***STUDENT LEARNING ASSESSMENT PROGRAM***

***SUMMARY FORM AY 2013-2014***

B.A. Psychology

**Degree and**

**Program Name:**

**John Mace, Department Chair;** Prepared by Jeffrey Stowell, Psychology Department Assessment Committee Chair

# Submitted By:

## PART ONE

| What are the learning objectives? | How, where, and when are they assessed? | What are the expectations? | What are the results? | Committee/ person responsible?  How are results shared? |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **1. Content Area Knowledge**: Students will demonstrate knowledge and understanding representing appropriate breadth and depth in the primary content areas of psychology. | a) Our locally developed **Psychology Comprehensive Exam** (PCE) is administered to graduating seniors during their last semester on campus; it became a graduation requirement with the 2007 catalog. [direct measure] | a) At least half of the students will score at least 50% on the PCE. | a) Expectations were met. Out of 115 students who expected to graduate this year, 105 took the PCE. Their mean score on the multiple choice portion, which measures content knowledge, was 60%. The mean score on the short answer portion (critical thinking) was 71%. Overall, 77% of students exceeded a score of 50% on the PCE. | a, b) Results will be shared with all psychology faculty and outcomes in specific domains discussed. |
|  | b) Starting with the 2008 catalog, students must complete a Capstone Course after having completed 90 semester hours and PSY3805 (Research Methods). **Capstone course** students are assessed on their ability to “Engage Original Primary Literature in Psychology.” [direct measure] | b) At least 70% of the students should be deemed at least “competent" (3 on a 4 point scale) in their ability to engage original literature in psychology | b) Expectations were met. Across AY 2013-2014, 9 different faculty completed capstone assessments on a total of 103 different students. 94% of the students evaluated were judged to be competent or highly competent in their ability to engage original literature in psychology. |  |
|  | c) Our **Exit Survey**, administered to graduating seniors, has students report their perceived mastery of subject matter in the major psychology domain areas covered in our curriculum (i.e., abnormal/social, biopsychology, cognitive/learning, and developmental) | c) 70% of graduating seniors will indicate being somewhat confident in their ability to give a presentation based on information learned from courses in the major domains, and overall mean scores will be above 2.8 (i.e., mean rating on a 4 point scale). | c) Expectations were met **for four out of six domains assessed.** Out of 115 graduating students in 2013-2014, 68 (59%) took the Exit Survey. The following percentage of those graduating students indicated feeling at least “somewhat confident” in the following domain areas: 90% in abnormal (M = 3.61), 76% in social (M = 3.33), 45**%** in biopsychology (M = 2.55), 48% in cognitive (M = 2.51), 81% in learning (M = 3.43, and 82% in developmental (M = 3.36). | c) Results will be disseminated to the department curriculum committee and the rest of the faculty. Explanations for consistently lower scores in biopsychology and cognitive domains will be explored. |
|  | d) Students completing undergraduate internships (PSY4275) are administered an **Internship Evaluation**. | d) At least 70% of the interns should agree that their knowledge base has increased in the understanding and application of psychological theories. | d). Expectations were met. There were 17 students who completed an internship experience in 2013-2014. Of these, 82% agreed or strongly agreed that, as a result of their internship, they had a greater understanding of psychological theories and concepts, and 94% agreed or strongly agreed that they had a greater understanding of the application of psychological theories to “real world” cases and work settings. | d) Will review results with Internship Coordinator and faculty. Results will be useful for Orientation to Internship course and internship site supervisors.  **COMMITTEE/**  **PERSON RESPONSIBLE:**  Assessment Committee, Internship Coordinator, Faculty teaching Capstone courses, and Faculty supervising internships |
| **2. Research**: Students will demonstrate skills in designing and conducting research, analyzing data, and interpreting results in the context of current theories in psychology. | a) Posters developed by students enrolled in Research Methods (PSY3805) classes are rated by independent faculty judges (excluding Research Methods instructors), using our **Poster Evaluation** instrument, on their Methods, Results, & Discussion sections, during each semester’s Research Methods Forum. [direct measure] | a) The mean ratings for the Methods, Results, and Discussion sections of the posters will indicate a level of effectiveness equal to or higher than “Somewhat Effective” (a minimum rating of 4 on a 6 point scale). | a) Expectations were met. Across the academic year 2013-2014, 10 faculty were randomly assigned posters to evaluate. (Some posters represented projects by more than 1 student). Posters were rated as effective in the areas of Methods (M = 4.67), Results (M = 4.89), and Discussion/Conclusion (M =4.61). | a, b, c, d) Results will be used to provide feedback to Research Methods instructors to assist in developing more systematic research methods instruction for students across all sections. |
|  | b) **Capstone course** students are assessed on their ability to “Engage Original Primary Literature in Psychology.” [direct measure] | b) At least 70% of the students should be deemed competent (3 or a 4 point scale) in their ability to engage original literature in psychology. | b) Expectations were met. Across AY 2013-2014, 9 different faculty people completed capstone assessments on a total of 103 different students. 94% of the students evaluated were judged to be competent or highly competent in their ability to engage original literature in psychology. |  |
|  | c) Students who conduct research are asked to complete a **Student Researcher Survey** rating their research skills. These students include Research Methods (PSY3805) students, students earning independent study (PSY3900) and supervised research (PSY4100) credit, and departmental honors students (PSY4444 and PSY4644). | c) At least 70% of the students conducting research will agree that participation in research improved their understanding of research methodology and statistics skills. | c) Expectations were met. Across semesters, there were 107 responses to the Student Researcher Survey. Of those, 97 (91%) agreed or strongly agreed that their understanding of research methodology improved, and 82 (77%) agreed or strongly agreed that their statistics skills improved. | c, d, e) Results will be used to provide feedback to Research Methods instructors, faculty research advisors and honors program coordinator to assist and improve students’ research experience. |
|  | d) On the **Exit Survey**, students indicate their perceived skill development with respect to research. | d) At least 70% of graduating students will indicate at least “some” skill development in research and at least 70% will agree that their ability to conduct research improved as a consequence of being a psychology major. | d) Expectations were met: Based on the Spring 2014 Exit Survey responses, 97% of respondents indicated at least “some” skill development in research skills, and 96% agreed that their ability to conduct research improved as a consequence of being a psychology major. |  |
|  | e) The number of **students conducting Independent Study** (PSY3900), **Supervised Research** (PSY4100),and **Honors Theses** (PSY4444 and PSY4644) projects is monitored. | e) At least 15% of ALL majors should be involved in Independent Study or Supervised Research. | e) Expectations were **not** met. In Fall 2013, out of our total number of 468 majors, 24 were enrolled in PSY 3900, 5 in PSY 4100, and 6 in PSY 4444 for a total of 35 students (7.5%). Out of 425 majors in Spring 2014, 17 were enrolled in PSY 3900, 15 in PSY 4100, and 5 in PSY 4644 for a total of 37 students (8.7%). | e) Faculty advisors will continue to encourage students to engage in independent research. |
|  | f) The number of **students disseminating research** (students in PSY4100 or PSY4644) presenting at psychological research conferences or publishing articles is monitored. | f) At least 50% of students completing Supervised Research or Honors Theses will present and/or publish their results. | f) Expectations were met. Of the 20 students enrolled in these courses in Spring 2014, 16 (80%) made a conference presentation. | f) Faculty advisors will continue to encourage students to present their research at undergraduate and professional conferences and to submit research manuscripts for publication. |
|  | g) The number of **research awards and grants** obtained by undergraduate students is monitored. | g) At least 30% of students completing Supervised Research or Honors Theses apply for research awards and grants. | g) Expectations were met: Out of 20 students enrolled in PSY 4100 (Supervised Research) or PSY 4644 (Honors Thesis) in Spring 2014, 1 student had applied for a SURE Award (and received it). 1 student applied for a Social Science Writing Award (did not win). In AY 2013-2014, four Psychology students received Undergraduate Research and Scholarship Awards (URSCA), out of 8 who applied. Altogether, 9 students out 20 (45%) competed for these Awards. | g) Faculty advisors will continue to nominate students for research awards and to encourage students to seek out grants and other funding opportunities.  **COMMITTEE/PERSON RESPONSIBLE:**  Assessment Committee, Research Methods faculty, Faculty poster judges, and Faculty supervising student research. |
| **3. Technology:** Students will demonstrate familiarity with computer technologies used in conducting psychological research and learning psychological principles. | a) Students who conduct research (PSY3805, PSY3900, PSY4100, PSY4444 and PSY4644) are asked to complete a **Student Researcher Survey** rating their computer/technical skills. | a) At least 70% of the students conducting research will indicate that participation in research improved their computer/technical skills | a) Expectations were met. Of the 107 responses to the Student Researcher Survey, 84 (79%) agreed or strongly agreed that their computer/technical skills improved as a result of conducting and/or assisting with research. | a, b) Results will be used to provide feedback to all faculty  **COMMITTEE/**  **PERSON RESPONSIBLE:**  Assessment Committee, Research methods faculty, and Faculty supervising student research |
|  | b) On the **Exit Survey**, students indicate their perceived skill development with respect to electronic communication skills, computer/technical skills, and confidence using statistical computer program(s). | b) At least 70% of graduating students will indicate at least “some” skill development in electronic communication and computer/technical skills; at least 70% will indicate they are at least somewhat confident in their ability to use a statistical computer program. | b) Expectations were **mostly met**: Of the 68 Exit Survey responses from graduating seniors this year, 84% indicated at least “some” skill development in electronic communication skills. Moreover, 85% reported some skill development with respect to computer/technical skills. However, only 60% (below criterion) were at least somewhat confident in their ability to use a statistical computer program. |  |
| **4. Critical Thinking:** Students will demonstrate critical thinking skills with regards to psychology. | a) Students who conduct research (PSY3805, PSY3900, PSY4100, PSY4444 and PSY4644) are asked to complete a **Student Researcher Survey** rating their critical thinking skills. | a) At least 70% of the students conducting research will indicate that participation in research improved their critical thinking skills | a) Expectations were met: 94% of student researchers agreed that their critical thinking skills improved as a result of conducting and/or assisting with research. | a, b, c, d, e) Results will be shared with all faculty.  **COMMITTEE/**  **PERSON RESPONSIBLE:**  Assessment Committee, Research methods faculty, Faculty supervising student research, and all faculty |
|  | b) On the **Exit Survey**, students indicate their perceived skill development with respect to critical thinking. | b) At least 70% of graduating students will indicate at least “some” skill development in critical thinking. | b) Expectations were met: Based on the Exit Survey responses, 96% of graduating students indicated at least “some” skill development in critical thinking due to being a psychology major. |  |
|  | c) **Capstone course** students are assessed on their ability to think critically about psychology: “Students will demonstrate critical and integrative thinking pertaining to psychology (e.g., use the scientific approach to solve problems related to affect, behavior, and mental processes).” [direct measure] | c) At least 70% of the students should be deemed competent (3 on a 4 point scale) in their critical thinking about psychology. | c) Expectations were met: 92% of the students evaluated were judged to be competent or highly competent in their critical thinking skills. The mean was 3.29. |  |
|  | d) The results for psychology students taking the **Watson-Glaser test** is monitored. [direct measure] | d) Psychology students will meet or exceed the average score across all students. | d) Expectations were met. In the Fall 2013 semester, the average total composite score of the 45 Psychology majors taking the test was 24.73, which was slightly above the average of all 677 students taking the test (24.62). In the Spring 2014 semester, the average total composite score of the 52 Psychology majors taking the test was 23.21, which was below the average of all 686 students taking the test (24.16). |  |
|  | e) Posters developed by students enrolled in Research Methods (PSY3805) classes are rated by independent faculty judges (excluding Research Methods instructors), using our **Poster Evaluation** instrument, on their Critical Thinking ability, during each semester’s Research Methods Forum. [direct measure] | e) The mean ratings for the Methods, Results, and Discussion sections of the posters will indicate a level of effectiveness equal to or higher than “Somewhat Effective” (a minimum rating of 4 on a 6 point scale). | e) Expectations were met. Across the academic year 2013-2014, 10 faculty were randomly assigned student posters to evaluate. Poster were rated as effective in the area of Critical Thinking (M = 4.88). |  |
| **5. Communication:** Students will demonstrate the ability to communicate information about psychology effectively. | a) Students’ (PSY3805) ability to orally communicate the results of their statistical analyses is assessed by individuals attending the Research Methods Forum using the **Attendee Evaluation Form**. [direct measure] | a) The mean ratings for the students’ ability to clearly communicate understanding of the background/rationale, methodology/ design and the results/implications of the study will be “somewhat effective” or above (A minimum rating of 4 on a 6 point agreement scale.) | a) Expectations were met. Across AY 2013-2014, there were 55 **faculty** attendee ratings of research methods posters. Overall, the faculty attendees rated the students as effective in discussing the background/rationale (M = 5.11), methodology/design (M = 5.17) and results/implications (M = 5.15). | a, b, c, d, e, f) Results will be used to provide feedback to all faculty  **COMMITTEE/**  **PERSON RESPONSIBLE:**  Assessment Committee; Poster attendee judges, Research methods faculty; Faculty supervising student research, all faculty |
|  | b) **Capstone course** students are assessed on their ability to Write Effectively about Psychology.” [direct measure] | b) At least 70% of the students should be deemed competent (3 on a 4 point scale) in their ability to write effectively about psychology. | b) Expectations were met: 86% of student evaluated were judged to be competent or highly competent to write effectively about Psychology. |  |
|  | c) **Capstone course** students are assessed on their ability to present information orally: Students will demonstrate the ability to communicate information about psychology effectively in an oral format (e.g., conference presentation, debate, and lecture) and for various purposes (e.g., informing, defending, explaining, persuading, arguing, teaching). [direct measure] | c) At least 70% of the students should be deemed competent (3 on a 4 point scale) in their ability to present information orally. | c) Expectations were met: 96% of the students evaluated were judged to be competent or highly competent to communicate about Psychology effectively in an oral format. |  |
|  | d) Students who conduct research (PSY3805, PSY3900, PSY4100, PSY4444 and PSY4644) are asked to complete a **Student Researcher Survey** rating their written communication skills. | d) At least 70% of the students conducting research will indicate that participation in research improved their communication skills | d) Expectations were met: 77% of the students agreed that their oral communication skills improved and 91% agreed that their written communication skills had improved as a result of conducting or assisting with research. |  |
|  | e) On the **Exit Survey**, students indicate their perceived skill development with respect to oral and written communication. | e) At least 70% of graduating students will indicate at least “some” skill development in oral and written communication. | e) Expectations were met: Based on the 2013-2014 Exit Survey responses, 76% of students indicated that their oral communication skills improved at least “some”; 87% agreed that their written communication skills had improved at least “some.” |  |
|  | f) Posters developed by students enrolled in Research Methods (PSY3805) classes are rated by independent faculty judges (excluding Research Methods instructors), using our **Poster Evaluation** instrument, on their Writing Ability, including APA style and grammatical knowledge, during each semester’s Research Methods Forum. [direct measure] | f) The mean ratings on the Writing Clarity scale of the Poster Evaluation instrument will indicate a level of effectivness equal to or higher than “Somewhat Effective” (a minimum rating of 4 on a 6 point scale).. | f) Expectations were met. Across the academic year 2013-2014, 10 faculty were randomly assigned posters to evaluate. (Some posters represented projects by more than 1 student). Posters were rated, on average, as “Effective” in the areas of APA format (M = 5.06) and Writing Clarity (M = 4.83). |  |
| **6. Global Citizenship /Ethical Behavior:** Students will interact effectively, sensitively, and ethically with people from diverse backgrounds and demonstrate understanding of the sociocultural contexts that influence individual differences | a) Students completing undergraduate internships (PSY4275) have their supervisors complete a **Supervisor's Internship Evaluation**. [direct measure] | a) At least 70% of the interns should be evaluated by internship supervisors as being ‘good’ or better in their ability to understand the problems of others, accept options & actions different from their own, and work with diverse populations. | a) Expectations were met. Out of 17 students who completed an internship during AY 2013-2014, 15 were evaluated by their onsite supervisor. Supervisors evaluated interns as being ‘good’ or better in their ability to understand the problems of others (93%), accept options & actions different from their own (93%), and work with diverse populations (88%). | a, b) Will review results with Internship Coordinator and faculty. Results will be useful for Orientation to Internship course and internship site supervisors. |
|  | b) Students completing undergraduate internships (PSY4175) are administered an **Internship Evaluation**. | b) At least 70% of the interns should agree that they have a greater understanding of the importance and application of ethical principles in psychology, have learned more about ethical judgments, and have a greater appreciation for diversity, particularly for agency consumers with either psychological disorders, family and emotional problems, or economic hardship. | b) Expectations were met. 100% of interns who responded either agreed or strongly agreed that their understanding of the importance and application of ethical principles has increased, as did their appreciation for diversity |  |
|  | c) Students completing study abroad experiences are administered a **Study Abroad Assessment**. | c) The mean ratings will indicate that students at least agree to being more receptive to different ideas & ways of seeing the world, having an increased tolerance of others, and greater interest in social issues (a minimum rating of 4 on a 5 point scale). | c) Some logistical and technical problems occurring in calendar year 2013 prevented us from gathering these data. A more complete explanation can be found Part II, previous plans addressed, point 1. A possible direction forward is described in Part III, what have we learned, point 4. | c) No results to share. |
|  | d) Students who conduct research (PSY3805, PSY3900, PSY4100, PSY4444 and PSY4644) are asked to complete a **Student Researcher Survey** rating their teamwork/interpersonal skills. | d) At least 70% of the students conducting research will indicate that participation in research improved their teamwork/ interpersonal skills. | d) Expectations were met: 83% of students agreed or strongly agreed that their teamwork/interpersonal skills improved. | d, e) Results will be used to provide feedback to all faculty.  **COMMITTEE/**  **PERSON RESPONSIBLE:**  Assessment Committee, Internship Coordinator, Study Abroad faculty, and Faculty supervising internships |
|  | e) On the **Exit Survey**, students indicate their perceived skill development with respect to teamwork/interpersonal skills, and their learning in how to interact effectively, sensitively, and ethically with people from diverse backgrounds. | e) At least 70% of graduating students will indicate at least “some” development in teamwork/interpersonal skills, and agree that they have learned how to interact effectively, sensitively, and ethically with people from diverse backgrounds. | e) Expectations were met: 91% of students agreed or strongly agreed that their teamwork/interpersonal skills had developed; 96% agreed to some extent that they had learned how to interact effectively, sensitively, and ethically with people from diverse backgrounds. |  |
| **7. Integrative Learning**: Students will demonstrate the ability to connect knowledge gained in Psychology coursework, internships and research experiences, and will reflect on such learning with meaning and purpose as part of their intellectual and personal development. | a) Our locally developed **Psychology Comprehensive Exam** (PCE) has been modified to include two short answer essay questions that will measure the student’s ability to vertically **connect** learning occurring in different courses in the curriculum. [direct measure] | a) Essay responses were scored using a standardized rubric. Average student performance will be at least at 50%, indicating that the students can connect at least half of the terms used in the short-answer essays. | 1. a) Expectations were met. For the 2013-2014 year, the mean percent correct was 71% for students who completed the essay questions. | a, b) Results will be shared with Psychology Department Curriculum Committee for discussion of ways to increase “scaffolding” in the curriculum to enable students to see and comprehend connections in curricular knowledge. |
|  | b) Posters developed by students enrolled in Research Methods (PSY3805) classes are rated by independent faculty judges (excluding Research Methods instructors), using our **Poster Evaluation** instrument, on their Integrative Learning ability, during each semester’s Research Methods Forum. [direct measure] | b) The mean ratings for the Integrative Learning capabilities of the students will indicate a level of effectiveness equal to or higher than “Somewhat Effective” (a minimum rating of 4 on a 6 point scale). Integrative Learning was rated by evaluators using Integrative Learning guidelines provided on the Provost’s website. This information was provided directly to the evaluators at the time of their assessment. | 1. b) Expectations were met. Across the academic year 2013-2014, 10 faculty were randomly assigned posters to evaluate. (Some posters represented projects by more than 1 student). Posters were rated as effective in the area of Integrative Learning (M = 4.90). | **COMMITTEE/**  **PERSON RESPONSIBLE:** Assistant Chair,  Assessment Committee, Unit A and Unit B Faculty teaching primarily upper-division courses, Faculty teaching Capstone courses. |

## PART TWO

Describe what your program’s assessment accomplishments since your last report was submitted. Discuss ways in which you have responded to the CASA Director’s comments on last year’s report or simply describe what assessment work was initiated, continued, or completed.

### Previous Plans Addressed

1. In previous reports, we have noted that we have had some technical difficulties acquiring data from 1) the Onsite Supervisor of the Student Internship Experience (PSY 4275), 2) the Student Internship Evaluation, and 3) students taking our Study-Abroad Experience. After working with the Department Internship Coordinator, the first of these problems has been solved. The student’s application for internship now includes a space for the student to include his or her Onsite Supervisor’s email address. Near the end of the internship, we send the supervisors a link to the *Onsite Supervisor’s Survey* in Qualtrics, enabling them to fill out the survey online. When the responses are submitted, Qualtrics generates an automated email containing the supervisor’s responses that are sent to the Department Internship Coordinator who can forward the email to the faculty supervisor, who reviews it with the student intern. In Academic Year 2013-2014, using this process, we were able to gather Onsite Supervisor data on 88% of our undergraduate interns (we use this information to make a direct assessment of our Global Citizenship Goal 6a), and the process is working to everyone’s satisfaction. Moving all of our assessment tools (except the Psychology Comprehensive Exam) into Qualtrics provides a collaborative environment where members of the assessment committee can share surveys with each other, and have easy access to the necessary data. Thus, the second problem has also been solved. The third problem regarding the Study-Abroad Experience may not be so easily solved. In AY 2012-2013 (i.e., Summer 2012), the Psychology Department teacher for this course, and the person who gathered the data that we use for Global Citizenship Goal 6c, Dr. Mike Havey, was prevented from teaching the course due to an injury. Although we were optimistic that Dr. Havey would be able to return to teaching the Multi-Cultural Awareness course in the Netherlands in Summer 2013, and thus resume data gathering, unfortunately, it now appears that Dr. Havey will no longer be able to staff this course. Psychology is no longer playing a role in the offering of the course. The Assessment Committee will need to rethink its evaluation of Goal 6c. Fortunately, in every crisis, there is an opportunity for growth, and some future possibilities are outlined in Part III, Plans for the Future, point 5.
2. In our previous plans we had addressed what might be required to increase the numbers of our most capable students to apply for the grants and Awards for which they are eligible, such as URSCA, SURE, and Social Science Writing Awards. We track these numbers and use them for assessment in Research Goal 2g. In AY 2011-2012 we did **not** meet our goal of having 30% of our students enrolled in Supervised Research (PSY 4100) or Honors Thesis (PSY 4644) apply for such grants. However, we addressed this by encouraging faculty members supervising such research projects to make their students aware of such opportunities. We are pleased to report that we **met our criterion** in Research Goal 2g in AY 2012-2013 with 39% of the eligible students applying for URSCA, SURE, or Social Science Writing Awards, and again in 2013-2014 (45%). We also had a pretty high hit rate too, with about half of our URSCA applicants receiving an Award.
3. Across Academic Year 2011-2012, we had 50 instances of faculty directly interviewing students at their posters and making assessments of communication skills (Direct Measure of Goal 5a). As an incentive for faculty participation, the Chair of the Assessment Committee writes a letter of commendation for each faculty member who works as either a poster evaluator or as a faculty attendee, and the faculty members are told about this when they are asked via email to volunteer as either a poster judge or a faculty attendee. Thanks to cooperation from the members of the Departmental Personnel Committee, the letter counts as documentation for faculty service obligations in their portfolios. We continued to use this mechanism as a way of increasing faculty involvement in the assessment program in Academic Year 2012-2013. Did this promise of a “credential letter” serve to increase participation in Academic Year 2012-2013, and beyond? Looking at levels of support among faculty for doing either the poster evaluations or serving as a faculty attendee, we see that the number of faculty serving as poster evaluators is similar (10 in 2011-2012, 11 in 2012-2013, 10 in 2013-2014). The number of faculty attendee interviews dropped from 50 instances in AY 2011-2012, to 44 in AY 2012-2013, then went up to 55 in 2013-2014. Our faculty participation appears to be consistent, but we are also pleased to be welcoming two junior faculty next year that can be recruited to participate.
4. For the last several years, going back to AY 2010-2011 at least, the Assessment Committee has been seeking to establish a regular plan for posting the yearly Assessment Report on the Department website, along with the CASA director’s comments. We still haven’t been able to get this done for a number of reasons. The Assessment Committee chair simply needs to do a better job of communicating with the Department website caretaker to get the information up on the site where is available for faculty reviewing. However, now that the Assessment Committee Chair also manages the website, these reports will be regularly posted! Please see Part III, Plans for the Future, point 4 for a more detailed and concrete discussion of the planning process that will be implemented to accomplish this goal.
5. Our previous plans have noted that we did not have very many direct assessments of writing. We initiated another direct assessment of writing (Goal 5f) in AY 2012-2013, along with a new direct assessment of Critical Thinking (Goal 4e), and a new direct assessment of Integrative Learning (Goal 7b). We have modified our Poster Evaluation instrument to capture the data for these goals. The poster evaluation seems like a good opportunity to for this assessment. The students prepare these posters in their Research Methods course (PSY 3805) which is a required course for Psychology majors that students tend to take near the conclusion of their studies. Please see Specific Responses to CASA Director’s Report, point 2, for a more complete discussion of the findings from this new measure of writing competency.
6. In our AY 2011-2012 report, we noted that we would attempt to develop a better mechanism for identifying, and coding student presentations of original research, which we use to measure performance in support of Research Goal 2f (student dissemination of research). We did substantially better this year by changing our data gathering process. A member of the Assessment Committee who also serves as the Faculty Advisor to Psi Chi (Dr. Cari Brito) gathered the information about student presentation of research from faculty members via email. This list of student presentations was cross-checked and corroborated by the Chair of the Assessment Committee against the conference program. Our more accurate data gathering system showed that we met our criterion in this area for the past two years!

### Specific Responses to CASA Director’s Report

1. On our previous submitted report (AY 2011-2012), Karla Sanders, CASA Director, raised a question about the number of students on whom we were basing our assessment of competence in Global Citizenship (Goal 6), and suggested that it may be a relatively smallish percentage of our students who are actually being assessed on the Global Citizenship goal. This has become a persistent issue for us in Psychology, and has prompted us to begin thinking about a new direction for us in assessing the Global Citizenship goal (more about that later). Regarding our overall numbers of students who are directly assessed on our Global Citizenship goal reveals a couple of problems. First, the only actual direct assessment we have for Global Citizenship is the Onsite Internship Supervisor’s direct assessment (Goal 6a). In the past, we have had problems getting the form into the hands of the Onsite supervisor, and then getting the form back to us. We’ve addressed that problem with new procedures and a more clearly delineated chain of communications, and seemingly solved it. For example, this year (AY 2012-2013) we harvested Onsite Supervisors Evaluations from nearly 70% of the all the students who did an undergraduate Internship (76% in 2013-2014). That’s the good news. The less-good news is that, as Dr. Sanders suggested, the number of undergraduates who actually complete the internship program is small (in AY 2012-2013, 27 students completing the internship, which is about 5.8% of our majors, based on average of 460 majors). Based on the Onsite Supervisor’s data, the Psychology Department is doing an excellent job of fostering Global Citizenship, as indicated by cultural sensitivity, and ability to work with diverse populations, with 88+% of the interns being rated “good” or higher on these dimensions by the Onsite Supervisor’s direct assessment. The students who take the Exit Survey in Psychology, which offers an indirect measure of Global Citizenship (Goal 6e) supports the data from the Onsite Supervisors, with 92% of the graduating seniors who took the survey agreeing that they had learned how to interact effectively, sensitively, and ethically with people from diverse backgrounds as a result of their training in Psychology. The number of students who take the Exit Survey is much higher than the number of internship students, and this fact suggests that there are other venues in the Psychology program where students are encountering information about Global Citizenship, and learning about it. However, the fact remains that we probably do need a direct assessment of Global Citizenship that touches on more than just the 4-5% of our students who are going to do an internship in any given year.
2. There has been an ongoing discussion in the department among the members of the Assessment Committee, other departmental faculty, and the CASA Director, about the assessment of writing in the capstone course, in comparison to the assessment of writing competency that is emerging from other assessment measures. For example, using a direct measure of writing effectiveness based on the Capstone course (Goal 5b) a somewhat astonishing 96% of our students in 2012-2013 (86% in 2013-2014) were evaluated as competent or highly competent in writing about Psychology. This assessment is comparable to the students’ self-reported ratings of writing competence. On the Student Researcher Survey, (Goal 5d) approximately 75-80% of the students across the two semesters of AY 2012-2013 agreed that their writing skills had improved by virtue of their having been a Psychology major (91% in 2013-2014). To investigate this relationship further, in AY 2012-2013, the poster evaluation instrument was modified to include an additional direct assessment of writing clarity. The results indicated that the poster evaluators found that the posters had been generally clearly written (5.41 on a 7-point scale). This slight-to-moderate discrepancy between assessment of Writing Competence based on the posters, and the assessment number on the Capstone course might reflect the fact that the students who are doing posters are generally juniors, and the people in the capstone course are by definition seniors. Still, even though the ratings are not identical for the different groups, by at least two direct measures, and several indirect measures, there seems to be substantial agreement that our students are learning to write effectively about Psychology, even though, at the level of tests, term papers, and other class materials, many Psychology faculty appear to be dissatisfied with the overall quality of writing done by Psychology majors.
3. In the ongoing dialogue about Technology assessment, the CASA Director noted that the difficulty the students have in keeping statistical skills or data analytic skills honed (and this is where we were encountering lower numbers in Technology assessment, rather than with electronic communication overall). It is difficult to keep these types of statistical skills honed, but we thought we had a good plan for doing so. Specifically, with our course sequence set up so that students would learn statistical skills and the use of statistical software in our basic Stat course (PSY 2610), followed by the implementation of the stat software in the Research Methods course (PSY 3805), culminating in the design and analysis of data in an independent study in the Capstone course, we believed that we had a sound plan to keep the statistical skills that are learned, honed. However, the indirect assessment numbers we collect for Technology Goal 3a and Technology Goal 3b tell us that the students are actually only just at, or slightly below, the criteria level we have established for knowledge in operating statistical software. Even though we think we have a solid plan for enabling the students to learn data analytic skills with a software package, there are a couple of issues for us. First, we don’t have a high enough percentage of students taking that last step and actually doing research involving statistical analysis. Our objectives call for 15% of our students to be involved in Independent Study or Supervised Research type courses, but the numbers are not that high; tending to be in the 8-11% range. The other issue is that the statistics course and the research methods course both tend to rotate among a number of different faculty who have very different ideas about how to teach the course, and whether to include a single statistical package for analyzing the data. It could be the case that, as the Assessment Committee percolates the data out there to the departmental faculty, a consensus may emerge about the need for one standard statistical software package to be adopted. Until or unless we do so, we are likely to struggle to meet the criterion in this area. With some new faculty teaching this course, we are more likely to have some agreement.

## PART THREE

Summarize changes and improvements in **curriculum, instruction, and learning** that have resulted from the implementation of your assessment program. How have you used the data? What have you learned? In light of what you have learned through your assessment efforts this year and in past years, what are your plans for the future?

### What have we learned?

1. For the last several years, actually going back to AY 2008-2009, the mean of the critical thinking scores of Psychology students, as measured by the Watson-Glaser test, has been within a fractional point of the University average. The University average is not particularly lofty: Objectively, the average score on the Watson-Glaser would translate into no better than a “C” or even a “D” as a course grade. However, we seem to see an incongruity between the critical thinking ability of our students as measured by the Watson-Glaser, and the two direct measures of assessment that we have developed in the Department. Our first direct measure of critical thinking is based on an assessment made by faculty members teaching our Capstone courses. Faculty assessment of critical thinking in the Capstone classes in AY 2012-2014 indicated a somewhat incredible 92% of students who were rated at least “competent” (3 or higher on a 4 point scale) by faculty in Critical Thinking (Goal 4c), with a mean rating of 3.29 out of 4 (a ratio of .82). In AY2012-2013, we added a second direct measure of critical thinking based on faculty assessment of critical thinking shown on the posters at our Research Forum (Goal 4e). These posters are created by students in their Research Methods classes each semester, a required class for our majors, and hence a representative snapshot of our majors. Faculty assessing critical thinking on the posters rated the students in AY 2012-2013 at a mean of 5.5 on a 7-point scale (a ratio of .79), and in 2013-2014 at a mean of 4.88 on a 6-point scale (a ratio of .81). Thus, our faculty rate our students’ critical thinking skills as good, when, according to the Watson-Glaser, they are mediocre at best. What is creating this apparent discrepancy between faculty ratings of critical thinking on our direct measures and the Watson-Glaser results? One hypothesis is that what we are seeing is a discrepancy between “domain-general” and “domain-specific” thinking skills. These terms refer to a well-founded distinction in the cognitive science of reasoning: In a contextual environment in which people have a modicum of knowledge-based expertise, people can use this knowledge to reason accurately. In situations in which people are placed in “decontextualized” or abstract reasoning environments, in which personal knowledge cannot be brought to bear, their reasoning performance declines. The Psychology Department has been just as guilty as any other department about looking at the Watson-Glaser scores and concluding that the sky is falling. However, given that most reasoning and critical thinking occurs in the context of a profession in the real world, it may be the case that the institution has a whole has put too much emphasis on the Watson-Glaser scores as the defining measure of critical thinking skills.
2. For the third year in a row we did not make criterion in one of our Research Goals (2e). Our goal is to have 15% of our majors involved in research (as measured by enrollment in PSY 3900 (Independent Study), PSY 4100 (Supervised Research), and other independent research-based courses. In the Spring 2013 semester, we had approximately 11-12% registered in these courses, but only 8.7% in the Spring of 2014. In explaining the shortfall, we have to rethink the realism of the goal. It might be the case that we will never see a time when 15% of our majors are ready and interested in doing research. For example, most of the faculty put some stipulations on the students they are willing to supervise, and one such stipulation is that the student has completed the Statistics course, and the Research Methods course. Most of the time, such students are seniors. If we were to modify the goal so that we expect 15% of our juniors and senior majors to be involved in research, we could possibly meet that. Indeed, limiting the denominator to 311 Juniors or Seniors in Spring 2014 who were enrolled in or had completed Statistics or Research Methods raises the percentage of students participating to 12% (assuming all student researchers were Juniors or Seniors). Alternatively, it might be more meaningful to define our research supervision effort in terms of the number of faculty CUs which are expended in undergraduate student research supervision, expressed as a percentage of overall faculty CU expenditure. Subjectively, and anecdotally, we might find that we expend 15% of our faculty effort on undergraduate student research. Finally, with two new faculty arriving this fall, we may be able to accommodate more students who are interested in this experience.
3. For some years we have noted that our graduating seniors are not equally confident about their knowledge levels in all of the various domains of Psychology (Content areas of knowledge, Goal 1c). On the AY 2012-2013 Exit Survey, the percentages of students reporting at least “some” confidence in these areas were the lowest that the Assessment Committee has seen in several years: Biopsychology (54%), Cognitive (57%), Learning (63%). However, in AY 2013-2014, Biopsychology and Cognitive fell to 45% and 48%, respectively, while Learning rose to 81%. Several of these areas are below the criterion level of 70% or more of our graduating students having at least “some” confidence of their knowledge in these areas, probably for several reasons. First, confidence in these content areas likely reflects differences in student interest and motivation. Very few of our students pursue advanced education or careers in biopsychology or cognitive psychology, while many are interested in further education and careers related to abnormal psychology and developmental psychology, in which 90% and 82% of students, respectively, expressed confidence. Secondly, there is likely more overlap between courses in content areas that students express greater confidence in knowing (i.e., abnormal psychology topics are covered in nearly every course). Finally, the Assessment Committee has noted the turnover in the professors assigned to teach these courses in the last year or two, and so what we may be seeing in this reversal is yet another instantiation of a well-known truism: We think the teaching really makes a difference in terms of the learning! Regarding our planning process, we’ll put this criterion on our watch list for next year.
4. As explained previously, in the Summer of 2012, the teacher for our Multi-Cultural Awareness course, and the person who gathered the data that we use for Global Citizenship Goal 6c, Dr. Mike Havey, was prevented from teaching the course due to an injury. Although we were optimistic that Dr. Havey would be able to return to teaching the Multi-Cultural Awareness course in the Netherlands in Summer 2013, and thus resume data gathering, unfortunately, it now appears that Dr. Havey will no longer be able to staff this course, and no other faculty have expressed an interest. Thus, it is unlikely that Psychology majors will take the course in the near future, forcing the Assessment Committee to rethink the use of Goal 6c. Fortunately, in every crisis, there is an opportunity for growth. In this case, the key is to realize that the overall learning goal is called “Global Citizenship *and Ethical Behavior* (italics added). Like many other departments, we have focused on the diversity and cultural awareness part of the goal, and we haven’t really devoted too much attention to the component of ethical behavior. But actually, in the department, we spend a good deal of our teaching effort discussing ethical behavior. For example, all Psychology majors are required to take our Research Methods course (PSY 3805). Before students can engage in human subjects research, they are required to be instructed in detail on the ethics of human subjects research. In some cases, the students are required to go online and complete the Human Subjects training module offered by the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs (ORSP). This module produces a score, which we might be able to capture (on a de-individuated basis). We could then use this score as an additional direct assessment measure of ethical behavior knowledge. This is just one avenue of approach—no doubt there are many other opportunities in the department to make assessments about our students knowledge of ethical behavior and these could eventually be worked into the Department’s overall assessment plan.

### Using the Data

1. In Spring 2014, we conducted an item discrimination analysis of the Psychology Comprehensive Exam (PCE). The analysis indicated that the open-ended items that are used to assess integrative learning (Learning Goal 7a) were the most discriminative items on the PCE, that is, scores on those items correlated more strongly with overall performance on the PCE than did scores on any of the multiple choice items that make up most of the PCE. This told us that we were on the right track with our use of the open-ended essay items as an assessment element for Integrative Learning (Goal 7a). Our problem was that, because the students knew that there was nothing “riding” on their score on the PCE, some of them simply got through it as quickly as they could, and they didn’t even bother to answer the open-ended questions. Beginning in Spring 2012, we began piloting an additional no-cost incentive in the form of a congratulatory letter (suitable for sharing with perspective employers) sent to the graduating seniors who scored at the 90th percentile on the PCE. We continued this pilot program across AY 2012-2013. Our data are still somewhat inconclusive: Across AY 2012-2013, we still had 17% of our graduating seniors who either did not respond at all to the open-ended questions, or indicated that they found those questions confusing (this latter point will be addressed in Part III, Plans for the Future, point 2). For the congratulatory letter to operate as an incentive, the students must be aware of it when they self-administer the PCE. We had a little trouble getting this point across in the Spring 2013 because some of our PCE instructions became a little garbled in the translation from the WebCT to the D2L environment. That’s been repaired now, but in AY 2013-2014, we still had 25% of students skip the short-answer questions. We may be able to incorporate some of our assessments into our capstone course (for a grade) to increase student motivation.
2. In AY 2010-2011, only 69% of our students reported that they were even somewhat comfortable with the use of a statistics package to analyze data (Technology Goal 3b). Although this number was not significantly below the criterion value (70%), it was nevertheless low in an absolute sense, and it is a persistent issue. In AY 2011-2012, there was a downward trend for this result; only 62% of our students reported that they were even somewhat comfortable with the use of a statistics package to analyze data from psychological experiments. Although we rebounded to a certain extent in AY 2012-2013, with 69% of our students reporting that they are at least somewhat comfortable with the use of a statistics package to analyze data, we are fell again in 2013-2014 to 60%, below 2010 levels. It’s fair to characterize this as a persistent problem. Although there had been some movement in the past few years to standardize the use of a statistical package in our Statistics courses, more needs to be done in this area. Please see Part III, Plans for the Future, point 3 for an action plan.

### Plans for the Future

1. We currently use the open-ended “essay” items on the Psychology Comprehensive Exam (PCE) to assess “vertical” integration of psychological content, that is, the student’s ability to reach back for connections in Psychology coursework taken earlier. But there are at least two other components of integrative learning whose assessment we have not yet started: Horizontal integration (importing and exporting connections from Psychology to other disciplines), and Reflective learning (connections among academic, professional, and personal knowledge that the student discovers and explains). The Assessment Committee has determined that the undergraduate internship experience may be a good location to begin to engage the students in this reflective process. Once again, there is a problem with the fact that undergraduate internship experience is a high impact experience that affects a relatively low number of students. However, it is also a location where, if the students are really able to take academic knowledge and see the connections to their professional and personal lives, it should be there. The easiest way to harvest these data would seem to involve modifying the Student Internship Survey which we currently use for Global Citizenship Goal 6b. By adding an additional open-ended focus question, or tweaking one of the existing questions, the Department could add an indirect measure of integrative learning.
2. There are a few technical issues to be technical or procedural issues to be resolved as we go forward with D2L as the environment in which students take the PCE. First, we need to make sure that the instructions on the integrative learning items are clear: A couple of students reported in the comments section of the PCE that the instructions were not clear. Second, we need to make sure that the instructions on the PCE itself make sure that the students are aware that the top 10% of the PCE scorers will receive a letter of accomplishment.
3. As stated in our 2011-2012 report, we still don’t have a direct measure for our Departmental Student Learning Goal in the area of Technology, but our problem in this area is really a rather narrowly focused one: Our students are reporting that they are not at the criterial level of comfort in using statistical software packages for analyzing human subjects data. Bringing this finding to the attention of departmental faculty might be the next step in addressing directions we could take from here. It seems worth noting that, on their Exit Survey, a substantial number of students self-reported the need to learn a standardized statistical software package in their coursework.
4. Going back to AY 2010-2011, each year the Assessment Committee plans on asking directly for faculty readership of this report, as well as using a department meeting to discuss assessment outcomes and goals. For a number of reasons we were unable to accomplish that goal in AY 2010-2011 *or since*. But we have had a number of impediments. First, we have had a reduced schedule of faculty meetings over the last two academic years, meeting perhaps 4 times each year, instead of the 8 that we had been having. During the meetings that we did have, the department was really crunched for time to discuss issues that were rated as having a higher priority. Thus, the Assessment Committee relinquished the time that had been devoted to discussing assessment issues. But we need to change that. Here is a detailed action plan for Academic Year 2014-2015 that will accomplish this goal. First, our recent assessment reports should be posted on the Department website in Summer 2014, along with the CASA director’s responses to our previous plan. Then in September 2014, the Chair of the Assessment Committee should call a meeting of the Assessment Committee to discuss a presentation to the faculty of the findings, issues and plans noted in this report, with such a presentation occurring at a Department meeting to be held in the Fall 2014 semester (possibly in November or December). Then in October 2014, the Chair of the Assessment Committee should send an email to the faculty apprising them of the report, and the CASA Director’s response to the previous report, and asking the faculty to read both documents prior to the next Department meeting in November or December 2014. Finally, at that department meeting, there should be discussion and action among the faculty about interventions that can be taken to address concerns noted in the report and highlighted by the Assessment Committee at the meeting.
5. As stated in our section on Previous Plans Addressed (Point 1), we need to continue to improve communication about the timing and data collection for the various instruments, as well as making the data collection process flow more easily. With the transition of most of our assessment tools to Qualtrics, the development, distribution, and collection of data has been streamlined. More generally, the members of the Assessment Committee need to begin the process of rethinking how they will assess the Global Citizenship goal. There is nothing wrong with using the data from the Onsite Supervisor from the Undergraduate Internship, and corroborating those results from the Student Internship Survey, and Exit Survey. However, given the small numbers of students who go through this high impact experience, we probably shouldn’t be over-reliant on this activity. Fortunately, the Global Citizenship goal can be assessed by measuring the student’s knowledge of ethical behavior. This should be a very viable route for Psychology to take. One place to make this assessment could be the PSY 3805 courses, in which every Psychology major is required to take an ethical module regarding the collection of human subjects data. It might be possible to capture the data used when the students take the online ethics course for their Institutional Review Board (IRB) authorization. These data could be corroborated by adding another question to the Student Researcher Survey regarding ethical knowledge, if such an element is not already present. These plans could take a different form or direction as specific issues are explored. The main goal for AY 2014-2015 should probably be to start the dialogue process within the Assessment Committee itself.
6. As a result of the discrimination analysis of student responses to the Psychology Comprehensive Exam (PCE) that we carried out in Spring 2014, some members of the Assessment Committee raised a question about the importance of content knowledge (vs. other kinds of knowledge that our program is imparting). The analysis showed that the open-ended Integrative Learning items were more highly correlated with the overall score than were any of the multiple choice elements on the PCE (possibly because they are worth more points). At that time, we discussed the possibility of having a departmental level retreat strictly to look at this particular aspect of our Psychology program, and the retreat remains a viable option. Until that time however, there are persistent questions among the Assessment Committee members about the continued viability of the multiple choice (MC) elements on the PCE. For example, is the PCE really doing what we want it to? The scores on the PCE are not changing much, despite the fact that we have made some substantial changes to our curricular offerings, and to the structure of our curriculum. There are some good reasons to believe that the MC portion of the PCE might not be sensitive to measure some of the genuine changes in learning that we have made in the Department. For example the MC portion of the PCE measures mostly low level, factual, content knowledge, which countless studies of pedagogical practice have already told us is among the least durable forms of learning, and a form of knowledge that is most likely to erode with time. Indeed one of the more typical comments made by students who have taken the PCE is something along the lines of “it’s been such a long time since I took these courses, I have forgotten most of the content.” With the results from the item discriminant analysis, we can eliminate questions on which students appear to be randomly guessing (i.e., they have a very low or negative correlation with the total score.) Using fewer, but better questions could also help avoid the student fatigue factor of taking an exam with 56 questions.

This paragraph should not necessarily be understood as the same type of concrete planning that the other paragraphs in this section represent. Rather, the purpose of this paragraph is to show that the Assessment Committee has continued to take a thoughtful path forward: As our program continues to evolve, we want to make sure that our assessment activities and measures and really providing us with the best view we can get of what our students are actually learning. It is in that light that the members of the Assessment Committee will consider whether it is advisable to shift to a more sensitive measure of our students’ learning.

1. The American Psychological Association has recently approved a revision of their [learning goals for the undergraduate major](http://www.apa.org/ed/precollege/about/psymajor-guidelines.pdf) (Aug 2013). The current learning goals include
   * Goal 1: Knowledge Base in Psychology
   * Goal 2: Scientific Inquiry and Critical Thinking
   * Goal 3: Ethical and Social Responsibility in a Diverse World
   * Goal 4: Communication
   * Goal 5: Professional Development

Over the next 2-3 years, our plan is to integrate the APA learning goals and EIU’s recently revised university learning goals into the psychology curriculum and modify our assessment tools as needed to accurately capture the success of our program in preparing EIU Psychology graduates for the future.