

REVIEW OF THE SPECIALIST IN SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY (S.S.P.)

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 Specialist in School Psychology (S.S.P.) 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 acknowledges the program for the inclusive self-study process that involved program faculty as well as 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. We commend the steady enrollment and the numerous recruitment activities that are being implemented to maintain this steady enrollment, such as writing letters to undergraduate-level advisors of recent graduates to inform them of the graduate's success and to encourage these advisors to continue to recommend the program to their students. In addition, the committee is encouraged to see the program recognizing the importance of cultural and individual differences and diversity in the training of school psychologists and incorporating this awareness with the program, such as by increasing diversity content in field experiences and focusing workshops and research colloquia on topics that address diversity among students from underrepresented backgrounds.

The committee notes the program's reaccreditation by 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 program also is approved by the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) to prepare students for licensure as school psychologists. Obtaining the Professional Educator License-School Psychology endorsement requires that students pass an ISBE content examination, and the committee is quite pleased that 100% of students who attempted this examination passed it. In addition, 100% of students who attempted the NASP Praxis Exam needed to obtain the Nationally Certified School Psychologist (NCSP) credential also passed that examination.

The committee congratulates the program for 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 sponsoring several social events for students. It actively supports a climate where peer and faculty interactions are natural dynamics of the two programs; faculty and students attend several events together, such as receptions at professional conferences and social events after program-wide meetings.

The committee commends the faculty for their 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. For future years, we would like to see how many unique students and thus what percentage of program students such impressive numbers of co-authoring and co-presentation entail.

The committee was interested to learn of 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 by individual faculty during annual performance evaluation year. Statements regarding the integration of such efforts were developed in the three areas of evaluation (i.e., teaching, research and creative productivity, and service) to better reward faculty for efforts toward greater 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 is gratified to see the program hosting external speakers on areas of current interest through their annual School Psychology Institute event. 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 program, 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 thanks 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 a 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. Such local recognition, especially within a large college, shows the sensitivity of the faculty to student needs.

Recommendations. The Academic Planning Committee thanks faculty and staff of the Specialist in School Psychology (S.S.P.) 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.

Consider opportunities for program growth. The committee acknowledges the program's statement regarding the shortage of school psychologists in the State of Illinois and 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 situation 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 with 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 it can 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 incorporating 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 administering an exit survey for graduating students, could 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 with 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.