**Annual Assessment Report to the College 2011-12**

**College:** Social and Behavioral Sciences

**Department:** Psychology

**Program:** Major

Note: Please submit report to your department chair or program coordinator, the assessment office and to the Associate Dean of your College by September 28, 2012. You may submit a separate report for each program, which conducted assessment activities.

**Liaison:** Ellie Kazemi

1. **Overview of Annual Assessment Project(s) (optional)**

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| 1a. **Assessment Process Overview:** Provide a brief overview of the assessment plan and process this year.  The psychology department faculty (i.e., the Education Policy Committee) revised the psychology major to better match the American Psychological Association (APA) recommendations and to offer more breadth in the psychology major. The revised major was approved and after a period of transition, fully took effect in Fall 2010. Assessment efforts in the 2011-2012 academic year, therefore, centered on revision of our Program Learning Objectives (PLOs) and Student Learning Objectives (SLOs) and we conducted a series of indirect and direct assessments to select common learning objectives across the core major requirements and make data-based decisions regarding our course offerings.  In the report to the department we will outline the three major assessment efforts we undertook in the past year. We began with an indirect assessment of students’ areas of interest within the major (i.e., a survey administered in Psychology 301: Pre-professional Development in Psychology), which will influence future capstone course offerings. Additionally, early in the fall semester we conducted a syllabi review of all course offerings in Fall 2011 to determine if faculty mentioned the previously adopted SLOs and if they matched coursework assignments and activities to the learning objectives of their course. The results from the syllabi review set the occasion for a departmental assessment retreat during which we reviewed our mission, PLOs, and made the decision to adopt the APA’s PLOs. Please see Appendices to the report to the department for results of these assessments (pages 4-11).  Our third activity took place during the Psychology Department’s day-long Assessment Retreat; we reviewed the course-work requirements for our major and discussed how the content of the course-work progresses sequentially. We decided to evaluate SLOs that were central to our major, introduced early in the major, practiced and applied in 300-level course-work, and mastered in 400-level advanced inquiry course-work. Therefore, we decided to develop assessment tools to evaluate longitudinal and cross-sectional gains in Statistics (Psychology 320:Statistical Methods in Psychological Research) and Research Methods (Psychology 321:Research Methods in Psychology). These concepts are introduced sequentially in a tiered system beginning with basic statistics in Math 140, tailored specifically to psychology in 320, applied and practiced in 321. Research Method is introduced in PSY 321 and practiced and mastered in capstones (PSY 471, 475, & 485). We were also able to evaluate if our students maintained the information they gained from earlier course-work which was very helpful because faculty who teach the advanced 300 and 400 level course-work often fear that the delay between foundational and advanced course-work may extensively influence students’ maintenance of information. For information regarding the demographics of the participants, pre and posttest questions and item analyses, as well as results of this assessment please see pages 12-22 of the assessment report to the psychology department. |

**2. Student Learning Outcome Assessment Project:** Answer questions according to the individual SLO assessed this year. If you assessed an additional SLO, report in the next chart below.

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| **2a. Which Student Learning Outcome was measured this year?**  PLO 1: Statistical Methods  SLO 1: Math 140 knowledge: Interpret basic statistics including: central tendency, percentiles, distributions of scores, and confidence intervals. |
| **2b. Does this learning outcome align with one of the following University Fundamental Learning Competencies? (check any which apply)**  **\***Definitions retrieved from the document entitled Fundamental Learning Competencies from the website of the CSUN Assessment Office (retrieved 9-20-12 from http://www.csun.edu/assessment/).  **Critical Thinking X**  **Oral Communication\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**  **Written Communication\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**  **Quantitative Literacy \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_X\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**  **Information Literacy\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**  **Other (which?)\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_** |
| **2c. What direct and indirect instrument(s) were used to measure this SLO?**  A 19 question multiple-choice test was created by the faculty to measure this SLO. The breakdown of the 19 questions was: 6 demographic questions, 6 questions targeting Math 140 concepts, and 7 questions targeting Psych 320 concepts. The exact same test was used at both pre and posttest. |
| **2d. Describe the assessment design methodology:** This SLO was assessed longitudinally. Although Math 140 is not a class within the psychology department, we decided to assess this area because knowledge of basic statistical concepts is critical to success in more advanced psychology coursework. We assessed students’ knowledge of Math 140 concepts at the beginning of Psych 320 and again at the end of 320 to examine maintenance and/or gains in this area. |
| **2e. Assessment Results & Analysis of this SLO:** Provide a summary of how the evidence was analyzed and highlight important findings from collected evidence.  We used SPSS to conduct descriptive statistics as well as dependent samples t-tests to compare pre and posttest scores for items measuring Math 140 concepts (see appendix for histograms and item-analyses). At pretest students’ performance ranged from 0 to 6 with an average of 3.36 (~56% correct). At posttest, students’ performance increased by about one point (~66% correct) with scores ranging from 0 to 6 with an average score of 3.94 (~65% correct). These findings indicate that students entered Psychology 320 with a moderate understanding of basic statistical concepts that was maintained during the time between the end of Math 140 and the beginning of Psych 320. Furthermore, in PSY 320, compared to pretest scores, students’ performed better (and this difference is statistically significant) on the posttest. For results see the figure titled “Psychology 320: Statistics; PLO1” on page 22 of the report to the department. |
| **2f. Use of Assessment Results of this SLO:** Were assessment results from previous years or from this year used to make program changes in this reporting year?  The faculty will review the results of this assessment in Fall 2012 to decide if the statistically significant gains are deemed socially and educationally significant and will decide how to proceed based on the results. The validity of our pre and posttest assessment is suspect because the pre and posttests were not a part of the students’ class examination and students may not have been as motivated to perform their best. We will discuss methods to embed the questions in class examinations in the future. Furthermore, we plan to analyze our test items to make better decisions about the instruments we use. The faculty is also discussing methods to offer support services (e.g., pre Psych 320 preparation services) to students coming into Psych 320 with only 50% knowledge from 140. We need to conduct further analyses in the future and compare CSUN students to students who transfer to CSUN as juniors.  Type of change: Offer more support services  changes to course content/topics covered: Will be discussed at October 2012 Dep. Faculty meeting  course sequence:  addition/deletion of courses in program:  describe other academic programmatic changes  student support services: Offer more support services  revisions to program SLOs  assessment instruments: We will review item analyses and embed questions within exams during the next cycle  describe other assessment plan changes  Have any previous changes led to documented improvements in student learning? (describe) |

**2. Student Learning Outcome Assessment Project:** Answer questions according to the individual SLO assessed this year. If you assessed an additional SLO, report in the next chart below.

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| **2a. Which Student Learning Outcome was measured this year?**  PLO 1: Statistical Methods  SLO 2: Psychology 320 Knowledge: Discriminate type (e.g., IV/DV) and value (e.g., nominal) of variables, appropriate statistical test, interpret statistical values, hypothesis testing and interpretation. |
| **2b. Does this learning outcome align with one of the following University Fundamental Learning Competencies? (check any which apply)**  **\***Definitions retrieved from the document entitled Fundamental Learning Competencies from the website of the CSUN Assessment Office.  **Critical Thinking\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_X\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**  **Oral Communication\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**  **Written Communication\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**  **Quantitative Literacy\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_X\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**  **Information Literacy\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_X\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**  **Other (which?)\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_** |
| **2c. What direct and indirect instrument(s) were used to measure this SLO?**  A 19 question multiple-choice test was created by the faculty to measure this SLO. The breakdown of the 19 questions was: 6 demographic questions, 6 questions targeting Math 140 concepts, and 7 questions targeting Psych 320 concepts. The exact same test was used at both pre and posttest. |
| **2d. Describe the assessment design methodology:** This SLO was assessed both cross-sectionally and longitudinally. For Psychology 320 students, we checked for longitudinal gains in 320 knowledge from the beginning to the end of the semester. Furthermore, we included the questions targeting this SLO on a test administered to students taking a research methods course (Psychology 321) in order to measure maintenance of this knowledge into the next course of the core course sequence in the major. |
| **2e. Assessment Results & Analysis of this SLO:** Provide a summary of how the evidence was analyzed and highlight important findings from collected evidence.  We used SPSS to run basic descriptive statistics as well as dependent samples t-tests to compare pre and posttest scores on items targeting Psychology 320 knowledge. We observed a statistically significant improvement from pre to post on Psychology 320 items. At pretest, scores ranged from 0 to 7 with an average of 3.48 (~50% correct). At posttest, scores ranged from 0 to 7 with an average of 4.75 (~68% correct. These finding show that students’ knowledge of Psychology 320 concepts improved greatly over the course of the semester. Furthermore, our cross-sectional findings show that this gain was maintained as students entered Psychology 321 with an average score of 4.93 (~70% correct) and remained the same by the end of Psychology 321 with an average score of 5.23 (~75% correct). For results see the graph titled “Psychology 320: Statistics; PLO1” on page 22 of the report to the department. |
| **2f. Use of Assessment Results of this SLO:** Were assessment results from previous years or from this year used to make program changes in this reporting year?  These results help the department consider if we should offer 320 and 321 either simultaneously or sequentially (with the added restriction that no time may elapse between 320 and 321). The faculty feel the applied practice of statistics in PSY 321 should dramatically influence students’ learning of statistical methods. However, we found no evidence of such influence in our data. Therefore, during our faculty meeting in October, the chair reserved the majority of the meeting time to discuss our assessment results and to consider offering PSY 320 and PSY 321 simultaneously or sequentially with either the same faculty member or two faculty members directly collaborating in offering the course. We may offer one pilot course in this manner and evaluate effectiveness of this method in the upcoming year.  Type of change:  changes to course content/topics covered\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  course sequence\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  addition/deletion of courses in program\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  describe other academic programmatic changes: Please see above statement  student support services\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  revisions to program SLOs\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  assessment instruments\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  describe other assessment plan changes: Again, we plan on embedding these questions in exams in the future.  Have any previous changes led to documented improvements in student learning? (describe) |

**2. Student Learning Outcome Assessment Project:** Answer questions according to the individual SLO assessed this year. If you assessed an additional SLO, report in the next chart below.

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| **2a. Which Student Learning Outcome was measured this year?**  PLO 2: Research Methods  SLO 1: Discriminate different types of research approaches, methods, and designs used. Evaluate the appropriateness of conclusions derived. |
| **2b. Does this learning outcome align with one of the following University Fundamental Learning Competencies? (check any which apply)**  **\***Definitions retrieved from the document entitled Fundamental Learning Competencies from the website of the CSUN Assessment Office.  **Critical Thinking\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_X\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**  **Oral Communication\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**  **Written Communication\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**  **Quantitative Literacy\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_X\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**  **Information Literacy\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_X\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**  **Other (which?)\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_** |
| **2c. What direct and indirect instrument(s) were used to measure this SLO?**  A 20 question multiple-choice test designed by faculty was administered to measure this SLO. The breakdown of the 20 questions was: 4 demographic questions, 7 questions targeting Psych 320 concepts, and 9 questions targeting Psych 321 concepts. The exact same test was used at both pre and posttest. |
| **2d. Describe the assessment design methodology:** This SLO was assessed both cross-sectionally and longitudinally. For Psychology 321 students we check for longitudinal gains in Psychology 321 knowledge from the beginning to the end of the semester. Additionally, we included the questions targeting this SLO on a test administered to students taking 400 level capstone courses in order to measure carryover of this knowledge into the next course of the core course sequence in the major. |
| **2e. Assessment Results & Analysis of this SLO:** Provide a summary of how the evidence was analyzed and highlight important findings from collected evidence.  We used SPSS to run basic descriptive statistics as well as dependent samples t-tests to compare pre and posttest scores. We observed a statistically significant improvement from pre to post on Psychology 321 items. At pretest, scores ranged from 0 to 9 with an average of 4.49 (~50% correct). At posttest, scores ranged from 0 to 9 with an average of 5.28 (~59% correct). These finding show that students’ knowledge of Psychology 321 concepts improved greatly over the course of the semester. Our analysis of carryover of Psychology 321 knowledge into capstone level courses were not statistically significant meaning, the material was maintained. For results see the graph titled “Psychology 321: Research Methods; PLO2” on page 22 of the report to the department. |
| **2f. Use of Assessment Results of this SLO:** Were assessment results from previous years or from this year used to make program changes in this reporting year?  The validity of our assessment procedures and results for Research Methods is suspect. We plan on conducting further analyses to determine how to minimize attrition at capstone level, how to embed research methods questions within class exams, and assess gains of methodological questions that may or may not be practiced across all capstones similarly (i.e., advanced concepts within each area of psychology includes discussions of methodological concepts germane to that area of psychology where as the general research methods course covers group design, and mostly experimental designs).  Type of change:  changes to course content/topics covered\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  course sequence\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  addition/deletion of courses in program\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  describe other academic programmatic changes\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  student support services\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  revisions to program SLOs\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  assessment instruments: please see above\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  describe other assessment plan changes: please see above\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  Have any previous changes led to documented improvements in student learning? (describe) |

Some programs assess multiple SLOs each year. If your program assessed an additional SLO, report the process for that individual SLO below. If you need additional SLO charts, please cut & paste the empty chart as many times as needed. If you did NOT assess another SLO, skip this section.

1. **How do your assessment activities connect with your program’s strategic plan and/or 5-yr assessment plan?**

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| We are a very large department and we proposed changes to our major based on recent developments in the field of Psychology and what is expected from graduates entering doctoral programs in psychology. Our assessment plan this past year was to revisit our previously adopted PLOs and decide how we would like to proceed within the next 5-years. Knowledge of statistics and research methods are the backbone of the psychology major. Therefore, we decided to tackle these SLOs first. |

1. **Other information, assessment or reflective activities or processes not captured above.**

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| As we mentioned in the overview, the past year we engaged in various assessment efforts, indirect and direct assessment, to make data-based decisions regarding selection and then revision of our SLOs as well as our course offerings. Such global assessments were very meaningful in that they set the occasion for discussions regarding faculty’s expectations of students, learning gains from each class, and much more. However, such assessment proved very challenging. For example, when faculty were given the American Psychological Association (APA) PLOs and SLOs to select the PLOs and SLOs that applied to their course-work, the majority of the faculty selected all of the PLOs and SLOs. Further discussions regarding assessment of the SLOs revealed many learning opportunities that may not be currently assessed by faculty. Therefore, this year’s assessment activities shed light on the need for assessment efforts at the individual class level as well as the program level. We still need to conduct various analyses on the data we collected during the Spring and further consider our PLOs as well as our current expectations of our students’ learning gains. |

1. **Has someone in your program completed, submitted or published a manuscript which uses or describes assessment activities in your program? Please provide citation or discuss.**

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| No one in the department published an assessment related manuscript this year. However, the following assessment related article was published by the assessment liaison and two of her students in 2009.  Thaler, N., Kazemi, E., & Huscher, C. (2009). Developing a rubric to assess SLOs using undergraduate  psychology students’ research manuscripts.  *Teaching of Psychology, 36*(2), 113-166. doi: 10.1080/00986280902739305 |
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