

**CPR FINDINGS AND PLANS
FOR THE
BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN PSYCHOLOGY
AT
NORTH GEORGIA COLLEGE & STATE UNIVERSITY**

MAJOR FINDINGS ON THE PROGRAM'S QUALITY, PRODUCTIVITY AND VIABILITY

The Psychology program addresses two diverse student curricular needs – provision of the major curriculum in Psychology and the service function provided through offering courses required or strongly recommended by many other curricula and within Areas B and E of the Board of Regents requirements. In both capacities, the Psychology program addresses these needs efficiently while maintaining high academic standards. The current level of staffing through full-time permanent faculty requires an extensive reliance on part-time and temporary faculty, which will be addressed under NEW RESOURCE ALLOCATIONS NEEDED FOR IMPROVEMENT.

One strong empirical indicator of the status of Psychology majors is enrollment in Advanced General Psychology, a course taken almost exclusively by majors. For the latest five years covered in the CPR, enrollment in that course has been very steady at about 55 per year. Enrollments in upper level Psychology courses for that period have been consistently high, with demand requiring that multiple sections of several be offered. Other indicators, such as number of declared majors also support the assertion that the Psychology major is robust in enrollment.

The service function of the Psychology program makes enormous demands on the resources of the faculty and the department which houses them. During the five years reported in the current CPR, annual enrollment in PSYC 1101 Introduction to General Psychology rose from 532 to 727 (37%). PSYC 1030 Principles of Leadership had an average annual enrollment of 545. PSYC 2103 Human Growth and Development, which is required for Teacher Education majors, had an average annual enrollment of 254. Average credit-hour productivity of Psychology faculty, largely because of this engagement in the service function, is among the highest at the university.

Psychology program quality is addressed in the CPR by data from Alumni surveys and graduates' performance on the Major Field Achievement Test (MFAT). Respondents to the Alumni survey reported that 81% had obtained full-time employment since graduation, and that 45% had enrolled either full-time or part-time in graduate or professional school. Performance on the MFAT for the five years reported in the CPR averaged over 60th national percentile.

As cited in the CPR, the faculty of the Psychology program is strong in qualifications. All the tenure-track faculty in Psychology possess the Ph.D. The temporary and part-time faculty possess master's degrees that meet SACS standards for undergraduate instruction.

The CPR lists the scholarly publications and presentations of the faculty, and for the five year period reported, they are credited with 14 publications and 63 presentations.

PLANS FOR IMPROVING THE PROGRAM'S QUALITY, PRODUCTIVITY AND VIABILITY

One of the needs pointed to in the CPR is for a greater proportion of the instruction offered in Psychology to be done by full-time tenure-track faculty. This should continue to be a focal point of both internal and external leadership in the program.

This CPR makes the recommendation that PSYC 1030 Principles of Leadership, which is currently a two-credit course, be made a three-credit course. The opposite has occurred, as a campus-wide committee has determined that it will be one credit. The course will have an LEAD prefix and be required for all incoming freshmen. It will be staffed from diverse departments, but curricular and administrative leadership for the course and Leadership Minor will continue to be housed in this department. A new faculty position has been created to coordinate this effort and further recommendations for improvement within this decision and course of action awaits the experience of the next few years.

The CPR recommends that PSYC 1102 Advanced General Psychology be deleted from the Psychology curriculum and replaced with a computer science course or advanced elective. This recommendation will be discussed in light of recent faculty hires and a plan for implementation of a change will be drafted. With the increased focus of Psychology faculty on research, suitable options may include Physiological Psychology or Advanced Social Psychology.

The CPR recommends that PSYC 3520 Human Sexuality, which is currently offered once a year, be offered twice. This recommendation has the support of the faculty member primarily responsible for instruction in the course and will be implemented.

The CPR recommends that program support of independent studies and internships in psychology be encouraged and additional faculty members have expressed interest in supervising guided research projects and internships.

The CPR notes that many of the criticisms of alumni of the Psychology program are about physical resources, including classrooms and labs. Psychology faculty members have developed some creative plans for use of classroom space as labs with a mobile computer lab system and this system has been ordered and will be in operation Fall 2006. We anticipate that this will help us meet both instructional and lab use needs more effectively.

The CPR recommends more careful attention be paid to keeping in contact with alumni for the purpose of conducting the alumni survey and for recruitment and networking purposes. This effort will be intensified, and coordinated through the very active Psychology Club and honor society, Psi Chi. Additional recommendations about advisement and course scheduling are made in the CPR and the faculty has addressed

many of these concerns by creating a Curriculum Checklist, planning and executing an annual mass advisement meeting, and collecting input from current students about future course needs.

NEW RESOURCE ALLOCATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Enrollment trends reported in the CPR indicate that interest in both the major course of study, in courses required by other majors and in a number of electives is high and increasing. In light of that, and in light of the continuing growth of North Georgia College & State University as a whole, the program in Psychology deserves serious consideration for additional faculty lines. The program has worked collaboratively with other units, such as Biology, Mathematics and Sociology, to make the most efficient use of university instructional resources on behalf of Psychology majors and students, but the faculty of the program are spread thin and will not be able to meet predicted needs of the university at the current staffing level. The CPR makes reference to many particular ways that the staffing shortfall is currently experienced, and this will only be exacerbated by continuing growth of the university.

Other than the obvious and unrelenting need for additional faculty staffing, the resource needs of the Psychology program are being met incrementally. The recent hire of a research-oriented physiological psychologist will require that a working animal lab be supported, and this is currently being addressed with the cooperation of the Biology Department. Additional designated teaching space will be required by the program in the foreseeable future.