

## REVIEW OF THE PH.D. IN SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY

Classification of Instruction Programs (CIP) Code: 42.2805  
School Psychology

**Review Outcome.** The Academic Planning Committee, as a result of this review process, finds the Ph.D. in School 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 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 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) 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 Department 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.

The committee commends the program for the inclusive self-study process that involved program faculty, departmental faculty who teach program courses or supervise program students, current students and interns, program alumni, supervisors of students' practicum experiences, and employers of program graduates. The committee also commends the steady enrollment and the low student-to-faculty ratio that helps to achieve this steady enrollment by ensuring that each student receives ample attention and dedicated monitoring of their progress from their faculty advisor, as well as support from their peer mentor who is an advanced-level student in the program. In addition, the committee commends the program for recognizing the importance of cultural and individual differences and diversity in the training of school psychologists and incorporating these within the

program, such as increasing diversity content in field experiences and focusing the topics of workshops and research colloquia on addressing diversity among students from underrepresented backgrounds.

The committee commends the program's reaffirmation of accreditation with the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) in 2016 as part of the University-wide teacher education unit's accreditation with the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP). The committee also commends the program's reaffirmation of accreditation with the American Psychological Association (APA) in 2020 and that all students who desired an APA-accredited internship placement were able to secure one. In addition, the program is approved by the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) to prepare students for licensure as a school psychologist. Obtaining the Professional Educator License-School Psychology endorsement requires that students pass an ISBE content examination, and the committee commends that 100% of students who attempted this examination passed it. The committee also commends that 100% of students who attempted the NASP Praxis Exam [needed to obtain the Nationally Certified School Psychologist (NCSP) credential] and 100% of students who attempted the Examination for Professional Practice in Psychology (EPPP; needed to obtain licensure as a psychologist for independent practice) passed those examinations. The latter is especially important given that more program alumni report being employed as health service providers in hospitals and medical centers.

The committee commends the program for making several changes to the curriculum to support student progress, such as altering course scheduling to better accommodate student travel between on-campus courses and off-campus field sites and requiring that students complete their dissertation proposal before they apply for their doctoral internship. The committee also commends establishing the Graduate Association of School Psychologists (GASP) in which all students in the two school psychology programs are members. GASP sponsors several events throughout the year that serve as fund-raising activities to support student travel to professional conferences and to support various mental health charities, as well as sponsors several social events for students. GASP actively supports a climate where peer and faculty interactions are natural dynamics of the two programs, and faculty and students attend several events together, such as receptions at professional conferences and social events after program-wide meetings.

**Follow-up Report: Student participation in research and creative activity.** The committee notes that the Department provided information as requested in the self-study report guidelines regarding student participation in activities such as presenting at research symposia and professional conferences or publishing peer-reviewed scholarship. The self-study report indicated the number of scholarly products, including peer-reviewed journal articles, book chapters, textbooks, books, and presentations, that have been produced by faculty during the current review period and how many of those included graduate students as co-authors or co-presenters. Although this information seems to address the report guidelines, the committee was unable to determine how many students publish and present with faculty based on this information because the scholarly product was the unit of analysis rather than the student. The committee asks that the faculty consider the numbers of students who have co-authored and co-presented with them during the current review period and report those numbers to provide a better sense of student participation in research and creative activity. The committee requests that the Department of Psychology submit its findings 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 Ph.D. in School 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 efforts to recruit students from culturally and individually diverse backgrounds.** The committee recognizes the program's work to increase student diversity through targeted networking with other institutions that serve high numbers of students from underrepresented groups, such as Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HCBUs) and Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs), and through outreach to programs and initiatives on campus that serve students from underrepresented groups, such as registered student organizations (RSOs). Given the program's goal to improve such initiatives, the committee notes that these efforts among several others that were described can assist in recruiting underrepresented students to the program and thus also contribute to the program's goal to increase the number of culturally and individually diverse school psychologists.

**Consider opportunities for program growth.** The committee acknowledges the program's statements regarding the discontinuation of one school psychology doctoral program in the State of Illinois and the shortage of school psychologists in the state, as well as the program's consideration of changes that have occurred in the field, including increases in the percentages of children and youth at risk for social-emotional/behavioral challenges. Given such increases in demand with the shortage of individuals who are qualified to meet that demand, the committee notes that this may present an opportunity for the program to increase its enrollment, especially given the recent successes of program faculty in obtaining external funding that could continue to support students while they complete the program. The committee also recognizes that such growth would require additional faculty, among other resources, to ensure the student-to-faculty ratio needed for continued student success and encourages the program to explore those opportunities.

**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 with 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 across all areas of diversity (e.g., race/ethnicity, gender, disability) 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 monitor and decrease student time-to-degree.** The committee acknowledges the work that the program has completed during the current review period to reduce students' time-to-degree, such as offering choices regarding required research experiences that students can make based on their own interests and requiring that students complete their dissertation proposal before they begin the required internship. Given that such changes have reduced time-to-degree compared to the previous review period, the committee notes that the additional efforts proposed in the self-study report, such as increasing the number of students who have finished data collection or defended their dissertations prior to beginning the internship, should assist in further decreasing time-to-degree.

**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 multiple 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.