# College of Arts and Sciences
## Annual Assessment Report

John Carroll UNIVERSITY

## Part I. General Information

Program(s) Discussed: Psychological Science

Current Semester: Summer 2015

Dates of Assessment Meetings – Parts of several department meetings throughout the 2014-2015 academic year were devoted to assessment

Participants in Assessment Meeting(s): The entire Department: Sheri Young, David Rainey, Helen Murphy, Abdul Imam, Denise BenPorath, John Yost, Angela Jones, Tracy Masterson, Elizabeth Swenson, Beth Martin
(We use part of our monthly dept. meetings to discuss ongoing assessment issues)

All Annual Assessment Reports are available to the appropriate Associate Dean, Dean, and the Provost, as well as to other administrators for institutional effectiveness and accreditation purposes. Please indicate the degree to which your program would like this information more widely shared.

| On-Campus Users | Off-Campus Users |
|---|---|
| X☐ Freely available | X☐ Freely available |
| ☐ Available upon request | ☐ Available upon request |
| ☐ Unavailable | ☐ Unavailable |

## Part II. Assessment Process

*Prompt*: In one or two paragraphs, describe your assessment process. Did you gather data on all of your program's student learning goals? If not, which student learning goals did you measure in this assessment cycle? What tools did you use to attempt to measure student learning? Where and how were they administered? Who scored them?

There are 8 student learning goals for the program (below) and we have an ongoing assessment of all 8, however, we typically discuss 2-3 in depth every year. We assess the goals through a number of different measures direct and indirect: MFT scores; evaluation of the final papers in the experimental research course (PS 301/301L), senior exit surveys; student grades in PS 101, student performance assessment in practicum classes, student performance on CITI training.

This year for the assessment process we looked specifically at 5 measures: a direct measure MFAT scores, and indirect measures: senior exit surveys, CITI training, grades in PS 301 and grades in PS 101. These are the major areas that American Psychological Association identifies as necessary for competence. The MFAT is a standardized comprehensive written exam that is divided broadly into four sections: 1) Learning & Cognition, language, Memory, and Thinking, 2) Perception, Sensory, Physiology, Comparative and Ethology, 3) Clinical, Abnormal, and Personality, and 4) Developmental and Social. All majors are required to complete the MFT with a passing score in the final semester of their senior year. The MFAT was given in late January all senior majors graduating in May and in the previous fall to students graduating in January. The exam is proctored by a faculty member and then is sent to Educational Testing Service to be scored. Then the results are discussed with the rest of the department at a department/ assessment meeting and students are sent a letter and e-mail inviting them to meet with the Department Chair to discuss their results. Results of our students' scores are attached (without names).

The senior exit survey is conducted individually by the Department Chair near the end of the spring semester. The survey is a short online survey that each senior completes individually in a private assessment room. It assesses 3 main areas: student perceptions of PS 301 (Experimental design which is required of every student), student perception of their own critical thinking skills developed as part of the Psychological Science Major, and student perception of the faculty in terms of faculty knowledge, availability, quality of teaching.

Data this year for PS 101 and PS 301 is a correlation (from 2005-2015) indicating the correlation between students final course grades in each course correlated with their MFT scores. The two courses are taught by a wide variety of faculty and several sections of each are offered each semester. All students are required to complete both courses.

The CITI training (Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative) is required of all students conducting research as part of the PS 301/301L courses. This training is conducted online and is administered through the JCU Institutional Review Board.

## Part III. Findings

*Prompt:* Along with this report, please submit the data charts the program used during the assessment meeting. Describe, in words, what your program learned about student learning during this assessment cycle. What were your strengths? In what ways did students fail to meet the goals you set for them?

The department has kept a record of the student's performance on this test since 1992 so we can look at any trends that have developed. Data shows the number of MFATs taken, and the average national percentile rank for the JCU students. Our department requires students to score a minimum of ½ sd below the national mean to pass the exam. This year our student average was a scaled score of 160 (out of 200), which is the 58$^{th}$ percentile. Our spring scores for the past 5 years have all been in that same range. The department standing in terms of the national percentile varies from the 55$^{th}$ – 62$^{nd}$ percentile yearly.

For PS 101 and PS 301 I will present some statistical analyses as indirect evidence that student grades in these classes do correlate well with scores on the MFT. We have data from 2008 – 2015 for both student course grades and MFT scores. The overall trend is very supportive of increasing correlations between student grades in these 2 courses and scores on the MFT exam.

PS 101: the correlation between student 101 grades and MFT scores in 2008-2009 and 2009-2010 were .34 and .39 respectively. The same correlations in 2013-2014 and 2014-2015 were .60 and .54 respectively. PS 301: the correlation between student 301 grades and MFT scores in 2008-2009 and 2009-2010 were .45 and .31 respectively. The same correlations in 2013-2014 and 2014-2015 were .58 and .65 respectively. Note in both cases there have been vast improvements in the strength of the relationship between student grades and their MFT scores. We feel that this is evidence of Department Learning Outcomes #1, 3, 4, & 6.

Exit data: An analysis of the surveys over the years 2010 – 2013 (all available data) indicates:
a. for PS 301 (experimental design) an average rating of 4.16 (out of 5). This tells us that students saw the class as important, as improving their writing, improving their capability to organize, synthesize and analyze information, and that they have a mastery of experimental methods and statistical analysis.
b. For Critical Thinking the average rating was 4.15 (out of 5) indicates: students felt very capable about thinking critically about research, and about psychology overall.
c. For Faculty the average rating was 4.43 (out of 5) indicates: students felt the faculty in the

Department of Psychological Science were strong advisors, very approachable, knowledgeable, and highly available.

## Part IV. Planned Changes to the Assessment System

*Prompt:* What changes, if any, do you need to make to your assessment system? (Questions to consider include: 1) Do your measures and processes provide useful data with a reasonable amount of effort? and 2) Are your measures reliable, valid, and sufficient?) On which student learning goals do you plan to focus your attention during the next assessment cycle? Do you need to implement additional formative assessment tools to better understand some of your findings? If so, describe those here.

The departmental student learning goals are being met and the assessment measures are adequate, valid and reliable, and easy to administer. The findings from both measures are in agreement. For the upcoming year we hope to establish rubrics for evaluating student final papers in PS 301 that will better help us to evaluate Learning Outcomes #2, and 5.

## Part V. Planned Changes to the Program in Response to Data

*Prompt:* What changes, if any, do you need to make to your program in response to what you now know about student learning? (Possibilities include changes to learning goals, pedagogy, assignments in particular classes, activities, and curricular requirements and/or structure.) What is your anticipated timeline for both implementation and assessment of the planned changes?

The evidence indicates that no major changes need to be made to the existing program at this time.