12 December 2013
Overview

The Psychology and Sociology (P&S) Department administers two degree programs, which are being assessed for the 2nd time within an independent department. Prior to the 2011-2012 academic year the Psychology and Sociology programs were resident in the Department of History and Social Sciences (HSS). Program assessment in the 2011-2012 academic years includes but is not limited to, Major Field Tests (MFT) for the disciplines of Psychology and Sociology.

Psychology and Sociology Major Field Test scores were recorded across all venues in the 2011/2012 academic year. Overall, seniors in the P&S degree programs across all venues, Day, Evening, Online, and Nationwide scored within the national mean for these disciplines.

As in previous years, variability in mean scores appeared among psychology seniors throughout the Divisions of the College. Psychology seniors in the Day Program scored significantly above the national mean overall. Psychology seniors in the Evening Program were not different from the national mean. Psychology seniors in the AHE programs generally scored significantly below the national mean and psychology seniors in the Online Program scored significantly below the national mean, although scores varied widely by venue.

Specifically, Day Psychology and Sociology seniors MFT scores were significantly better than their counterparts in Nationwide and Online venues. This does not match up well with average GPA outcomes, however, which suggests that the methods for assessing external venues is flawed or is invalid. The wide variance in scores between instructional venues points at an opportunity to significantly improve our Departmental relationship with Nationwide and Online venues to provide support and guidance to enhance instructional opportunities for students in these programs.

In its second year as an independent department P&S hosted a Faculty Integration Conference during the spring semester 2012 in which we identified curricular and pedagogical strengths and weaknesses and discussed plans to modify course curricula, evaluate teaching and learning assessment methods, modify course rotations, and adapt teaching practices and expectations to meet the expectations of today’s students.

During the conference we explored means to begin to influence instructional outcomes in Online and Nationwide venues. For example, an initiative has begun to improve the Online Program offerings of PSYC 101 by partnering with a publisher to provide pedagogically useful instructional course content and assessment in the online environment. More full-time faculty will be developing new courses on line and
redeveloping existing courses online with the goal of improving pedagogical rigor. These improvements will be ongoing and will eventually include all courses taught in Psychology. Our goal is to provide enhanced and engaging instructional resources for Nationwide and Online instruction.

P&S department has focused attention on curriculum and teaching needs that deal specifically with pedagogical and instructional resource improvements.

Psychology faculty teaching PSYC 495 will continue the practice of identifying reliable indicators of content mastery and deficiency other than the MFT among seniors to record on their Assessment of Major (AM) Forms.

**Degree Program: Psychology** (Undergraduate)

1. Assessment Instruments: Major Field Tests, Program Evaluation. (Senior thesis - proposed if the BS degree is pursued.

2. Students Assessed:
   - Day: 11
   - Evening: 9
   - Online: 103
   - Nationwide: 52

3. Results of Assessment:

   A. MFT Results:
      - National Mean (X) =156.2; Standard Deviation (S) = 14.8

      **DAY**
      - MEAN: 165.9 (±17.8) (n=13) (78th Percentile)

      **EVENING**
      - MEAN: 151.9 (±17.7) (n=14) (31st Percentile)

      **NATIONWIDE**
      - MEAN: 149.4 (±14.0) (n=59) (21st Percentile)

      **ONLINE**
      - MEAN: 146.2.0 (±13.1) (n= 109) (10th Percentile)

   NOTE: Psychology MFT scores vary by campus: ranging from campuses recording individual scores from the 85th percentile to the 20th percentile.
4. Analysis: The Day Psychology and Sociology MFT scores were situated significantly above the national mean, and the Evening campus seniors scored not differently than the national mean. Nationwide and Online scores in Psychology continue to present areas of concern overall. Few individuals score above the national norm and most score well below with some campuses showing significantly poor outcomes.

It is a consensus of the full-time faculty who review adjunct application dossiers and approve teaching appointments that one of the most important ways to address these deficits is to employ highly qualified and inspired instructors. Some of the more remote Nationwide campus locations have difficulty finding highly qualified instructors, but in the Online venue an opportunity exists to seek out and hire the best and most qualified instructors in our disciplines. The credentials of potential faculty members who are trained at on-line universities are still suspect. It will be in our best interest as an institution to avoid hiring faculty from for-profit institutions specifically. It should be noted that student satisfaction with instruction should not be used as a measure of content mastery.

5. Recommendations for Improvement:
   A. Efforts to improve student outcomes in all venues should continue as follows and as indicated in the P&S strategic plan
   B. A long-term effort should be made to improve the performance of faculty in all venues. Improvements might be accomplished by avoiding employing instructors whose degrees are from for-profit institutions and taking greater care in examining the credentials of those whom we employ.

**Degree Program: Sociology (Undergraduate)**

1. Assessment Instruments: Major Field Test.

2. Students Assessed:
   - Day: 6
   - Evening: 0
   - Nationwide: 0
   - Online: 15

3. Results of Assessment:
   A. MFT Results:
      NATIONAL MEAN (X) = 147.6; Standard Deviation (S) = 12.2

      \[
      \text{DAY} \\
      \text{MEAN: 150.5 (8.1) (n=6) (53}^{\text{th}} \text{ percentile)}
      \]

      \[
      \text{AHE} \\
      \text{MEAN: 145.2 (±11.7) (n=15) (40}^{\text{th}} \text{ percentile)}
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4. Analysis: The N is too small to make statements of significance regarding the outcomes of Sociology in any of the venues.

5. Recommendation for Improvement:

   a. Monitor MFT results over time and begin to identify the curricular patterns and teaching practices that seem to be contributing to high student achievement.

   b. Efforts to improve student outcomes in all venues should continue as follows and as indicated in the P&S strategic plan

   c. A long-term effort should be made to improve the performance of faculty in all venues. Improvements might be accomplished by avoiding employing instructors whose degrees are from for-profit institutions and taking greater care in examining the credentials of those whom we employ.