

Annual Assessment Report

Department: Psychology

Academic Year: 2015-2016

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Department Chair: Steve Rogers, Ph.D.

I. Response to the previous year PRC's recommendations

<p>Item: Students' assessment of their own achievements (through a department-produced survey), and dialogue with faculty about their perceptions of success, may better enable department faculty to clearly know how their student are doing (rather than relying on third-party evaluators who may not be as familiar with the assessment goals, tenor and character of the Psychology Department itself). As well, consider whether it would be helpful for students being assessed, to actually see and understand the assessment rubric that is being used by the department.</p>	<p>Response:</p> <p>The psychology department elected not to provide students with the rubric for evaluation in advance of the assessment because we were concerned that it might unduly bias students' responses and behaviors during their practicum experience. This would minimize the validity of the instrument itself.</p>
<p>Item: We wonder whether the PLO assessed (in part) in this current report is too broad; it seems cumbersome to have a PLO with so many specific subgroups within it, although it appears that you are comfortable with this situation. Could some of the subsections be combined, or simply restructured into their own separate PLO?</p>	<p>Response:</p> <p>After discussing this in length at several meetings, the department concurred that it is comfortable with this PLO. As the PRC committee surmised, some of the subgroups could be combined, but it would lose the valuable information about our major and students that is achieved by retaining these subelements. The department is also concerned about having too many separate PLOs.</p>

<p>Item: Consider new ways/opportunities in which students may grow in their learning, that directly relates to the growth and development that is occurring amongst the faculty themselves. We understand that the department is satisfied with the student performance results and yet wonder whether you are going to act upon your assessment results in any way, especially if the department wants to see more students performing at the distinguished level. Westmont faculty made the decision to undertake the assessment process, in part, so as to develop and provide their students in their discipline with opportunities to grow and develop, as the faculty within a department are growing and developing. By your willingness to act and modify your assessment process and use of evidence, you could essentially create a clear, and even more exciting, path for your students to follow in their personal and academic growth.</p>	<p>Response:</p> <p>Following several discussions, the department concluded that it would like more students at the <i>Distinguished</i> level, but the level of variability in the data is within a satisfactory and expected range. If more students were at the distinguished level, this classification or rating would likely become invalid and meaningless. The department also feels like it has maximized its available opportunities, time, and resources toward ensuring that students “will value, appreciate, and welcome, through understanding and demonstrative action, scientific methods, ethics, faith, and openness to experience.”</p>
<p>Item: Only indirect measures of assessment were utilized; we wonder if there are some interesting ways to directly measure students’ success.</p>	<p>Response:</p> <p>The department has used direct measures for some of its previous assessments, but we elected to construct and implement an indirect method in light of the extensive time and effort involved in past direct assessments. Even in this indirect measure, however, the information gathered was from someone who provided a direct assessment.</p>
<p>Item: In future, use the established template document that has been developed and is being used by other departments on the Westmont Campus.</p>	<p>Response:</p> <p>The established template is being used for the current, 2015-2016 assessment.</p>

II. Program Learning Outcome (PLO) assessment

<p>Program Learning Outcome</p>	<p>The psychology department assessed the Program Learning Outcome (PLO), <i>Applications</i>, in the 2015-2016 academic year. The aspiration of this PLO is for students to “engage as active agents in their local communities, bringing their intellectual and academic abilities and interests to bear on improving the lives of those around them.”</p>
<p>Who is in Charge /Involved?</p>	<p>Although Steve Rogers coordinated this assessment, all department members (i.e., Brenda Smith, Andrea Gurney, Carmel Saad, Ron See, Katie Mukai, Judy Williams) were involved in every step of the assessment, including design, implementation/administration, data analysis, and discussion of the results and implications.</p>
<p><u>Indirect Assessment Methods</u></p>	<p>A survey composed of three quantitative and three qualitative questions (see Appendix A) was constructed by the department and then administered in PSY 111, <i>History and Systems of Psychology</i>. Of the 23 students enrolled in the class, 20 were present on the day the survey was administered and therefore participated in the assessment. This Capstone course was selected because it is predominantly taken by seniors who can provide a valid representation of the department’s success in achieving its <i>Applications</i> goals over the course of students’ experiences in the department.</p>
<p>Major Findings</p>	<p>As seen in Table 1, our psychology seniors seem to rate themselves highest and above average ($M = 5.45, SD = 0.95$) for displaying behavior that can be seen as civil. They rate their positive influence on the community as slightly above average ($M = 5.00, SD = 1.08$) and their search for opportunities to serve and promote community as average ($M = 4.03, SD = 1.59$). The differences between their ratings of their search for opportunities to serve their community and both their civil behavior and their positive influence on their community were statistically significant ($ps < .05$). This suggests that they perceive themselves as less actively searching for opportunities to serve others, but they do rate themselves as displaying greater than average civility in behavior.</p> <p>Although these findings are satisfactory to the department, there are a few factors that may contribute to our seniors’ slightly lower tendencies to search for opportunities to serve others. First, many of the respondents spontaneously indicated that their ability to participate in service opportunities was constricted by time and heavy academic demands. Second, although the survey instructed participants to consider their “entire career at Westmont,” students’ memory for their past</p>

behaviors and involvements may be limited, suggesting that these results may better reflect our students current, rather than past, activities and influences in the community. Third, it appeared that the respondents remain committed to the activities in which they are involved, so even though their perception of their involvement may be slightly lower, this does not reflect their strong commitment to the activities they do seek. Finally, as the findings in the next paragraph intimate, there seemed to be a discrepancy between students' quantitative and qualitative responses, so that they quantitatively rated their involvement as lower than supported by their qualitatively endorsed behaviors.

When students' specific experiences were examined, they engaged in an average of 3.84 specific ways to positively influence their community, display civil behavior, and/or accept or seek opportunities to serve others (see Table 2 for summary statistics and Table 3 for all experiences that were endorsed). Of these, 59% were Westmont-affiliated, and 71% directly impacted or involved serving communities off-campus. Seventy-three percent were pure volunteer experiences, and 20% were for internship or research credit. This suggests that our seniors are engaging in multiple civil activities, with the majority influencing environments external to the Westmont community. Almost 2/3 were not for pay or internship/research credit, suggesting a strong degree of volunteerism, although the department is also pleased that its internship and research opportunities facilitate one-fifth of students' civil behavior and involvement.

Closing the Loop Activities

All members of the department met on multiple occasions to review and discuss these results. Based on these findings, the psychology department concluded that it is doing well in promoting students' engagement as "active agents in their communities, bringing their intellectual and academic abilities and interests to bear on improving the lives of those around them." We decided that we want continue to encourage students to (a) predominantly focus on their academic responsibilities and opportunities, and (b) persist at the level and degree to which they are serving their communities, including the strength of their commitment to these endeavors. The department would also like to use advising and classroom opportunities to reassure students that their level and degree of community involvement is sufficient considering their strong academic demands. Using these results, the department will continue its advocacy, both explicitly (e.g., advising, instruction) and implicitly (e.g., faculty and staff behavior), for students to positively influence their communities, engage in civic behavior, and serve others. We look forward to further assessing *Applications* in our next six-year cycle.

III. Follow-ups

Program Learning Outcome	The psychology department's primary follow-up activity was in response to the Openness to Experience subcomponent of the <i>Values and Character</i> PLO.
Who was involved in implementation?	All faculty and staff of the psychology department.
What was decided or addressed?	Based on the outcomes from the psychology department's 2014-2015 assessment, we elected to construct and administer a department-produced survey for our 2015-2016 assessment of <i>Applications</i> .
How were the recommendations implemented?	In this department-produced survey, students assessed their own achievements and were able to view all elements of this assessment, which eliminated any reliance on third-party evaluators.

Appendix A. Applications Assessment

The following is a brief questionnaire that the psychology department is using to assess how well our students engage as active agents in their communities, bringing their intellectual and academic abilities and interests to bear on improving the lives of those around them.

Instructions:

Please respond to each of the following questions. Each question has two parts – one that is quantitative and another that is qualitative. When making your responses to each question, please consider your entire career at Westmont, on campus and off, both locally and internationally, including clubs and organizations aimed at serving others.

1. a. To what degree do you positively influence your community?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Very poorly			Average			Exceptionally well

b. Using specific examples, in what ways have you positively influenced your community?

2. a. How well do you display behavior that can be seen as civil, such as sensitivity, respect, trustworthiness, and generosity, in your community?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Very poorly			Average			Exceptionally well

- b. In what ways, using specific examples, have you displayed this type of civil behavior in your community?

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3. a. How well do you actively accept and/or seek opportunities to serve others and promote your community?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Very poorly			Average			Exceptionally well

- b. In what ways, using specific examples, have you actively done this?

On behalf of the department, thanks for your time and help!

Table 1.

Descriptive Statistics for Applications-Related Quantitative Questions

Prompt	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Mode	Median	Range
To what degree do you positively influence your community?	20	5.00	1.08	6	5	3 - 6
How well do you display behavior that can be seen as civil, such as sensitivity, respect, trustworthiness, and generosity, in your community?	20	5.45	0.95	6	6	3 - 7
How well do you actively accept and/or seek opportunities to serve others and promote your community?	19	4.03	1.59	3	4	1 - 7

Note. Respondents provided a rating from 1 (*very poorly*) to 4 (*average*) to 7 (*exceptionally well*)

Table 2.

Summary Statistics for Qualitative Questions about Applications-Related Experiences (N = 23)

	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	Range
Total experiences	75	3.84	2 - 6
Experiences off campus	53	2.68	0 - 6
Westmont-affiliated	44	2.32	0 - 4
	<i>n</i>	%	
Experiences that were internships	15	20	
Experiences that were paid	5	7	
Pure volunteer experiences (i.e., not paid or for credit)	55	73	

Note. These data represent the sum of students' responses to the three qualitative questions.

Table 3.

Type and Number of Applications-Related Experiences that were Endorsed (N = 23)

Organization or Experience	<i>n</i>
Being a good citizen	5
Serving friends	5
Youth Group leader/ministry	4
Potter's Clay	4
Serving the homeless population	3
Sanctuary Psychiatric	3
Cottage Hospital Children's Services	3
Friendship Center Practicum	2
Chaplain	2
Resident Assistant	2
Choir singer	2
Emmaus Road	2
Attend and promote local events	2
Coffee shop	1
Canalino Elementary School	1
High school guidance counselor	1
Day Care at SBCC	1
Kitchen Team leader	1
Jesus Burgers	1
Hearts Equestrian Center	1
Sports Outreach	1
Buying cows ministry	1
Youth Crisis Center	1
United Way Day of caring	1
Gen Psych tutor	1
Research with older adults	1
Feminist Club	1
Work at Westmont Bookstore	1
Vespers leader	1
Volunteer with Boy Scouts	1
Spring Sing Band	1
Volunteer at local start-up	1
Cold Springs School	1
Alpha Resource Center	1
Internship in Thailand	1
Bible study for athletes	1
Suicide prevention	1
Girls' Inc.	1
Mental health awareness club	1

Organization or Experience	<i>n</i>
Volunteer at school functions	1
Spectrum	1
Transitional counseling center	1
Retirement home	1
Attend Westmont talks	1
Track	1
Reading tutor	1