



UMass Amherst's Educational Effectiveness Plan (EEP) provides departments with an ongoing structure for conducting systematic inquiry into the effectiveness of their efforts to support student success. Departments initially developed and submitted their EEP inquiry plans and evidence gathering strategies in spring 2018 and are asked to provide updates on their progress on a regular basis. EEP activity is also incorporated into the University's strategic planning process – with departments including their EEP progress and findings into their 2021 Strategic Planning Refresh. What follows is the department's most current reporting, as synthesized by the Office of Academic Planning and Assessment (OAPA).

Psychological and Brain Sciences EEP

Identify the evidence you currently use (beyond GPA) to determine that your undergraduates have achieved the objectives you have for them.

We require all majors to pass a Moodle tutorial and quiz before they can register for classes. We review our sophomore survey data.

Please describe the focus of your inquiry and explain why this inquiry is important to your department right now.

Line of Inquiry 2018: PBS has been engaged for the past couple of years in a department-defined line of inquiry of the kind envisioned by the EEP. The new curriculum proposal is the main product of that process. At present, the outstanding issues for our department are as follows:

- Determining the final set of area courses and lab courses for each area of focus.
- Determining which Psychology courses will continue as Gen Ed service courses.
- Coordinating approval and implementation of the new curriculum with the approval and implementation of a new Neuroscience Major, and determining how resources will be provided to ensure smooth rollout and administration of the two majors (both of which may be administered by PBS).
- Coordinating development of the many new courses that will be required under the new curriculum, without placing additional strain on our instructional resources.

Progress your department has made toward addressing your line of inquiry, and the types of evidence that you have collected to inform your inquiry

Several developments have affected our plans regarding the new Psychology curriculum. After extensive discussion with Biology and other stakeholders, we reached consensus on a detailed plan for a new Neuroscience major, which we plan to roll out at the same time as the changes to the Psychology major. The Neuroscience Track will be eliminated from the Psychology major. However, delays in the approval process for the Neuroscience major have resulted in the need to push back implementation of all of these changes until Fall 2021, at the earliest. We are currently awaiting approval of our preliminary proposal for the new Neuroscience major at the

Provost's level, in advance of a system-level review and approval. Once we obtain this approval, we will simultaneously put forward the proposal on campus for the new Neuroscience major and for the revisions to the Psychology major. In light of this delayed timeline, we have some time to consider how to best assess the effects of the new curricula (both Psychology and Neuroscience) on student outcomes. We plan to use our sophomore survey in Spring 2021 to obtain detailed 'baseline' data regarding student satisfaction with various aspects of the major, but we have not yet planned that assessment in detail.

What are your department's next steps regarding your continuing and/or upcoming EEP line of inquiry?

We are in the process of implementing a fairly large-scale restructuring of our curriculum and therefore have not planned an upcoming line of inquiry. To support the pursuit of our current line of inquiry, we will be using the sophomore survey in Spring 2020 to gather information on student satisfaction with and awareness of diversity-related programs and issues in the department. We will continue to press forward on gaining approval for, and heading toward implementation of, our new curriculum in the psychology major and the entirely new neuroscience major. And we will use the Spring 2021 sophomore survey to obtain detailed baseline information on student satisfaction, participation in a range of activities (e.g., internships, research), and self-reported career/graduate school preparedness.

What are the Student Learning Objectives for your department or program(s)?

Psychology, B.S.

- Critically evaluate empirical support for various theories and findings
- Conduct literature searches using traditional and technology-based methodologies and critically evaluate and synthesize findings
- Understand the interconnections of psychology with other disciplines
- Use and evaluate research methods and designs
- Employ and evaluate basic statistics
- Appreciate how psychological findings can be used to make informed judgments that strengthen the community and build public policy
- Speak and write effectively in the discourse of the discipline; Understand the diversity of behavior and experience; Work effectively with others and on teams; Synthesize natural science and social science aspects of psychology; Understand the ethical practice of scientific inquiry; Think scientifically, understanding the relationships between theories, observations, and conclusions

Experiential Goals

- Students in our Neuroscience Track are required to have a laboratory experience, either through a course (Psych 430) or through an independent student (Psych 496A)
- Students in the specialization in Developmental Disabilities and Human Services (DDHS) are required to complete an internship

- Students completing departmental honors must complete an honors thesis which involves one year of independent research
- All other students are encouraged, but not required, to obtain laboratory and/or internship experience

Psychological and Brain Sciences Department Graduate Student Learning Objectives

- Develop theoretical and empirical content expertise in a sub-discipline of psychological and behavioral science
- Conduct and consume original research in an area of psychological and behavioral science in an ethical and responsible manner
- Acquire and apply cutting-edge methodological and statistical knowledge to a research program
- Develop effective written and oral communication skills for disseminating scientific information to professional and lay audiences
- Develop competency in teaching and mentorship
- Acquire knowledge of discipline-relevant career options/pathways
- Bring a multicultural orientation to research, practice, teaching, collaboration, and mentorship

Note that this list of objectives reflects goals that are shared across our four independent Ph.D. programs.