



Memorandum of Understanding

This MOU has been read and approved by:

Department Chair: Chi-Ah Chun Date: 11/21/2024
Chi-Ah Chun

Dean, College of Liberal Arts : Deborah Thien Date: 11/21/2024
Deborah Thien

Interim Vice Provost Academic Programs: Pei-Fang Hung Date: 11/21/2024
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**Program Review Summary
Memorandum of Understanding**

Department of Psychology,
College of Liberal Arts
November 2024

This document serves as a summary of the Program Review findings and a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) outlining the consensus reached by the Department of Psychology, the College of Liberal Arts, and the Division of Academic Affairs, based on the recently conducted program review with a Self-study received in August 2023. Dr. Susan Charles (University of California, Irvine) and Dr. Kenneth Shultz (California State University, San Bernardino) completed the external review in September 2023. This report and MOU is issued in February 2024, and it describes the goals to be achieved, and the actions to be undertaken by all parties to this MOU to achieve these goals, during the next program review cycle. Progress toward goals is to be addressed in an annual report.

The Department of Psychology offers the following degrees: BA in Psychology, MS in Psychology with Options in Human Factors (HF) and Industrial and Organizational (IO) Psychology, and an MA in Psychology with an Option in Psychological Research (PR). These MS and MA options were in the process of elevating to full degrees for EO 1071 compliance at the time of the review, and they have since received approvals. The Department also offers a Psychology Minor and a Supplemental BA in Psychology Cohort program (through College of Professional and Continuing Education (CPaCE)) which are not assessed during this program review period.

The Department has made progress in assessment as recommended in the MOU from 2015. The MOU between the College of Liberal Arts and the Psychology Department specified the following needs: establish concrete, measurable learning outcomes for students; implement meaningful assessment; provide attention to each graduate program; ensure each has a desirable-sized cohort of students; ensure timely graduation of graduate students; examine graduate recruitment efforts, admissions and yields; create a forum for graduate student voices to be heard; provide faculty – especially new faculty – venues for interaction and engagement with other faculty; hiring tenure line faculty to keep pace with undergraduate and graduate enrollments; and, Psychology faculty conducting the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) approved animal research will be provided access to and lab space within the Vivarium.

Following the receipt of the 2015 MOU, each of the four degree/option programs (BA PSY, MSHF, MSIO, and MAPR) within the Psychology Department refined their student learning



outcomes to better reflect the program goals in active and measurable terms. Each program also created a Curriculum Map which specified which courses in the program were linked to which learning outcomes. The level of emphasis (introduced, progressing, or mastered) were specified for each link. Beginning in AY 2016-17, each program conducted an annual direct assessment of a specified learning outcome, with a new learning outcome examined each year.

Resources reviewed for the report:

1. Self-study 2023
2. External review 2023
3. Previous MOU 2015
4. Department website

Strengths were identified in the reports.

1. **Mission Statements:** The Department has mission statements and program goals that are posted clearly on the website and are appropriate in context for the profession. The Department may consider elevating some of the graduate-level outcomes to higher levels of Bloom's taxonomy.
2. **Undergraduate Enrollment:** The Department has consistently served a high number of Full-Time Equivalent Students (FTES) ranging between 1152.8 in 2013 to 1235.5 in 2020. Although there were an equal number of major and non-major students served in 2013, currently almost 70% of students have declared Psychology as their major. The number of majors has increased from 1418 in 2013 to 2344 in 2022, a 164% increase. The Department is to be commended for offering a high-quality curriculum that is in high demand.
3. **Faculty:** The Psychology department faculty are excelling in their research agendas, with 64% of faculty receiving external funding. Faculty are also submitting publications into highly cited peer review journals and successfully include students into research as a high-impact practice. Faculty also engage in exemplary service activities and teaching practices. Faculty headcount has stayed fairly stable over the review period, starting with 27 in 2012, increasing to 31 in 2019/2020, and decreasing to 25 by 2023/2024 due to departure and retirement.
4. **Graduate Curriculum:** The Department successfully elevated their Master's Options to be compliant with EO 1071.
5. **Assessment:** The Department engages in regular assessment of their PLOs across all degree programs. Although the department is successfully collecting data, they now need to take the additional step of closing the loop to implement changes based on data results.
6. **Undergraduate Advising:** CLA ATLAS supports pre-Psychology majors, while faculty mentor majors. The Psychology Resource Office (PRO) is co-run by Dr. Correa, Dr.



Kohfeldt, and a group of undergraduate students working as PRO Guides. It includes resources that focus on the broad needs of the students ranging from information about graduate schools and careers so they can more easily chart their future career goals, to information about basic needs, social resources, and mental health services. The external reviewers praised the PRO Center as a model for all universities and as a striking example of the university's commitment to the physical, mental, and future success of their students. Transfer students have the opportunity to participate in the Transfer Learning Community.

Concerns were noted in the reports:

1. **Course scheduling:** PSY 241 - Psychobiology, and PSY 301 - Introduction to Psychology as a Discipline and Profession are difficult to register for and fill up quickly once registration starts. The Department has not been able to minimize these bottlenecks without additional or shifting resources.
2. **Graduate Advising:** The Department lost their full-time staff graduate advisor to retirement in 2023, and they are now transitioning to a faculty graduate advising model with some difficulty. The department is particularly concerned about the current and potentially future levels of administrative support for advising.
3. **Post-COVID Practices:** The review occurred as faculty and students were returning to campus after COVID. Issues at this time included some students who felt isolated with fewer opportunities to gather on campus, while other students appreciated the move to alternative modes of instruction and wanted more options in mode of delivery (i.e., online courses) moving forward. The Department has begun addressing post-COVID student needs. Students may benefit from further opportunities to build communities in smaller groups. The Department may also assess student demand and pedagogy to consider the ratio of online to in-person learning in scheduling.

Opportunities for Development were noted in the reports.

1. **Curriculum:** In AY 2019-20 the Department reviewed and revised their major curriculum structure to ensure all majors complete a sequence of courses to receive opportunities to practice and ultimately master each of the SLOS set by the American Psychological Association (APA) in 2013. There is an opportunity to refine the curriculum through assessment and closing the loop.
2. **Graduation Rates:** The Department has successfully improved both native and transfer student success. Graduation rates are improving particularly with Native Juniors and Transfer students, with rates frequently above CSU benchmarks.
 - a. **First-time, First-year (FTFY) student graduation rates** are consistent with University rates at the 4-year level, but lag at the 6-year level. This indicates an opportunity to assess retention rates and develop strategies to improve



retention. Although an equity gap exists 4-year graduation rate for minority (30.5%) versus non-minority students (46.6%) in 2013, this difference is eliminated at 6 years with minority students finishing at a higher rate with 54.2%, but only 52.1% of non-minority students for the same year. Further disaggregation shows that 20% of Black or African-American students graduate within 4 years, and only about 30% after 6 years, providing an opportunity for this program to integrate some of the initiatives from our Black Student Success plan.

- b. Transfer student 2-year graduation rates are improving (67.4% for 2018 cohort) but are still lower than College and University rates. Conversely 4-year graduation rates are consistent with College and University rates. With a fairly low unit to degree major (36 units), there is an opportunity to assess why the 2-year rates are low, for example if there are any bottlenecks or scheduling issues that are making it difficult for students to finish in 2 years. Graduation rates for under-represented minority students show little to no opportunity gaps overall with 63% of minority transfer students graduating in 2 years compared to 59.2% of non-minority transfers.
3. Graduate student enrollments have maintained consistency with 24-25 students in both the Psych MS Options. The Psych MA in Psychology Research enrollments have decreased over time, from an average of 24 students over the last 5 years to Fall 2023 enrollment of 18 students. Although the percentage of admitted students enrolling (admit to enroll yield) has improved since then with a brief spike during COVID, the percentage of students enrolling still appears to be lower overall. In addition, the number of students graduating each year has decreased, although this could be due to decreasing time to graduation rates. The Department is graduating more than the Chancellor's Office minimum of 5 graduate students per year, but has an opportunity to expand graduate student capacity if the Department is able to increase their tenure track hiring in order to support graduate student research.
4. The Department offers several High Impact Practices for undergraduate and graduate students. On average, each tenure-track research faculty works with about eight undergraduate students engaged in active research activities (a strong number for the intensive training this requires). Community engagement includes opportunities from four courses (PSY 353, PSY 361, PSY 375i, and PSY 405) offered during the academic year, as well as summer opportunities (e.g., a group this summer engaged in community service in South Africa). Unfortunately, with over 2,000 majors, it is difficult for faculty to offer HIPs to as many psychology students who desire them.
5. Graduate Student travel support: MAPR and other grad students receive \$500 for travel expenses. In addition, these students have the opportunity to supplement these funds



through ASI or Graduate Center Travel grants. The Department could communicate these outside resources to students.

Recommendations:

It is therefore agreed that the Department of Psychology will collaborate with the College of Liberal Arts and Academic Affairs to:

1. Continue to implement the program's comprehensive assessment plan in order to complete annual assessments using direct and indirect methods and report on closing the loop activities to illustrate that continuous learning outcome data are used to inform decision making. Provide an annual update (due June 1) on progress made towards MOU actions to the CLA dean, the Vice Provost for Academic Programs, and the Coordinator of Program Review and Assessment. Your review cycle will therefore be from 2023-2030. A comprehensive self-study will be due June 2030 for a 2030-2031 Academic Year review process.
2. Create a plan to reduce bottlenecks in PSY 241 and PSY 301 to improve academic progress for student success. This could include adding section offerings, moving PSY 301 earlier in the program roadmap, or adding an additional course to meet the requirement.
3. Survey students about their desired electives among those currently offered, with the goal of increasing these offerings and reducing the offerings of less popular elective courses.
4. Assess retention and graduate rates (FTFY 6-year and Transfer 2-year) and develop strategies to improve retention particularly for students who are Black or male-identifying. This may include aligning with campus efforts to build support and community for black student success, encouraging faculty to participate in development related to culturally relevant pedagogy, and using new faculty dashboards to determine racial inequities in courses.
5. Conduct an analysis and consider a plan to grow the Master's degree programs in order to provide opportunity for our undergraduate students, as well as to ensure the programs meet benchmarks set for the number of graduates per year. Analysis should include curriculum implications, workforce needs, student needs (i.e., for applying to a PhD program), and resource needs (e.g., faculty, space).
6. Increase opportunities to create small communities within the larger psychology major to help students feel less isolated post-COVID and more connected to the University (e.g., more informal study sessions, which have helped students in the past).
7. As resources provide, expand high-impact applied experiences to students (e.g., research, community service projects and internships).
8. Create a hiring plan to address the shift in FTES toward more students within the major and also a plan to increase HIPs for students in the major. This plan should include



permanent full-time positions of teaching professor/professor of practice -especially to help retain high-quality, long-term lecturers.

9. Provide professional development for faculty that are transitioning in graduate advising. The College will provide 6 units of reassigned time for fall and spring semesters (12 units total), and the Department can use RS or endowment funds for an additional 3 units of reassigned time per semester at the replacement rate if they so choose.
10. Increase resources available to students. This could include communication of outside travel resources to students and requesting unused college NRT waivers for non-domestic students. In addition, the College will add 1 Equity scholar to the 1 scholar that the Department currently has. The Department may add a 3rd Equity Scholar through use of RS or Endowment funds.
11. Improve communication from the campus and college to the department regarding policy/procedural changes.
12. Provide campus or college recommendations for ratio of online to in-person learning to address student demand for online learning.

This MOU has been read and approved by:

Chair for the Department of Psychology: Chi-Ah Chun

Dean for the College of Liberal Arts: Deborah Thien

Interim Vice Provost for Academic Programs: Pei-Fang Hung

*DocuSign signature page on file.