

MAJOR FIELD ASSESSMENT
M. A. PSYCHOLOGY
 March 2003

The mission of Southeastern Louisiana University is to meet the education and cultural needs, primarily of Southeast Louisiana, to disseminate knowledge and to facilitate life-long learning through quality instruction, research and service in a safe, student-centered environment.

The purpose of offering graduate study in the Department of Psychology is to provide students with a M.A. level of knowledge and skills that will prepare them for entry either into a Ph.D. program or a subprofessional position.

1. Goal 1

To train graduate students in practical research skills and critical thinking skills.

a. Assessment

(1) Criterion: A student will not be allowed to graduate with a M.A. in Psychology without at least acceptable competence in those skills listed in Working Goal 1.

(a) Procedure: An understanding of research and the manner by which research is conducted is accomplished both by formal course work plus actual experience in research. All students are required to take Psyc 635 (Experimental Design and Analysis) and Psyc 636 (Nonexperimental Design and Analysis). These four hour courses cover design and statistics, and also require work on a research project as part of the course requirement. Students are required to earn a grade of at least a B in these courses. All students gain actual research experience when they are required to conduct a research project for their thesis work (Psyc 770). Some students gain additional research experiences by taking independent research (Psyc 549) as an elective. A student's research skills and knowledge are certified by faculty committee evaluations of their performance on thesis and on their comprehensive exams.

(2) Criterion: Alumni respondents will have positive ratings in terms of the questions relating to training in research and critical thinking skills.

(a) Procedure: All of the Alumni of our M.A. program will be surveyed using the questionnaire developed by Institutional Research at SLU. The questionnaire is entitled AA Survey of Graduate Degree Programs@ and contains several questions rating satisfaction with the research training and critical thinking training.

b. Results Obtained

(1) As can be seen in Appendix A, students have performed quite well in the statistics/methods courses. Overall during the assessment period, 88% of the students passed the comprehensive exam in Psyc 635 (Experimental) and 100% of the students passed the comprehensive exam in Psyc 636 (Nonexperimental). The percentage of students passing the comprehensive exam requirement in Psyc 635 is comparable to that of the previous assessment period (90%) and the passing rate for Psych 636 exceeded that of the previous assessment period (88%).

(2) During the current assessment period, five students successfully completed research projects in Psyc 549.

(3) As can be seen in Appendix B, thirteen students successfully defended their theses during the assessment period.

(4) Institutional Research surveyed graduate alumni in 2002; however, to date the data from that survey has not been released. Thus, we do not currently have access to data which assesses alumni attitudes towards their training.

c. Changes in the Program

During the assessment period, we have incurred significant turnover among the graduate faculty. However, despite this turnover, training in the areas of research and critical thinking remains strong.

d. Planned Changes.

No changes are planned in this area of the program.

2. Goal 2

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

a. Assessment

- (1) Criterion: A student will not be allowed to graduate with a M.A. in Psychology
- (a) Procedure: Students do not specialize in an area in the Psychology M.A. program; rather they are required to take a broad base of core courses. Thus, whether students are going on to Ph.D. programs in applied areas such as Cognitive or Physiological, they have had a broad base on which to build. Student' general knowledge is certified by faculty committee evaluations of their performance on thesis and on comprehensive exams. Additional evidence comes from performance on the LSU consortium exams which require a broad, general knowledge of the major areas of Psychology (Note: only the subset of our students in the consortium program take these exams).

without :

- (2) Criterion: Alumni respondents who enter Ph.D. programs will have positive ratings on questions relating to how well their M.A. training prepared them for further graduate work.
- a) Procedure: All of the Alumni of our M.A. program will be surveyed using the questionnaire developed by Institutional Research of SLU. The questionnaire is entitled “A Survey of Alumni of Graduate Degree Programs” and contains several questions rating satisfaction with the curriculum.
- (3) Criterion: Fifty percent of the students who apply to doctoral programs will be admitted to a doctoral program.
- (a) Procedure: Psychology faculty will follow up on all graduate students for whom they write letters of recommendation to graduate schools, and report the results to the Graduate Coordinator.

(b) Results Obtained

- (1) (a) As can be seen in Appendix A, students continued to do extremely well on their SLU comprehensive exams in the various content areas. The overall pass rate for all comprehensive exams was 92%.
- (1) (b) Results from the LSU consortium exams (Appendix C) indicate a decrease in performance in all areas except in the Cognitive area where scores remained strong. The decline in passing rates in the areas of History & Systems and Biological Bases can be traced to graduate faculty turnover. Subsequently, the bulk of instruction in these areas were taught by temporary graduate faculty during the assessment period. The decline in passing rates in the area of Social Bases may have been influenced by turnover at LSU. Specifically, LSU incurred turnover in the Social area and, as a result, several changes in format, content, and scheduling of the Social consortium exam occurred. For example, the Social consortium exam was not offered at all in the 2000-2001 academic year.
- (2) Institutional Research surveyed graduate alumni in 2002; however, to date the data from that survey has not been released. Thus, we do not currently have access to data which assesses alumni attitudes towards their training.
- (3) As can be seen in Appendix D, our students are quite successful in gaining acceptance into doctoral programs after completing their M.A. at SLU. In fact, all but one student who applied to doctoral programs was eventually accepted. Thus, the goal of a 50% acceptance rate for those students applying to doctoral programs was exceeded.

d. Changes in Program

We have hired a new tenure-track, graduate faculty member who will assume instruction of both History & Systems and Physiological Psychology at the graduate level. We believe that this change will increase the preparedness of our students for the LSU consortium exams in these areas.

e. **Planned Changes**

Although our students have an excellent record of gaining acceptance into high-quality doctoral programs after receiving their M.A. from SLU, we are working to develop better strategies to prepare our students for the LSU consortium exams in History & Systems, Biological Bases, and Social Bases.

3. Goal 3

To permit pursuit of a Ph.D. degree in Psychology in the “Louisiana Consortium of Graduate Training in Psychology.”

a. Assessment

(1) Criterion: Each year at least one student will enter an LSU Ph.D. program through the consortium program. (Note: LSU limits the number of consortium students that they allow each year to 1 or 2).

a. Procedure: These figures are obtainable from LSU each year.

(2) Criterion: SLU will have at least two faculty qualifying as LSU Affiliate Graduate Faculty Members.

(a) Procedure: These figures are obtainable from the LSU graduate catalogue each year.

b. Results Obtained

(1) None of our students qualified to enter the LSU consortium program in 2001 and one student qualified in 2002.

(2) LSU was contacted about including SLU graduate faculty members as LSU Affiliate Graduate Faculty Members. However, LSU currently accepts applications for Affiliate Graduate Status only under very special circumstances (e.g., no LSU faculty member in an area of expertise specifically required for a dissertation committee). Thus, unless a need at LSU arises, it is unlikely that SLU faculty members will be granted LSU Affiliate Graduate Status.

d. **Changes in Program**

As mentioned in “Changes to Program” under Goal 2, we have hired a new tenure-track, graduate faculty member who will assume instruction of both History & Systems and Physiological Psychology at the graduate level. We believe that this change will increase the preparedness of our students for the LSU consortium exams in these areas and thus increase the number of students eligible for the consortium program at LSU.

(3) **Planned Changes**

We are working to develop better strategies to prepare our students for the LSU consortium exams in History & Systems, Biological Bases, and Social Bases. Also, we plan to drop criteria 2 from our assessment procedures in this area and replace it with

new criteria.

4. Goal 4

To provide students who do not immediately wish to pursue a Ph.D. with a variety of courses that will help prepare them for subprofessional positions.

Assessment

(1) Criterion: Seventy five percent of the M.A. alumni who attempt to get jobs in Psychology will be successful.

(a) Procedure: Major professors will follow up on all of their graduate students receiving the M.A. and report the results to the Graduate Coordinator.

(2) Criterion: Alumni respondents who obtain jobs will have positive ratings on questions relating to how well their M.A. training prepared them for those jobs.

(a) Procedure: All of the Alumni of our M.A. program will be surveyed using the questionnaire developed by Institutional Research at SLU. The questionnaire is entitled "A Survey of Alumni of Graduate Degree Programs" and contains several questions rating satisfaction with how well the M.A. program trained them for jobs.

(3) Criterion: Students who plan to obtain subprofessional positions will include applied courses in their program.

(a) Procedure: Students are allowed to take up to nine hours of practicum work. Students a assessment and counseling under the guidance of a licensed Psychologist. This is a chance for students to operate in a manner more relevant to their future professional life than would be the case in the typical classroom setting.

b. Results Obtained

(1) As can be seen in Appendix E, 100% of the graduates who attempted to find subprofessional positions were successful. Thus, the goal of a 75% success rate was achieved.

(b) Institutional Research surveyed graduate alumni in 2002; however, to date the data from that survey has not been released. Thus, we do not currently have access to data which assesses alumni attitudes towards their training.

(c) During assessment period, six students successfully completed practicum courses.

c. Changes in the Program

No changes have been made in this area of the program

d. Planned Changes

No changes are planned in this area of the program

Appendix A

SLU Comprehensive Exam Summary F'00 to S'03

<u>Date</u>	<u>Area</u>	<u># Taking</u>	<u># Passing</u>	<u>% Passing</u>
F'00	Experimental (635)	7	5	71
F'00	Cognitive	8	7	88
F'00	Physiological	6	6	100
S'01	Nonexperimental (636)	6	6	100
S'01	Social	6	5	83
F'01	Experimental (635)	10	10	100
F'01	Cognitive	9	7	78
F'01	Social	10	10	100
F'01	Physiological	5	5	100
S'02	Nonexperimental (636)	9	9	100
F'02	Experimental (635)	9	8	89
F'02	Cognitive	9	9	100
F'02	Social	12	10	83
Total		106	97	92

Appendix B

Thesis index F' 00 to S' 03

<u>Title</u>	<u>Author</u>	<u>Prof.</u>	<u>Date</u>
1. Facilitative and disruptive effects in hypermnesia for performed acts: Alice's further recollections of wonderland.	Loveland	JW	S'01
2. Implicit memory bias in avoidant personality disorder.	MarinoJB		S'01
3. Self-discrepancies and emotional vulnerabilities in women fulfilling dual social roles.	Michel	HM	S'01
4. Victims of oxygen deprivation: Ten case studies	Rivet	LHO	F'01
6. The effects of public self-consciousness and social identity on brand choice.	Roybiskie	SC	F'01
7. Investigating implicit attitude-behavior consistency.	Sutherland	HM	F'01
8. University faculty turnover: An analysis of biographic and demographic factors.	Preis	AB	S'02
9. Behavioral undercontrol, negative affect, peer association, and expectancy as predictors of alcohol use.	Smith	JW	S'02
9. Effects of decision time manipulation on mug shots presented grouped and one-at-a-time.	Miller	HM	F'02
10. Simultaneous versus sequential mug book presentation: The impact of an instruction set on decision accuracy.	Bayer	HM	F'02
11. Conditional reasoning in violent and nonviolent female inmates.	Amedee	AB	F'02
12. How much pressure for thinness do adolescents face? A relational examination of parental perceptions and communication.	Eller	PVS	S'02

Appendix C

LSU Consortium Exam Summary F'00 to S'03

<u>Date</u>	<u>Exam</u>	<u>#Taking</u>	<u>#Passing</u>	<u>%Passing</u>
F'00	Cognitive Bases of Behavior	5	4	80
F'00	Biological Bases of Behavior	6	2	33
S'01	History and Systems	3	1	33
S'01	Social Bases of Behavior	**Exam not offered**		
F'01	Cognitive Bases of Behavior	4	4	100
F'01	Social Bases of Behavior	6	1	17
S'02	History and Systems	5	2	40
S'02	Biological Bases of Behavior	3	0	0
F'02	Cognitive Bases of Behavior	6	4	67
F'02	Social Bases of Behavior	8	2	25
	Total	46	20	43

Appendix D

Ph.D./Doctoral Admissions for Graduates F'00 to S'03

<u>Semester</u>	<u>Graduating</u>	<u>Applying</u>	<u>Accepted</u>	<u>Accept. Rate</u>
S'01	3	2	2	100%
F'01	3	1	1	100%
S'02	2	1	1	100%
F'02	3	1	0	0%
Total	11	5	4	80%

Appendix E

Employment for Graduates F'00 to S'03

<u>Semester</u>	<u>Graduating</u>	<u>Seeking</u>	<u>Obtaining</u>	<u>Success Rate</u>
S'01	3	1	1	100%
F'01	3	2	2	100%
S'02	2	1	1	100%
F'02	3	2	2	100%
Total	11	6	6	100%