Department/Program Name: Psychology

Date Submitted: September 30, 2013

Academic Year this plan will take effect: 2013

Department/Program Mission Statement:

"The SUNY Potsdam Psychology Department is firmly committed to providing a broad, liberal-arts education for its majors. This involves teaching and mentoring activities that foster a basic understanding of research methods and psychological theory as well as exposure to a variety of areas and perspectives in the field of psychology. All four of Boyer's forms of scholarship are valued, though two of them in particular reflect the primary mission of the psychology department: teaching and discovery. Our majors should be able to critically evaluate psychological problems and realize that scientific inquiry is a dynamic and evolving process. Our faculty members see themselves first and foremost as teachers. It is hoped that a rigorous and diverse set of core courses, a carefully-chosen selection of elective courses, an honors program, internship experiences, independent studies, seminars, interdisciplinary programming, and involvement in faculty research projects will equip our students with the intellectual, theoretical and applied skills necessary for advanced study or career opportunities in the field of psychology. Members of the faculty are also encouraged to engage the discipline beyond the classroom—through research, community service, discipline-related consulting, and as resources for the media and other community groups."

Department Assessment Coordinator or Faculty Member Completing this Form:
Rick Williams

**Intended Student Learning Outcome #1**

*Psychology students will have the capacity to read, understand, evaluate, and engage psychological theories and research.*

**Connection to University/Dept Mission/The Potsdam Graduate**

We believe that our majors should be able to critically evaluate the psychological problems that are addressed by theory and research. With regard to the campus mission, we believe that psychological theories and research are a fundamental part of a liberal arts education. This is also reflected in the SA Gen Ed designator classes that are listed below.

**Links with other programs/departments**

- *Gen Ed Component*
  Three courses within the major carry the SA Gen Ed designator: PSYC 100 Introduction to Psychology, PSYC 220 Child Development (and also the Honors section of PSYC 220) and PSYC 321 Psychology of Adolescence. These courses
are taken by many students in Education, Crane, and from other departments in Arts & Sciences, as well as by psychology students.

- **Related Courses**
  STAT 100 (MATH 125) Introduction to Statistics is a required cognate course for all psychology students. Students are required to have completed this course before taking PSYC 300 Research Methods. Students must have an initial familiarity with statistical concepts in order to successfully complete the methods course. The evaluation of research relies heavily on an understanding of the statistical analyses that play a fundamental role in psychology research.

**Measurable Criteria and Assessment Method(s)**

Given the theoretical and empirical foundation of psychology, nearly all of the classes we teach have a substantial focus on psychological theory and research. This list includes: PSYC 100, 220, 300, 320, 321, 322, 330, 340, 350, 361, 364, 370, 375, 376, 377, 381, 383, 384, 385, 386, 390, 400, 493, and 494.

**Data Source/Results & Analysis**

The data sources for this learning outcome are the annual senior exam and the annual term paper assessment report.

A. Senior Exam. This examine includes 10 multiple-choice questions from each of our primary courses. We compare scores for students who took each course at SUNY Potsdam and students who did not.

B. Term Papers (psychological analysis, understanding of theories, APA style). We examine written work in numerous courses (e.g., Research Methods, Animal Behavior, Learning & Memory, Counseling, History, Honors Seminar) to assess student learning of APA style and understanding or psychological theories).

**Intended Student Learning Outcome #2**

Psychology students will be familiar with multiple theoretical schools of thought in the field, both past and current.

**Connection to University/Dept Mission/The Potsdam Graduate**

The connection between this learning outcome and the department mission statement is clear. In it, we state directly that a central part of our mission is to teach these concepts to our students, both in the classroom and beyond its confines. With regard to the campus mission, we believe that psychological theories and research are a fundamental part of a liberal arts education.
Measurable Criteria and Assessment Method(s)

The following courses cover various schools of thought in the field of psychology: PSYC 100, 220, 320, 321, 350, 364, 370, 375, and 400.

This student learning outcome is assessed via the term paper assessment report and the senior exam.

Intended Student Learning Outcome #3

Psychology students will be able to communicate their analyses of this material in an effective fashion, be it oral or written.

Connection to University/Dept Mission/The Potsdam Graduate

Although it is not explicitly stated in the department’s mission statement, students’ ability to communicate their analyses of the material they have learned in their classes is crucial to their success in the field. Many of our courses involve a written or spoken component. With regard to the campus mission statement, we believe that effective communication skills are a central part of all academic programs.

Links with other programs/departments

- Gen Ed Component
- Three courses in the major carry Gen Ed designators that are relevant to this student learning outcome. PSYC 300 Research Methods carries a WI designator. PSYC 320 Advanced Child Development, PSYC 493 Psychology Seminar (Stillwell’s section), Classic Psychology, and PSYC 494 Honors Seminar all carry the SI designator.

Measurable Criteria and Assessment Method(s)

Our courses that involve either written or oral communication as part of the requirements are: PSYC 300, 320, 340, 364, 370, 380, 390, 400, 493, and 494. We measured this outcome with the term paper assessment and those results are reported under Outcome #4. We assess Oral communication by examining a selection of these courses each year. We define outcomes slightly differently in each course.
Intended Student Learning Outcome #4

Psychology students will be able to effectively use APA style in their writing.

Connection to University/Dept Mission/The Potsdam Graduate

Although it is not explicitly stated in the department’s mission statement, students’ ability to use APA style effectively is crucial to their success as psychology majors. Many of our courses include instruction in APA style as part of their content and require students to make use of APA style in their writing. With regard to the campus mission statement, although APA style is, for the most part, discipline specific, effective communication skills are a central part of all academic programs.

Measurable Criteria and Assessment Method(s)

The courses that include assignments involving the effective use of APA style are: PSYC 300, 364, 390, 400, 493, 494, and 496.

Data Source/Results & Analysis

A. We first examined the acquisition of APA style information in our research methods courses. We assess the use of APA style in our term paper assessment.