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Campus Correspondence

Southeastern Louisiana University

**To:** Faculty  
Department of Psychology  
Dr. Michelle Hall, Research Associate

**From:** Major Field Assessment in Psychology Committee  
Earl W. Capron, Chair  
Jay Azorlosa, member  
Hunter McAllister, member

**Re:** Assessment/Evaluation of MFA efforts from Fall, 1994 to Fall, 1996

Please find below a summary of the Assessment/Evaluation program currently underway in the Department of psychology:

I. Degree Program: B. A. PSYCHOLOGY

I. B.A. Psychology

1. Goal A

Provide students with a broad body of knowledge representative of the current state of knowledge in psychology.

a. Method of Assessment

SLU graduating psychology majors will, on average over the entire period covered by this report, meet or exceed the 50th percentile on a national sample of schools on the various specified ETS variables. Due to changes in ETS format, specific variables used changes after Spring, 1995. Specifically:

For Fall, 1994: SLU graduating psychology majors will meet this criterion on the average Total Test scale score of the ETS Major Field Achievement Test in Psychology. ETS provides not only a Total Test scale score, but two subscores and several "assessment indicators" so that relative strengths and weaknesses of a program can be evaluated. It is expected that SLU graduating psychology majors will meet or exceed this criterion on each of the following two subtests: Experimental psychology and Social psychology. In addition, it is expected that SLU graduating psychology majors will meet or exceed this criterion on each of the following "assessment indicators": Learning, Cognition & Perception; Sensory & Physiological: Developmental; Clinical, Abnormal & Personality; Social; and Measurement and Methodology. The area of Ethology & Comparative Psychology is omitted because we do not currently offer a course in this area.

For Spring, 1995 and beyond: SLU graduating psychology majors will meet or exceed this criterion on the average Total Test score of the ETS Major Field Achievement Test in Psychology. ETS provides not only a Total Test scale score, but also several "assessment indicators" so that relative strengths and weaknesses of a program can be evaluated. It is expected that SLU graduating psychology majors will meet or exceed this criterion on each of the following "assessment indicators": Memory & Thinking; Sensory & Physiology; Developmental; Clinical & Abnormal; Social; and Measurement & Methodology.

In addition, all psychology majors are required to take either Psychology 333 (Experimental Research in Psychology), or Psychology 334 (Applied Research Design and Analysis) thus providing a relatively complete sample of advanced psychology majors. Psychology 333 and 334 students will take the "Psych 333/334 Questionnaire" and will, on average over the entire period covered by this

report, rate the Department positively (i.e. above "3.0") with regard to Goal "A" both in terms of success in meeting this goal and also rate this goal as being more important now than when they took their first psychology course.

#### b. Results Obtained

##### (1) TABLE 1 -- ETS Exam Results (Fall, 1994 to Fall, 1996): see Appendix I

In summarizing the ETS data (Appendix I), it must be emphasized that the percentile rankings for the various Total Test scale scores and the two Subscores (available for Fall, 1994 only) are based on a table of distributions of individual students' scores, whereas the percentiles for the various Assessment Indicators are based on a table of distributions of Institutions' scores. Also, mean scores falling between percentile intervals are reported in terms of their approximate percentile rank.

The mean SLU Total Test scale score fell at the 56th percentile when averaged across the five semesters included in this report; this mean Total Test scale score meets Departmental goals.

Regarding the Fall, 1994 semester, the Experimental subscore fell at the 61st percentile and the Social subscore fell at the 55th percentile both of which meet Departmental goals. Regarding the various "Assessment indicators", the Department met or exceeded its goal (50th percentile) for all areas except "Measurement and Methodology".

With respect to the various "assessment indicators" for Spring, 1995 and beyond, the Department met or exceeded its goal (50th percentile) for all four semesters tested in the area of Sensory & Physiology. The Department met or exceeded its goal in three out of the four semesters in the area of Memory & Thinking. Students scored at or above the 50th percentile in two out of the four semesters in the areas of Clinical & Abnormal; and Social. The Department met or exceeded its goal in one of the four semesters tested in the following areas: Developmental; and Measurement & Methodology.

From the "Assessment indicator" data, in general, currently the Department's relative strengths are in the two areas of: Sensory & Physiology; and Memory & Thinking. Relative weaknesses are currently in the two areas of: Developmental; and Measurement & Methodology.

##### (2) TABLE 2 -- Psych 333/334 Questionnaire Results: see Appendix II

The results of the Psych 333/334 Questionnaire with regard to Goal "A" indicates that the Department was rated positively (i.e. above "3.0") in terms of success in meeting this goal for both academic years covered, and rated this goal as being more important now than when they took their first psychology course.

#### c. Changes in Program

Developmental Psychology performance should be strengthened by the recent addition of a junior-level course in Developmental Psychology.

#### d. Planned Changes

Starting in summer of 1997, Goal A will be included as a SLU Exit Survey question.

Ongoing modification of curriculum and course content as necessary. For example, the possibility of adding an intermediate statistics/methods course to help address the weakness in Measurement & Methodology has been referred to a Departmental Committee.

## 2. Goal B

Foster students' grasp and appreciation of the scientific method in psychology.

### a. Method of Assessment

Graduating psychology majors will take the ETS Major Field Achievement Test in Psychology and will, on average over the entire period covered by this report, meet or exceed the 50th percentile in the Experimental psychology subtest (for the Fall, 1994 semester only) and on the Measurement and Methodology "assessment indicator".

In addition, all psychology majors are required to take Psychology 220 (Principles of Research Design), Psychology 221 (Psychological Statistics), Psychology 222 (Psychological Statistics Laboratory) and either Psychology 333 (Experimental Research in Psychology) or Psychology 334 (Applied Research Design and Analysis) in which all of these skills are emphasized. Passing Psychology 333 or 334 requires the student to have written a manuscript from beginning to end in which the student must be able to conceptualize the targeted phenomenon into scientific research terms, and generate one or more testable hypotheses. Psychology 333 and 334 students will take the "Psych 333/334 Questionnaire" and will, on average over the entire period covered by this report, rate the Department positively (i.e. above "3.0") with regard to Goal "B" both in terms of success in meeting this goal and also rate this goal as being more important now than when they took their first psychology course.

### b. Results Obtained

(1) Results of ETS (Appendix I and summary in section 1b) indicate that the Department has met or exceeded its goal with respect to the Experimental subscore but not with respect to the "Measurement and Methodology assessment indicator". More specifically:

- (a) Experimental subscore -- exceeded the goal in the only semester it was administered
- (b) Measurement & Methodology Assessment Indicator -- exceeded the goal in one out of the five tested semesters

(2) The results of the Psych 333/334 Questionnaire (Appendix II) indicate that the Department was rated positively (i.e. above "3.0") in terms of success in meeting this goal for both academic years covered, and rated this goal as being more important now than when they took their first psychology course.

Additional Questionnaire results indicate that over 50% of students felt competent to perform all of the listed skills with only minimal supervision except for advanced statistics. More specifically, with regard to Question #27: 80% to 100% of the students rated themselves competent, with only minimal supervision, to do every skill listed except that, for the 1994 academic year and the 1995 academic year respectively, 54% & 74% felt competent to graph data, 77% & 63% felt competent to perform simple statistics (e.g. t-tests) and 40% & 48% felt competent to use more advanced statistics (e.g. ANOVA) to analyze data. These results are higher than the corresponding results included in the 1994 Assessment /Evaluation Report.

### c. Changes in Program

Self-perceived ability to graph data should be eventually increased by already implemented changes in Psychology 222 (Statistics Lab).

#### d. Planned Changes

Starting in summer of 1997, Goal B will be included as a SLU Exit Survey question.

Ongoing modification of course content and curriculum as necessary. For example, the possibility of adding an intermediate statistics/methods course to help address the weakness in Measurement & Methodology has been referred to a Departmental Committee.

### 3. Goal C

To train students in practical research skills.

#### a. Method of Assessment

Graduating psychology majors will take the ETS Major Field Achievement Test in Psychology and will, on average over the entire period covered by this report, meet or exceed the 50th percentile in the Experimental psychology subtest (for the Fall, 1994 semester only) and on the Measurement and Methodology "assessment indicator".

In addition, all psychology majors are required to take Psychology 220 (Principles of Research Design), Psychology 221 (Psychological Statistics), Psychology 222 (Psychological Statistics Laboratory) and either Psychology 333 (Experimental Research in Psychology) or Psychology 334 (Applied Research Design and Analysis) in which all of these skills are emphasized. Passing Psychology 333 or 334 requires the student to have written a manuscript from beginning to end in which the student must be able to conceptualize the targeted phenomenon into scientific research terms, and generate one or more testable hypotheses. Psychology 333 and 334 students will take the "Psych 333/334 Questionnaire" and will, on average over the entire period covered by this report, rate the Department positively (i.e. above "3.0") with regard to Goal "C" both in terms of success in meeting this goal and also rate this goal as being more important now than when they took their first psychology course.

#### b. Results Obtained

(1) Results of ETS (Appendix I and summary in section 1b) indicate that the Department has met or exceeded its goal with respect to the Experimental subscore but not with respect to the "Measurement and Methodology assessment indicator". More specifically:

- (a) Experimental subscore -- exceeded the goal on the only semester it was administered
- (b) Measurement & Methodology Assessment Indicator -- exceeded the goal in one out of the five tested semesters

(2) The results of the Psych 333/334 Questionnaire (Appendix II) indicate that the Department was rated positively (i.e. above "3.0") in terms of success in meeting this goal for all academic years covered, and rated this goal as being more important now than when they took their first psychology course.

Additional Questionnaire results indicate that over 50% of students felt competent to perform all of the listed skills with only minimal supervision except for advanced statistics. More specifically, with regard to Question #27: 80% to 100% of the students rated themselves competent, with only minimal supervision, to do every skill listed except that, for the 1994 academic year and the 1995

academic year respectively, 54% & 74% felt competent to graph data, 77% & 63% felt competent to perform simple statistics (e.g. t-tests) and 40% & 48% felt competent to use more advanced statistics (e.g. ANOVA) to analyze data. These results are higher than the corresponding results included in the 1994 Assessment /Evaluation Report.

#### c. Changes in Program

Self-perceived ability to graph data should be eventually increased by already implemented changes in Psychology 222 (Statistics Lab).

#### d. Planned Changes

Starting in summer of 1997, Goal C will be included as a SLU Exit Survey question. At the same time, the question "What are your employment plans immediately following graduation?" will be included in the SLU Exit Survey.

Ongoing modification of course content and curriculum as necessary. For example, the possibility of adding an intermediate statistics/methods course to help address the weakness in Measurement & Methodology has been referred to a Departmental Committee.

### 4. Goal D

To develop students' skill in Critical Thinking.

#### a. Method of Assessment

Graduates will be able to critique a methodologically simple published experiment, be able to point out any obvious methodological errors, and offer reasonable suggestions for their correction in a follow-up experiment. The level of experimental sophistication will compare favorably with those students graduating from a national sample of psychology programs.

Graduating psychology majors will take the ETS Major Field Achievement Test in Psychology and will, on average over the entire period covered by this report, meet or exceed the 50th percentile in the Experimental psychology subtest (for the Fall, 1994 semester only) and on the Measurement and Methodology "assessment indicator".

In addition, all psychology majors are required to take Psychology 220 (Principles of Research Design), Psychology 221 (Psychological Statistics), Psychology 222 (Psychological Statistics Laboratory) and either Psychology 333 (Experimental Research in Psychology) or Psychology 334 (Applied Research Design and Analysis) in which all of these skills are emphasized. Passing Psychology 333 or 334 requires the student to have written a manuscript from beginning to end in which the student must be able to: critique a methodologically simple published experiment, be able to point out any obvious methodological errors, and offer reasonable suggestions for their correction in a follow-up experiment. Psychology 333 and 334 students will take the "Psych 333/334 Questionnaire" and will, on average over the entire period covered by this report, rate the Department positively (i.e. above "3.0") with regard to Goal "D" both in terms of success in meeting this goal and also rate this goal as being more important now than when they took their first psychology course.

## b. Results Obtained

(1) Results of ETS (Appendix I and summary in section 1b) indicate that the Department has met or exceeded its goal with respect to the Experimental subscore but not with respect to the "Measurement and Methodology assessment indicator". More specifically:

- (a) Experimental subscore -- exceeded the goal on the only semester it was administered
- (b) Measurement & Methodology Assessment Indicator -- exceeded the goal in one out of the five tested semesters

(2) The results of the Psych 333/334 Questionnaire (Appendix II) indicate that the Department was rated positively (i.e. above "3.0") in terms of success in meeting this goal for all academic years covered, and rated this goal as being more important now than when they took their first psychology course.

Additional Questionnaire results indicate that over 50% of students felt competent to perform all of the listed skills with only minimal supervision except for advanced statistics. More specifically, with regard to Question #27: 80% to 100% of the students rated themselves competent, with only minimal supervision, to do every skill listed except that, for the 1994 academic year and the 1995 academic year respectively, 54% & 74% felt competent to graph data, 77% & 63% felt competent to perform simple statistics (e.g. t-tests) and 40% & 48% felt competent to use more advanced statistics (e.g. ANOVA) to analyze data. These results are higher than the corresponding results included in the 1994 Assessment /Evaluation Report.

## c. Changes in Program

Critical thinking should be enhanced by increased ability to conceptualize data trends visually (i.e. graphically), and thus better evaluate such trends. Self-perceived ability to graph data should be eventually increased by already implemented changes in Psychology 222 (Statistics Lab).

## d. Planned Changes

Starting in summer of 1997, Goal D will be included as a SLU Exit Survey question.

Ongoing modification of course content and curriculum as necessary. For example, the possibility of adding an intermediate statistics/methods course to help address the weakness in Measurement & Methodology has been referred to a Departmental Committee.

## 5. Goal E

To prepare qualified students for graduate school in Behavioral Sciences.

### a. Method of Assessment

The rate of admittance into graduate schools in the behavioral sciences will compare favorably with other students graduating from a national sample of psychology programs in institutions comparable to SLU, and who apply for graduate work in the field. Once in a graduate program, the level of academic performance will compare favorably with other students graduating from other undergraduate institutions comparable to SLU.

Graduating psychology majors will take the ETS Major Field Achievement Test in Psychology and will, on average over the entire period covered by this report, achieve a Total Test scale score which meets or exceeds the 50th percentile rank on a national sample of schools.

Psychology 333/334 students administered the "Students' Attitudes Towards Psychology" questionnaire will have positive scores (i.e. an average score of above "3.0") on those items in which they rate their current opinion of their degree of preparedness, and will rate this goal as being more important now than it was when they first entered the program.

In addition, at least 25% of respondents will indicate that they are currently pursuing an advanced degree in the Behavioral Sciences.

Furthermore, there is an open-ended question by which students can express any opinion relevant to this goal.

Alumni respondents will have positive ratings (i.e. an average score of above "3.0") in terms of the department's success in having achieved Goal E. In addition, at least 25% of respondents will indicate that they are currently pursuing an advanced degree in the Behavioral Sciences.

#### b. Results Obtained

(1) Results of ETS (Appendix I and summary in section 1b) indicate that the Department, on average, has met its goal. More specifically, Total Test scale score data indicates that the Department has met or exceeded this goal in four out of the five semesters tested.

(2) Questionnaire results (Appendix II) indicate that, in all cases, students rated the Department favorably (i.e. above "3.0") with respect to success in meeting this goal, and rated this goal as being more important now than when they took their first psychology course. In addition, 59% (1994 academic year) and 92% (1995 academic year) indicate that they are either "likely" or "very likely" to apply to graduate school, which far exceeds our goal.

(3) Relevant Alumni data are to be made available in the summer of 1997 and should be incorporated in the next bi-annual report. (See 5d below)

#### c. Changes in Program

No specific changes have been made to program.

#### d. Planned Changes

Starting in the summer of 1997, "Degree to which the Psychology Department prepares qualified students for further education in the Behavioral Sciences" will be included as a SLU Exit Survey question. At the same time, the question "What are your plans for further education following graduation?" will be added to the SLU Exit Survey.

Ongoing modification of course content and curriculum as necessary.

#### Goal F

To stimulate students' interest in the study of psychology.

a. Graduates in Psychology will compare favorably in their interest level and motivation to pursue an advanced degree in the behavioral sciences with students in other undergraduate programs.

Psychology 333/334 students administered the "Students' Attitudes Towards Psychology" questionnaire will have positive scores (i.e. an average score of above "3.0") on those items in which they rate their current interest in psychology, and will rate this goal as being more important now than when they first entered the program. In addition, there is an open-ended question by which students can express any opinion relevant to this goal.

b. Results Obtained

(1) Questionnaire results (Appendix II) indicate that:

(a) In all cases, 59% (1994 academic year) and 92% (1995 academic year) indicate that they are either "likely" or "very likely" to apply to graduate school, which far exceeds our goal.

(b) In all cases, students rated the Department favorably (i.e. above "3.0") with respect to success in meeting this goal, and rated this goal as being more important now than when they took their first psychology course.

c. Changes in Program

No specific changes have been made to program.

d. Planned Changes

Starting in summer of 1997, Goal F will be included as a SLU Exit Survey question.

Results will be monitored and changes in course content and curriculum made as necessary.



**Appendix I**

Table I -- ETS Exam Results, means and percentiles (Fall, 1994 to Fall, 1996)

	Fall 1994 <sup>a</sup>	Spring 1995 <sup>b</sup>	Fall 1995 <sup>b</sup>	Spring 1996 <sup>b</sup>	Fall 1996 <sup>b</sup>	Mean Percentile Rank
SLU N	11	17	19	22	9	
<b>SLU Means {National Percentile Rank for Individual Students' Test Scores}</b>						
Total Test	162.9{59th}	159.1{56th}	153.8{40th}	162.5{65th}	160.9{62nd}	<b>56th</b>
Subscore 1/ Experimental	63.4{61st}	X	X	X	X	
Subscore 2/ Social	62.0{55th}	X	X	X	X	
Assessment Indicator:						
<b>SLU Mean % Correct {Institutional National Percentile Rank}</b>						
Learning, Cognition, & Perception	<u>56.6{78th}</u>	X	X	X	X	
Sensory & Physiological	<u>58.5{84th}</u>	X	X	X	X	
Developmental	<u>52.7{53rd}</u>	X	X	X	X	
Clinical, Abnormal, & Personality	<u>62.6{68th}</u>	X	X	X	X	
Social	<u>59.1{70th}</u>	X	X	X	X	
Measurement & Methodology	<u>44.7{32nd}</u>	<u>39.7{43rd}</u>	<u>38.1{36th}</u>	<u>41.5{52nd}</u>	<u>38.4{37th}</u>	<b>40th</b>
Assessment Indicator (initiated in Spring of 1995):						
<b>SLU Mean % Correct {Institutional National Percentile Rank}</b>						
Memory & Thinking	X	<u>39.0{51st}</u>	<u>35.4{31st}</u>	<u>43.5{78th}</u>	<u>43.9{81st}</u>	<b>64th</b>
Sensory & Physiology	X	<u>42.5{88th}</u>	<u>41.2{84th}</u>	<u>47.5{97th}</u>	<u>44.4{92nd}</u>	<b>89th</b>
Developmental	X	<u>42.1{33rd}</u>	<u>39.3{20th}</u>	<u>44.7{51st}</u>	<u>39.7{21st}</u>	<b>36th</b>
Clinical & Abnormal	X	<u>59.3{77th}</u>	<u>45.3{11th}</u>	<u>58.4{73rd}</u>	<u>52.9{42nd}</u>	<b>54th</b>
Social	X	<u>59.3{44th}</u>	<u>59.7{46th}</u>	<u>64.9{72nd}</u>	<u>68.0{84th}</u>	<b>63rd</b>

Notes: Percentiles are in brackets.  
 Percentiles of decimal numbers are approximate (e.g. tables provide the percentiles of Total scale scores of 162 and 163, but the percentile of a Total scale score of 162.5 had to be estimated).  
 Mean Percentile Rank is a simple (i.e., non-weighted) average of percentiles across the five semesters included.

<sup>a</sup>Percentile ranks are based on 1991-1994 national norms (ETS [Comparative Data Guide](#))

<sup>b</sup>Percentile ranks are based on 1995-1996 national norms (ETS [Comparative Data Guide](#))

## APPENDIX II

TABLE 2 -- Psych 333/334 Questionnaire Results:

## 1. Summary of Psyc 333/334 Questionnaire Fall, 1994-Spring, 1995 n=39

Scale: 1 extremely unimportant - 5 extremely important

Goal A: To provide students with a broad body of knowledge representative of the current state of knowledge in Psychology.

- 18. 3.54 (first day of Psyc 101)
- 19. 4.33 (present view)
- 20. 4.13 (success of Department)

Goal B: To foster students' grasp and appreciation of the scientific method in Psychology.

- 6. 3.23
- 7. 4.41
- 8. 4.00

Goal C: To train students in practical research skills.

- 15. 2.33
- 16. 4.10
- 17. 3.95

Goal D: To develop students' skills in critical thinking.

- 12. 2.72
- 13. 4.08
- 14. 3.72

Goal E: To prepare qualified students for graduate school in Behavioral Sciences.

- 24. 2.74
- 25. 4.03
- 26. 3.82

Goal F: To stimulate students' interest in the study of Psychology.

- 9. 3.49
- 10. 4.41
- 11. 4.03

## APPENDIX II (Cont.)

Question 27: % of students who feel that he/she can do the following with minimal supervision.

a.	run subjects -----	100
b.	collect data -----	88.6
c.	do background research -----	85.7
d.	formulate a set of hypotheses -----	91.4
e.	write an introduction -----	94.3
f.	write a methods section -----	97.1
g.	graph data -----	54.3
h.	use simple statistics (e.g. t-test) -----	77.1
i.	use advanced statistics (e.g. ANOVA) --	40.0
j.	write results section -----	94.3
k.	write discussion -----	88.6

Percentage of students who answered either "likely" or "extremely likely" about applying to graduate school: 59.0%.

## 2. Summary of Psyc 333/334 Questionnaire Fall, 1995-Spring, 1996 n=29

Scale: 1 extremely unimportant - 5 extremely important

Goal A: To provide students with a broad body of knowledge representative of the current state of knowledge in Psychology.

- 18. 3.52 (first day of Psyc 101)
- 19. 4.41 (present view)
- 20. 4.24 (success of Department)

Goal B: To foster students' grasp and appreciation of the scientific method in Psychology.

- 6. 2.93
- 7. 4.17
- 8. 4.03

Goal C: To train students in practical research skills.

- 15. 2.66
- 16. 4.31
- 17. 4.14

## APPENDIX II (Cont.)

Goal D: To develop students' skills in critical thinking.

12. 2.76

13. 4.55

14. 3.97

Goal E: To prepare qualified students for graduate school in Behavioral Sciences.

24. 2.48

25. 4.31

26. 3.79

Goal F: To stimulate students' interest in the study of Psychology.

9. 3.55

10. 4.14

11. 3.69

Question 27: % of students who feel that he/she can do the following with minimal supervision.

a.	run subjects -----	82.9
b.	collect data -----	82.9
c.	do background research -----	85.7
d.	formulate a set of hypotheses -----	88.6
e.	write an introduction -----	94.3
f.	write a methods section -----	97.1
g.	graph data -----	74.3
h.	use simple statistics (e.g. t-test) -----	62.9
i.	use advanced statistics (e.g. ANOVA) --	47.7
j.	write results section -----	85.7
k.	write discussion -----	82.8

Percentage of students who answered either "likely" or "extremely likely" about applying to graduate school: 92.0%.