

## **Department of Psychology Assessment Report for 2005-2006**

### **Mission Statement:**

The Department of Psychology has three academic programs (undergraduate major/B.A. degree, Ed.S. in school psychology, and M.A. in clinical counseling); these are considered to be of equal priority. Due to the diversity of these three programs, it is necessary for the Department of Psychology to evaluate each separately. In addition, the Department of Psychology teaches an undergraduate course (PSYC 201/General Psychology) that can be taken to fulfill the social science core curriculum requirement, and it will be evaluated separately as well. Each of these components of the Department's activity will be on a three-year assessment cycle: The undergraduate major and PSYC 201 (the focal points of this year's annual assessment report) will be evaluated during the first year of the cycle, the M.A. in clinical counseling will be assessed the next year, the Ed.S. in school psychology will be evaluated the year after that, and so on.

### **Core Curriculum**

#### **I. Mission/Purpose**

The Department of Psychology teaches one of the social science core courses that may be selected by undergraduate students to meet their core curriculum requirements. The mission or purpose of this course (PSYC 201/General Psychology) is as follows:

**Mission statement:** The primary mission of this course is to explore how the science of psychology serves the individual on the road to self-discovery. As students systematically subject themselves to personal evaluation, they are exposed to the principles of hypothesis testing, psychometrics, and scientific communication. Students are called to be active learners, with a focus on the process of science, rather than on the just the content of psychological knowledge.

**Purpose:** The purpose of this course is to provide an introduction to the diverse areas of study known collectively as psychology. Topics covered will include the history of psychology, biological determinants of behavior, learning, motivation, memory and cognition, development, personality, psychological disorders, emotions, and social behavior. Applications of principles in psychology to areas of one's life will be discussed, and the integration of research across the various subfields of psychology will be emphasized. Successful students will obtain a better appreciation for the complexity of human behavior and will acquire the necessary skills to use research as a basis for understanding behavior.

## Core Curriculum Skills

“Each course, or sequence of courses, which addresses a core curriculum requirement incorporates, where appropriate, the following skills: written communication, critical thinking, logical reasoning, and resource and reference usage.” For each area, please check one response and explain briefly.

Written Communication—

Yes   X        How?

Students in PSYC 201 generally write two reports on research articles, as well as several reports on various types of “application activities” that are required of all students.

No \_\_\_\_\_      Why not?

Critical Thinking—

Yes   X        How?

The scientific method and experimental methodology represent a key theme of PSYC 201.

No \_\_\_\_\_      Why not?

Logical Reasoning—

Yes   X        How?

The scientific method and experimental methodology represent a key theme of PSYC 201.

No \_\_\_\_\_      Why not?

Resource and Reference Usage—

Yes   X   How?

Students in PSYC 201 read primary sources as part of the “research article report” assignments.

No \_\_\_\_\_ Why not?

## **II. Expected Results**

With this mission in mind, the Department of Psychology has modified its PSYC 201 course to meet these requirements. The following assessment mechanisms have been developed and implemented:

### **a. Knowledge of Psychology**

Students will master knowledge from major areas of psychology including human development, learning and motivation, physiological aspects of behavior, personality theory, health psychology, social psychology, abnormal psychology, and psychological interventions. This mastery will be demonstrated by students’ achieving a minimum score of 70% on a common set of multiple-choice items on the final examination in the class.

### **b. Scientific Method and Critical Thinking**

Students will be able to apply the scientific method and a basic knowledge of psychology to enable them to think more critically. The development of this ability will be demonstrated by (1) a statistically significant pretest-posttest increase in scores on a 10-item multiple-choice test assessing knowledge of the scientific method and experimental procedures; (2) a statistically significant pretest-posttest increase in scores on a test of critical thinking. (Both of these measures are administered at the beginning of the semester, and then again at the time of the final exam.)

### **c. Application of Knowledge**

Students will apply basic knowledge about psychology to his/her person, academic and professional life. The ability to apply psychological knowledge will be demonstrated by achieving 75% “satisfactory” ratings on a randomly selected sample of “application activity” reports generated each term.

### **III. Assessment Tools**

#### **a. Knowledge of Psychology**

Knowledge of psychology will be assessed by way of a common set of multiple-choice items (reflecting the breadth of the course) included on the final examination in the class.

#### **b. Scientific Method and Critical Thinking**

Students' knowledge of methodological issues and their ability to apply critical thinking skills will be assessed using:

1. A 10-item multiple-choice test assessing knowledge of the scientific method and experimental procedures (administered at the start and again at the end of the course).
2. A test of critical thinking (also administered at the start and again at the end of the course).

#### **c. Application of Knowledge**

A sample of 50 "application activity" reports, taken from all sections of the course, will be randomly selected each term. Two instructors will assess each as "satisfactory" or "unsatisfactory" with regard to the paper's successful demonstration of an appropriate level of application of psychological knowledge. (Both instructors will be required to assess a given report as "satisfactory" for that to be the final designation for that report.)

### **IV. Assessment Results**

#### **a. Knowledge of Psychology**

Knowledge of psychology is assessed by way of a common set of 20 multiple-choice items (reflecting the breadth of the course) included on the final examination in the class. Mastery of this subject area is demonstrated by students' achieving a minimum score of 70% on this set of common items on the final examination in the class. In other words, we expect our PSYC 201 classes to produce mean scores of at least 70% on this portion of the final.

This piece of the assessment plan was introduced in Fall 2003. Admittedly, there have been a few rough spots -- administratively and logistically speaking -- as instructors have been getting accustomed to this new expectation. In a few cases instructors have simply not administered the items, while in other cases they have collected the data but have failed to compute and/or report their results. As a consequence, we do not have these data for all 32 of the sections of PSYC 201 taught between Fall 2003 and Spring 2006. We do, however, have complete data sets from 12 of the 32 sections -- which almost certainly represent a representative and perfectly adequate sample.

Mean scores in these 12 classes ranged from 66% to 77%, with 11 of these above the 70% criterion. Across all 12 of these sections, the average mean score on the common final items was 73.5% -- clearly surpassing our expected result here, and thus providing evidence that PSYC 201 students are satisfactorily mastering the subject matter of the course.

#### **b. Scientific Method and Critical Thinking**

1. At the start and then again at the end of the course, all students in PSYC 201 are to complete a 10-item multiple-choice test that assesses their knowledge of the scientific method and experimental methodology. As one would imagine, there has been the occasional logistical glitch (e.g., an instructor who fails to administer one or both of the measures, a student who is not present to complete the measure on both occasions, or one who fails to complete the instrument properly) that prevents our achieving a 100% "response rate"; however, we have complete data from 471 of the 824 students who took PSYC 201 during the regular year between Fall 2003 and Spring 2006. (This reflects a response rate of 57% and certainly stands as a representative sample of our students.)

As expected, in each of the six semesters under review, the students showed a statistically significant pretest-posttest gain (evaluated by way of a matched-pairs *t*-test). For these six semesters, the average pretest score was 5.34, and the average posttest score was 6.87; this overall difference was, of course, highly statistically significant. (All of these *ps* were well beyond the usual criteria for statistical significance.) Clearly, students in PSYC 201 have been increasing their level of knowledge in this area during the past three academic years.

2. PSYC 201 students also complete a challenging test of their critical thinking skills (also administered at the start and again at the end of the course). In this case we have complete data from 511 of the 824 students (62%). In each of the six semesters under review, the pretest and posttest mean scores on this test (maximum score is 18) were compared and analyzed by way of a matched-pairs *t*-test. In five of the six semesters the difference between these means was in the predicted direction (i.e., higher scores on the posttest), but in only one case (Fall 2005) did that difference achieve statistical significance ( $p < .004$ ). Across all six semesters under review, the average pretest score was 5.95, and the average posttest score was 6.18 -- a difference that was in the predicted direction but only marginally statistically significant ( $p < .15$ ). In short, it appears that students in PSYC 201 have probably been experiencing a slight increase in their critical thinking abilities as a result of their experience in that class. Given that there is no direct effort to enhance the critical thinking abilities of the students in this class, it is entirely possible that our expected result (i.e., a statistically significant increase in these score) is a bit ambitious. Any such increase is more than likely a byproduct of ongoing exposure to the scientific perspective that permeates psychology, and it may well be that a longer period of time than that encompassed by one semester is necessary for more substantial changes in critical thinking abilities to occur. Nevertheless, it still appears that the PSYC 201 class is at least providing students with a healthy nudge in that direction.

### **c. Application of Knowledge**

Our intention is to generate a random sample of 50 “application activity” reports, taken from all sections of the course, each semester. Two evaluators will then assess each as “satisfactory” or “unsatisfactory” with regard to the paper’s successful demonstration of an appropriate level of application of psychological knowledge. (Both evaluators must judge a given report as “satisfactory” for that to be the final designation.) Our expectation -- i.e., our criterion for success -- is that 75% of these will result in ratings of “satisfactory.”

This piece of the assessment plan was also introduced for the first time in Fall 2003, and here we have also experienced some of the same logistical and administrative difficulties previously discussed with respect to other aspects of the plan. In this particular area, one unique hurdle is that different PSYC 201 instructors offer their students quite a variety of alternatives for completing these application activities. For this aspect of our assessment, we have chosen to focus on one specific application activity assignment that is offered by all instructors, and a second one that is offered by most instructors. Still, with numerous other alternatives available it has been difficult to generate the desired number of reports to be subjected to the evaluation process. It should be noted that although we will continue efforts to generate 50 such reports each semester, it may be impossible to achieve that goal.

Nevertheless, we have still managed to generate a healthy (and we believe representative) sample over the three-year period covered by this report. From six different sections of the class we produced and evaluated 144 application activity reports, 117 of which were deemed satisfactory. This represents 81.3% of the reports and obviously surpasses our expected result of 75%, thus providing convincing evidence that PSYC 201 students are adequately demonstrating the ability to apply the knowledge acquired in the class to domains beyond the class.

## **V. Actions Taken and Resources Needed**

Considered collectively, the data that have been reported in this section support our contention that the PSYC 201 class is generally producing the intended effects upon students taking the course. Steps have already been taken, particularly within the just-completed academic year, to improve the efficiency of the data collection and reporting mechanisms, and we expect that the data will reflect the involvement of a higher percentage of PSYC 201 students three years from now (i.e., when these data will next be reported). Aside from these administrative measures, no actions are needed, and none will be taken. Consequently, no additional resources are required at this time.

## **B.A. Psychology Major**

### **I. Mission/Purpose**

The Citadel's undergraduate programs are grounded in the liberal arts and sciences. Consistent with this structure, the major in psychology is designed around a broad liberal education whereby learning in the humanities and the sciences is integrated through an emphasis on the study of human behavior. Students in psychology develop an approach to learning that combines an empirical, objective methodology built upon observational and statistical strategies, with skills in discerning patterns across data – all of which in turn foster conceptual and theoretical analysis. Students who graduate from this program are expected to have the knowledge base and skills in data analysis that would support graduate study in any of the specialty areas of psychology. They also should be well prepared for employment in positions that require understanding and motivating others.

With this mission in mind, the Department of Psychology recognizes that its greatest asset is its students. The Department is committed to insuring that its students not only have the highest level of instruction, but also that they are learning the material expected of a college graduate with a major in psychology.

### **II. Expected Results**

#### **a. Quality of Instruction**

Faculty teaching in the Department of Psychology at The Citadel will exhibit a high level of teaching proficiency, as indicated by the following: (1) on core items from the college-wide student evaluation of instruction, faculty will have overall average ratings at or above the college mean (in undergraduate courses); (2) on a rating scale administered to graduating seniors in the major, Psychology faculty will receive a rating indicating that our majors perceive them (i.e., as a group) to be better than 75% of Citadel faculty outside of the department (in the top one-fourth of all faculty, in other words); (3) on a regular teaching observation conducted by either the department head or a senior member of the faculty, each faculty member will receive an average overall rating of at least “satisfactory.”

#### **b. Student Knowledge**

Undergraduate psychology majors graduating from The Citadel will have a broad knowledge of the field of psychology, as demonstrated by the following: (1) 60% of graduating seniors will score at or above the overall mean for all students (i.e., nationwide) taking the ETS Major Field Test in psychology; (2) at least three students annually will present their independent research at a state, regional, or national professional meeting.

### **III. Assessment Tools**

#### **a. Quality of Instruction**

The quality of classroom instruction will be assessed using the following:

1. Core items from the college-wide student evaluation of instruction, administered at the end of every course.
2. Ratings by graduating undergraduate majors: Each graduating senior who has majored in psychology is asked to provide an overall rating of the quality of the faculty in the Department of Psychology. As part of a more extensive "exit survey," the student is asked to consider all of the Psychology faculty with whom he or she has had a class; thinking about them collectively and using a 10-point scale, the student then offers a rating to compare Psychology faculty with other faculty the student has had at The Citadel. For example, circling an "8" means that the student thinks that the Psychology faculty are better than 80% of Citadel faculty outside of the department. This survey is administered at the time of the exit interview and is completed anonymously.
3. Annual teaching observation: A standard form is used to structure each faculty member's annual observation of teaching. The rater evaluates the instructor on 12 different components of instruction; each rating is made on a five-point scale (with one being the highest, five being the lowest, and three being designated as "satisfactory").

#### **b. Student Knowledge**

The general level of student's knowledge of the field will be assessed using the following:

1. Each graduating senior in the department takes the ETS Major Field Test in psychology.
2. Presenting one's work at a state, regional, or national professional meeting is used as another general indicator of our students' competence and general level of knowledge.

## IV. Assessment Results

### a. Quality of Instruction

1. College-Wide Student Evaluation of Instruction: During the three-year period covered by this report, approximately 80 sections of undergraduate psychology courses have been offered. (This figure excludes Maymester and summer sessions.) Faculty teaching these courses have received overall average ratings above the college mean on core items over 90% of the time; most of the exceptions to this pattern have involved adjunct faculty. For Fall 2003, Spring 2004, Fall 2004, Spring 2005, and Fall 2005, the overall average rating for regular departmental faculty exceeded the college mean in every case. (Spring 2006 results were not available at the time this report was written.) Across these five semesters, the mean of this overall average rating for regular Psychology faculty was 4.54, while the corresponding college average was 4.40 (with the difference ranging from .04 to .29). These figures are consistent with the expected result for this measure and suggest that faculty in the department continue to perform well in the classroom.

2. Ratings of Psychology Faculty by Graduating Majors: The Department Head conducts an exit interview with all graduating senior majors, and each of these students also completes a fairly extensive exit survey that is designed to provide feedback that is used to refine and improve the program as appropriate. One particular item on this survey is tied to our assessment plan (as explained in the "Expected Results" section in the foregoing). This item asks the respondent to consider all of the Psychology faculty with whom he or she has had a class; thinking about them collectively and using a 10-point scale, the student then offers a rating to compare Psychology faculty with other faculty the student has had at The Citadel. (For example, circling an "8" means that the student thinks that the Psychology faculty are better than 80% of Citadel faculty outside of the department.) For the three years under review, the mean ratings on this item were as follows:

2004: 8.68

2005: 9.06

2006: 8.63

For the entire three-year period, the average rating (based on 32 total respondents) was 8.79, indicating that these students collectively view the departmental faculty as better than nearly 90% of the other Citadel faculty with whom they had had experience.

These results are also consistent with expectation and indicative of solid teaching on the part of the faculty in the Department of Psychology.

3. Observations of Teaching: During the past three years, each member of the department who teaches at least one undergraduate course has been observed in the classroom at least once. These observations are conducted by either the Department Head or another full professor in the department. (Originally, our assessment plan called for each faculty member to be observed annually; however, practical considerations have led us to conclude that such a schedule is overly ambitious. It is probably not necessary to observe tenured faculty that frequently anyway; untenured faculty, however, are always observed at least once a year.) The rating form used for this purpose allows the observer to assess a number of different aspects of teaching using a five-point scale (on which higher ratings reflect better performance); the observer also offers an overall summary judgment using the same scale. During this review period, the average overall rating for these observations was 4.9, with no overall score lower than 4.5. Since a "3" rating means "satisfactory" on this particular scale, this result is thus clearly consistent with the expectation that no such observation will result in an unsatisfactory rating.

#### b. Student Knowledge

1. ETS Major Field Test in Psychology: This tool is the most critical measure we use to assess our majors' general knowledge of the field of psychology. The Major Field Test in Psychology, available through the Educational Testing Service, provides a national perspective on the actual learning of students majoring in psychology. Our results for the three years under review were as follows:

	<u>N</u>	<u>Mean %-ile</u>	<u>n&gt;Mean</u>
2004	10	52	4 (40%)
2005	16	53	8 (50%)
2006	21	58	14 (67%)
OVERALL	47	53	26 (55%)

For this three-year period, the average score produced by Citadel psychology majors has been at the 53rd percentile, thus suggesting that our students are performing collectively at a level just slightly above average. Strictly speaking, however, we did not achieve our expected result as it is stated -- i.e., that 60% of our graduating seniors will score at or above the overall nationwide mean for all students taking the Major Field Test. For this period, 26 of our 47 students, or 55%, met that criterion. Interestingly, two students from the class of 2004 fell only one point shy of exceeding the nationwide mean; including these two students

would have raised this total to exactly 60%. In other words, we were extremely close to achieving our expected result for this reporting period.

2. Undergraduate Student Presentations: The number of undergraduate students involved in professional presentations was as follows for each of the academic years currently under review:

2003-2004: 4  
 2004-2005: 1  
 2005-2006: 4

These figures yield an average of three undergraduate student presentations per year and thus are perfectly consistent with our expectation. Several of these presentations involved more than one undergraduate co-author -- so, strictly speaking, more than three students per year were involved in research that was presented at professional meetings.

## **V. Actions Taken and Resources Needed**

All of the indicators clearly suggest that the quality of instruction in the Department of Psychology remains quite high. With regard to our students' knowledge and achievement -- although we are constantly striving to improve our performance on the Major Field Test, we are at least somewhat gratified that our students continue to perform at a level above the national average.

We are especially pleased to note a heightened level of research productivity among our undergraduate students. In our 2003 annual assessment report (when we last focused on the undergraduate program), we noted that our undergraduates' research productivity was lagging. As a consequence, we indicated that we would mount an effort to increase the level of undergraduate research involvement. The numbers we have reported here suggest that this effort has been successful.

One final note: As previously noted, the exit survey administered to our graduating seniors generates a significant amount of useful information beyond that which is directly tied to our assessment plan. Over this three-year reporting period, those additional data generally provide convergent evidence that our undergraduate program is serving our majors well. One set of items on that instrument asks students to rate how well we are doing in several specific areas (e.g., stimulating critical thinking, helping students to develop intellectually, curriculum coverage, etc.). We received mean ratings well above average in all such areas except one -- "shaping writing skills" (in which our mean rating was only slightly above average). Particularly over the last year or so, departmental faculty have been discussing the need to strengthen our commitment to developing our students' writing abilities; ironically, before these results became

available, we had already scheduled a retreat for later this summer in which we would develop a plan to address this concern. Consequently, we will hope to see a positive impact as a result of this effort by the time we next report on the undergraduate program in June of 2009.

Overall, we believe the general state of our undergraduate program to be sound, and no additional resources are needed at this time.

## **M.A. in Psychology: Clinical Counseling**

The Department of Psychology has two graduate programs: one in school psychology and one in clinical counseling. In addition, the Department offers courses that can be taken by graduate students in other programs. The purpose of The Citadel's College of Graduate and Professional Studies is to serve the citizens of the Lowcountry and the State of South Carolina; consistent with this purpose, the majority of the students in Psychology's two graduate programs are from the region, and nearly all of them are from South Carolina.

### **I. Mission/Purpose**

The graduate program in Clinical Counseling is a 54-semester hour program leading to the degree of Masters of Arts in Psychology: Clinical Counseling. Approximately 25% of the students in the program are considered full-time graduate students; the majority of the program's students are part-time, in other words.

The mission of the Clinical Counseling program at The Citadel is to prepare students to become scholarly practitioners of psychosocial counseling in community agencies, including college counseling centers, hospitals, mental health centers, and social services agencies. The program emphasizes the application of theories of human development, psychopathology, and behavior change to psychosocial problems of a diverse population of individuals and families seeking mental health services in the community. The program's model blends didactic and experiential training to facilitate students' ability to utilize an empirical approach to assessment, goal development, intervention, and evaluation of services for individuals and families experiencing a variety of psychosocial difficulties. It is the expectation of the program that students will be trained to be competent and ethical professional service providers who will bring compassion and caring to their work.

### **II. Expected Results**

The Department of Psychology is committed to training the highest level of service provider in clinical counseling that can be produced at the master's degree level. In order to meet this goal, the following results are expected:

#### **a. Accreditation**

The Clinical Counseling Program will seek/maintain the appropriate accreditation for its program.

## **b. Student Knowledge of Psychological Foundations**

All Clinical Counseling students will demonstrate a proficient working knowledge of the psychological foundations for clinical counseling prior to beginning their applied courses and practical experiences. Content areas contributing to these foundations include:

- Biological bases of behavior
- Acquired or learned bases of behavior
- Social/cultural bases of behavior and influences on the counseling process
- Individual or unique basis of behavior (developmental, personality, etc.)
- Research techniques
- Principles of assessment
- Psychological and counseling theory and applications
- Ethical and professional standards
- Human development

This working knowledge of the field will be demonstrated on a written, comprehensive examination; all students who complete the program will have received a grade of “pass” on this examination.

## **c. Effective Counseling Skills**

All Clinical Counseling students will demonstrate effective counseling skills, including an ability to apply theoretical principles in the counseling setting. This set of competencies will be demonstrated in two ways: (1) an average rating of “satisfactory” or above on all field supervisor ratings of the student’s practicum/internship work; (2) a grade of “pass” on a final case study that is presented to a group of program faculty members.

## **d. Quality of Instruction, Advisement, and Supervision**

The Clinical Counseling program will provide excellent teaching, advisement, and supervision to its students, as demonstrated by: (1) on core items from the college-wide student evaluation of instruction, all faculty will have overall average ratings at or above the college mean (in graduate courses); (2) an overall assessment of “satisfactory” on 100% of the exit interviews done with all graduating students; (3) an overall assessment of “satisfactory” on 100% of the alumni field follow-up interviews conducted with graduates of the program.

## **e. Licensure**

All graduates from the Clinical Counseling program who seek licensure as

counselors or Masters level psychologists (depending upon the state in which they reside) will be successful in doing so.

#### **f. Recruitment and Completion**

The number of students accepted, enrolled, and completing the program will remain more or less level with the average numbers in these areas from the preceding three-year period.

### **III. Assessment Tools**

#### **a. Accreditation**

This assessment tool will be the maintenance of accreditation by the Masters In Psychology Accreditation Council (MPAC).

#### **b. Student Knowledge of Psychological Foundations**

Students' working knowledge of the field will be assessed by way of a written, comprehensive examination.

#### **c. Effective Counseling Skills**

The effectiveness of students' counseling skills will be assessed using:

1. Field supervisor ratings.
2. The final case study presentation.

#### **d. Quality of Instruction, Advisement, and Supervision**

The quality of instruction, advisement, and supervision will be assessed using these mechanisms:

1. Core items from the college-wide student evaluation of instruction, administered at the end of every graduate course tied to the program.
2. The exit interview conducted with all graduating students.
3. The alumni field follow-up interview.

**e. Licensure**

Successfully gaining appropriate professional licensure (which will vary by state) will be treated as an assessment mechanism.

**f. Recruitment and Completion**

The number of students accepted, enrolled, and completing the program will be monitored annually.

**IV. Assessment Results**

The staggered three-year reporting cycle created by the January 2003 revision of the department's assessment plan means that data for the Clinical Counseling program will next be reported in June 2007.

**V. Actions Taken and Resources Needed**

No modifications to this portion of the assessment plan were introduced in 2005-2006; however, there is one noteworthy development to report. During the past year we were informed that as a direct consequence of our successful efforts to address issues raised in the 2002 accreditation report, the program's accreditation by MPAC has been extended through 2012. Aside from this bit of welcome news, the only "action" taken during the past year was the hiring of a new faculty member for the Clinical Counseling program; the new hire will join the faculty in Fall 2006.

Apart from these developments, no specific actions have been taken during this period, other than to continue efforts to address the areas of concern relative to this program that were identified in the 2003-2004 annual assessment report (i.e., teaching performance and the exit interview and alumni survey processes). No additional resources are needed at this time.

## **Ed.S. - School Psychology**

### **I. Mission/Purpose**

The graduate program in School Psychology is a 75-semester hour program leading to the Specialist in Education degree, with the MA degree being awarded along the way. This is primarily a full-time graduate program, with approximately 75% of its students being enrolled in nine or more semester hours per semester.

The School Psychology program embraces a training model based upon the application of the principles of scientific methodology to the school setting – i.e., a school psychologist is a data-based problem-solver who is able to bring his/her knowledge (psychological and educational) and skills (diagnostic and prescriptive) to bear on school-related problems, generating viable and testable hypotheses about the problem that can be evaluated in light of continued data-gathering. Within this model, the program emphasizes the application of theory and research to practical and applied problems and settings within the ecology of the schools. It is the expectation of the program that students will be trained to meet these guidelines and that they will be competent professional problem-solvers who are compassionate and caring in their service. It is also the expectation of this program that students graduating will meet NASP guidelines for training, will be certifiable in the State of South Carolina at Level II, and will be eligible for National Certification.

### **II. Expected Results**

The Department of Psychology is committed to training the highest level of service provider in school psychology that can be produced at the specialist degree level. In order to meet this goal, the following results are expected:

#### **a. Accreditation**

The School Psychology Program will maintain its accreditation with the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) in order for its graduates to be eligible for Certification in the State of South Carolina at Level II and for National Certification.

#### **b. Student Knowledge of Scientific Methodology**

Students in the School Psychology Program will demonstrate a knowledge of scientific methodology as it applies to the school setting, as indicated by the following: (1) all graduates will have successfully completed a thesis; (2) annually, at least 75% of the program's thesis-level students will present their research at a state, regional, or national professional meeting; (3) annually, at least 50% of the program's thesis-level students will be a primary or secondary author on a published journal article.

**c. Student Knowledge of School Psychology**

Students will develop the knowledge necessary to function as school psychologists, to be indicated by 75% of graduates achieving scores at or above the national mean on the School Psychology section of the Praxis II exam (formerly known as the National Teacher Examination, or NTE).

**d. Student Skills in School Psychology**

Students will develop the skills necessary to function as school psychologists, as indicated by the following: (1) all students will achieve an average rating of at least “satisfactory” on the Field Supervisor Rating Form; (2) all students will achieve an average rating of at least “satisfactory” on the Efficacy of Intervention Rating Form; (3) all students will achieve a grade of “pass” on the presentation of a case study.

**e. Recruitment and Completion**

School Psychology program will be successful at recruiting quality students and assisting students in completing the program; as an indication that this goal is being accomplished, the number of students accepted, enrolled, and completing the program, as well as their average GPAs and GRE scores, will remain more or less level with the average numbers in these areas from the preceding three-year period.

**f. Quality of Instruction, Advisement, and Supervision**

The School Psychology program will provide excellent teaching, advisement, and supervision to its students, as demonstrated by: (1) on core items from the college-wide student evaluation of instruction, all faculty will have overall average ratings at or above the college mean (in graduate courses); (2) an overall assessment of “satisfactory” on 100% of the exit interviews done with interns completing that component of the program; (3) an overall assessment of “satisfactory” on 100% of the Efficacy of Intervention Rating Forms completed by internship supervisors; (4) an overall assessment of “satisfactory” on 100% of the alumni follow-up surveys conducted with graduates of the program.

### **III. Assessment Tools**

#### **a. Accreditation**

This assessment tool will be the maintenance of accreditation by the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP).

#### **b. Student Knowledge of Scientific Methodology**

Students' knowledge of scientific methodology will be assessed using these mechanisms:

1. Successful completion of the thesis.
2. The number of students presenting research at state, regional, or national professional meetings.
3. The number of students who publish articles in professional journals.

#### **c. Student Knowledge of School Psychology**

Students' knowledge of school psychology will be assessed using the School Psychology section of the Praxis II exam (formerly known as the National Teacher Examination, or NTE).

#### **d. Student Skills in School Psychology**

Students' skills in school psychology will be assessed by way of the following:

1. The Field Supervisor Rating Form.
2. The Efficacy of Intervention Rating Form.
3. A case study presentation.

#### **e. Recruitment and Completion**

The School Psychology program's success in recruiting quality students and assisting them in completing the program will be assessed using the following measures:

1. The numbers of students accepted, enrolled, and completing the program, monitored annually.
2. GPAs of these students.
3. GRE scores of these students.

#### **f. Quality of Instruction, Advisement, and Supervision**

The quality of instruction, advisement, and supervision will be assessed using these mechanisms:

1. Core items from the college-wide student evaluation of instruction, administered at the end of every graduate course tied to the program.
2. The exit interview conducted with interns upon the completion of the internship.
3. The Efficacy of Intervention Rating Form (completed by internship supervisors).
4. The alumni follow-up survey.

#### **IV. Assessment Results**

The staggered three-year reporting cycle created by the January 2003 revision of the department's assessment plan means that data for the School Psychology program will next be reported in June 2008.

#### **V. Actions Taken and Resources Needed**

No modifications to this portion of the assessment plan were introduced in 2005-2006; however, there is one noteworthy development to report. In June of 2003 the program received a highly complimentary report from NASP granting accreditation with Full Approval for the next five years (the maximum possible); we recently were informed that our full accreditation has now been extended through December 31, 2010. (This action was apparently a consequence of some administrative adjustments on the part of NASP.) Aside from this bit of welcome news, the only "action" taken during the past year was the hiring of a new faculty member for the School Psychology program; the new hire will join the faculty in Fall 2006.

No additional resources are needed at this time.

## **GOALS AND OBJECTIVES FOR 2006-2007**

### **I. Core Curriculum Course**

Goal 1: To improve the efficiency of the data collection mechanisms tied to PSYC 201.

Objective: To increase the percentage of PSYC 201 students producing usable data through more careful monitoring of the process.

Objective: To generate, distribute, and post a standard set of instructions to be used by all instructors to guide these data collection activities.

Goal 2: To improve the degree to which PSYC 201 fosters the development of critical thinking skills.

Objective: To develop a standardized activity related to critical thinking, to be used in PSYC 201.

### **II. B.A. in Psychology Major**

Goal: To improve the writing skills of Psychology majors.

Objective: To develop and introduce one additional writing exercise, using a common basic framework, for use in each of five courses within the major.

Objective: To begin the process of examining how writing requirements might be enhanced in other courses within the major.