

## REVIEW OF THE M.A., M.S., IN PSYCHOLOGY

Classification of Instruction Programs (CIP) Code: 42.0101

Psychology, General

**Review Outcome.** The Academic Planning Committee, as a result of this review process, finds the M.A., M.S. in Psychology to be in Good Standing.

The Academic Planning Committee recognizes that many of the efforts and activities that led to the development of the self-study report were accomplished during the time period coinciding with the COVID-19 pandemic. The Academic Planning Committee commends the faculty for the high levels of scholarly productivity during the current review period. Since fall 2012 (i.e., submission of the previous self-study report), faculty have produced 425 publications (e.g., peer-reviewed journal articles, book chapters), 149 of which were co-authored with undergraduate and/or graduate students and 38 of which were co-authored with international scholars. In addition, faculty have given 517 professional conference presentations within the United States and 54 professional conference presentations outside the United States; of these, 411 were co-authored with undergraduate and/or graduate students, and 51 were co-authored with international scholars.

The committee commends the changes that the Department has made to its annual faculty evaluation processes. During the fall 2019, faculty voted to alter the Department's Appointment, Salary, Promotion, and Tenure (ASPT) policies to better acknowledge diversity, inclusion, and safe environment efforts completed during the annual performance evaluations. The committee commends that statements regarding the integration of such efforts were developed in the three areas of evaluation (i.e., teaching, scholarly and creative productivity, and service) and were included to render all faculty accountable for diversity, inclusion, and a safe environment.

The committee commends the community engagement and outreach efforts that have been sustained from the previous review period. The Psychological Services Center on campus provides assessment, intervention, and consultation services for the academic and social-emotional concerns of community members. These services provide opportunities for approximately 40 graduate-level students every year to receive supervised experiences in these areas. The Autism Place is located off campus and has been funded through grants from the State of Illinois to provide autism treatment services for children with autism and their families. These services provide training opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students in psychology, speech-language pathology, and education programs.

The committee commends the program for the preparation students receive to continue their graduate-level education through enrollment in doctoral programs. Of the program alumni who responded to a recent survey, 60% had enrolled in a doctoral program or had earned a doctoral degree since graduating from the program. These alumni have enrolled at top universities, such as Brown University; University of California, Davis; University of Illinois at Chicago; and University of Wisconsin-Madison, in programs focused on areas such as applied educational psychology, experimental psychology, cognitive science, and human development.

The committee commends the program on hosting external speakers who present on topics regarding their research/scholarly and/or practice/clinical interests. During fall 2018, the Department organized a series of colloquia called The Extending Empathy project to provide a space to share ideas regarding empathy and to create a persistent, positive voice in the campus environment. Faculty, staff, and students from the Department, from other units on campus, and from other institutions have presented colloquia, many of which focus on issues surrounding diversity, inclusion, and safe environments.

The committee commends the Department for providing an online graduation ceremony in response to the COVID-19 pandemic during spring 2020. Faculty and staff noted the importance for graduating students to celebrate this event and organized the ceremony during which graduate faculty read the names of each graduating student and every student had the opportunity to say a few words to the attendees after their name was read. Given that faculty, staff, and students reported how moving the event was, the Department intends to hold similar graduation ceremonies for students at the end of each fall and spring semester.

**Follow-up Report: Aspirational program analysis.** The committee notes that the Department completed the comparator program analyses in which the program at Illinois State University was examined in relation to the similar programs offered at other public universities in the State of Illinois. The Department acknowledged that the aspirational program analyses were not completed prior to submission of the self-study report. The committee asks that the faculty complete these analyses in which they review similar programs regionally or nationally and use the findings to inform the program improvement initiatives that have been prioritized during the next review period. These initiatives should be those identified by the faculty for the program to pursue, and the selected programs should be those that already have implemented actions to achieve those identified initiatives. After reviewing the actions taken by the aspirational programs, faculty then should describe how the program at Illinois State University can achieve its initiatives and indicate any additional resources needed to do so. The committee requests that the Department of Psychology submit its aspirational program analyses as a follow-up report to the Office of the Provost by May 15, 2022.

**Follow-up Report: Student retention and graduation analysis.** The committee notes that the Department reported larger enrollments in the program compared to the numbers of admitted and graduating students in several years during the current review period. The self-study report indicated that this was due to the program requirement of completing a master's thesis that some students take longer to fulfill and that some students do not fulfill before enrolling in a doctoral program or obtaining employment. The committee asks that the faculty complete a retention and graduation analysis in which they review information regarding the students who do not complete the program due to not fulfilling the master's thesis requirement to determine any patterns that may exist among these students, their progress, and their post-program experiences. Based on the findings, faculty may consider changes to support students in completing the program and fulfilling all requirements. The committee requests that the Department of Psychology submit its retention and graduation analyses as a follow-up report to the Office of the Provost by May 15, 2022.

**Recommendations.** The Academic Planning Committee thanks faculty and staff of the M.A., M.S. in Psychology program for the opportunity to provide input regarding the program at Illinois State University through consideration of the submitted self-study report. The following committee recommendations to be addressed within the next regularly scheduled review cycle are provided in a spirit of collaboration with psychology faculty and staff. In the next program review self-study report, tentatively due October 1, 2028, the committee asks the program to describe actions taken and results achieved for each recommendation.

**Continue to infuse diversity and inclusion throughout the curriculum and program.** The committee recognizes the work that the Department has completed to incorporate more diversity within the curriculum, such as the faculty's commitment to expand the diverse content as part of all required courses. The committee also acknowledges the Department's efforts to support diversity, inclusion, and safe environments among students, faculty, and staff through the establishment of the Diversity Task Force of Graduate Students in Psychology and The Extending Empathy project. Given that additional opportunities for infusing diversity and inclusion within the program were identified in the self-study report, such as working to launch the Diversity Task Force of Graduate Students in Psychology again, the committee notes that such work is important because of the exposure this will provide to students in the program. Student learning regarding diversity and inclusion can be informed by program assessment efforts and could include the consideration of program goals regarding diversity, inclusion, and safe environments.

**Continue to track program alumni and monitor their successes.** The committee acknowledges the mechanisms that the Department has developed to track alumni, such as holding an Alumni Day Award ceremony and reception/dinner as part of the University's Homecoming celebration, supporting the School Psychology Institute Day, and inviting alumni to return to campus and present colloquia for students, faculty, and staff. The committee also recognizes the establishment of an Alumni Relations Committee in the Department to manage such activities. Given that stakeholder feedback is important for program assessment, the committee notes that administering an alumni survey similar to the survey that was developed for the undergraduate program, as well as continuing to administer the exit survey for graduating students, can provide further insights on strengths and areas for improvement that faculty can consider.

**Continue to implement and refine the student learning outcomes assessment plan.** The committee recognizes faculty for their work to implement the assessment plan during the current review cycle. Given other initiatives

identified by the Department, such as further infusing diversity and inclusion within the curriculum, the committee notes that continued examination of student learning can both inform these initiatives and provide a more holistic perspective on student learning in the program. In addition, consistently gathering feedback from stakeholders, developing mechanisms for using this feedback among other gathered information, and indicating how this information has been used to inform program changes will assist in supporting student learning throughout the program.