



Date: February 21, 2020

To: John Stalvey, Interim Provost

From: John Petraitis, Interim Dean, College of Arts and Sciences

Cc: Mychal Machado, Assistant Professor
Eric Murphy, Professor; Director, Department of Psychology

Re: AY20 Expedited Program Review Findings

Program/s in this review: Psychology BA-BS

Specialized accrediting agency (if applicable): None

Campuses where the program is delivered: Anchorage

Members of the program review committee:

Mychal Machado, Assistant Professor
Eric Murphy, Professor and Department Director

Centrality of Program Mission and Supporting Role

UAA's mission is to discover and disseminate knowledge through teaching, research, engagement and creative expression. UAA is committed to serving the higher education needs of the state, its communities and its diverse peoples. It is also committed to instruction at multiple academic levels, success of all students regardless of their higher education goals, and service to the diverse peoples and communities of the state. UAA's core themes are (1) Teaching and Learning, (2) Research, Scholarship and Creative Activity, (3) Student Success, (4) UAA Community, and (5) Public Square. UAA values international and intercultural education, diversity of experiences and perspectives, and the diversity of our unique location in Southcentral Alaska that comes from the Alaska Native peoples of this area.

The College of Arts and Sciences CAS contributes to UAA's mission with a suite of programs that provide, among other things,

1. general education courses for undergraduates in CAS and other Colleges,
2. opportunities for undergraduates to pursue majors in the humanities, social sciences, natural sciences, and the arts, and

3. opportunities for faculty and students to pursue research and creative activities in CAS's academic disciplines,
4. graduate programs for advanced studies.

Given decreased enrollments across UAA and significant budget cuts to CAS, the challenge is to serve UAA's and CAS's missions with only 75% of the funds it had in 2018-2019. CAS's shrinking budget is especially challenging for programs that rely on state financial appropriations through CAS because the programs have a gap between (a) the total costs of everything the program does and needs, and (b) the tuition CAS receives to cover those costs. This describes most programs in CAS: most rely on state appropriations and CAS has 30% less than it had two years ago.

At the undergraduate level, CAS's Department of Psychology contributes to CAS's and UAA's mission by providing three Social Sciences General Education Courses, some required courses for other degree programs, a minor and concentration in behavior analysis that fits well with UAA's health-related mission, a BA-BS degree for students interested in further studies in psychology, and opportunities for students to be mentored by faculty in research and applied behavioral services.

Program Demand (including service to other programs), Efficiency, and Productivity

One measure of program demand is the number of incoming high-school seniors who select the Psychology BA-BS as their initial major. Averaging over 60 such students each year since 2013, the Psychology BA-BS is six times more popular than the median baccalaureate program in CAS which attracts 10 student annually, following only Biology in its draw among high-school students. Another measure of demand is enrollment in classes; and by this measure Psychology courses produced more than 10,500 student credits hours in 2019, more than four times the median in other CAS programs. As to efficiency, Psychology courses are unrivaled in CAS programs that rely on full-time faculty. Part of the reason is that faculty have increased their average class size from 33 in 2013 to 41.5 in 2019, allowing the number of faculty to shrink from 15.7 in 2013 to 11.7 in 2019 with modest drops in student credit hours. Finally, as to productivity, the Department produced an average of 72 BA-BS awards since 2013, nearly twice the rate of the next closest department.

Program Quality, Improvement and Student Success

The program relies on a stable base of experienced faculty who are dedicated to undergraduate student success. It offered UAA's first online pathway whereby students could complete the entire Psychology BA-BS either with just face-to-face classes, just online classes, or a combination of both options.

Program Duplication / Distinctiveness

UAF also offers a BA-BS in Psychology. Since 2016 the two programs have combined to produce about 100 BA-BS awards each year; approximately 1/3rd were at UAF and 2/3rd were at UAA. Both programs appear large enough to exist on their own.

Commendations and Recommendations

I commend the faculty for their commitment to undergraduate education and research opportunities, and commend them for providing an online pathway that helps bring the curriculum to students rather than requiring students to come to campus. The faculty also should be commended for the hard work they put into their expedited program review submission.

Decision

Continuation. The large class sizes make a case that additional faculty might be needed. However, budget constraints make that difficult to accomplish with new hiring. Reassigning departmental faculty from one program to the BA-BS program should be considered.