

Psychology Department Academic Plan: 2009 -2014

Mission and Aspirations

The Department of Psychology at the University of Wyoming aspires to be a premier department in the social and behavioral sciences. We strive to provide students with training in psychological theory and methods in an atmosphere of intellectual rigor and technical competence. To this end, we promote an understanding of behavior, emotion, and cognition through our strong commitment to excellence in research, teaching, and service. In the exercise of our primary mission the Department of Psychology will:

- Provide a high quality undergraduate major that creates life-long learners and prepares students for highly competitive post-baccalaureate academic programs as well as various employment opportunities in the state, region, and nation.
- Provide courses that promote understanding of behavioral and psychological processes of relevance to the educational programs of other University of Wyoming academic units.
- Serve geographically-bound psychology undergraduate majors through the University of Wyoming Outreach School.
- Provide graduate training for doctoral students in clinical and experimental psychology who will attain positions of leadership in academic, governmental, and service careers.
- Engage in basic and applied research that will yield new, important knowledge in our field and has the potential for translation into practice at the local, state, national, and international levels.
- Provide service to the state of Wyoming through faculty consultation to various Wyoming public and private agencies.

Previous Planning Accomplishments

AP II Goals	Progress
1. Establish and evaluate our undergraduate student assessment plan	Accomplished
2. Establish and evaluate our graduate student assessment plan.	Accomplished
3. Stabilize and maintain sufficient faculty staffing to meet the undergraduate and graduate teaching missions of the department.	In progress
4. Continue implementation of the Clinical Psychology Ph.D. emphasis in Integrated Health Care.	Accomplished
5. Increase Ph.D. production to 7-10 students/year.	In progress
6. Develop and implement an interdisciplinary graduate degree for Psychology students in the Psychology and Law concentration.	No progress
7. Identify interested undergraduates earlier in their college career and offer research opportunities.	No progress
8. Recruit talented community college students to UW by providing an enriched research experience during the summer.	No progress
9. Formalize graduate student training in outreach teaching.	In progress
10. Continue existing development efforts and look for new development opportunities in the future.	On going
11. Host biennial meetings with community college instructors to discuss curriculum and common interests and goals.	On going

Relevant Institutional Issues

The Psychology Department will continue to play crucial roles in the future of the University. The department serves 450 majors on and off campus, including over 40 Ph.D. students and provides courses for 19 programs across five colleges. The department has 14 tenure track and one APL faculty across five fields of psychology, all of whom are research active. Four important themes consistent with *Creation of the Future 3* are emphasized in the current plan.

- 1) The Psychology Department will bolster graduate education, consistent with the Planning Motif, **Building Excellence in Human Capital**, by maintaining its new clinical Ph.D. training emphasis in Integrative Behavioral Health, evaluating the curriculum of the experimental Ph.D. training program, increasing the number of Ph.D. students in both the clinical and experimental Ph.D. programs, and assessing graduate program outcomes (PSYC 1, 3, 9, 10).
- 2) The Psychology Department will improve undergraduate education in the Planning Motif, **Building Excellence in Human Capital**, by increasing research opportunities, formalizing our mentorship of graduate teaching opportunities, and establishing undergraduate course offerings related to diversity (PSYC 4, 5, 6, 7).
- 3) The Psychology Department will contribute to two **Areas of Distinction** articulated in *Creation of the Future*. Within **Life Sciences**, we will seek to hire a replacement biological psychologist who can collaborate with neuroscience faculty to examine human brain functions as related to behavior (Psyc 2). Within **Professions Critical to the State and Region**, graduate students in our clinical psychology Ph.D. training program provide clinical services in Laramie and throughout the state and region through our in-house clinic, fourth year practica, summer clerkships, and year long internships (PSYC 3).
- 4) The Psychology Department will contribute to the **Leadership** Planning Motif by participating in a new **Interdisciplinary Mental Health Collaborative** (PSYC 8A).

The Psychology Department plan is also consistent with each of the **College of Arts & Sciences Planning Themes**.

- 1) *Continue to emphasize the value of a liberal arts education.* The Psychology programs will continue to provide a strong foundation for future learning (PSYC 1A and 1B).
- 2) *Providing foundational knowledge and skills in the liberal arts and sciences to all students at UW.* Consistent with this theme, the Psychology Department will expand opportunities for undergraduates to become involved in research (PSYC 6) and continue evaluating our curriculum (PSYC 1 and 8).
- 3) *Enhance graduate education.* The Psychology Department will expand the depth of our programs and increase the number of Ph.Ds produced. (PSYC 3 and 4)
- 4) *Identify means to improve and expand research.* (PSYC 1 and 10)
- 5) *Incorporate in our curriculum and research the changes that are occurring in Wyoming due to the energy boom.* We will develop new courses to address the energy

boom, the large influx of new workers, and its implications for the people of Wyoming. (PSYC 5A).

- 6) *Demonstrate our appreciation for diverse human perspectives in local, national, and global contexts.* We will develop new courses on diversity issues (PSYC 5B).
- 7) *Emphasize our commitment to interdisciplinarity or multidisciplinary at all degree levels.* The Psychology Department undergraduate curriculum will continue to offer courses needed in other majors and programs.

Psychology Department Action Items for 2009-2014

PSYC 1. Ensuring quality degree programs in Psychology at the BA and PhD levels is an institutional priority. To this end, the Department will offer coursework enabling students to graduate expeditiously.

PSYC 1A. For the undergraduate program, the Department will offer a curriculum competitive with the best of the land grant universities, our comparator institutions. We will explore curriculum changes such as a Bachelor of Sciences curriculum to integrate research training into undergraduate education.

PSYC 1B. We will evaluate outcomes of the curriculum of the Clinical Psychology Ph.D. program. The Experimental Ph.D. Program will focus on integrating the curriculum for students in developmental, social, cognitive, and biological psychology.

PSYC 2. The department will work to maintain sufficient faculty staffing to meet the undergraduate and graduate teaching missions of the department, including faculty across the areas of clinical, developmental, social, biological and cognitive psychology. With current staffing of 8 clinical, 3 developmental, 2 social, 1 biological, 1 cognitive psychologist, and 1 APL, we are able to teach our full undergraduate and graduate curricula. Maintaining sufficient staffing is important to meeting course requirements for the American Psychological Association accreditation of our clinical psychology doctoral training program. Our staffing was cited as a strength in our recent accreditation report in which our program received the maximum of 7 years accreditation.

PSYC 3. The department will increase PhD production with a goal of 7-10 graduates per year. Psychology PhD production is limited primarily by funding availability. The incoming graduate class size in the last 4 years has averaged 6 students (see Appendix A). In the competitive recruiting atmosphere, guaranteed financial support for a full 4 years is necessary for recruiting the highest quality of PhD students. Currently we are unable to make this commitment to prospective students. Although the department will continue to work to increase GA support through the Pasewark fund (see PSYC 6B) and grants, state GAs will be needed to guarantee four years of full funding.

Students in the Clinical Psychology Ph.D. training program also contribute to the Creating the Future Area of Distinction: *Professions critical to the state and region.* Students provide psychological services throughout the city and state at the Sheridan VA, Wyoming State Hospital in Evanston, United Medical Center in Cheyenne, and the Laramie Downtown Clinic. During the academic year, they provide free psychotherapy

services to the residents of Laramie. After graduation, some of our doctoral students remain in Wyoming, often assuming leadership positions in the mental health arena.

PSYC 4. The department will work to develop top teaching skills in our PhD candidates by providing more supervised instructional opportunities during the academic year. This will require four (4) additional State funded GA lines. We will develop and implement a stepwise process of instructing graduate students in teaching. Graduate students will begin by assisting with teaching in a closely supervised Enhanced TA position. They will participate in syllabus development, class planning, grading, and multiple guest lectures with faculty feedback. After completing this Enhanced TA, they will be able to provide independent instruction in a class with capped enrollment with the assistance of another graduate student TA. Additional State funded GA lines are needed as two GA lines are required for each independent instructor position.

PSYC 5. The department will develop more in-depth learning experiences for undergraduates, including smaller class sizes, more writing and laboratory opportunities, more in-class activities, new courses that address our changing culture, and courses that address issues related to the Wyoming energy boom. This will require four (4) additional State funded GA lines and additions to the Instructional Excellence Budget.

PSYC 5A. The department will incorporate in our curriculum and research the changes that are occurring in Wyoming due to the energy boom. Examples of psychological issues include substance abuse and decision making processes related to environmental issues.

PSYC 5B. The department will demonstrate our appreciation for diverse human perspectives in local, national, and global contexts by adding an undergraduate diversity course in cross cultural psychology to fulfill the D course requirement.

In order to accommodate over 400 psychology majors, our faculty regularly teach very large classes. Upper division 3000 level classes are often capped at 125 students and 4000 level classes can have 60 students or more. Our limited pool of TAs is distributed to PSYC 1000 and writing intensive classes, but faculty teaching other large classes do not get TAs. Faculty are reducing or eliminating writing assignments and are unable to provide meaningful written feedback. An increase in the number of state funded Graduate Assistantships would allow us to raise our graduate student enrollments, thereby ensuring more TAs in our large classes. **In addition to providing training in teaching for our graduate students, adding TAs in our large classes would allow our faculty to assess, critique, and improve, student writing.** Also, TAs could lead smaller sections of classes as instructors of record (see PSYC 4).

PSYC 6. The department will work to provide research opportunities to more interested undergraduate majors earlier in their college career. Student enrolling in research credits in PSYC 4855 are disproportionately seniors. Plans to recruit sophomores and juniors include targeting PSYC 2000 (Research Methods) students and Psi Chi Psychology Honors Society members as well as advertising research lab information in the department office and enhancing lab web sites. Once in labs, students will be encouraged to conduct senior theses.

PSYC 7. The department will continue to facilitate the transition of students from community colleges to the university. Consistent with *Creation of the Future 2* Planning Motif of **Improving Access to Higher Education**, we will continue to maintain collaborative ties with community college instructors by hosting biannual meetings to discuss curriculum issues and goals.

PSYC 8. The department will demonstrate our commitment to interdisciplinarity.

PSYC 8A. The Psychology department will join other UW units to form an **Interdisciplinary Mental Health Collaborative**. A preliminary meeting with representatives from WYSAC, Nursing, and Social Work was held to begin development of a Behavioral Health Interdepartmental Initiative. We plan to continue these discussions.

PSYC 8B. The department will continue to maintain our role in interdisciplinary programs including the Early Childhood Development program. We will expand collaborative possibilities with the Early Childhood Mental Health Certification Programs and the Wyoming Geriatric Education Program (WyGEC).

PSYC 9. The department will continue implementing undergraduate and graduate student assessment plans. We will continue to use the Psychology Department Assessment of Student Learning Test to identify strengths and weaknesses in our curriculum on and off campus. Likewise, assessment of our graduate program will focus on meeting program milestones and follow-up of five year outcomes.

PSYC 10. The department will continue existing development efforts such as the Pasewark fund and look for new development opportunities in the future. The Pasewark fund will be used to support a GA. We will continue to look for other creative opportunities to fund graduate students, including grant funding.

PSYC 11. Consider moving the department to a Behavioral Sciences Division within the College of Arts & Sciences. Psychology will explore joining a new division with Anthropology and other social sciences with similar goals and interests.

Implementation Plan

Action Item	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Ongoing
PSYC 1	1A			1B		
PSYC 2						X
PSYC 3					X	
PSYC 4			X			
PSYC 5		5B		5A		
PSYC 6			X			
PSYC 7						X
PSYC 8	8A/B					
PSYC 9						X
PSYC 10						X
PSYC 11					X	

Appendix A

Psychology Graduate Student Data

Year	Incoming Class	GRE V+Q of Incoming Class	Number of Applicants	Number of PhDs Produced
2008	5	1262	82	NA
2007	7	1239	109	8
2006	5	1228	84	10
2005	7	1147	95	5
2004	9	1232	78	2