

# Annual Assessment Report

**Department: Psychology**  
**Academic Year: 2019-2020**  
**Date of Submission: September XX, 2020**  
**Department Chair: Ronald See**

## I. Response to the previous year PRC’s recommendations

<b>Item:</b>	<b>Response:</b>
<b>Item:</b>	<b>Response</b>
<b>Item:</b>	<b>Response:</b>
<b>Item:</b>	<b>Response:</b>
<b>Notes: The department was engaged in its 6-year review in 2018-2019. We responded to PRC feedback at that time and developed both an action plan and assessment plan for the next 6 years, and these were submitted to the PRC in July, 2019.</b>	

## II A. Program Learning Outcome (PLO) assessment

*If your department participated in the ILO assessment you may use this section to report on your student learning in relation to the assessed ILO. The assessment data can be requested from the Dean of Curriculum and Educational Effectiveness.*

<b>Program Learning Outcome</b>	<b>Psychological Knowledge Base</b>
<b>Who is in Charge /Involved?</b>	<b>Brenda Smith oversaw the process, and all other department members were involved (Lydia Grenko, Steve Rogers [sabbatical, S20], Ronald See, Carmel Saad [leave, 2019-2020], and Andrea Gurney). Brenda conducted research on standardized tests of psychological knowledge and presented a summary of two tests to the department for their analysis. Department members selected ETS' MFT in Psychology by unanimous consensus. All members discussed the form of assessment, the results, and how to close the loop.</b>
<b><u>Direct Assessment Methods</u></b>	<b>ETS' Major Fields Test in Psychology (MFT) was used. This test provides an overall, scaled score (120-200), and 4 subscales covering: Learning/Cognition/Memory, Sensory/Perception/Physiology, Clinical/Abnormal/Personality, and Developmental/Social areas. All 32 graduating psychology majors were invited to take the test between April 4 and</b>

	<p>August 31. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, which forced students and faculty to work remotely starting in March 2020, the deadline was extended multiple times to encourage more students to take the test. Those who completed the test were able to enter into a drawing for 1 of 5 \$25 gift cards. The initial assessment plan called for students to take the exam in Winter Hall, but the COVID-19 pandemic upended these plans, so we provided a remote access option for students to complete the test from their homes using the online testing platform, ProctorU.</p> <p>Five males and five females completed the test. Eight were BA track and two were BS-Neuroscience track. Four students initially scheduled a time to complete the test, but then they cancelled due to other commitments. Three experienced technical problems that ProctorU or ETS were unable to fix. Some of this latter group rescheduled and completed the test.</p>
<p><a href="#">Indirect Assessment Methods</a></p>	
<p>Major Findings</p>	<p>The MFT mean Total Score was 164 (40th percentile). Six out of 10 students scored between the 40<sup>th</sup> and 90<sup>th</sup> percentiles. There were no significant differences in Total Scores between males and females or between BA and BS-Neuroscience track students. Correlations between Overall GPA and Total Scores, and Psychology GPA and Total Scores were significant (.80 and .77, respectively, <math>ps \leq 0.01</math>).</p> <p>The distribution of all Subscale Scores mirrored that of the Total Scores: Depending on the subscale, 5-6 students scored between the 40<sup>th</sup> and 90<sup>th</sup> percentiles. There were no significant differences in Subscale Scores between males and females. BS Neuroscience students performed better than BA students on all of the subscales, but statistically significantly better only on the Sensory/Perception/Physiology subscale, <math>p \leq 0.01</math>. This was expected, given that the former group is more likely to take two courses in this area, Sensation and Perception as well as Behavioral Neuroscience.</p>
<p>Closing the Loop Activities</p>	<p>Since slightly less than one third of the seniors completed this assessment, and this gave us a very small sample of only 10 students, the department finds it difficult to draw any firm conclusions and does not plan to consider curricular changes at this time. While it is disappointing that the average total score was in the 40<sup>th</sup> percentile, the distribution of scores was consistent across Subscale and Total Scores, with about half of the students scoring between the 40<sup>th</sup> and 90<sup>th</sup> percentiles in all instances. Therefore, there doesn't seem to be a deficit in any of the subscale areas, suggesting that departmental courses and teaching in those courses is consistent across the subareas of psychology.</p> <p>In addition, the fact that students are not required to take courses in all of the subareas and yet performed very consistently across those areas is encouraging.</p> <p>Finally, the high, significant correlations between MFT total scores and both overall GPAs and Psychology GPAs suggests that the lower scores on the MFT may have more to do with students' ability (e.g., poor study skills) or attention (e.g., poor time management or poor balance between academics and extracurricular activities) rather than faculty teaching.</p>

The department decided that psychological knowledge would be assessed at some future time, but the instrument and method of administration will be reconsidered. The possibility that methods of instruction be modified to support students with various abilities and capacities will be considered as well.

### Collaboration and Communication

Brenda Smith took the lead for this assessment and researched the available standardized tests of psychological knowledge. At a department meeting (Aug 30, 2019, see department meeting excerpts, Appendix A), the ACT, the MFT, or the department-constructed KAPT that was used in 2010-2011 were suggested as possible instruments. Department members discussed the tests and decided that a standardized, nationally-normed test would be preferable, and the MFT seemed better than the ACT, based on ease of use, the remote proctoring option, and the reputation of the MFT test. Incentives to encourage participation were discussed, and it was agreed that the assessment would ideally occur at the beginning of Spring semester 2020. Ron requested funding for the test from the Provost, which was denied. Some department members wanted more information about the two tests, so Brenda summarized the details of the ACT and MFT and presented that summary to department members via email.

On October 25, 2019, department members finalized their selection of the MFT. Judy Williams and Brenda Smith planned the logistics of a “Pizza and Test Night”, using the computer lab.

In Spring semester 2020, Brenda organized and invited students to participate in the remote proctoring of the test on campus, but when Westmont went remote in March due to COVID-19, students were then asked to complete the MFT using ProctorU, a remote proctoring organization.

The department members were apprised of these changes in Spring department meetings and via email. In April, the deadline for taking the test was moved to the end of May, and ultimately moved to the end of the summer. Over the summer, Ron and Brenda repeatedly emailed students to encourage them to take the test. We attribute the low level of response by seniors to the severe disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

At our first department meeting this year (August 28, 2020), the department discussed the low completion rate and decided not to make important curricular decisions based on the results. After Brenda collated and analyzed the data, and wrote the draft of the annual assessment, it was sent via email for feedback from department members, and that feedback was incorporated into the final report.

or/and

### II B. Key Questions

Key Question	
Who is in Charge/Involved?	

<u>Direct Assessment Methods</u>	
<u>Indirect Assessment Methods</u>	
Major Findings	
Recommendations	
Collaboration and Communication	

### III. Follow-ups

Program Learning Outcome or Key Question	
Who was involved in implementation?	
What was decided or addressed?	
How were the recommendations implemented?	
Collaboration and Communication	

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**IV. Other assessment or Key Questions related projects**

<b>Project</b>	
<b>Who is in Charge /Involved?</b>	
<b>Major Findings</b>	
<b>Action</b>	
<b>Collaboration and Communication</b>	

**V. Adjustments to the Multi-year Assessment Plan (optional)**

Proposed adjustment	Rationale	Timing

**VI. Appendices**

- A. Department Meeting Excerpts

## Appendix A: Department Minutes Excerpts

Aug. 30, 2019

- 1) Brenda is in charge of the PLO Knowledge base
- 2) About 2/3 of graduating seniors took this assessment back in 2011 or 2012; Gen Psych students took it also. Offered pizza as incentive.
- 3) Dept. devised 101 questions. One question had no single correct answer.
- 4) Do we want to use the same assessment or change it to a standardized test? A pre-made test costs money. Ask the Provost if they will pay the cost or use Tea Fire Funds.
  - a. ACAT Costs \$25 for standard report. More for special reports. Can be taken online, can determine how many questions; in Windows only.
  - b. ETS is a straight 2-hour test, can't make changes, website looks more professional. Can get a variety of reports from the results. More cost?
  - c. Which is the better advantage—use the same assessment or a standardized test? Most agree that ETS would be the path to take. Brenda will prepare a summary and Ron will send an email to the Provost with the ETS features and request for funding. . . .
  - d. Since proctored online, can determine when to have seniors take it. Sooner rather than later? Incentive—extra credit? Plan to do assessment at the beginning of spring semester.

October 25, 2019

1. Assessment plans for 2019-2020
  - a. Set aside two nights with pizza; invite seniors/majors.
  - b. We decided to go with on site assessment at \$25/student.
  - c. Free standard results; there are costs for customized results.
  - d. Can utilize data for comparative reporting.
  - e. Brenda and Judy to plan logistics.

November 22, 2019

- 1) ETS for Knowledge base
  - a. Brenda will arrange with ETS and set up dates
  - b. No institutional funds for assessment; will come out of Tea Fire funds (\$25/student).
  - c. Brenda to contact Judy to place order for the assessments and arrange for time and place of the test.

April 24, 2020

- 1) Moved deadline from May 2 to May 30; six have scheduled, one student has taken it, waiting for others to schedule.
- 2) Ron will send another email to seniors emphasizing gift card incentive.

Aug 28, 2020

- 1) Followed up with Seniors over the summer – 9 completed; 2 more scheduled; 11 total (not even half of senior class)
- 2) Enough data for assessment?
- 3) Process cumbersome with ProctorU—technical issues, re-scheduling students
- 4) Consider trying again during this current academic year?
  - a. If use ETS again, go through Canvas.
  - b. If conduct knowledge assessment again, don't use ETS.
  - c. Can assess again in the future.
  - d. Brenda to write up a brief description of the ETS results and the challenges involved.