Psychology Department Assessment Plan

Student Learning Objectives

In the *Handbook for Enhancing Undergraduate Programs in Psychology*, published by the American Psychological Association in 1993, a distinguished panel of educators in psychology asserted that undergraduate programs in the field should embody the following aims for their majors: (a) to help them develop the capacity to think scientifically about behavior; (b) to produce in them an appreciation for human diversity; (c) to provide them with a sound knowledge base in the discipline; (d) to help them acquire competence in the methodology of psychological research; (e) to allow them the opportunity to gain practical experience in the application of psychology; (f) to strengthen their oral and written communication skills; and (g) to cultivate in them sensitivity to the ethical standards that guide research and practice within the discipline.

The Department endorses the above aims and views them as being very much in keeping with the mission and purposes of the College as a whole. Consequently, we seek to inculcate in our students the qualities and capacities outlined in the above goals.

Annual Collection of Assessment Data

A. The Department will annually administer the Major Field Test in Psychology to its senior majors. This will be the principal means through which the Department will ensure that its majors are gaining a solid knowledge base within the discipline.

B. The Department will keep annual records of the number of students presenting posters and papers at state, regional, and national meetings. This will allow us to determine how many students are gaining the opportunity to improve their oral communication skills by presenting research before their peers. In addition, the number of papers and posters presented at meetings is a good gauge of whether students have mastered research methodology and are able to pursue their research interests in depth.

C. The Department will annually keep a record of how many students do oral presentations during class. Similar to what was mentioned above, this will allow the Department to determine if students have sufficient opportunities to hone their oral communication skills.

D. The Department will maintain a record of how many students gain "W" credit in departmental Writing-Intensive courses. This measure will be a rough gauge of how many students have demonstrated good written communication skills specifically in psychology courses.

E. The Department will annually collect representative student papers from courses throughout the curriculum. These papers can be examined by members of the Department to assess the overall quality of student research and writing in any given year. In addition, copies of these papers will be provided to the external consultant who participates in the departmental self-study every five years.

F. The Department will keep a record of how many students complete internships each year, both through the departmental practicum course, Psychology Practicum, and through Career Development. This information will be helpful in assessing whether students are gaining practical experience in the application of psychology. In addition, these data will prove useful in determining whether our majors have experiences that expose them to human diversity.

G. The Department will maintain a record of how many students are admitted to the local Psi Chi Chapter. The number of majors who earn membership in the discipline's primary honor society is a good indication of how many students are gaining distinction in psychology. Moreover, the number of students in Psi Chi is also a good gauge of the extent to which students are invested in the discipline and are seeking ways to more closely identify with it. Finally, tracking membership in this organization will allow us to see how many of our majors are gaining leadership and service experience outside the classroom.

H. The Department will collect indirect assessment data from graduating seniors during the Spring semester before graduation in the form of a Senior Survey. This information will be helpful in assessing whether students see themselves as having met the learning objectives laid out in this assessment plan.

I. The Department will collect information on the number of Experiential Learning projects that are completed during the year. Depending on the type of project, this information will be helpful in assessing a number of the learning objectives laid out in this assessment plan.