

Summarized Assessment Report

June 1, 2004

Department of Psychology

B.A. in Psychology, CIP 420101
B.S. in Psychology, CIP 420101
M.A. in Psychology, CIP 420101
Ph.D. in Psychology, CIP 420101

1. Mission, Centrality, Uniqueness. The mission of the Department of Psychology is to engage in the discovery of knowledge about behavior, the biological and psychological processes that affect that behavior, and to share that knowledge and the processes for obtaining it with our students and the scholarly community. The Department integrates graduate and undergraduate education, teaching, research, and service activities to further the overall mission of the university. The Psychology Department serves a critical role in providing the university community with scientific knowledge about behavior, whether it be of humans or animals. The Department accomplishes this role with its clear emphasis on basic and applied research. Besides generating such work, the Department also educates its students and the community through its courses and community work.

2. Quality of Faculty. All faculty in the Department of Psychology hold the terminal Ph.D. degree and have extensive teaching and research experience. Our faculty have received numerous teaching awards from the College of Art & Sciences and the University. Senior exit interviews confirm that students perceive their quality of instruction as very good. The faculty are also extremely productive in their scholarly pursuits: publishing in high-quality, peer review journals; presenting papers at local, national, and international meetings; securing extramural funding for research projects; providing leadership in their respective scientific societies; and training graduate students as our next generation of scientists and practitioners. The faculty also provide valuable service to the administrative units at the college and university levels.

3. Quality of Students. The quality of our undergraduate majors was necessarily increased when the Department instituted a minimum overall GPA of 2.5 for psychology majors. Faculty perceptions of students taking core psychology courses suggest that the minimum GPA raised the level of discourse and interactions in these classes. The quality of our Psychology majors is also reflected in the success with which they have pursued their post-baccalaureate endeavors, whether it be graduate work, professional schools, or employment. Graduate student quality continues to be high, partially because of high acceptance standards but also because of the intensive training they receive. Our graduate students are active in basic research and in internship positions. Competent graduate students allow many faculty to maintain strong and productive research programs.

4. Employer Demand. For the undergraduate majors who do not pursue post-baccalaureate programs, employment opportunities are as varied as the training that the students receive as undergraduates. A list of employment placements for psychology majors includes major corporations, governmental agencies, and a large range of business enterprises (insurance companies, retail stores, etc.). Because of the broad educational background guaranteed by the Psychology Department (core requirements), the College of Art & Sciences (Basic Requirements), and the University (General Education), baccalaureate students have valuable skills and knowledge for a wide variety of careers. Similarly, graduate students who complete their degrees in our program have succeeded in securing employment in academic settings (approximately 60% of our recent Ph.D. students are employed by institutions of higher education) and in the private sector. Several of the doctoral students work for governmental agencies such as the Federal Aviation Authority and the Department of Defense.

5. Service Provided to the Discipline, the University, and Beyond. Faculty in the Department of Psychology devote many hours each year to professional service. In a typical year they will review manuscripts for peer-reviewed journals, different publishing companies, professional societies, and different granting agencies that provide extramural research support. During the past few years, individual faculty members in the Department have also served as an Editor for one journal, an Associate Editor for another journal, as Contributing Editors for two professional periodicals, as Editorial Board members for 6 different journals, and as "external reviewers" for numerous universities' tenure and promotion decisions. Faculty have served as Board Members of several professional societies and have provided their time and talent to these societies for their administration and annual meetings. Faculty are heavily involved in service activities that benefit the University, the College of Arts and Sciences and the Department of Psychology, by serving on committees, task forces, and faculty governing bodies. Several faculty members in the Department contribute to the University's Presidential Lecture Series, traveling to high schools and community colleges throughout Kansas to deliver invited addresses and classes. Faculty also provide public service by delivering invited talks in a variety of business organizations and nonprofit agencies, and by making themselves available to newspapers, magazines, television and radio stations.

6. Cost Effectiveness. Given the relatively small size of the faculty, even when fully staffed, it is difficult to imagine a more cost effective unit in the university. The Psychology Department manages to provide instruction for both a large undergraduate contingent (majors and non-majors, the latter through several large, service courses) and a large graduate program. It should be noted also that the faculty serve as academic advisors for our large number of majors, an activity that requires a large time commitment, particularly during pre-enrollment times. Supervision of doctoral students is also extremely time-consuming. The majority of the research conducted in the Department is funded by external sources, allowing faculty to generate scholarly output in a very cost-effective manner.