Academic Program Assessment Report

Psychology, MS

Program (8.2.a)-Psychology, M.S.

Mission Statement: The mission of the Department of Psychology, with respect to its offering of the Master of Science degree, is to produce graduates who are prepared to enter the workforce or pursue advanced degrees and/or training in psychology. This mission is to be accomplished by providing students rigorous coursework that covers the major concepts, theoretical perspectives, empirical findings, and historical trends in psychology. Likewise, students will be taught how to critically evaluate and empirically investigate claims, arguments, and problems related to psychology. To further facilitate the accomplishment of this mission, students will be paired with a faculty mentor who will oversee their development in the program and supervise their research endeavors, which will culminate in the completion of a major research project (i.e., master?s thesis) that represents a significant contribution to the field of psychology.

VP/Dean Plan Approval: Approved by A.Wierzbicki on 9-16-2017
Approved by R. Coleman on 9-20-2018
Approved by R. Coleman on 9-25-2019
Approved by R. Coleman on 10-20-2020
Approved by R. Coleman on 10-19-2021

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Approved by R. Coleman on 10-20-2020
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Intended Outcomes	Assessment Methods	Results	Findings
Knowledge Base in Psychology with Special Focus on Area of Concentration - Students graduating with a graduate degree (M.S.) in Psychology will be able to demonstrate sufficient knowledge in their specific area of concentration (e.g., cognitive psychology) and in Psychology in general.	**Portfolio Review -** Just prior to graduation, students submit a portfolio containing the following materials: (1) final draft of first year project, (2) final draft of thesis, and (3) final draft of paper written for one of the four core courses that all M.S. students are required to take. First year project and thesis papers are evaluated by two graduate faculty members, including the student's major professor. Course paper is evaluated by two graduate faculty members, including the	Three students graduated from the MS program this year. These students were included in this assessment. A total of 20 ratings from graduate faculty were given for the papers contained in these students' portfolios. Ratings averaged 4.5, which is above the success criterion of 3.0. Ratings for individual papers were as follows: First year project (4.2), Thesis (4.8). Both papers surpassed the success criterion and were rated as falling between "average master's level" and "superior master's level".	**Measure Status:** Criterion Met

Analysis: The results of this year's assessment mirror what we found last year. That is, our students are producing written work that exhibits a level of knowledge consistent with our program's goal of producing competent researchers. Additionally, there was notable improvement in evaluations from the first year project to the thesis. This suggests that our students' level of knowledge is |

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	instructor of the course. Evaluations are based on the level of knowledge demonstrated in the papers and range from: 0 (unacceptable even for undergraduate student), 1 (average undergraduate level), 2 (below average master's level), 3 (average master's level), 4 (superior master's level), 5 (doctoral level), 6 (faculty level). In the above description, the term "knowledge" is defined differently depending on the paper being assessed: First year project and thesis papers: "knowledge" is defined as demonstrating familiarity with the core topics of the study (e.g., the major themes and variables being researched) and background literature relevant to the research. Course paper: "Knowledge" is defined as demonstrating understanding of the core topic of the paper and familiarity with background literature relevant to the core topic. **Target:** Students are expected to receive ratings of three or above.		improving as they progress through our program.
		Three students graduated from the MS program this year. These students were included in this assessment. A total of 15 ratings from graduate faculty were given for the papers contained in these students' portfolios. Ratings averaged 4.69, which is above the success criterion of 3.00. Ratings for individual papers were as follows: First year project (4.56), Thesis (4.86). Both papers surpassed the success criterion and were rated as falling between "superior master's level" and "doctoral level".	**Measure Status:** Criterion Met **Analysis:** Our students continue to perform very well on this assessment. Based on these ratings, our students are performing, on average, how they should be in order to be competitive for admissions to doctoral programs. Indeed, two of these three students are now in doctoral programs. The third is taking a gap year and will be applying to doctoral programs next year.
		Fourteen students graduated from the MS program this year (n = 5), last year (n = 3), and the two years before (n = 6) combined. These students were included in this assessment. A total of 59 ratings from graduate faculty were given for the papers contained in these students' portfolios. Ratings averaged 4.58, which is above the success criterion of 3.00. Ratings for individual papers were as follows: First year project (4.48), Thesis (4.69). Both papers surpassed the success criterion and were rated as falling between "superior master's level" and "doctoral level".	**Measure Status:** Criterion Met **Analysis:** This was the largest group of students that we have graduated from the MS grogram since this assessment began. The ratings are now quite stable and suggest that our students are performing well on their first year projects and theses. This is not surprising given that all of them graduated from the program. Thus, almost by definition, they are doing acceptable work. Nevertheless, the assessment provides some quality assurance and a potential "early warning" regarding quality of student output and possible program-wide deficiencies.
		Nine students graduated from the MS program this year (n = 3), last year (n = 3), and the year before (n = 3) combined. These students were included in this assessment. A total of 39 ratings from graduate faculty	**Measure Status:** Criterion Met **Analysis:** The graduate faculty decided that the inclusion of class

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		were given for the papers contained in these students' portfolios. Ratings averaged 4.59, which is above the success criterion of 3.00. Ratings for individual papers were as follows: First year project (4.47), Thesis (4.72). Both papers surpassed the success criterion and were rated as falling between "superior master's level" and "doctoral level".	papers in this assessment was uninformative as they do not provide evidence of our students' abilities to conduct independent research in their area of concentration, which is the primary objective of our graduate training program. The first year project and thesis provide more than adequate insight into these abilities and thus going forward we will only assess the first year project and thesis for this assessment and all other assessments that incorporate a portfolio review. **Action:** This change has been implemented and future assessments will include the first year project and thesis.
		Six students graduated from the MS program this year (n = 3) and last year (n = 3) combined. These students were included in this assessment. A total of 38 ratings from graduate faculty were given for the papers contained in these students' portfolios. Ratings averaged 4.58, which is above the success criterion of 3.00. Ratings for individual papers were as follows: First year project (4.43), Thesis (4.67), Class paper (4.67). All three papers surpassed the success criterion and were rated as falling between "superior master's level" and "doctoral level".	**Measure Status:** Criterion Met **Analysis:** Student papers were rated quite highly and there is agreement among the faculty that our graduating students are producing excellent work. The sample size is still very small, however, which makes these results somewhat tentative. We will continue this assessment and accrue more students in the sample before deciding whether to continue it or abandon it in favor of something perhaps more informative. **Action:** The portfolio review was conducted once again and once again students surpassed the success criterion. Indeed, scores

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			were higher than they've ever been. One adjustment--namely--the removal of the class