

Department of Psychology Graduate Assessment
Progress Report September 11, 1996

We proposed several components for an assessment program and have collected data, but not fully analyzed the results from all but one of the proposed assessment measures.

We continue to evaluate our first year students at an annual symposium (the next one to be held on October 4, 1996), and are impressed with the research quality and competence that our students demonstrate in their first year of graduate training.

Each of our five area groups holds weekly proseminars to provide opportunities for graduate students and faculty to try out new ideas and to present completed work. In at least some areas graduate students are required to present at least once each year, providing further assessment of research progress beyond the initial year. Students are also evaluated by area groups twice each year and each student must be making satisfactory progress in order to continue in the program.

We have continued to send out evaluation forms to all students whom we accepted for admission but who have turned down our offers to attend other schools. In several cases there appears to have been a better match between a student's interest and faculty at another institution, but we are losing a few outstanding applicants each year because Wisconsin does not offer a competitive support guarantee. Some universities now provide a 7 year guarantee of support, and, for a given applicant, we are often the only institution that requires graduate students to pay in-state tuition from their stipend. These points do hurt our recruiting effort.

We are continuing our professional development course (Psychology 776) into a second year and we have found good response to this series of seminars and workshops on topics such as grant preparation, lecture preparation, giving job talks, research ethics and dealing with publishing research articles. We are bringing in faculty from predominantly teaching institutions to talk about how our students can prepare for these types of jobs as well as jobs at research and teaching institutions that we faculty are familiar with. We envision the development of two or three separate courses in the future, one focusing on teaching skills, another on grant preparation and publication skills and research ethics. The Graduate Committee will be discussing how we can improve professional development training for our graduate students as part of its agenda this year.

We have maintained a listing of all the honors, fellowships and awards received by our students during the past year. The list is impressive and we can submit this on request.

We have asked each student to submit a curriculum vitae and will ask for annual updates each May. About 58% of the students have responded so far and of these 48% have received at least one university or outside fellowship. 22% have received some type of local or national award for teaching or research excellence. 70% have published peer-reviewed papers and among

those publishing the mean number of papers is 2.2 each. 81% have been author or co- author of a talk or paper given at a state, national or international conference. The mean number of conference papers per student is 4.7. Several graduate students are regular reviewers of manuscripts submitted to journals.

The one area we have not followed up on yet is a survey of past Ph.D. recipients 5 years and ten years after receiving their degree. We are still discussing the type of information that would be most useful to gather, but we expect to send surveys out to our 1986 and 1991 graduates later this fall.

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Re the undergrad report, the department's undergrad committee believed that the approval of our plan came so late (and at such a busy time) last spring, and with no funding, that they simply could not carry out the exit interviews, surveys, etc. that we had proposed.

HOWEVER, last year's Associate Chair for Undergraduate Studies (Judy Harackiewicz) is quite interested in motivation and student achievement as research topics. As part of one of her projects, she included substantial assessment-relevant content into a careful scientific study that she conducted with a large sample of our undergraduates. Judy then quickly left for a sabbatical in New Zealand. The department has asked one of Judy's grad students to to analyze the relevant data for us (we'll pay him). We'll use this info to decide on further assessment efforts.