UNIT REPORT
Psychology/Communication Stdys-Academic - APR Self-Study Report by Academic Unit/Department
Generated: 3/15/22, 3:26 PM

Program Mission

New Program Mission Item

Program Mission Statement:

APR Dashboard: https://uidaho.campuslabs.com/insight/dashboards-v2/1201/full

Department of Psychology & Communication Mission Statement

Program Mission Statement:

The Psychology and Communication Department's broad mission is to serve the College of Letters, Arts, and Social Sciences, the University, and the community at large. Our mission focuses on three objectives: to engage in scholarship of the highest quality and to disseminate the results of our scholarship; to provide excellent teaching and service enhanced by our efforts to discover, synthesize, and transmit knowledge; and to provide a liberal and professional education in the domains of psychology and communication.

Program Goal (add a minimum of 3 program goal "plan items")

Goal #1 Growth in Psychology and Communication Undergraduate Programs

Goal Statement:

Increase the number of students majoring in psychology and communication.

Alignment to UI Strategic Plan Goals: Transform (Goal 3): Increase our educational impact.

Indicators/Metrics to Evaluate Progress:

Increases in majors can be directly measured by regular reports of major counts received from the college.

List of Actions the Program Will Take to Achieve Goals :

Several actions will be taken to progress toward this goal. First, advising for students in the psychology and communication programs is a point of contact helping to increase enrollment and retention. Second, faculty from both programs are regularly involved year-round in efforts at the unit and college level to bring more students into the programs. Third, outreach to distance students will help grow the communication program. Expansion of online course offerings for communication majors also will assist with this third goal, and funding is in place to expand these offerings. Fourth, the unit will establish a communication lab using infrastructure funds. The communication lab will serve program needs for teaching, course preparation, student projects, and will enable interdisciplinary collaboration with other units and students on campus.

Goal Achievement Level: In Progress

Goal #2 Communication Certificates for Undergraduate Students

Goal Statement:

Development of certificates for human resources and/or leadership for undergraduate communication majors.

Alignment to UI Strategic Plan Goals:

Engage (Goal 2): Suggest and influence change that addresses societal needs and global issues, and advances economic development and culture. Transform (Goal 3): Increase our educational impact.

Indicators/Metrics to Evaluate Progress:

Registration of students, enrollment in course associated with the certificates, and completion of certificates will serve as metrics to evaluate progress.

List of Actions the Program Will Take to Achieve Goals :

At least two actions are necessary. First, the unit will create and propose the certificate, followed by seeking approval at the college, university, and state levels. Second, recruitment efforts (e.g., advising and recruitment events) will help bring new students into the certificates.

Goal Achievement Level: Not Met

Goal #3 Increase Productivity of Psychology PhD Program

Goal Statement:

Increase number of graduates from the PhD program in Psychology.

Alignment to UI Strategic Plan Goals:

Innovate (Goal 1): Scholarly and creative products of the highest quality and scope, resulting in significant positive impact for the region and the world.

Transform (Goal 3): Increase our educational impact.

Indicators/Metrics to Evaluate Progress:

The number of students finishing their dissertations in our psychology program is a clear metric to evaluate progress for this goal. We can also assess the timing of certain milestones along the way toward the degree. For example, students' completion of master's level projects and preliminary exams at the expected times, and students' engagement in publishing scholarly work.

List of Actions the Program Will Take to Achieve Goals :

The following actions can be taken to achieve this program goal:

1. Adding two tenure-track faculty members to support the MS and PhD programs. The new faculty will establish laboratories and be expected to mentor students from both programs.
2. Enhance recruitment efforts in collaboration with the College of Graduate Studies in order to increase the annual applicant pool for the PhD program, thus bringing students into the program who are more likely to succeed.
3. The graduate program committee can use the internal review process to ensure new students meet milestones in a timely manner and complete the PhD program in 4-5 years.

Goal Achievement Level: In Progress

Student Learning Assessment Report (add one "plan item" for each major, degree, and/or certificate offered by dept)

Communication BA, BS

Assessment Report Contact: Benjamin Barton

Program Changes in Past Year:

Changed the name of the department from "Psychology and Communication Studies" to "Psychology and Communication." Changes were made in the communication curriculum to the courses listed below:

COMM 332: changes title, number, and description

COMM 359: change to prerequisites

COMM 410: removed recommended preparation from course description

COMM 431: changed title, added COMM 355 to recommended preparation

COMM 460: added this course to the curriculum

Learning Outcomes are Communicated to All Students in Program (check box if true): true

Learning Outcomes are Communicated to All Faculty (check box if true): true

Optional: Framework Alignment: n/a

Import Outcomes Data (from Anthology Outcomes):

1.

Understand Communication Theory

Students will understand Communication theories, perspectives, principles, and concepts.

Academic Year 2020-2021: **Communication (B.A., B.S.)**

Term: **Overview**

Exceeded	**53.33%**	**8**
Met	**40%**	**6**
Partially Met	**6.67%**	**1**
Not Met	**0%**	**0**

2.

Investigate Communication Inquiry Processes

Students will investigate processes of Communication Inquiry.

Academic Year 2020-2021: **Communication (B.A., B.S.)**

Term: **Overview**

Exceeded	**100%**	**11**
Met	**0%**	**0**
Partially Met	**0%**	**0**
Not Met	**0%**	**0**

Summary of Student Learning:

Outcomes 1 and 2 were assessed with direct measures. Ninety three percent of students met or exceeded expectations for #1 and 100% met or exceeded expectations for #2. The measures were aggregates of students' performance in COMM 453 Theory and COMM 359 Methods, respectively. The communication program has a total of six learning outcomes. Outcomes 3-6 have not been assessed yet.

Summary of Faculty Discussion:

Communication faculty met regularly throughout the year to discuss assessment on several occasions. The communication BA/BS program is relatively new, but the consensus was assessment measures seem to be working well and meeting outcomes.

Summary of Changes/Improvements Being Considered:

Assessment for outcome #1 (measured in COMM 453 Communication Theory can be enhanced by including assignments that build knowledge prior to students' completing the assignments that serve as the assessment measure. Assessment of outcome #2 (measured in COMM 359 Communication Research Methods) appears to be working well.

Existing data have been collected only from courses taught in-person. Data from both in-person and online courses will be included in future assessment cycles.

Inter-rater Reliability:

Future efforts will include a uniform direct measure pulled from COMM 233, Interpersonal Communication, which is taught by several faculty members and is linked to learning outcome #4. Agreed upon rubrics may be used to establish inter-rater reliability.

Closing the Loop:

The communication program is relatively new and only one assessment cycle has passed. Learning outcomes are in place but measures are still being developed. Once more cycles have passed, faculty will use results to improve student success.

Psychology BA, BS

Assessment Report Contact: Benjamin Barton

Program Changes in Past Year:

Changed the name of the department from "Psychology and Communication Studies" to "Psychology and Communication."

Learning Outcomes are Communicated to All Students in Program (check box if true): true

Learning Outcomes are Communicated to All Faculty (check box if true): true

Optional: Framework Alignment: n/a
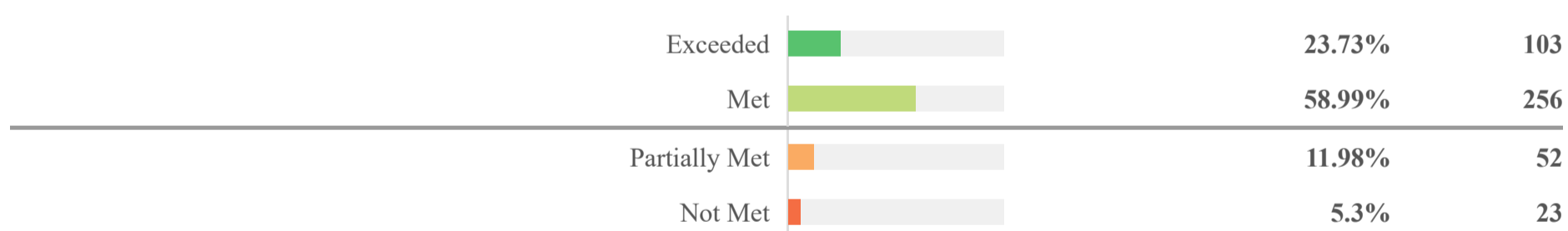
Import Outcomes Data (from Anthology Outcomes):

1.

Knowledge Skills

Students should understand the broad underpinnings of thought and action, including sensation, perception, and the functioning of the nervous system.

Academic Year 2020-2021: Psychology (B.A., B.S.)

Term: Overview

Exceeded	23.73%	103
Met	58.99%	256
Partially Met	11.98%	52
Not Met	5.3%	23

2.

Fundamental Knowledge

Students should understand the fundamentals of development, and the dynamic influences of personality and situations on cognition and behavior.

Academic Year 2020-2021: Psychology (B.A., B.S.)

Term: Overview

Exceeded	32.58%	101
Met	44.52%	138
Partially Met	15.16%	47
Not Met	7.74%	24
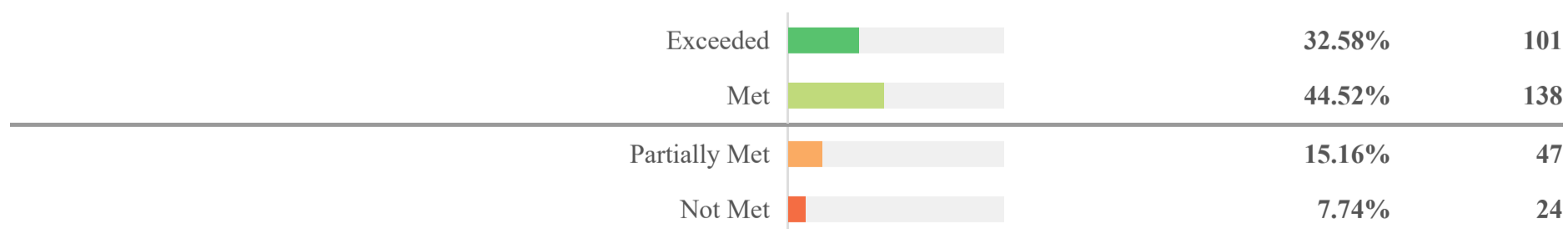
3.

Practical Application

Students should be able to move, intellectually and ethically, between theory/research and real-world applications of psychology in domains such as organizations/business, technology, health, forensics, and interpersonal/group relations.

Academic Year 2020-2021: Psychology (B.A., B.S.)

Term: Overview

No Results

4.

Knowledge Skills

Students should understand both the common biological and social heritage they share with their fellow humans, and the individual differences (in age, culture, gender, abilities, ethnicity, etc.) that make each of us unique, interesting, and valuable.

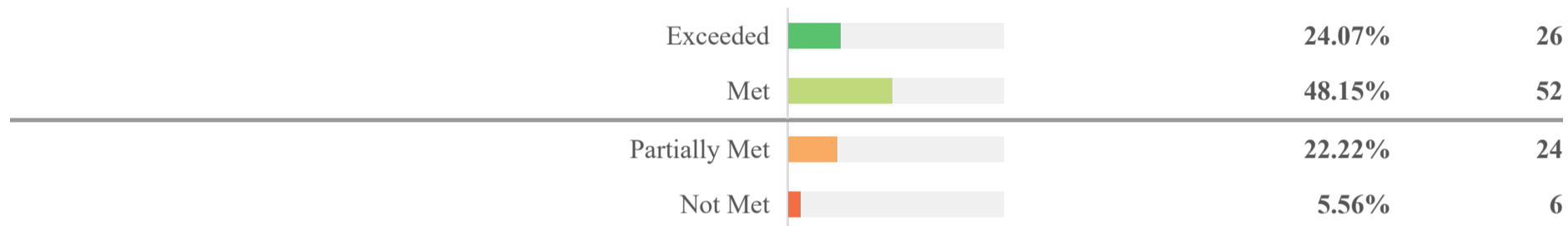Academic Year 2020-2021: Psychology (B.A., B.S.)

Term: Overview

Exceeded	**68.83%**	**53**
Met	**19.48%**	**15**
Partially Met	**7.79%**	**6**
Not Met	**3.9%**	**3**
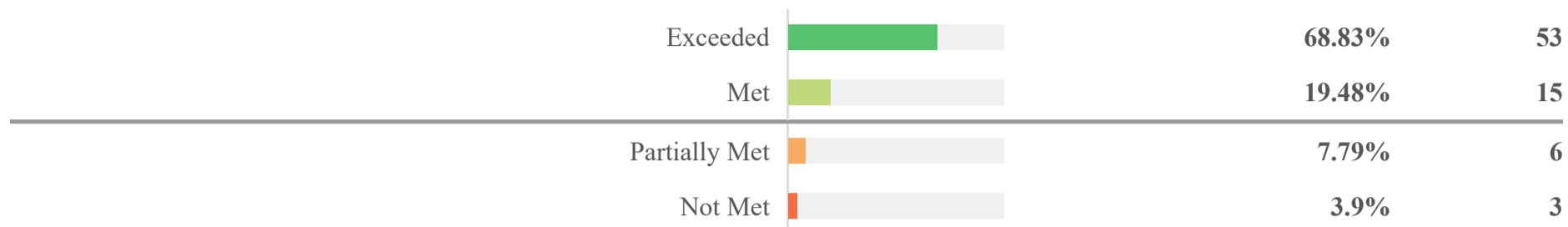
5.

Critical Skills

Students should have the ability to be critical consumers of popular accounts related to psychological phenomena, to be skeptical of overly broad and unsupported claims about behavior and cognition, and to understand that conclusions should be supported with evidence.

Academic Year 2020-2021: Psychology (B.A., B.S.)

Term: Overview

No Results

6.

Research Skills

Students should have an undergraduate mastery of statistics and research design.

Academic Year 2020-2021: Psychology (B.A., B.S.)

Term: Overview

Exceeded	**24.07%**	**26**
Met	**48.15%**	**52**
Partially Met	**22.22%**	**24**
Not Met	**5.56%**	**6**

Summary of Student Learning:

The majority of students met or exceeded the expectations for learning outcomes #1 (81%), #2 (78%), #4 (90%), and #6 (72%). Data for these outcomes were obtained from aggregates of students' performance in courses.

Outcomes #3 and #5 were not measured in the last academic year. The courses tied to these two objectives primarily concern research methods and statistics. Direct measures will be developed in order to assess performance on samples of work from these courses in order to assess outcomes #3 and #5.

Summary of Faculty Discussion:

Faculty discuss assessment results annually. Recommendations are made for improving existing measures through accuracy and sample size and creating new measures for outcomes not yet tested.

Summary of Changes/Improvements Being Considered:

Two changes are ongoing in the psychology program. First, the psychology program revised old learning outcomes to comprise the five outcomes listed below. The outcomes were developed to match our undergraduate major's content areas, in accordance with University of Idaho outcomes, and in the context of the American Psychological Association's standards for undergraduate education.

#1 Students should understand the broad underpinnings of thought and action, including sensation, perception, and the functioning of the nervous system.

#2 Students should understand the fundamentals of development, and the dynamic influences of personality and situations on cognition and behavior.

#3 Students should be able to move, intellectually and ethically, between theory/research and real-world applications of psychology in domains such as organizations/business, technology, health, forensics, and interpersonal/group relations.

#4 Students should understand both the common biological and social heritage they share with their fellow humans, and the individual differences (in age, culture, gender, abilities, ethnicity, etc.) that make each of us unique, interesting, and valuable.

#5 Students should have the ability to be critical consumers of popular accounts related to psychological phenomena, to be skeptical of overly broad and unsupported claims about behavior and cognition, and to understand that conclusions should be supported with evidence.

Second, the psychology program recently developed a new direct measure to be delivered during the senior experience course, PSYC 415 History of Psychology. The measure is a multiple-choice exam measuring students' knowledge on all outcomes except #3, which is planned to be assessed through direct measures gathered from research methods and statistics courses. The measure also will be delivered in PSYC 101 Introduction to Psychology from time to time in order to compare performance at the beginning and end of students' time in the program.

Inter-rater Reliability:

The program currently does not use assessment measures that require inter-rater reliability. However, once objectives requiring such measures are being assessed, we will use agreed upon rubrics and perhaps statistical indices such as Cohen's kappa to establish inter-rater reliability.

Closing the Loop:

Past assessment efforts included direct measures in the form of the psychology field test, focus groups, and alumni surveys. Students expressed desire for more opportunities for involvement in experiences that enhance their learning beyond regular coursework, such as lab experiences or internships. Faculty created new courses to allow faculty-student contact for every major moving through the program. Faculty also offer regular opportunities to earn credit through hands-on research work and internships in the community.

Psychology MS

Assessment Report Contact: Benjamin Barton

Program Changes in Past Year:

Changed the name of the department from "Psychology and Communication Studies" to "Psychology and Communication."

Learning Outcomes are Communicated to All Students in Program (check box if true): true

Learning Outcomes are Communicated to All Faculty (check box if true): true

Optional: Framework Alignment: n/a
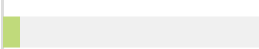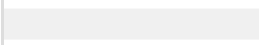
Import Outcomes Data (from Anthology Outcomes):

1.

Knowledge Skills

Students should have a firm grounding in the foundational fields of human factors (e.g., cognition, sensation/perception, ergonomics/biomechanics, human factors engineering).

Academic Year 2020-2021: Psychology (M.S.)

Term: Overview

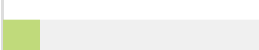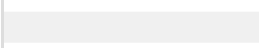|		
Exceeded	92%	46
Met	6%	3
Partially Met	2%	1
Not Met	0%	0

2.

Fundamental Skills

Students should develop a mastery of the fundamental skills of research design and statistical analysis.

Academic Year 2020-2021: Psychology (M.S.)

Term: Overview

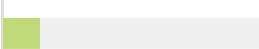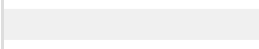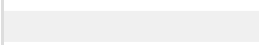|		
Exceeded	81.4%	35
Met	13.95%	6
Partially Met	4.65%	2
Not Met	0%	0

3.

Theory and Application Skills

Students should be able to move, intellectually and ethically, between theory/research and application of their subfields to organizations/business, technology, group relations, decision-making, human performance and safety, and more.

Academic Year 2020-2021: Psychology (M.S.)

Term: Overview

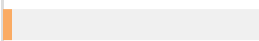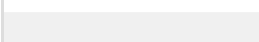|		
Exceeded	85.71%	24
Met	14.29%	4
Partially Met	0%	0
Not Met	0%	0

4.

Diagnostic Skills

Students should be able to diagnose workplace problems and develop innovative workplace solutions.

Academic Year 2020-2021: Psychology (M.S.)

Term: Overview

Exceeded		90.63%	29
Met		6.25%	2
Partially Met		3.13%	1
Not Met		0%	0

Summary of Student Learning:

The majority of students met or exceeded the expectations for all learning outcomes: #1 (98%), #2 (94%), #3 (90%), and #4 (99%). Data for these outcomes were obtained from aggregates of students' performance in courses related to each learning outcome.

Learning outcomes #1-#3 are also linked to completion of the comprehensive exam process or a master's thesis. Most students in the MS program are non-thesis track, and complete the comprehensive exam. The comprehensive exam comprises two parts. The first is a 100 question multiple-choice exam covering material from all core courses in the MS curriculum and structured according to the objectives found in the exam for the Board of Certification in Professional Ergonomics. Students must past the exam with a score of 70% or better. The second part of the comprehensive exam is a portfolio review of each students' work conducted by faculty on the graduate program committee. All students who have graduated from the MS program in the past academic year successfully completed the comprehensive exam process.

Summary of Faculty Discussion:

Course performance and comprehensive exam components are discussed annually by the graduate program committee. Faculty noted some questions on the multiple-choice measure, specifically concerning research design, needed updating and the portfolio design expectations needed standardization. Both changes were made during the 2020-2021 academic year.

Summary of Changes/Improvements Being Considered:

The graduate program committee will be working during the 2021-2022 academic year to examine which courses in the core curriculum are tied to each learning outcome and ways in which direct measures of each outcome can be enhanced.

Inter-rater Reliability:

Direct measures collected from coursework will be assessed by multiple members of the graduate program committee using a rubric created by the committee and, if necessary, quantifying inter-rater reliability with statistical means such as Cohen's kappa.

Closing the Loop:

Past assessments have included focus groups and alumni surveys. Students expressed desire for more knowledge of specific human factors skills, such as task analysis. These opportunities were already available in our curriculum but faculty enhanced them in response to student feedback.

Psychology PhD

Assessment Report Contact: Benjamin Barton

Program Changes in Past Year:

Changed the name of the department from "Psychology and Communication Studies" to "Psychology and Communication."

Learning Outcomes are Communicated to All Students in Program (check box if true): true

Learning Outcomes are Communicated to All Faculty (check box if true): true

Optional: Framework Alignment: n/a
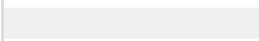
Import Outcomes Data (from Anthology Outcomes):
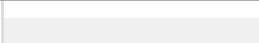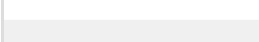
4.

Research Skills

Students should be able to conduct independent research that advances our knowledge of human factors.

Academic Year 2020-2021: Experimental Psychology (Ph.D.)

Term: Overview

Exceeded		0%	0
Met		100%	3
Partially Met		0%	0
Not Met		0%	0

Summary of Student Learning:

Three PhD students have completed the program. Their completion of dissertations is our only current measure and is taken to indicate successful application of research skills, outcome #4.

Summary of Faculty Discussion:

Faculty have not discussed assessment measures for the PhD program. The unit graduate program committee is tasked with beginning development of measures for learning outcomes during the 2021-2022 academic year.

Summary of Changes/Improvements Being Considered:

No curricular changes specific to this program are planned. Primary course work for the PhD program for the first two years is the same as the MS program. Any assessment measures developed for the two years of coursework required for the MS program will also be used for the PhD program. The PhD program may also use master's theses, preliminary exams, and dissertations as measures of student success. Engagement in publication of scholarly work may be another assessment benchmark for the PhD program.

Inter-rater Reliability:

Theses and dissertations may be assessed for outcome #4. Future measurement of these projects may be accomplished by application of a common rubric developed by the graduate program committee.

Closing the Loop:

To date, only three students have graduated from the PhD program in psychology. No formal feedback has been collected from students on which we may base efforts to improve student success. In the future, exit interviews with PhD students who have successfully defended their dissertations may serve as a point for collecting feedback.

Student Achievement

Student Achievement

Student Retention:

The unit monitors the numbers of majors in psychology, communication, and our MS and PhD programs using regular reports from the college office. These reports show data comparing the current academic year to the previous academic year, allowing determination of growth. According data received in early October 2021, 390 students had psychology as their primary major and 42 students had communication as their primary major.

Data available through Anthology suggest 207 psychology majors who were in our program in fall 2020 continued into 2021, and 85 majors graduated in 2021. Data available through Anthology suggest 15 communication majors who were in our program in fall 2020 continued into 2021, and 6 majors graduated in 2021.

All MS and PhD students enrolled in fall 2020 continued to spring 2021.

Student Persistence:

The unit has not previously monitored persistence. Regular reports from the college office do contain data on persistence.

Data available through Anthology suggest 240 who were in our psychology courses in fall 2020 continued into 2021; likewise four students who were in our communication courses in fall 2020 continued into 2021.

Students enrolled in our MS and PhD courses did not include students continuing who were not part of those programs.

Student Completion:

The unit monitors students graduating from the psychology, communication, and MS and PhD programs using regular reports from the college office. Data available through Anthology suggest 85 psychology majors and 6 communication majors graduated in 2021. Approximately five MS students and two PhD students graduated in 2021.

Student Postgraduate Success:

The unit monitors post-graduate success through alumni surveys of students five years out from graduation. However, the survey typically required funds and, since the loss of discretionary internal funds in 2019, the unit has not conducted an alumni survey. The surveys often were plagued with low response rates of perhaps 20-30 participants. No data are currently available.

Identify Equity Gaps:

Demographic characteristics of majors in our unit are reported in the table below. Our majors are predominantly white and a majority are female.

Race/Ethnicity by Measures	Undergraduate
White	403
Asian	14

Sex by Measures	Undergraduate
Female	349
Male	104

American Indian or Alaska Native	24
Black	25
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	6
Hispanic/Latino	7
Unknown	17

Data reported in the table below show incoming GPA (M = 3.20) and cumulative GPA (M = 3.11) do not vary considerable by ethnicity among our undergraduate majors, as indicated by the low variance across ethnic categories.

Race/Ethnicity by Measures	Avg UG Cum GPA	Avg UG Incoming GPA
White	3.21	3.28
Asian	3.15	3.36
American Indian or Alaska Native	2.88	3.17
Black or African American	3.27	2.96
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	2.99	2.79
Hispanic/Latino	3.26	3.55
unknown	3.01	3.31
Average	3.11	3.20
Variance	0.02	0.07

Overall, while GPA (as an indicator of achievement) does not appear to vary wildly among majors in our unit, ethnic and sex disparities exist.

Effective Learning Environment and Closing Equity Gaps:

Open-minded and inclusive environments in our classrooms are key for ensuring an effective learning environment for our students. Our faculty strive to create such environments in their classrooms, benefiting both students who are majors in our program and those who are not.

Recruitment efforts can be used to target ethnic and sex disparities in the demographic characteristics of our majors. However, this will require looking beyond the states in the Pacific northwest from which our student primarily are drawn

Demand and Productivity

New Demand and Productivity Item

External Demand:

APR Dashboard: https://uidaho.campuslabs.com/insight/dashboards-v2/1201/full

Internal Demand:
Credit Productivity:

Demand and Productivity

External Demand:

Demand is increasing for the programs offered in our unit. The total number of majors in our psychology and communication programs increased from approximately 414 in fall 2020 to 454 in fall 2021. Across class ranking, numbers also increased in all categories except sophomores from fall 2020 to fall 2021, as shown in the table below. Both undergraduate programs are expected to see increases in majors in coming years, especially the communication program.

	Fall 2020	Fall 2021
Freshman	74	90
Sophomore	88	68
Junior	124	139
Senior	147	156

Internal Demand:

Demand has increased for courses offered by out unit. Credit hour production increased from 7740 in fall 2020 to 7806 in fall 2021. Fifty-three percent of instruction was delivered in-person, although this percentage is lower than normal due to the pandemic. Twenty-nine percent of our credit hour production was driven by general education needs, as indicated by data obtained from Anthology.

Credit Productivity:

One strength of our programs is they are both high-demand majors among students who come to the University of Idaho. Psychology and Communication remain popular nation-wide as undergraduate majors. Students enjoy the opportunities offered by our program for hands-on experience in research or internships.

Loss of faculty has been a threat, especially for offering upper-division elective courses for our majors. We have five fewer tenure-track faculty than we did in 2019. This has been particularly problematic for the communication program However, with the financial situation improving at the University of Idaho we may hire as many as four faculty members in the next two years.

Financial Health and Resources

Financial Health and Resources

Financial Health:

As with all academic units at the University of Idaho, the unit is recovering from financial hardship. Our unit lost approximately $185,000 in fall 2019 due to university budgetary problems. Faculty lost funds tied to infrastructure, travel, and graduate student support. Subsequent budget cuts and the pandemic created additional challenges. However, we are emerging from the crisis period. The college has allocated approximately $118,000 to be used for infrastructure, graduate program needs, and online education development to strengthen our undergraduate programs. We expect the process of financial recovery to continue, but the future is positive.

Efficient Use of Resources:

Efficiency of resources in our program takes at least three forms. First, space and equipment resources are shared when necessary among faculty and laboratories. Sharing resources that support research not only enhances faculty productivity but offers more opportunities for undergraduate and graduate student experiences. Second, faculty are a resource supporting undergraduate program needs. Faculty teaching rotations have been changed in response to shortage to ensure our core undergraduate courses are available to our on-campus and distance students on a regular basis. Third, funds for enhancing online education will be used to develop new courses and update ones that are in need of overhaul. Infrastructure development will support delivery of courses.