Overview

The Psychology and Sociology (P&S) Department administers two degree programs, which are being assessed for the first time within an independent department. Prior to the 2010-2011 academic year the Psychology and Sociology programs were resident in the Department of History and Social Sciences (HSS). Program assessment in the 2010-2011 academic year include, but are not limited to, Major Field Tests (MFT) for the disciplines of Psychology and Sociology.

A total of 195 Psychology and 21 Sociology Major Field Test scores were recorded across all venues in the 2010/2011 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 were significantly better than their counterparts in Nationwide and Online venues. 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 first year as an independent department P&S has worked on goals and objectives to review and revise, as needed, Major Learning Objectives and Outcomes on all master syllabi in preparation for a program review scheduled for spring semester 2012. Specifically, we have identified curricular and pedagogical strengths and weaknesses and are in the process of modifying course curricula, evaluating teaching and learning assessment methods, modifying course rotations, and adapting teaching practices and expectations to meet the expectations of today’s students.

We are exploring 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. These improvements will be ongoing and will eventually include all courses taught 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
      DAY
      MEAN: 150.5 (8.1) (n=6) (53th percentile)
      AHE
      MEAN: 145.2 (±11.7) (n=15) (40th percentile)
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.
Program Assessment Components and Process

Degree Name: Sociology

Academic Year: 2010 - 2011

Completer of Form: Eric Cunningham, Associate Dean (Academics), AHE

Sources of Evaluative Information:
- Direct: ETS Major Field Test (MFT)
- Indirect: Degree Program Assessment Form (DPAF)

Agency for Program Evaluation / Change: Vice President, Division for Adult Higher Education (AHE)

Assessment Feedback Loop: Sociology is a very small program in AHE, hosted only by the Online Campus. Assessment results and methods to improve the assessment culture are discussed at both Campus Directors' Conferences (Spring & Fall). At the campus level assessment results are discussed at each faculty meeting (minimum of twice yearly at each campus). Assessment results are also an habitual agenda item for the periodic Lead Faculty Member conference calls.

Assessment Goals: No academic program below 30th percentile. No campus below 30th percentile in any discipline.

Feedback Loop Results: National benchmark: Mean = 147.6; Standard Deviation = 12.2. The performance of the AHE Sociology students was satisfactory. The aggregate AHE (n=15; Online Campus only) mean was 145.2, ranking at the 40th percentile.
ANNUAL DEPARTMENT ASSESSMENT REPORT

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: 13
   Evening: 14
   Online: 109
   Nationwide: 59

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
Program Assessment Components and Process

Degree Name: Psychology

Academic Year: 2010-2011

Completer of Form: Eric Cunningham, Associate Dean (Academics), AHE

Sources of Evaluative Information:
- Direct: ETS Major Field Test (MFT)
- Indirect: Degree Program Assessment Form (DPAF)

Agency for Program Evaluation / Change: Vice President, Division for Adult Higher Education (AHE)

Assessment Feedback Loop: As AHE's third largest degree, assessment results in Psychology receive significant attention. This attention is even more focused because AHE students have regularly under-performed on the Psychology MFT. Assessment results and methods to improve the assessment culture are discussed at both Campus Directors' Conferences (Spring & Fall). At the campus level assessment results are discussed at each faculty meeting (minimum of twice yearly at each campus). Additionally, the AHE Associate Dean (Academics) has met annually for several years with the Psychology full-time faculty to determine actions that could improve student outcomes.

Assessment Goals: No academic program below 30th percentile. No campus below 30th percentile in any discipline.

Feedback Loop Results: National benchmark: Mean = 156.3; Standard Deviation = 14.0. In general the performance of the AHE Psychology students continues to be below the national norm. The aggregate AHE (n=172; Evening Campus, Online Campus, Nationwide Campuses) mean was 147.3, ranking at the 29th percentile, below the college goal. Of the 8 campuses with MFT scores this year, 4 scored below the college goal (Online Campus; Orlando, FL; Fort Leonard Wood, MO, Rolla, MO). All except Fort Leonard Wood fell below the goal for a second straight year. The Psychology Department took the proactive step of requiring students to have 18 credit hours of psychology courses beyond the core courses before taking the capstone course. This change in requirement did not apply to most students taking the MFT this year but should help student preparedness in the future. A confounding problem is that students in AHE habitually avoid more rigorous electives such as: Neuroscience; Tests & Measurements; Learning Theories; Cognitive Psychology and Sensation & Perception. These courses are prominent in the MFT content.