

## **Psychology Department Assessment Report AY 2018-2019**

As part of our current strategic plan, the psychology department has dedicated itself to the goals of promoting equity and inclusion. To achieve these goals, we have committed ourselves to a number of different tasks, including working to make involvement in our program of Experiential Learning Opportunities in Psychology (ELOPsy) more accessible to all students. Thus, the psychology department focused assessment during the 2018-2019 academic year on evaluating student participation in our ELOPsy program, which includes mentored undergraduate research and internships. Assessment was a department-wide effort, conducted by faculty and staff of the department. However, a committee of three full-time faculty members was appointed to evaluate the data and write up the results for this report.

There are a number of different learning outcomes that are particularly relevant to our ELOPsy courses, including “career preparation,” “critical analysis and reasoning,” and “ethical reasoning and compassion.” For this assessment, we chose to focus on the “respect for diversity” and “applied psychology” learning outcomes. Psychology faculty completed an online survey to report on the number of discrete student topics that fulfilled these particular learning outcomes. Results of this assessment are presented in Appendix A and described below. In addition to assessing these learning outcomes, we chose to evaluate whether we are exposing a diverse group of students to these opportunities. To do this, we assessed whether the distribution of students across ELOPsy courses was equitable by gender, race, honors program participation, EOF status, and transfer status. The Center for Institutional Effectiveness provided our assessment committee chair with data on ELOPsy course enrollments over the past several years (2015-2018). We present these data in tables (see Appendix B through F) and briefly discuss our findings below.

### **Assessment of Learning Outcomes**

A first goal of our assessment during 2018-2019 was to evaluate the extent to which our writing-intensive courses contribute to the “Respect for Diversity” and “Applying Psychology” learning outcomes. The psychology department faculty completed an online survey at the end of each semester (Fall 2017 and Spring 2019). This survey asked the faculty to report the number of discrete student project topics from different courses and how many of those topics fulfilled the “respect for diversity” and/or “applying psychology” learning outcomes. A table summarizing the results of this survey is presented in Appendix A. Chi-square tests for goodness of fit indicated that project topics satisfying the “Respect for Diversity” and “Applying Psychology” learning outcomes were equally likely to occur in ELOPsy Courses compared to Non- ELOPsy Courses (Psy299 and Psy470) and in the internship ELOPsy courses compared to the research ELOPsy courses. There were also equal proportions of projects satisfying “Respect for Diversity” and “Applying Psychology” across the thesis capstone (Psy496) compared to the non-ELOPsy 400 level course (Psy470).

### **Students Enrolled in ELOPsy Courses**

Our second goal was to examine the proportion of students from various groups (racial/ethnic minorities, students in EOF program, honors program students) who are enrolled across our ELOPsy courses. Though we found that the proportion of Black and Latinx students enrolled in ELOPsy courses is similar to the general proportion of these students enrolled in the major, Black and Latinx students are less likely to be enrolled in certain ELOPsy courses compared to White students (see Appendix B). Of particular concern, only one Black student served as an instructional intern during the 3-year time span. This is concerning given the demonstrated benefits of peer mentoring programs among racial minority students. The data also show that Black and Latinx students are a higher proportion of students in collaborative research at the 400-level (PSY 492) than the 300-level (PSY 390), but White students (and Honors students) are a higher proportion of senior honors thesis (SHT) students (PSY 396/496). In general, these data suggest that while we are retaining Black and Latinx students in Senior level ELOPsys (e.g., PSY 492); we seem to be sorting White students into more prestigious ELOPsy experiences (e.g., the honors thesis). (As an additional analysis, when we removed students in the Honors program from these data, the difference between PSY 492 and PSY 496 diminished. Students in the Honors Program earn credit for completing the Senior Honors Thesis, which may incentivize their participation — see the high proportion of honors students completing the thesis.)

There is a similar pattern for EOF students: EOF students are a higher proportion of PSY 492 than PSY 390 (see Appendix C), whereas Honors students are a hugely disproportionate number of SHT students (see Appendix D). An obvious explanation for this is that this course meets one of the requirements of the Honors program. However, these data show that the SHT reinforces and certifies privilege for these students. Likewise, transfer students are not completing SHTs, although they are doing many ELOPsys (see Appendix E). Given the PSY 299 and two-semester requirements for SHTs, it is next to impossible for transfer students to complete them and graduate in four years. This effectively closes the opportunity to them.

In discussions with the department, we agree that Senior Honors Thesis projects are not of consistently higher quality than other capstone projects and do not consistently result in better outcomes (e.g., conference presentations, publications, graduate school acceptances). Therefore, our current practice may not reflect the quality of student work. Further, we have identified lower participation in SHT for transfer students and students of color than other students (White students participating in the Honors program), due to issues of access and incentives. As a result, we spent a substantial portion of our department retreat in the spring discussing how to revise our honors model to address these issues.

At present, students in Psychology can earn honors by applying for and completing a two-semester thesis (PSY 396/496). There are several problems with this practice.

Accepted applications are awarded Honors so long as the projects are completed, regardless of quality. As a result, non-Honors projects (e.g., PSY 492 projects) may end up being of higher-quality than Honors-level projects.

Some student groups have particular incentives to apply for Honors. Students in the Honors Program, for example, receive credit toward completing an Honors thesis. Other student groups are at a strong disadvantage for being eligible for an Honors award. Transfer students with Associates degrees, for example, have four semesters to graduate; the prerequisites for Honors take three semesters (i.e. PSY 121, 203, 299) and the project itself lasts two semesters. Many more students are either not aware that the program exists or they would find it difficult to fit a two-semester project into their schedule.

Students who would prefer to complete capstone courses and internships are disincentivized from participating in an Honors Thesis, as are students with consistently high-achievement who would rather not complete a two-semester project.

To address these problems, we are creating a new model for awarding Honors. Possible alternative honors distinctions include the following:

**Most Valuable Psychologist (MVP) award.** Honors would be awarded on the basis of exemplary performance on a capstone paper. Any faculty member teaching a capstone course or sponsoring a capstone project could nominate a student for the MVP award. These awards could be reviewed and determined by an Honors committee. Alternatively (but not additionally), faculty members could be given a set of criteria (e.g., a rubric) that defines an Honors-level capstone paper, and could independently determine which students deserve MVP recognition. MVP awards would be recognized at commencement.

**Hall of Fame (HOF) award.** Any student who earns a major GPA above a particular threshold would automatically receive the HOF award. The threshold could be defined by a fixed GPA in the major or by a certain Standard Deviations above the Mean GPA in the major (e.g., 2 SDs above the mean). HOF awards would be recognized at commencement.

We believe that the department needs a new Honors procedure that will better reward excellence in our major — both in terms of an individual project and in terms of consistent performance — as well as reduce the disparities among student groups with respect to Honors participation. By taking it upon ourselves to develop procedures to identify excellent student work, we believe we will capture a fuller picture of student success than if we continued to rely on students to identify their own work to us.

In sum, findings from this assessment have encouraged us to explore new ways to promote our ELOPsy courses and identify potential barriers to these courses so that all psychology majors may benefit equally from these opportunities. Our assessment plan moving forward is to continue to evaluate the accessibility of our ELOPsy program by focusing on applications to

research labs (Psy 390), which is the general entry point to participating in higher-level research (e.g., the thesis).

## Appendix A

<b>Faculty Assessment Survey Result for Fall 2018 - Spring 2019</b>					
<i>Course</i>	Number of Discrete Project Topics	Number of Diversity Projects	%	Number of Applying Psychology Projects	%
ELOPsy - Total	109	57	52%	81	74%
PSY 399 (Internship)	10	8	80%	10	100%
PSY 499 (Internship)	19	13	68%	18	95%
Combined Internships	29	21	72%	28	97%
PSY 393 (Independent Study)	11	5	45%	6	55%
PSY 396 (Thesis-I)	8	3	38%	4	50%
PSY 492 (Lab Capstone)	29	13	45%	22	76%
PSY 493 (Independent Study)	21	8	38%	12	57%
PSY 496 (Thesis)	11	7	64%	9	82%
Combined Research	80	36	45%	53	66%
PSY 299 (Research Seminar)	56	12	21%	23	41%
PSY 470 (Non-Research Cap)	50	32	64%	42	84%
Non-ELOPsy – Total	106	44	42%	65	61%

## Appendix B

	<i>Course</i>	<b>African American</b>	<b>Asian</b>	<b>Hispanic</b>	<b>Native American</b>	<b>Not Reported</b>	<b>&gt; 1 race</b>	<b>White</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>%AfA m</b>	<b>%Latin o</b>	<b>%Asian</b>	<b>%Whit e</b>
PSY 383	COUNSELING/ FLD EXPERIENCE SEM	4	4	6		2		53	69	5.80	8.70	5.80	76.81
PSY 390	COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH	25	85	59	1	31	4	381	589	4.24	10.02	14.43	64.69
PSY 391	INDEPENDENT STUDY		1	7				7	15	0.00	46.67	6.67	46.67
PSY 393	INDEPENDENT RESEARCH	1	2	3		1		23	30	3.33	10.00	6.67	76.67
PSY 396	SENIOR HONORS THESIS I	1	6	3		1		29	40	2.50	7.50	15.00	72.50
PSY 397	INSTRUCTIONAL INTERNSHIP	1	7	8		5		66	87	1.15	9.20	8.05	75.86
PSY 399	INTERNSHIP	2	1	4		2		39	48	4.17	8.33	2.08	81.25
PSY 492	SR COLLABORAT. RESEARCH	10	10	17		3		73	113	8.85	15.04	8.85	64.60
PSY 493	SENIOR INDEPENDENT RESEARCH	3	7	8		5		44	67	4.48	11.94	10.45	65.67
PSY 496	SENIOR HONORS THESIS II	1	6	3		1		28	39	2.56	7.69	15.38	71.79
PSY 499	SENIOR INTERNSHIP	1	7	12		4	3	53	80	1.25	15.00	8.75	66.25
	<i>Total</i>	49	136	130	1	55	7	796	1177	4.16	11.05	11.55	67.63

## Appendix C

		<i>Course</i>	<b>EOF Students</b>	<b>Non-EOF Students</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>%EOF</b>
PSY	383	COUNSELING/ FLD EXPERIENCE SEM	5	64	<b>69</b>	7.25
PSY	390	COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH	35	554	<b>589</b>	5.94
PSY	391	INDEPENDENT STUDY IN PSYCHOLOG		15	<b>15</b>	0.00
PSY	393	INDEPENDENT RESEARCH		30	<b>30</b>	0.00
PSY	396	SENIOR HONORS THESIS I	1	39	<b>40</b>	2.50
PSY	397	INSTRUCTIONAL INTERNSHIP	2	85	<b>87</b>	2.30
PSY	399	INTERNSHIP	1	47	<b>48</b>	2.08
PSY	492	SR COLLABORAT. RESEARCH	13	100	<b>113</b>	11.50
PSY	493	SENIOR INDEPENDENT RESEARCH	3	64	<b>67</b>	4.48
PSY	496	SENIOR HONORS THESIS II	1	38	<b>39</b>	2.56
PSY	499	SENIOR INTERNSHIP	5	75	<b>80</b>	6.25
		<i>Total</i>	<b>66</b>	<b>1111</b>	<b>1177</b>	5.61

## Appendix D

		<i>Course</i>	<b>Honors Students</b>	<b>Non-Honors Students</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>%Honors</b>
PSY	383	COUNSELING/ FLD EXPERIENCE SEM	4	65	<b>69</b>	5.80
PSY	390	COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH	66	523	<b>589</b>	11.21
PSY	391	INDEPENDENT STUDY IN PSYCHOLOG	3	12	<b>15</b>	20.00
PSY	393	INDEPENDENT RESEARCH	5	25	<b>30</b>	16.67
PSY	396	SENIOR HONORS THESIS I	10	30	<b>40</b>	25.00
PSY	397	INSTRUCTIONAL INTERNSHIP	12	75	<b>87</b>	13.79
PSY	399	INTERNSHIP	3	45	<b>48</b>	6.25
PSY	492	SR COLLABORAT. RESEARCH	3	110	<b>113</b>	2.65
PSY	493	SENIOR INDEPENDENT RESEARCH	5	62	<b>67</b>	7.46
PSY	496	SENIOR HONORS THESIS II	10	29	<b>39</b>	25.64
PSY	499	SENIOR INTERNSHIP	4	76	<b>80</b>	5.00
		<i>Total</i>	<b>125</b>	<b>1052</b>	<b>1177</b>	10.62



## Appendix E

		<i>Course</i>	<b>Transfer Students</b>	<b>Non-Transfer Students</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>% Transfer</b>
PSY	383	COUNSELING/ FLD EXPERIENCE SEM	14	55	<b>69</b>	20.29
PSY	390	COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH	82	507	<b>589</b>	13.92
PSY	391	INDEPENDENT STUDY IN PSYCHOLOG	9	6	<b>15</b>	60.00
PSY	393	INDEPENDENT RESEARCH	6	24	<b>30</b>	20.00
PSY	396	SENIOR HONORS THESIS I	1	39	<b>40</b>	2.50
PSY	397	INSTRUCTIONAL INTERNSHIP	9	78	<b>87</b>	10.34
PSY	399	INTERNSHIP	12	36	<b>48</b>	25.00
PSY	492	SR COLLABORAT. RESEARCH	18	95	<b>113</b>	15.93
PSY	493	SENIOR INDEPENDENT RESEARCH	13	54	<b>67</b>	19.40
PSY	496	SENIOR HONORS THESIS II	1	38	<b>39</b>	2.56
PSY	499	SENIOR INTERNSHIP	24	56	<b>80</b>	30.00
		<i>Total</i>	<b>189</b>	<b>988</b>	<b>1177</b>	16.06

## Appendix F

		<i>Course</i>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>% Women</b>
PSY	383	COUNSELING/ FLD EXPERIENCE SEM	58	11	<b>69</b>	84.06
PSY	390	COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH	486	103	<b>589</b>	82.51
PSY	391	INDEPENDENT STUDY IN PSYCHOLOG	10	5	<b>15</b>	66.67
PSY	393	INDEPENDENT RESEARCH	26	4	<b>30</b>	86.67
PSY	396	SENIOR HONORS THESIS I	32	8	<b>40</b>	80.00
PSY	397	INSTRUCTIONAL INTERNSHIP	79	8	<b>87</b>	90.80
PSY	399	INTERNSHIP	42	6	<b>48</b>	87.50
PSY	492	SR COLLABORAT. RESEARCH	95	18	<b>113</b>	84.07
PSY	493	SENIOR INDEPENDENT RESEARCH	59	8	<b>67</b>	88.06
PSY	496	SENIOR HONORS THESIS II	30	9	<b>39</b>	76.92
PSY	499	SENIOR INTERNSHIP	75	5	<b>80</b>	93.75
		<i>Total</i>	<b>992</b>	<b>185</b>	<b>1177</b>	84.28