

Campus Correspondence

Southeastern Louisiana University

To: Faculty
Department of Psychology

Date: November 30, 2000

From: Major Field Assessment in Psychology Committee
Earl W. Capron, Chair
Jeff Baker, member
Hunter McAllister, member

Re: Assessment/Evaluation of MFA efforts for the M.A. in
Psychology for Spring, 1998 to Spring, 2000

Degree Program: M. A. PSYCHOLOGY

Purpose/Mission Statement:

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 A

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

a. Method of 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 A.

(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, but also require work on a research project as part of the course requirement. Students are required to earn a grade of at least 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 experience through taking independent research (Psych 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 "A Survey of Alumni 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 continued to perform well in the two new statistics/methods courses. For F'98 and F'99 the percentages of students passing the comprehensive exam in the area covered by Psyc 635 (Experimental) were 78 and 100% respectively. For S'98, S'99, and S'00 the percentages of students passing the comprehensive exam in the area covered by Psyc 636 (Nonexperimental) were 75%, 89%, and 100% respectively. This is a significantly better performance than during the previous assessment period where 53-89% of the students passed the comprehensive exams in these areas.

(2) For the period S'98 to S'00, 4 students completed a research project in Psyc 549. All four of the students received a grade of A for the research.

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

(4) Institutional Research did not survey graduate alumni during the assessment period; thus, there is no data on alumni attitudes towards their training.

c. Planned Changes

The recently changed two course sequence continues to be successful in preparing students for thesis research. The change in policy limiting the number of theses that may be supervised by a single faculty member has increased the balance in thesis supervision performed by the faculty.

D. Changes in Program

No changes are planned for this area of the program.

2. Goal B

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

a. Method of Assessment

(1) Criterion: A student will not be allowed to graduate with a M.A. in Psychology without a broad base of knowledge of 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 Clinical and Industrial or going on in basic research areas such as Cognitive and Physiological, they have had a broad base on which to build. Students' 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 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).

(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 at 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 did extremely well on their SLU comprehensive exams in the various content (i.e., excluding Psyc 635 & 636 discussed in Goal A) areas. The overall pass rate for Psyc 635 was 90% and for 636 the rate was 92%.

(1)(b) As can be seen in Appendix C, the LSU consortium exam results also provide a positive view of student knowledge. The results of these exams continue to show improvement. During the assessment period 76% of these exams were passed by SLU students. Of particular note is the improvement in the cognitive exam results. During the previous assessment period the results for this exam were less than 50% and in Fall of 1999 100% of the students attempting this exam passed.

(2) Institutional Research did not survey graduate alumni during the assessment period; thus, there is no data on alumni attitudes towards their training.

(3) As can be seen in Appendix D, the goal of a 50% acceptance rate for those students applying to doctoral programs was exceeded. In the Spring of 2000 88% of our graduates went on to doctoral programs. This far exceeded our expectations.

c. Changes in Program

The continued improvement in performance on the LSU cognitive exam reflect that our action to create a course geared to this material continues to be effective.

d. Planned Changes

Given the success of our students on the LSU consortium exams there are no planned changes for those courses at this time. We are, however, working to develop better methods for following the progress of these students.

3. Goal C

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

a. Method of 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) We had two students qualify to enter the LSU consortium program in 1998, one student in 1999, and four students (although two had to defer a year) who qualified in Spring 2000. This well exceeds our target of one student per year.

(2) The number of SLU faculty who are on the LSU faculty has dropped from 2 to one with the loss of Dr. Lipscomb as department head. Efforts will be made to add Dr. Burstein and the new graduate coordinator Dr. Baker to the LSU faculty.

c. Changes in the Program

As discussed under Goal B, attempts have been made to improve the coordination between the SLU and LSU Psychology programs. Given the dramatic increase in our students' success on Consortium tests, these improvements appear to be successful.

d. Planned Changes

Given our success with the LSU consortium and the possibility of overloading LSU with students we are attempting to establish new consortium relationships with other doctoral programs. Dr. Burstein and Dr. Baker have written up a proposal for new doctoral consortiums and have sent it to graduate coordinators and department heads across the country.

4. Goal D

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.

a. Method of 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 seven hours of practicum work. Students are placed in a setting such as the Comprehensive Counseling Center on campus or the private practice of the Neuropsychological Center of Louisiana in Baton Rouge and allowed to engage in 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.

(2) Institutional Research did not survey graduate alumni during the assessment period; thus, there is no data on alumni attitudes towards their training.

(3) During assessment period, 6 students completed practicum courses.

c. Changes in the Program

The new therapy techniques course has been implemented as was proposed in the last report. This course has had excellent enrollments (13 students) and has been well received by the students. There has also an anticipated increase in students taking industrial/organization parctica.

d. Planned Changes

There are no major changes anticipated. Our students have been extremely successful in obtaining subprofessional jobs in Psychology. We are, however, evaluating improved methods of tracking our alumni.

Appendix A

SLU Comprehensive Exam Summary S'98 to S'00

<u>Date</u>	<u>Area</u>	<u># Taking</u>	<u># Passing</u>	<u>% Passing</u>
S'98	Nonexperimental (636)	8	6	75
S'98	Social	11	10	91
F'98	Experimental (635)	9	7	78
F'98	Cognitive	8	7	88
F'98	Physiological	9	8	89
S'99	Nonexperimental (636)	9	8	89
S'99	Social	8	7	88
F'99	Experimental (635)	11	11	100
F'99	Cognitive	9	8	89
F'99	Physiological	9	9	100
S'00	Nonexperimental	8	8	100
S'00	Social	9	9	100
	Total	108	98	91

Appendix B

Thesis Index S'98 to S'00

<u>Title</u>	<u>Author</u>	<u>Prof.</u>	<u>Date</u>
1. Effects of Opioid and Monoopioid Footshock Stress on Morphine Oral Self-Administration and Withdrawal in Rats	Moak	JA	S'98
2. Distributive Justice and the Role of in-group Bias in Reward Allocation	White	WT	S'98
3. Obsessive-Compulsive Personality Disorder as it is Related to Birth Order and Family Environment Characteristics	LaGraize	JB	S'99
4. Comparing Traditional Mug Shot Albums with Those Using Computer Facial Recognition Algorithms	Rivas	HM	S'99
5. Histrionic and Dependent Personality Disorders: Self/Other Unbalanced Personalities and the Self-Serving Bias	Maness	HM	F'99
6. Understanding the Influence of Cognitive Load in Learning Two and Three-Dimensional Interfaces	Whitelaw	MR	F'99
7. Causal Attribution and Antisocial Traits of Incarcerated Males	Cooper	JB	S'00
8. Treatment Acceptability for Obesity: the Influences of Self-efficacy and Outcome Expectancy	Jaber	PS	S'00
9. The Effects of Context Performances on Halo Personal Judgements and Reaction Times	Jennings	JP	S'00
10. Value as Organic Unity in the Post-Conventional Stage of Moral Reasoning	Simmons	JB	S'00
11. An Examination of the "Dumb Jock" Stereotype and Its Effects on Academic Performance	Quinlan	HM	S'00

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| 12. Mugbook Identification: Effects of Similarity on Mugshots Presented Simultaneously or Sequentially | Stewart | HM | S'00 |
| 13. Eating Attitudes and Behaviors in American Martial Arts | York | PS | S'00 |
| 14. Outstanding or Just Standing Out: An Examination of Contrast Effects as a Function of Rating Scale Format | Blair | JP | S'00 |
| 15. The Effect of Moart on Spatial Representation | Booksh | MR | S'00 |

Appendix C

LSU Consortium Exam Summary F'98 to S'00

<u>Date</u>	<u>Exam</u>	<u># Taking</u>	<u># Passing</u>	<u>% Passing</u>
F'98	Biological Bases of Behavior	8	6	75
F'98	Cognitive Bases of Behavior	7	6	85
S'99	Social Bases of Behavior	7	5	71
S'99	History and Systems	6	3	50
F'99	Biological Bases of Behavior	6	4	67
F'99	Cognitive Bases of Behavior	7	7	100
S'00	Social Bases of Behavior	4	2	50
S'00	History and Systems	4	4	100
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	Total	49	37	76

Appendix D

Ph.D./Doctoral Admissions for Graduates S'98 to S'00

<u>Semester</u>	<u>Graduating</u>	<u>Applying</u>	<u>Accepted</u>	<u>Accept.Rate</u>
S'98	2	2	2	100%
F'98	1	0	0	-
S'99	4	3	2	67%
F'99	3	0	0	-
S'00	8	6	6	100%

Appendix E

Employment for Graduates S'98 to S'00

<u>Semester</u>	<u>Graduating</u>	<u>Seeking</u>	<u>Obtaining</u>	<u>Success Rate</u>
S'98	2	2	2	100%
F'98	1	1	1	100%
S'99	4	2	2	100%
F'99	3	3	3	100%
S'00	8	2	2	100%
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Total	18	10	9	100%