

## **Data-Based Decision in Psychology Undergraduate Program**

The undergraduate program committee implemented the following program changes and improvements as a result of ongoing assessment activities.

- Skill Tracks within the major were outlined, based on feedback from post-graduation evaluation forms from students, and reviews of areas where there were significant employment opportunities.
- The academic advising office has been providing students with more specific information about practicum and research opportunities with faculty, due to student and faculty input suggesting that some students were not aware of the need for involvement in such opportunities until their senior year.
- Several courses have been redesigned to improve students' mastery and learning. These changes came about as a result of faculty assessing students' learning via examinations, and student teaching evaluation forms.
  - The Psychological Statistics 2800 course was redesigned by Dr. Renee Galliher in 2001 and 4 years prior to this, by Dr. J.Grayson Osborne, who introduced basic mastery of SPSS software as a course requirement.
  - The Education Psychology 3660 course has been improved in several ways: 1) more permanent assignment of the class to particular instructors to maintain consistency; 2) increased relevance of the course content for elementary and special education teaching majors (student evaluation feedback to instructors).
- The GPA required for entrance into the psychology major was increased in 1998 from 2.5 to 2.75, and again in 2003 to 3.0. This change was made based on feedback from faculty that they were having difficulties covering needed material due to an inadequate knowledge base of some students. This increase in GPA requirement also eliminated those students who appeared to not be serious about their education. In addition, psychology majors must earn a GPA of 2.75 in all of their USU coursework, previously 2.5. This GPA requirement change brought us more in line with the other major requirements in the College of Education.
- In 2007, a new psychology course was added to the required coursework for majors. This course, titled Orientation to Psychology as a Career and Profession, gives students exposure to information pertinent to career and graduate school topics early on in their academic career. This course also provides an introduction to APA writing style. This course was created partially based on feedback from faculty that students were lacking basic information on Psychology skills that would be beneficial to have as they progressed through the major, namely use of APA style. This course also provides information about graduate school opportunities and the early preparations that students must engage in. Students are also exposed to various career options available to graduates from this program. The feedback on this change has been very positive from students and professors alike.
- The apprenticeship sequence was streamlined along with the creation of the orientation course. The course number was lowered from 5950 to 4950 in order to encourage students to get involved in the apprenticeship experience earlier in their academic career as many students were waiting until late in their undergraduate academic career to engage in applied and research work. Students are required to complete Psychology 4950: Undergraduate Apprenticeship, which gives them

research and applied experience. They then have the option of completing Psychology 4960: Advanced Apprenticeship for secondary elective credit in the psychology major. As always, students have the option of completing additional out of classroom experience with the independent study and independent research courses. They also have the opportunity to assist professors under the Psychology 5930: Instructional Apprenticeship course.