequate emphasis in each of the required content areas.

70% of students will indicate they agree "strongly" or "somewhat" that there is adequate quality of instruction in each of the required content areas.

Findings (2011-2012) - Target: Met

Hattiesburg campus: 93.00% of Capstone students (N=57 reporting); Gulf Coast campus: 75.00% of Capstone students (N=20 reporting) agreed that there was adequate **emphasis** on the major concepts, theoretical perspectives, empirical findings, and historical trends in psychology in their courses.

Hattiesburg campus: 87.70% of Capstone students(N=57 reporting); Gulf Coast campus: 90.00% of Capstone students (N=20 reporting) agreed that they were satisfied with the **quality** of the course offerings and the comprehensive coverage of the field of psychology.

Related Action Plans (by Established cycle, then alpha):

For full information, see the *Details of Action Plans* section of this report.

Response to low survey numbers

Established in Cycle: 2010-2011

Our survey response rates remain low for senior capstone students and alumni. The surveys are a critical component of our self-a...

M 23:Alumni Survey - Quality of Courses

Alumni respond to an Alumni Survey to measure degree of agreement with statements regarding each of the department's objectives.

Source of Evidence: Alumni survey or tracking of alumni achievements

Target:

70% will indicate they "strongly" or "somewhat strongly" endorse the quality of courses on a 7-point scale.

70% of alumni responding will indicate that they agree "strongly" or "somewhat" that there was adequate emphasis in each of the required content areas.

Findings (2011-2012) - Target: Met

Hattiesburg Campus:

Hattiesburg Campus: 90.0% of alumni (9 of 10 reporting) from both campuses, agreed that there had been adequate emphasis on the major concepts, theoretical perspectives, empirical findings, and historical trends in psychology in their courses when they attended USM.

Hattiesburg Campus: 90.0% of alumni (9 of 10 reporting) from campuses, reported being satisfied with the quality of the course offerings and the comprehensive coverage of the field of psychology when they attended USM.

Gulf Coast Campus:

Gulf Coast Campus: 100.0% of alumni (4 of 4 reporting) from both campuses, agreed that there had been adequate emphasis on the major concepts, theoretical perspectives, empirical findings, and historical trends in psychology in their courses when they attended USM.

Gulf Coast Campus: 100.0% of alumni (4 of 4 reporting) from campuses, reported being satisfied

with the quality of the course offerings and the comprehensive coverage of the field of psychology when they attended USM.

Related Action Plans (by Established cycle, then alpha):

For full information, see the *Details of Action Plans* section of this report.

Response to low survey numbers

Established in Cycle: 2010-2011

Our survey response rates remain low for senior capstone students and alumni. The surveys are a critical component of our self-a...

SLO 2: Research Methods in Psychology

Students will understand and apply basic research methods, including research design, data analysis, and interpretation

Related Measures:

M 3: Course Tests - Research Methods (PSY 361)

Course instructors construct tests that measure knowledge of research concepts and ability to apply that knowledge.

Source of Evidence: Academic direct measure of learning - other

Target:

70% of students in PSY 361 will receive a 70% or higher on course tests which measure their understanding of research methods in psychology.

Findings (2011-2012) - Target: Met

Hattiesburg Campus: 83.92% of students (120 of 143) scored 70% and higher on course tests on research methods. Gulf Coast Campus: 94.12% of students (32 of 34) scored 70% and higher on course tests on research methods.

M 4: Research Project - PSY 361

Students in the department's Writing Intensive class (PSY 361) will write an empirical research paper. Some course sections may write multiple papers; other sections write a longer paper with multiple drafts. Papers will be evaluated for structure, content, and attention to APA style using a five stage holistic rubric.

Source of Evidence: Academic direct measure of learning - other

Target:

70% of students will receive a 3 and above (out of 5) on a standard holistic rubric.

Findings (2011-2012) - Target: Met

Hattiesburg Campus: 86.01% of students (123 of 143) scored 3 and above on a standard holistic rubric. Gulf Coast Campus: 94.12% of students (32 of 34) scored 3 and above on a standard holistic rubric.

M 12: Senior Survey - Research Methods

Capstone students respond to a Senior Survey that measures degree of agreement with statements regarding each of the department's objectives.

Source of Evidence: Academic indirect indicator of learning - other

Target:

70% of students will indicate they agree "strongly" or "somewhat" that there was adequate emphasis on research methods.

70% of students will "strongly" or "somewhat strongly" endorse the quality of coverage with regard to research methods.

Findings (2011-2012) - Target: Met

Hattiesburg campus: 80.70% of Capstone students (N=57 reporting); Gulf Coast campus: 85.00% of Capstone students (N=20 reporting) agreed that there was adequate emphasis on research methods, including research design, statistics, data analysis, results interpretation, and scientific reporting.

Hattiesburg campus: 82.50% of Capstone students (N=57 reporting); Gulf Coast: 80.00% of Capstone students (N=20 reporting) agreed that they were satisfied with the quality of instruction in research methods in psychology.

Related Action Plans (by Established cycle, then alpha):

For full information, see the *Details of Action Plans* section of this report.

Response to low survey numbers

Established in Cycle: 2010-2011

Our survey response rates remain low for senior capstone students and alumni. The surveys are a critical component of our self-a...

M 21:Alumni Survey - Research Methods

Alumni respond to an Alumni Survey to measure degree of agreement with statements regarding each of the department's objectives.

Source of Evidence: Alumni survey or tracking of alumni achievements

Target:

70% of the respondents will agree "strongly" or "somewhat" that there was adequate emphasis on research methods.

70% of alumni will agree "strongly" or "somewhat" that the quality of coverage of research methods is adequate.

Findings (2011-2012) - Target: Partially Met

Hattiesburg Campus Alumni:

60.0% of Alumni (6 of 10) agreed that there was adequate emphasis on research methods in psychology in their courses.

80.0% of Alumni (8 of 10) reported being satisfied with the quality of instruction on research methods in psychology in their courses.

Gulf Coast Campus:

100.0% of Alumni (3 of 3) agreed that there was adequate emphasis on research methods in psychology in their courses.

100.0% of Alumni (4 of 4) reported being satisfied with the quality of instruction on research methods in psychology in their courses.

Related Action Plans (by Established cycle, then alpha):

For full information, see the *Details of Action Plans* section of this report.

Response to alumni rating of research emphasis as deficient.

Established in Cycle: 2010-2011

Our numbers for Research Methods quality and emphasis have improved since last academic year. The remaining deficient finding is...

Response to low survey numbers

Established in Cycle: 2010-2011

Our survey response rates remain low for senior capstone students and alumni. The surveys are a critical component of our self-a...

SLO 3:Critical Thinking Skills in Psychology

Students will use critical thinking, and, when possible, the scientific approach to solve problems.

Related Measures:

M 5:Critical Thinking Assignment - PSY 361

Given a research article or scenario, students will be able to identify flaws in research and suggest changes in design.

Source of Evidence: Academic direct measure of learning - other

Target:

70% of students in PSY 361 will competently identify flaws in research and propose alternatives as demonstrated by earning satisfactory or better on a standard holistic rubric.

Findings (2011-2012) - Target: Met

Hattiesburg Campus: 83.22% of students (119 of 143) competently identified flaws in research by earning 3 and above on a standard holistic rubric. Gulf Coast Campus: 94.12% of students (32 of 34) competently identified flaws in research by earning 3 and above on a standard holistic rubric.

M 6:Critical Thinking Assignment - PSY 418

Capstone students are presented with assignments requiring them to apply their knowledge to new situations.

Source of Evidence: Academic direct measure of learning - other

Target:

70% of students will successfully apply their knowledge to new situations as demonstrated by earning satisfactory or better on a standard holistic rubric.

Findings (2011-2012) - Target: Partially Met

Hattiesburg Campus: 76.85% of students (83 of 108) successfully applied their knowledge to new situations by earning 3 and above on a standard holistic rubric. Gulf Coast Campus: 65.00% of students (13 of 20) successfully applied their knowledge to new situations by earning 3 and above on a standard holistic rubric.

Related Action Plans (by Established cycle, then alpha):

For full information, see the *Details of Action Plans* section of this report.

Critical Thinking Improvements

Established in Cycle: 2011-2012

Better coordination with the Gulf Coast campus in terms of curricular expectations, consistency of teaching faculty and similari...

M 14:Senior Survey - Critical Thinking Coverage

Capstone students respond to a Senior Survey that measures degree of agreement with statements regarding each of the department's objectives.

Source of Evidence: Academic indirect indicator of learning - other

Target:

70% of students will indicate they agree "strongly" or "somewhat" that the current level of emphasis, with regard to critical thinking skills, is adequate.

70% of students will indicate they agree "strongly" or "somewhat" that the current level of quality of training, with regard to critical thinking skills, is adequate.

Findings (2011-2012) - Target: Partially Met

Hattiesburg campus: 78.90% of Capstone students (N=57 reporting); Gulf Coast: 55.00% of Capstone Students (N=20 reporting) agreed that there was adequate emphasis on training in critical thinking skills.

Hattiesburg campus: 82.50% of Capstone students (N=57 reporting); Gulf Coast: 75.00% of Capstone students (N=20 reporting) agreed that they were satisfied with the quality of training in critical thinking skills in psychology.

Related Action Plans (by Established cycle, then alpha):

For full information, see the *Details of Action Plans* section of this report.

Response to low survey numbers

Established in Cycle: 2010-2011

Our survey response rates remain low for senior capstone students and alumni. The surveys are a critical component of our self-a...

M 28:Alumni Survey - Critical Thinking Coverage

Alumni respond to an Alumni Survey to measure degree of agreement with statements regarding each of the department's objectives.

Source of Evidence: Alumni survey or tracking of alumni achievements

Target:

70% of the respondents will agree "strongly" or "somewhat" that the level of emphasis, with regard to critical thinking skills, was adequate.

70% of alumni will agree "strongly" or "somewhat" that the quality of courses, with regard to critical thinking skills, was adequate.

Findings (2011-2012) - Target: Met

Hattiesburg Campus:

Hattiesburg Campus: 77.78% of alumni (7 of 9 reporting) agreed that there had been adequate emphasis on training in critical thinking skills.

Hattiesburg Campus: 77.78% of alumni (7 of 9 reporting) reported being satisfied with the quality of training in critical thinking skills in psychology.

Gulf Coast Campus:

Gulf Coast Campus: 100.0% of alumni (4 of 4 reporting) agreed that there had been adequate emphasis on training in critical thinking skills.

Gulf Coast Campus: 100.0% of alumni (4 of 4 reporting) reported being satisfied with the quality of training in critical thinking skills in psychology.

Related Action Plans (by Established cycle, then alpha):

For full information, see the *Details of Action Plans* section of this report.

Response to low survey numbers

Established in Cycle: 2010-2011

Our survey response rates remain low for senior capstone students and alumni. The surveys are a critical component of our self-a...

SLO 4:Career Planning and Development

Students will emerge from the major with well-developed plans for career or postgraduate education after graduation.

Related Measures:

M 7:Career Assignments - PSY 418

Career assignments in PSY 418 will be evaluated for knowledge of options, specific plans, realistic self-assessment.

Source of Evidence: Academic direct measure of learning - other

Target:

70% of students in PSY 418 will receive satisfactory or higher on a standard holistic rubric with regard to the student's demonstration of their career plans. Career assignments will be evaluated for knowledge of options, specific plans, realistic self-assessment .

Findings (2011-2012) - Target: Met

Hattiesburg Campus: 86.11% of students (93 of 108) received a score of 3 and above on the standard rubric for career plans. Gulf Coast Campus: 95.00% of students (19 of 20) received a score of 3 and above on the standard rubric for career plans.

M 18:Senior Survey - Career Plans

Capstone students respond to a Senior Survey that measures degree of agreement with statements regarding each of the department's objectives.

Source of Evidence: Academic indirect indicator of learning - other

Target:

70% of students will indicate they agree "strongly" or "somewhat" that the current level of emphasis, with regard to career planning and development, is adequate.

70% of students will indicate they agree "strongly" or "somewhat" that the current level of quality of training, with regard to career planning and development, is adequate.

Findings (2011-2012) - Target: Partially Met

Hattiesburg campus: 68.40% of Capstone students (N=57 reporting); Gulf Coast campus: 75.00% of Capstone students (N=20 reporting) agreed that there was adequate emphasis with regard to career planning and development.

Hattiesburg campus: 71.90% of Capstone students (N=57 reporting); Gulf Coast campus: 80.00% of Capstone students (N=20 reporting) agreed that they were satisfied with the quality of training in career development in psychology. (Cannot split data by campus, data were not identified by campus when collected.)

Related Action Plans (by Established cycle, then alpha):

For full information, see the *Details of Action Plans* section of this report.

Student & Alumni ratings of career development emphasis & quality below target.

Established in Cycle: 2009-2010

The trend regarding career planning is undeniably clear. We continue to have students and alumni report that career planning and...

Response to alumni and senior student ratings of career training as deficient

Established in Cycle: 2010-2011

Our Career Development numbers on the student and alumni surveys continue to be low for emphasis and quality. The plans for reme...

Response to low survey numbers

Established in Cycle: 2010-2011

Our survey response rates remain low for senior capstone students and alumni. The surveys are a critical component of our self-a...

M 27:Alumni Survey-Career Plans

Alumni respond to an Alumni Survey to measure degree of agreement with statements regarding each of the department's objectives.

Source of Evidence: Alumni survey or tracking of alumni achievements

Target:

70% of the respondents will agree "strongly" or "somewhat" that the level of emphasis, with regard to career planning, was adequate.

70% of alumni will agree "strongly" or "somewhat" that the quality of training, with regard to career planning, was adequate.

Findings (2011-2012) - Target: Not Met

Hattiesburg Campus:

Hattiesburg Campus: 44.4% of alumni (4 of 9 reporting) agreed that there had been adequate emphasis with regard to career planning and development.

Hattiesburg Campus: 44.4% of alumni (4 of 9 reporting) reported being satisfied with the quality of training with regard to career development in psychology.

Gulf Coast Campus:

Gulf Coast Campus: 50.0% of alumni (2 of 4 reporting) agreed that there had been adequate emphasis with regard to career planning and development.

Gulf Coats Campus: 50.0% of alumni (2 of 4 reporting) reported being satisfied with the quality of training with regard to career development in psychology.

Related Action Plans (by Established cycle, then alpha):

For full information, see the *Details of Action Plans* section of this report.

Student & Alumni ratings of career development emphasis & quality below target.

Established in Cycle: 2009-2010

The trend regarding career planning is undeniably clear. We continue to have students and alumni report that career planning and...

Response to alumni and senior student ratings of career training as deficient

Established in Cycle: 2010-2011

Our Career Development numbers on the student and alumni surveys continue to be low for emphasis and quality. The plans for reme...

Response to low survey numbers

Established in Cycle: 2010-2011

Our survey response rates remain low for senior capstone students and alumni. The surveys are a critical component of our self-a...

SLO 5:Communication Skills

Students will be able to communicate effectively in a variety of formats.

Relevant Associations:

This outcome is consistent with the guidelines of the American Psychological Association and will replace "Historical Trends".

Related Measures:

M 8:PSY 361 Writing Assignment: Composition

Students in the department's Writing Intensive class (PSY 361) will write an empirical research paper. Some course sections may write multiple papers; other sections write a longer paper with multiple drafts.

Source of Evidence: Academic direct measure of learning - other

Target:

70% of students will write a research report in an organized, logical, and coherent manner as demonstrated by earning a 3 and above(out of 5) on a holistic rubric.

Findings (2011-2012) - Target: Met

Hattiesburg Campus: 87.41% of students (125 of 143) wrote a research report in an organized, logical, and coherent manner demonstrated by earning 3 and above on a standard holistic rubric. Gulf Coast Campus: 94.12% of students (32 of 34) wrote a research report in an organized, logical, and coherent manner demonstrated by earning 3 and above on a standard holistic rubric.

M 9:Capstone Writing Assignment: Composition

Students in the department Capstone class (PSY 418) write 5000 words outside of class. Some sections write multiple papers while other sections write a longer paper with multiple drafts.

Source of Evidence: Academic direct measure of learning - other

Target:

70% of Capstone students will demonstrate the ability to write in an organized, logical, and coherent manner as measured by earning satisfactory or better on a standard holistic rubric.

Findings (2011-2012) - Target: Met

Hattiesburg Campus: 81.48% of Capstone students (88 of 108) wrote a research paper in an organized, logical, and coherent manner measured by earning a score of 3 and above on a standard holistic rubric. Gulf Coast Campus: 80.00% of Capstone students (16 of 20) wrote a research paper in an organized, logical, and coherent manner measured by earning a score of 3 and above on a standard holistic rubric.

M 10:Capstone Oral Presentation

Capstone students will focus and develop an idea in their final oral presentation.

Source of Evidence: Academic direct measure of learning - other

Target:

70% of Capstone students will successfully focus and develop an idea in their final oral presentation as demonstrated by earning 14/20 points or better on a standard analytic rubric.

Findings (2011-2012) - Target: Met

Hattiesburg Campus: 86.11% of Capstone students (93 of 108) successfully developed an idea in the final oral presentation by earning 14/20 and higher on a standard analytic rubric. Gulf Coast Campus: 90.00% of Capstone students (18 of 20) successfully developed an idea in the final oral presentation by earning 14/20 and higher on a standard analytic rubric.

M 16: Senior Survey- Communication Coverage

Capstone students respond to a Senior Survey that measures degree of agreement with statements regarding each of the department's objectives.

Source of Evidence: Academic indirect indicator of learning - other

Target:

70% of students will indicate they agree "strongly" or "somewhat" that the current level of emphasis, with regard to communication skills, is adequate.

70% of students will indicate they agree "strongly" or "somewhat" that the current quality of instruction, with regard to communication skills, is adequate.

Findings (2011-2012) - Target: Met

Hattiesburg campus: 75.40%% of Capstone students (N=57 reporting); Gulf Coast campus: 90.00% of Capstone students (N=20 reporting) agreed that there was adequate emphasis on coverage of development of communication skills, including description and explanation of procedures, results, and interpretations.

Hattiesburg campus: 80.70% of Capstone students (N=57 reporting); Gulf Coast campus: 85.00% of Capstone students (N=20 reporting) agreed that they were satisfied with the quality of training in communication skills in psychology.

Related Action Plans (by Established cycle, then alpha):

For full information, see the *Details of Action Plans* section of this report.

Response to low survey numbers

Established in Cycle: 2010-2011

Our survey response rates remain low for senior capstone students and alumni. The surveys are a critical component of our self-a...

M 25:Alumni Survey-Communication Coverage

Alumni respond to an Alumni Survey to measure degree of agreement with statements regarding each of the department's objectives.

Source of Evidence: Alumni survey or tracking of alumni achievements

Target:

70% of the respondents will agree "strongly" or "somewhat" that the level of emphasis, with regard to communication skills, was adequate.

70% of alumni will agree "strongly" or "somewhat" that the quality of instruction, with regard to communication skills, was adequate.

Findings (2011-2012) - Target: Partially Met

Hattiesburg Campus:

Hattiesburg Campus: 66.7% of alumni (6 of 9 reporting) agreed that there had been adequate emphasis on coverage of development of communication skills, including description and explanation of procedures, results, and interpretations. Hattiesburg Campus: 66.7% of alumni (6 of 9 reporting) reported being satisfied with the quality of training in communication skills in psychology.

Gulf Coast Campus:

Gulf Coast Campus: 75.0% of alumni (3 of 4 reporting) agreed that there had been adequate emphasis on coverage of development of communication skills, including description and explanation of procedures, results, and interpretations.

Gulf Coast Campus: 100.0% of alumni (4 of 4 reporting) reported being satisfied with the quality of training in communication skills in psychology.

Related Action Plans (by Established cycle, then alpha):

For full information, see the *Details of Action Plans* section of this report.

Response to low survey numbers

Established in Cycle: 2010-2011

Our survey response rates remain low for senior capstone students and alumni. The surveys are a critical component of our self-a...

Details of Action Plans for This Cycle (by Established cycle, then alpha)

Student & Alumni ratings of career development emphasis & quality below target.

The trend regarding career planning is undeniably clear. We continue to have students and alumni report that career planning and guidance are lacking. Although Psychology is a very popular undergraduate major, many undergraduates pursue a BA or BS in psychology without a clear idea of how the degree will translate to a career choice, short of pursuing graduate education. There are several ways to address this problem. We can develop and maintain a "Careers in Psychology" website and feature it prominently as a link on the Psychology Department home page. We can formalize some transmission of career guidance information within the advisement process. For example, the SOAR page the student uses to register for courses can feature a link to a career information page and checklist survey, that each student must visit at least once before registering. Advisors can also check each student's familiarity with career options during advisement. We can also create a physical presence for career information within the psychology department spaces at each campus, such as a small information kiosk or prominent bulletin board space. These approaches were recommended last cycle, and are being developed for implementation. We also continue to represent the psychology department at the multiple Black and Gold career day events each year. One significant action, which has been taken, was the creation of a Careers in Psychology course (PSY 251). The course has been delivered once so far (summer of 2009). It will be a year or two before we know if the course, or other actions, will improve student ratings, and at least two years to see effects for alumni ratings of career development.

Established in Cycle: 2009-2010

Implementation Status: In-Progress

Priority: High

Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):

Measure: Alumni Survey-Career Plans | **Outcome/Objective:** Career Planning and Development

Measure: Senior Survey - Career Plans | **Outcome/Objective:** Career Planning and Development

Implementation Description: Department staff, advising faculty, and PSY 251 instructors will implement the actions proposed.

Responsible Person/Group: Department staff and faculty.

Response to alumni and senior student ratings of career training as deficient

Our Career Development numbers on the student and alumni surveys continue to be low for emphasis and quality. The plans for remediation implemented thus far have been to: instruct advisors to offer more career information; add a career development project to the capstone course; and create a new "Careers in Psychology" course (PSY 251). Our rating from both senior students and alumni, for both quality and emphasis of career preparation, have increased from last year, but remain deficient. We believe there will be a lag in improvement in these numbers as most seniors, and all alumni did not benefit from some, or all of our actions to improve performance in career planning and development. We believe the addition of the PSY 251 class will be particularly effective in improving performance, but we will not see that improvement in our number for another year or two. We also plan to make PSY 251 a required course in our BA/BS degree plan. Other steps that could be taken include: adding a careers website; formalizing career guidance content in the advising process; and dedicating highly visible department space to career information materials.

Established in Cycle: 2010-2011

Implementation Status: In-Progress

Priority: High

Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):

Measure: Alumni Survey-Career Plans | **Outcome/Objective:** Career Planning and Development

Measure: Senior Survey - Career Plans | **Outcome/Objective:** Career Planning and Development

Response to alumni rating of research emphasis as deficient.

Our numbers for Research Methods quality and emphasis have improved since last academic year. The remaining deficient finding is from the alumni survey rating of research emphasis. The alumni numbers are

from graduates from the academic year two years prior to the current year, so there will always be a lag in change in alumni numbers in response to program changes. Previously the methods course instructors developed a plan to include a "hands-on" course project in response to deficient student and alumni rating regarding research methods, as well as specific comments requesting more "hands-on" research experience. Previous actions have been taken to address perceived dissatisfaction with specific research methods instructors in previous years. Those actions, and the addition of hands-on course content appear to be having the intended effect.

Established in Cycle: 2010-2011

Implementation Status: In-Progress

Priority: High

Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):

Measure: Alumni Survey - Research Methods | **Outcome/Objective:** Research Methods in Psychology

Response to low survey numbers

Our survey response rates remain low for senior capstone students and alumni. The surveys are a critical component of our self-assessment process, as evidenced by the number of domain associations, and arguably provide our most objective data. Managing the survey process requires a significant investment of time and labor. For the survey process to have any chance of achieving its potential as an information source the process needs to be properly resourced by assignment to staff with time and facilities to manage it, or by provision of release time to faculty to manage it. The consistency of our numbers across years, even with low response rates, demonstrates the reliability of the instruments. The congruence of survey response with frequent student and alumni comments, as well as informal observations, suggests validity of the instruments. In addition, the changes in ratings in response to actions taken supports validity of the instruments. The process seems to be of value. Maybe it is time to resource it.

Established in Cycle: 2010-2011

Implementation Status: In-Progress

Priority: High

Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):

Measure: Senior Survey- Communication Coverage | **Outcome/Objective:** Communication Skills

Measure: Alumni Survey - Critical Thinking Coverage | **Outcome/Objective:** Critical Thinking Skills in Psychology

Measure: Alumni Survey - Quality of Courses | **Outcome/Objective:** Knowledge Base of Psychology

Measure: Alumni Survey - Research Methods | **Outcome/Objective:** Research Methods in Psychology

Measure: Alumni Survey-Career Plans | **Outcome/Objective:** Career Planning and Development

Measure: Alumni Survey-Communication Coverage | **Outcome/Objective:** Communication Skills

Measure: Senior Survey - Career Plans | **Outcome/Objective:** Career Planning and Development

Measure: Senior Survey - Courses and Content | **Outcome/Objective:** Knowledge Base of Psychology

Measure: Senior Survey - Critical Thinking Coverage | **Outcome/Objective:** Critical Thinking Skills in Psychology

Measure: Senior Survey - Research Methods | **Outcome/Objective:** Research Methods in Psychology

Critical Thinking Improvements

Better coordination with the Gulf Coast campus in terms of curricular expectations, consistency of teaching faculty and similarity of course content across both campuses may improve critical thinking skills. The undergraduate coordinator for Hattiesburg will work more closely with the Gulf Coast undergraduate coordinator to ensure sufficient attention to this outcome. Revisions to the WEAVE goals may be expected.

Established in Cycle: 2011-2012

Implementation Status: Planned

Priority: High

Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):

Measure: Critical Thinking Assignment - PSY 418 | **Outcome/Objective:** Critical Thinking Skills in Psychology

Knowledge Base

The undergraduate coordinator will begin the task of 1) ensuring better coordination between GC and Hattiesburg campus, 2) considering curricular improvements to increase general knowledge base on both campuses and 3) coordinate with instructors to determine there are consistent expectations across all sections of courses taught. The Department has recently hired six new faculty which should reduce the reliance on adjunct and transitional faculty and improve course rigor and consistency.

Established in Cycle: 2011-2012

Implementation Status: Planned

Priority: High

Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):

Measure: Competency Exit Exam | **Outcome/Objective:** Knowledge Base of Psychology

Review and Revisit BA/BS WEAVE outcomes and measures

The Department of Psychology's Undergraduate Committee will be charged with reviewing, revising and updating the WEAVE measures and objectives for the coming cycle. Considerations including creating a new capstone course and expanding the major requirements to include a "Careers in Psychology" course.

Established in Cycle: 2011-2012

Implementation Status: Planned

Priority: High

Analysis Questions and Analysis Answers

What specifically did your assessments show regarding proven strengths or progress you made on outcomes/objectives?

The psychology department met goals related to research requirements, communication skills, writing and critical thinking. These were areas of focus in recent years and so progress in these areas has been expected.

What specifically did your assessments show regarding any outcomes/objectives that will require continued attention?

Career planning continues to be an area for growth among our majors. We have not yet met this targeted goal. As such, the Department has developed a course entitled, "Careers in Psychology" which will explore career issues among psychology majors. This is currently an elective class, but the Department Undergraduate Committee will explore the possibility of making this a new requirement for our major in the coming year. Also, the current capstone course is being revisited and there is discussion about the possibility of developing a new capstone required course which will help students access better information related to career planning.

Additionally, partially met findings suggest that better coordination between the Hattiesburg and Gulf Coast campus is necessary to ensure a consistent curriculum.

Annual Report Section Responses

Program Summary

Again, multiple efforts were undertaken by the Department during 2011-12 to improve the undergraduate program through the direct delivery of services to psychology undergraduate majors. Through our consistent offerings of PSY 251 (Careers in Psychology) on the Hattiesburg and Gulf Coast campuses, we continue to bolster our efforts to address career development objectives in program planning for our undergraduate students. While we have made improvements in this area, we continue to need to focus on additional efforts directed at improvement, including but not limited to, web site information and special career sessions offered regularly to our majors. This year, the faculty advisers of the Psychology Club and the local chapter of Psi Chi must offer activities directed at career planning and development. The activities must take place each regular

semester throughout academic year. Records of these activities will be submitted to the Chair of the Department during the academic year with an outline of those activities that occurred. We have been very successful with the inclusion of careers information in our undergraduate Preview packets (early registration packets) for incoming first year and transfer students new to the Department of Psychology. The opening of the Undergraduate Advisement Center to assist current undergraduate students with course selection and scheduling decisions continues to be a pearl of the Department. The Center is open a minimum of 30-35 hours per week during the regular semesters and during the summer semester. The Department is committed to the success of the Center and pays stipends to two Counseling Psychology Masters students each semester for staffing the Center. This allows faculty advisers/mentors additional time to engage in the career and research mentoring process for our undergraduates. These efforts and others that will be mentioned in subsequent portions of this section have resulted in improved performance of our current undergraduates with respect to program objectives. While some program objectives have been met, others are still in process and require our continued attention.

Continuous Improvement Initiatives

The Department has undertaken and continues to undertake several activities to address program improvement issues based on this year's data. The following illustrates some of these efforts: The conversion of General Psychology (PSY 110) and Forensic Psychology (PSY 440) to on-line versions taught in the summer and fall respectively in response to a requests by our undergraduates to offer more psychology on-line courses. These offerings will also allow broader access of undergraduate students to coursework in the Department. To this end a series of trainings pertaining to on-line offerings has been designed for the Psychology Department through LEC and is slated for delivery during the fall 2012 semester. These trainings will expand the on-line offerings of the Department over the course of the next two academic years. The Psychology of Humor (PSY 453) and the Psychology of Music (PSY 469), our most recent new undergraduate course offerings, continue to be well received by our undergraduate students. Additional new undergraduate courses and on-line versions of existing courses are in the planning stages. As mentioned previously, the Undergraduate Advisement Center, under the guidance of Dr. Emily Yowell, came on line fall 2010 to more fully address the advisement needs of our undergraduate students, and it has developed well into a model service delivery center for our undergraduates. The Center is available to undergraduates approximately 30-35 hours per week on a walk-in basis or for scheduled appointments and is staffed by two Counseling Psychology Masters students funded by the Department. Having the Undergraduate Advisement Center frees up faculty to spend more time in the mentoring aspect of support to our undergraduate majors. Mentoring takes the form of career guidance and support in the research process.

To continue to address the career planning and development needs of our undergraduates, PSY 251 (Careers in Psychology) is being consistently offered on an elective basis not only in regular and summer semesters, but also during mini-sessions. In addition to offering information pertinent to careers in the field, information related to the graduate school process is also covered during the class. The Department is currently assessing whether to make the course a required course in the major. While we had hoped to make that decision during the 2011-12 year, that did not occur, but will occur during the 2012-13 academic year. Concerns in that regard are specific to resources needed, specifically adequate classroom space and faculty personnel.

Career development information is also routinely offered to our undergraduates through participation in the Psychology Club and Psi Chi, but such efforts will be more systematic during the 2012-13 academic year, particularly as related to recruitment. Such information is also contained in the Preview packets distributed to incoming students during early registration sessions conducted during the summer. Additionally, we have initiated discussion related to PSY 418 (History of Psychology) continuing to serve as the Capstone course of the Department. The question has arisen as to whether this is the best treatment of that course and whether the development of a true capstone course would better serve the Department and better serve the needs of our majors. That question will be put before the departmental faculty during the fall 2012 with the possible formation of an ad hoc committee charged with designing that course for consideration to the various curriculum committees after approval by the departmental faculty.

Based on information gathered during the assessment process pertinent to PSY 361 (Research Evaluation), an ad hoc committee assessing not only the impact of this course on our undergraduates, but also PSY 360 (Behavioral Statistics) was convened to determine redesign needs for this sequence. That ad hoc committee did

not generate recommendations during this past academic year. Consequently, that committee will be reconstituted and reconvened with the charge of generating a plan to be reviewed by the departmental faculty. This initiative will be completed during the spring of 2013. It is anticipated that these activities will continue to strengthen the undergraduate BA and BS programs.

Closing the Loop

Action plans specific to PSY 361 (Research Methods) during 2011-12 including more "hands on" research experiences through course assignments will continue to be in process during 2012-13. Also, PSY 361 instructors will continue to meet to address why alumni tended to rate our research emphasis below our performance target relative to critical thinking and communication skills. We will continue to address our curriculum needs, course objectives as related to this assessment process, and data collection procedures as related to gathering information from our current majors and recent graduates of our undergraduate program. Continued attention will be paid to increasing response rates to our Alumni Survey. The Department of Psychology looks forward to reporting on the Continuous Improvement Initiatives undertaken, yet not completed during 2012-13. We anticipate continued improvement in supporting our undergraduates.