

2021 ANNUAL ACADEMIC ASSESSMENT REPORT FORM
(Due October 15 to the dean)**PROGRAM SECTION (Due to the dean on October 15)****Submission date:** 10/12/2021**Submitted by:** Yasuhiro Ozuru, Professor of Psychology, yozuru@alaska.edu**Program(s) covered in this report:** Psychology BA/BS

If you selected "Other" above, please identify. (100 characters or less)

College: College of Arts and Sciences**Campuses where the program(s) is delivered:** ☒ Anchorage ☐ KOD ☐ KPC ☐ MSC ☐ PWSC**Specialized accrediting agency (if applicable):** Select Specialized Accrediting Agency or N/A.

If explanation is necessary, such as only some of the certificates and degrees are covered by the specialized accreditation, briefly describe: N/A

INSTITUTIONAL STUDENT LEARNING CORE COMPETENCIES

In 2020, UAA launched a consensus-based, deliberative process to identify the key skillsets that help students achieve academic and post-graduation success. After a year-long process that included students, faculty, staff, administrators, alumni, and employers, the UAA community identified four "core competencies" at the heart of a quality UAA education. Students develop mastery of these competencies through curricular (e.g., courses), co-curricular (e.g., internships, conferences), and extra-curricular (e.g., student clubs) learning experiences.

After the stakeholder-based process in AY20, UAA conducted a pilot project focusing on the core competency of Personal, Professional, and Community Responsibility (PPCR). This decision was based on input from the 2020 Annual Academic Assessment Retreat.

Question #1 below is designed to engage program faculty in thinking about how they can or already do promote student learning in this core competency.

1. Personal, Professional, and Community Responsibility: The knowledge and skills necessary to promote personal flourishing, professional excellence, and community engagement.

- **What would you hope a student would say if asked where in your program or support service they had the opportunity to develop proficiency in this Core Competency? (500 characters or less)**

The program is aimed at training students for "practicing" psychology in scientific research and mental health profession. Thus, our program exposes students to knowledge, awareness, and obligation of responsible conduct as a scientific researcher and mental health professional. Research methods (and corresponding lab) and practicum courses have an emphasis on teaching students about their responsibilities as scientists and mental health professionals.

- **Do you have an example that could be a model for the university of an intentionally designed course, assignment, or activity that showcases the student learning in this core competency? ☒ Yes ☐ No**

If yes, please briefly describe. (500 characters or less)

Research methods (PSY A261) and independent research projects (PSY A498) that lead to conference presentations is a good example where students learn personal and professional responsibility towards their own research as well as to the participants. Students also learn about responsibilities to the public on accuracy of the information they present. In a practicum course where students work in a community agency, they learn about responsibility and ethics of mental health professionals.

- **Do you have any ideas about where your program or the university might develop other intentionally designed opportunities for students to develop proficiency in this core competency? ☒ Yes ☐ No**

If yes, please briefly describe. (500 characters or less)

CESA (community engaged student assistantship) in various areas (research, internship in community agency) may be one example program where students experience, and hence are encouraged to develop a "sense of responsibility" across personal, professional, and communal levels.

PROGRAM STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

2. Please list the Program Student Learning Outcomes your program assessed in AY21. For each outcome, indicate one of the following: Exceeded faculty expectations, Met faculty expectations, or Did not meet faculty expectations.

Example: Communicate effectively in a variety of contexts and formats – Exceeded faculty expectations.

- A broad knowledge of contemporary psychology.

Based on the exit exam score in which they achieved 47th percentile at the national standardized

test score across 2019/20 and 2020/21, the performance level is acceptable for an open enrolment institution. However, the overall performance went down quite significantly from previous years. Therefore, the expectation was met but the students' performance on the exit exam did not exceed expectation.

- Be able to demonstrate skills in research design and data analysis

The exit exam score in Experimental design and Statistics was the 49th percentile. It is lower than previous years but still around 50th percentile which is an acceptable level. Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, we had very limited research opportunities and its presentation (BSCN) this past year which is where we assess students' ability/skill for this outcome.

- Have experience conducting psychological research

This is a difficult one to assess because of the campus closure. Most, if not all of the in person, research was suspended during the year of 2020-21. We managed to provide some research experience with online survey-based research. We also provided a face-to-face lab course with animal research experience. Thus, we manage to continue to provide some, albeit limited, research experiences.

- Be prepared for advanced study in psychology and related disciplines.

We had at least 4 Psychology Major students accepted to M.S. program in Clinical Psychology in UAA. Additionally, 3 students were accepted to graduate programs (Masters level) at other universities outside of Alaska, including Boston College Law School (he was also wait listed in Harvard and Columbia law schools). This represents more than 10% of graduates in this academic year. Further this is based on somewhat incomplete data as this is based on informal communication between faculty and students (students notify faculty who wrote letter of recommendation); the actual count is likely to be higher. Hence, we believe that the expectation was met on this criterion.

3. Describe your assessment process in AY21 for these program student learning outcomes, including the collection of data, analysis of data, and faculty (and other, e.g., advisory board) conversations around the findings. (750 characters or less)

The first two SLOs are based on a standardized exam before the student's graduation. There are 8 topic areas in the exam, and these areas are covered by at least one required course. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, students took the exam at home online. We have a concern that one reason that this year's performance showed nearly a 10% decline may be due to the testing conditions, as opposed to the students' ability level. The other two learning outcomes are assessed based on communication between faculty members and students; we communicate among faculty and students about the number of publications, research presentations, and research projects as well as graduate program acceptance on a regular basis.

**4. What are the findings and what do they tell the faculty about student learning in your program?
(750 characters or less)**

Overall, students are learning the skills and knowledge that the BA/BS program are aimed to provide. However, as a trend, the department recognizes: 1) a possibility that the current primary measure of the learning outcome (standardized exam) may have some limitation in its validity in the current environment where the exam is administered online; while the exam is designed to assess what students are capable of when they really try, the current testing environment is unlikely to drive students to exert such an effort to realize their full potential; 2) limited face-to-face interaction in learning may be compromising the quality of training in particular, the knowledge, and skills on research.

5. Based on the findings, did the faculty make any recommendations for changes to improve student achievement of the program student learning outcomes? Please describe the recommended action, what improvement in student learning the program hopes to see with this change, the proposed timeline, and how the program will know if the change has worked. If no recommendations for changes were made, please explain that decision. (750 Characters or less)

The recommendation is currently being considered. Given the pandemic that forced us to drastically alter both the learning situation (online) and assessment of the learning outcome (online exit exam), it is difficult to determine whether the changes (some negative) in performance of SLOs (on exit exam) is caused by: 1) changes in the assessment format; 2) changes in the learning situation; 3) some additional psychological factors (declined commitment and motivation) on learning as well as assessment activities (e.g., doing well on exit exams, applying to grad school; doing extra-curricular research activities). While we recognize a need to improve SLO, a longer observation is necessary to reach an accurate conclusion on the shortcomings.

PROGRAM IMPROVEMENTS AND ASSESSING IMPACT ON STUDENT LEARNING

6. In the past academic year, how did your program use the results of previous assessment cycles to make changes intended to improve student achievement of the program student learning outcomes? Please check all that apply.

- ☐ Course curriculum changes
- ☐ Course prerequisite changes
- ☐ Changes in teaching methods
- ☐ Changes in advising
- ☐ Degree requirement changes
- ☐ Degree course sequencing
- ☐ Course enrollment changes (e.g., course capacity, grading structure [pass/fail, A-F])
- ☐ Changes in program policies/procedures

- ☐ Changes to Program Student Learning Outcomes (PSLOs)
- ☐ College-wide initiatives (e.g., High Impact Practices)
- ☐ Faculty, staff, student development
- ☐ Other
- ☒ No changes were implemented in AY21.

If you checked “Other” above, please describe. (100 characters or less)

7. Do you have any information about how well these or other past improvements are working? Are they achieving their intended goals? Please include any data or assessment results that help you demonstrate this. (750 characters or less)

While we did not make any changes in the past year, we have been making numerous small changes in previous years (e.g., course sequences, pre-requisites, and the course content). We monitor the consequences of these changes through subsequent assessment and informal observations by individual instructors. We discuss the changes in students’ performance as well as behaviors on regular basis in the Undergraduate Studies Committee. The changes in the past resulted in improvement on the exit exam scores in the past. Some changes also resulted in speedier completion of the program due to shorter waiting times and fewer repeats due to poor performances in the courses resulting from lack of preparedness.

8. Programs are not required to respond to question #8 below for their report due on October 15, 2021. Question #8 will be required for the next round and moving forward.

9. Do you have any examples of post-graduate success you want to highlight? For example, major scholarships, the percent of students who pass licensure examinations, the percent of students accepted to graduate programs, the percent in post-graduation employment in the field or a related field. (750 characters or less)

We observe generally consistent success for acceptance to graduate (Ph.D and Masters) programs both within and outside psychology. In a typical years, including 2020-21, 4-6 students are accepted to Master's programs and additional 2-3 students are accepted into Ph.D programs. Together these make up about 15-20% of the students graduating in a given year. In addition, more students are assumed to make it to some graduate programs few years after graduation from our program which has been informally confirmed based on private communication between the graduates and faculty. Given that getting a career job in the field of psychology requires some degrees of graduate level training, this is a reasonably good performance.

DEAN SECTION (Due to the program on January 15)

- 1. Based on the program's responses above, what guidance and support do you have for the program moving forward? Is there a particular area the program should focus on?**

The Department is encouraged to work on CESAs (community engaged student assistantships) in various areas, possibly to include research and/or internships with community agencies.

It is recommended that all programs review their Program Assessment Plan to ensure clear inclusion of the new UAA Core Competencies and in particular to address the closing of any equity gaps in the program.

- 2. Is there something the program is doing particularly well in terms of its processes for the assessment and improvement of student learning, including the closing of equity gaps, that might serve as a model for other programs? If yes, please explain. You may skip this question. (750 characters or less)**

This report shows thoughtful reflection on the program, evidence of achievement of defined student outcomes, and is a solid assessment report in general.

Dean's signature: *Jenny McNulty*

Date: December 14, 2021