

Academic Year 2009/10 Assessment Report  
Psychology Department  
Fairmount College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

**Psychology Department Assessment Narrative:**

**Introduction:**

This year's assessment focused on three questions: (1) Trends in number of undergraduate majors over time; (2) Efforts to retain majors; and (3) Contributions of our undergraduate major to colleges outside of LAS.

**Assessment Findings:**

The number of majors (469 in spring, 2009) has been static. Since the department has no special admission requirements for becoming a major, the number of majors is probably a good indication of actual demand. However, the department does operate at close to capacity as measured by percentage of closed or near closed undergraduate classes in a given semester. For example, in the current semester 40% of our current undergraduate classes are closed and 82% are filled to within 5 seats of capacity.

As regards retention of majors we note that 120 psychology majors graduated in during the past year (covering fall, 2008, spring, 2009, & summer, 2009). The number of graduates constitutes 26% of our major count as of spring, 2009, so data indicate that the department is achieving a good level of retention. We attempt to foster retention by keeping class sizes small (n=35 or less for most undergraduate classes), and maintaining an atmosphere of openness and availability with our students. As to recruitment, the university maintains an active program of contacting area high-schools and hosting visiting students to the campus. Our department cooperates fully with the admissions visitation program in meeting with visiting students from area high-schools and community colleges.

The Psychology Department's contribution to colleges outside LAS includes an important service course, Developmental Psychology, required by many programs with the College of Health Professions. Undergraduate students also make important contributions to the research mission of our department. Besides the traditional contribution of serving as research "subjects," some advanced students become contributing members in our faculty research labs. Many of our undergraduate majors also enroll in Cooperative education with mental health related placements in the surrounding community.