

## Psychology Annual Assessment Report 2016

### I. Executive Summary Statement

The psychology major focused on three goals from the psychology assessment plan that had been identified last year for modification and/or study in 2015-2016. These included: research methodology preparation and proficiency (goal 2), application of psychology (goal 4), and preparing students for their paths beyond Wells (goal 10). Note that these numbers correspond to the previously used goals, and that this year we have updated the goals in accordance with the APA Guidelines for the Undergraduate Psychology Major, Version 2.0. In conducting this assessment, we used qualitative and quantitative measures including two from the senior comprehensive exam in psychology (ETS Field Test; Exit Interview) and a Post-Wells Plans database, to help assess our career/graduate school preparation efforts. From these sources, we identified two goals for continued study and improvement in 2016-2017: scientific inquiry and professional development.

Exit Interviews revealed two consistent requests: more opportunities in research methods and more assistance with post-Wells plans. We started asking students what their post-Wells plans were last year, as part of the Exit Interview. This year, we found that the vast majority of the 2016 class (23 of 32, or 72%) indicated they would be working either full or part time immediately following graduation, most in a psychology-related occupation. A smaller but still large proportion of the class (19 of 32, or 59%) expressed intentions of pursuing graduate education (16), certification training (2), or professional experience (3) following Wells. Two of our grads intend on serving in Americorps for a year. Finally, four students expressed indecision about their plans.

This year's senior class had a mean overall score of 149 (out of 200) on the ETS Field Test in Psychology, compared with a national average of 156. They scored better than their 2015 Wells peers on all measures and especially excelled in the area of social psychology. The results suggest that we need to work on bolstering our students' understanding of the Statistics/Research Methods and Developmental areas; our Report below suggests ways in which we might achieve this.

Finally, course evaluations from PSY 403: Senior Seminar in Psychology suggested that our attempt to address goal 4 (application of psychology) by offering an application capstone project as an alternative to the traditional thesis was successful in its inaugural year. We learned quite a bit from this first offering and will continue to offer this opportunity next fall.

### II. Summary of Annual Assessment Review and Planning Meeting(s)

#### a. Date, Length, Attendees

Professors Gagnon, Morfei, and Markowitz met for an hour on August 26, December 2, and December 10, 2015 and April 20, 2016, to discuss assessment and other topics. On February 2, 2016, Professors Gagnon and Markowitz met for one hour to discuss assessment and other topics.

#### b. Topics

The topics of these meetings focused primarily on senior seminar, and ways to improve it. Senior seminar is one of the primary ways that we deliver assessment objectives and assess outcomes, so we are always trying to improve both. We also discussed other topics relevant to assessment, including the ETS exam, student performance and motivation, poster presentation, adjunct faculty support, and research methods and opportunities.

c. Changes

Changes we intend on implementing are detailed in V: Summary of Data: Methods and Results (see Solutions). The Psychology Major Assessment Plan has also been updated to reflect changes that impact it.

III. Action Plan

We intend on continuing our focus on finding ways to deliver hands-on research opportunities for our majors who desire it, which will make them more viable candidates for graduate-level (particularly Ph.D.) programs. We also intend on strengthening our focus on ensuring adequate graduate school and career/occupational preparation. It is clear that students need to take PSY 270 Foundations and Methods early in their career in the major. We have been advising this from the advent of the course, but logistics have sometimes precluded students from taking the course until their senior year. We hope to avoid this in future classes. From Exit Interview responses, students have mixed reactions to research in the Psychology curriculum. Many students desire more opportunities for hands-on research experiences in their courses, while others commented that there is too much focus on research for students uninterested in a research career. One way to meet the needs of both groups of students will be to offer a topics course: Research Practicum in Psychology next spring. We will also consider ways to include more career preparation throughout the Psychology curriculum. Below is commentary and 'action plan' for each of the five goals of our assessment plan. These goals are from the APA Guidelines for the Undergraduate Psychology Major Version 2.0, published in 2013 (<http://www.apa.org/ed/precollege/about/psymajor-guidelines.pdf>). We will focus on the bolded goals in the coming year. The psychology assessment faculty will meet in early fall 2016, to continue development or implementation of these and other actionable items.

**Goal 1: Knowledge Base in Psychology.** Students report on exit interviews that they have achieved a broad base of knowledge in the different areas within psychology, through the curriculum's design of requiring at least one course in each of six different areas. There was a range of performance on this year's ETS exam. Some students demonstrated an excellent knowledge base through high scores on this exam, while many demonstrated a solid knowledge base, and others failed to do so.

**Goal 2: Scientific Inquiry and Critical Thinking.** This will continue to be a primary focus in 2016-2017, particularly objective 2.4 to interpret, design, and conduct basic psychological research. Students expressed frustration that there were not more opportunities for hands-on research. While three seniors presented their research

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at academic conferences, one of whom gathered her own data for the project, we would like to find ways for more students with this interest to conduct research themselves. To this end, Professor Gagnon is planning to offer a topics course: Research Practicum in Psychology in Spring 2017. Students also commented that they engaged in critical thinking frequently in their Psychology coursework and improved their skills in this area via the Psychology curriculum.

Goal 3: Ethical and Social Responsibility in a Diverse World. While some students on Exit Interview indicated a desire for more focus in this area, others appreciated the work that professors do to address diversity and ethics.

Goal 4: Communication. We require students to practice written, oral, and other communication skills in virtually every class. Students are required to demonstrate poster communication competency formally in senior comps, PSY 270, and PSY 290/390 (psychology internship). We will continue these practices. Several students remarked on Exit Interviews that this has benefitted them.

**Goal 5: Professional Development.** Although changes have been made to improve this area, students continue to report that they would like more emphasis on career development throughout their coursework (not just in senior seminar), as part of both their academic courses and through enhanced internship opportunities. Last year, we offered a service-learning project in senior seminar, hoping that students who wished to pursue service opportunities or careers would gain experience in this area. Few students selected this option, but those who did seemed to benefit. We will continue to offer this opportunity to the class of 2017. We will continue to work on bringing career/occupational discussion to all courses within the major. We will continue to gather post-Wells plans via Exit Interview and discuss other ways in which we can measure outcomes in this area.

#### IV. Assessment Plan

A copy of the Psychology Major Assessment Plan is attached.

#### V. Summary of Data: Methods and Results

In this section, we summarize our assessment methods and results for each of the three measures we collected and examined: Exit Interviews, ETS Field Test, and Post-Wells Plans

- a. Exit interviews
  - i. Methods

As part of the senior comprehensive exam, all graduating seniors are required to provide anonymous responses to a series of questions on an exit interview (see below). Fulfillment of this requirement is guaranteed by tying receipt of comprehensive exam letter to submission of the exit interview. Thus, we are ensured 100% participation rate. The exit interview provides students with a copy

of the psychology assessment plan and students are specifically asked to let us know how we are doing on fulfilling each of our goals, so the mapping to assessment couldn't be more transparent. For this assessment analysis, all exit interviews from this past year were examined to determine what themes emerged. We identified two themes (see Results).

### **Psychology Senior Exit Interview Spring, 2016**

As a graduating senior who has now completed requirements for the psychology major at Wells, we value your input on our academic program. Please look over the psychology assessment goals, objectives, and outcomes below. After you've read through that material, we would like you to respond to the Exit Interview Questions listed below. We ask that you send your answers electronically to Laurie Turo (lturo@wells.edu). Your responses are anonymous and a required component of the senior comprehensive exam. Ms. Turo will check your name off her list of psychology seniors and will provide your responses to us without any identifying information attached after all responses are in.

In addition to the exit interview file, we ask that you indicate *in your e-mail message* what your post-Wells plans are, whether that be graduate school, employment, student teaching, or some other opportunity. Please be as specific as possible (e.g., if attending graduate school, indicate program, degree, institution; if job, the specific position and organization; if Teach for America, Peace Corps, etc., where the placement is, etc.) This information will be forwarded to us independently of your Exit Interview, once all responses are in.

Your answers to the questions are due to no later than **4:30 on Friday, May 6**. As soon as Ms. Turo receives your Exit Interview and post-Wells plans, she will send your Senior Comprehensive Exam letter to you *via campus mail* (if you want it sent to another address, please let Ms. Turo know this in your email). This letter from the major will indicate your comps grade (Pass, Pass with Distinction, Not Pass) and will include your score report from the ETS Exam. *Please be sure to respond by the due date, as recommendation for graduation will not be released to the Registrar until this component of the Comprehensive Exam is completed.*

Finally: Thank you – We appreciate and value your input!

#### **Exit Interview Questions:**

1. Do you feel that we are adequately addressing all ten of the listed goals? Provide some context for your answer.
2. Do you have any suggestions for how we might do a better job of addressing the goals?

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3. In your view, are some goals stressed too heavily, while others are not dealt with enough? If so, please provide some detail as to which goals are over-stressed and which ones need more attention.
4. Are the ten goals for the major in line with what you hoped or expected to get out of the major or would you delete, add, or modify any?
5. Please provide any further comments you have about the psychology major at Wells.

### **Wells College Psychology Major Assessment Plan**

#### **Mission Statement**

The mission of the Wells College psychology major is to provide a solid foundation in the study of behavior and mind and to help students apply their knowledge of the field toward achieving a sustainable and just world. The major aims to develop critical analysis, sound reasoning, effective oral and written communication, a humane and ethical manner, and methodological skills in its students. The overarching goal of the major is to help prepare students for global citizenship and contribution through appreciation of the diversity of human experience, participation in service and/or experiential learning opportunities, and cultivation of a sense of responsibility for making a positive impact on the world through their understanding of self and others.

#### **Learning Goals and Outcomes**

The American Psychological Association provides parameters for the development of learning goals and outcomes (<http://www.apa.org/ed/pcue/taskforcereport2.pdf>) for undergraduate psychology programs. We have adapted these parameters as a template for our assessment plan, modifying them where appropriate to address the mission statement and institutional goals of Wells College.

#### **Knowledge, Skills, and Values Consistent with the Study and Application of Psychology:**

##### **Goal 1. Knowledge Base of Psychology**

**Objective 1:** Students will be knowledgeable about the major concepts and constructs in the field of psychology, be able to connect theory and empirical research, and understand the impact of historical, societal, and cultural trends on the development of the field.

**Outcome 1:** Students will take courses in all major areas of the field.

**Objective 2:** Students will demonstrate an understanding of theoretical perspectives, empirical findings, and historical, societal, and cultural trends in psychology.

**Outcome 2:** Students will demonstrate satisfactory knowledge of concepts, constructs, theory, empirical research, and trends through objective and subjective evaluation.

## **Goal 2. Research Methods in Psychology**

**Objective 3:** Students will understand and apply basic qualitative and quantitative research methods in psychology.

**Outcome 3:** Students will develop the skills necessary to apply inductive and deductive reasoning skills to explore empirical questions about behavior and mind.

**Objective 4:** Students will understand research design, data analysis, interpretation, validity, and critique.

**Outcome 4:** Students will demonstrate an understanding of the value, appropriate application, and critique of qualitative and quantitative research methods.

**Objective 5:** Students will appreciate the ethical issues involved in conducting behavioral research – both on humans and animals.

**Outcome 5:** Students will know how to conduct ethically sound research and how to evaluate the research of others for its ethical soundness.

## **Goal 3. Critical Thinking Skills in Psychology**

**Objective 6:** Students will use and respect critical thinking, skeptical inquiry, and the scientific approach to understanding behavior and mind.

**Outcome 6:** Students will develop the skills necessary to critically and reasonably evaluate psychological research and theory.

**Objective 7:** Students will apply critical analysis to the field, consider its strengths and shortcomings, and be able to articulate constructive improvements to the discipline as a whole and its practice, research, and pedagogy.

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**Outcome 7:** Students will demonstrate their ability to apply their critical analysis skills

### **Goal 4. Application of Psychology**

**Objective 8:** Students will understand and apply psychological principles to personal, social, and organizational issues, with the goal of improving the world in terms of sustainability, justice, and the human experience.

**Outcome 8:** Students will demonstrate their ability to apply their knowledge of the field to real-world issues and problems.

### **Goal 5. Values in Psychology and Wells College**

**Objective 9:** Students will be able to weigh evidence; appreciate complexity and tolerate ambiguity; act ethically, humanely, and rationally; respect others' opinions and perspectives; make interdisciplinary connections; and reflect other values that are the underpinnings of psychology as a social science and Wells College as a liberal arts institution.

**Outcome 9:** Students will possess the character, skills, and values to make a positive difference at Wells and in the wider world.

### **Knowledge, Skills, and Values Consistent with Liberal Arts Education that are Further Developed in Psychology:**

### **Goal 6. Information and Technological Literacy**

**Objective 10:** Students will demonstrate information competencies and the ability to use computers and other technology for many purposes, including data analysis and scholarly communication.

**Outcome 10:** Students will develop the skills necessary to use technology as a tool for communication and analysis.

**Objective 11:** Students will learn to evaluate sources of information for credibility, authenticity, and appropriateness.

**Outcome 11:** Students will develop the skills necessary to assess the usefulness of information.

### **Goal 7. Communication Skills**

**Objective 12:** Students will be able to communicate original work effectively and creatively in a variety of formats.

**Outcome 12:** Students will develop the skills to write effective papers and reports.

**Outcome 13:** Students will develop the skills to make effective oral presentations, poster presentations, and/or portfolio presentations.

**Outcome 14:** Students will learn to communicate empirical results and be facile in the application of APA format in written scholarly communication.

### **Goal 8. Sociocultural and International Awareness**

**Objective 13:** Students will recognize, understand, accept, and respect the complexity of sociocultural and international diversity.

**Outcome 15:** Students will develop an awareness and understanding of inclusivity and diversity in the context of the field of psychology and in their own lives.

**Outcome 16:** Students will expand their own experiences through exposure to other ways of thinking, values, and worldviews.

**Outcome 17:** Students will understand the limitations of the current state of the field in a multicultural context and consider ways of improving the status quo.

### **Goal 9. Personal Development**

**Objective 14:** Students will develop awareness and insight into their own and others' behavior and mental processes and apply effective strategies for self-management, self-understanding, and self-improvement.

**Outcome 18:** Students will be encouraged to develop the capacity to be self-reflective, compassionate, and empathetic.

**Outcome 19:** Students will learn to value and pursue lifelong learning as a means of self-development in the cultivation of a meaningful life.

**Outcome 20:** Students will grow in their own ethical and moral judgments and actions.

**Outcome 21:** Students will apply course material to better understand, appreciate, and possibly improve their own and others' behaviors.

## Goal 10. Career Planning and Development

**Objective 15:** Students will emerge from the major with realistic ideas about how to implement their psychological knowledge, skills, and values in occupational pursuits in a variety of settings.

**Outcome 22:** Students will explore ways in which they might incorporate their knowledge of psychology into their future careers and personal lives.

Results. Two themes were identified from this year's graduating majors; we offer solutions for each:

### Class of 2016 Exit Interviews: Two Themes and Solutions

- 1.) Students want more opportunities for hands-on research.** This is a consistent complaint in the exit interviews we have conducted ever since we removed the PSY 360L/365L course offerings, and a problem we have been studying and trying to address. Our Environmental Scan of peer institutions three years ago confirmed that we do not meet the opportunities provided by our peer institutions in this regard. *Solution: Offer topics course: Research Practicum in Psychology Spring 2017. We expect this to be a valuable opportunity for those students able to take advantage of it. It does not, however, systematically address the need for such a course, as it requires that we forgo a regularly offered course in our curriculum in order to make room for this in our rotations. Previously, we have advised students interested in a hands-on research methods experience to take SOC 294. While this has been successful to some extent, it relies on faculty in another major and is unsatisfactory as a sustainable practice. We have been considering bringing back a version of the PSY360L/PSY365L courses, which are still on the books for just this reason. We also make a hands-on research project opportunity available (PSY 404) for seniors who wrote a research proposal for their senior thesis.*
- 2.) Career/Grad School Preparation:** Students embrace the opportunity to be better prepared for life beyond Wells as part of Senior Seminar, but expect more information about possible career/occupational avenues earlier in their undergraduate career. While there was an appreciation that this was covered in PSY 270, students still want more career development focus throughout all of their coursework. *Solution: Enhance discussion of this topic across all courses, and promote guest speakers when possible. With the graduation of the unusually large class of 2016, we are hopeful that more students will take PSY 270 in the first or second year, thereby encouraging them to think about professional development early in their Psychology major. We are also asking seniors to provide their post-Wells plans and tracking paths*

*to help us better address graduates' needs (see Class of 2016 Post Wells Plans). We intend on starting up a Psychology at Wells Facebook page to help current students and alums of the program more easily communicate about careers, internships, and graduate school with one another.*

## **b. Educational Testing Service Major Field Test in Psychology**

**i. Methods.** As part of their senior comprehensive exam, psychology majors are required to take the Educational Testing Services (ETS) field test in psychology early in the spring semester of their senior year. The ETS Field Test in Psychology is a comprehensive undergraduate assessment “designed to measure the critical knowledge and understanding obtained by students in the major field of study.” (ETS, 2015). The major field test goes “beyond the measurement of factual knowledge by ... (evaluating) students’ ability to analyze and solve problems, understand relationships and interpret material from their major field of study.” ETS offers comprehensive national comparative data that allows us to evaluate our students’ performance and compare our program’s effectiveness to programs at similar institutions nationwide. The ETS major field test provides “reliable documentation for accreditation, student achievement benchmarks, and curricula improvement... (it can be used) in curriculum evaluation, departmental self-studies, and end-of-major outcomes assessment.” Thus, the test is an essential and invaluable tool in program assessment. It helps us prepare students to succeed by improving our curriculum, it can be used to demonstrate the strengths of our program to prospective students and their families, and it helps assure us that our students have mastered their field of study.

For each student, ETS provides an overall score (from 120-200) and subscores (out of 100%) for each of four subject areas: Learning, Cognition, & Memory; Perception, Sensation, & Physiology; Clinical, Abnormal, & Personality; and Developmental & Social. These individual scores are useful for assessing individual performance, but more useful for assessment purposes are the Assessment Indicators that are returned for the aggregate in six knowledge areas: Memory & Cognition; Perception/Sensation/Physiology; Development; Clinical & Abnormal; Social; and Measurement & Methodology. All these data points can be compared to the national comparative data that are based on 6,302 test takers from 221 domestic institutions that administered the test from September 2014 through June 2015. Note that the comparative data for this year’s test differs from preceding years as a new test was developed and administered starting in September 2014. (The complete National Comparative Data Summary, including the identities of the 221 participating institutions, can be found at: [http://www.ets.org/s/mft/pdf/acdg\\_psychology.pdf](http://www.ets.org/s/mft/pdf/acdg_psychology.pdf))

**ii. Results.** The mean test score for the 2016 Wells cohort was 149 (out of 200), compared to a national mean test score of 156. While 50% of the national cohort scored below the mean of 156 (by definition), 69% of the Wells cohort scored below it. Thus, our students are underperforming compared to their peers

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across the country. However, compared to their peers at Wells, they showed improvement: the Wells 2015 cohort scored a mean of 143 and only 2 of the 15 test takers (13%) from that year scored at or above the national mean, while this year's mean was 149 and 10 out of 32 students (31%) scored above the national mean. How did the Wells 2016 cohort fare in each of the subareas? Following are the national individual averages across all 6,302 test takers, the 2016 cohort, and the difference between the two both for 2016 and 2015 (in parens).

	National <u>2014-2015</u>	Wells <u>2016</u>	Difference <u>2016 (2015)</u>
1. Learning, Cognition, Memory	56	51	-5 (-5)
2. S&P, Physiology	56	53	-3 (-9)
3. Clinical/Abnormal, Personality	56	46	-10 (-12)
4. Developmental, Social	56	53	-3 (-10)

The results show that our 2016 cohort performed less well individually than their peers in other institutions across the nation in every subarea of the field and the difference scores decreased from last year in all areas but one (Learning, Cognition, & Memory). The gap narrowed quite considerably in two areas: S&P/Physiology and Developmental/Social. In these two areas, Wells students perform most comparably to their peers nationally.

How does Wells compare in terms of institutional averages? Below are the averages (2014-2015) for each of the six Assessment Indicators, Wells' 2016 average for each Indicator, and the difference between the two for 2016 and, in parentheses, 2015.

	National <u>2014-2015</u>	Wells <u>2016</u>	Difference <u>2016 (2015)</u>
1. Memory/Cognition	46	43	-3 (-12)
2. S&P/Physiology	54	50	-4 (-6)
3. Developmental	50	41	-9 (-14)
4. Clinical/Abnormal	70	61	-9 (0)
5. Social	64	63	-1 (-11)
6. Statistics/Methods	55	46	-9 (-10)

Again, while the Wells cohort performs less well in each area compared to other institutions, it performed reasonably similarly in the areas of Memory/Cognition and S&P/Physiology and virtually the same in the Social area. And again, the Wells 2016 cohort performed better in all areas than the Wells 2015 cohort, with the exception of the Clinical area. However, it should be noted that the National comparative data to which these two cohorts were subjected was different in 2015 and 2016, which may account for this apparently anomalous result. Or, it may be that while 2015 was a weaker class overall, it did enjoy strength in the clinical area while the 2016 class seems to be relatively strong in the Social and the Cognitive/Bio areas. There seems to be consistent weakness in the developmental

and statistics/methods areas, but before drawing that conclusion, it would be prudent to look at more than just two years' worth of data. Below we present the performance in terms of the six Assessment Indicators for the Wells psychology graduates of 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, and 2016. Again, because the scores are based on different tests, it is not appropriate to compare the absolute scores across years; instead, we will compare the relative rank ordering in performance across years. To that end, the performance rank of each subject area appears in parentheses next to each absolute score; the ranking for the National scores appears in parentheses next to the area name.

	<u>2012</u>	<u>2013</u>	<u>2014</u>	<u>2015</u>	<u>2016</u>
Memory/Cognition (6)	44 (5)	44 (6)	54 (6)	32 (6)	43 (5)
S&P/Physiology(4)	51 (4)	48 (5)	55 (5)	43 (4)	50 (3)
Developmental(5)	53 (3)	55 (3)	58 (3)	37 (5)	41 (6)
Clinical/Abnormal (1)	64 (1)	66 (1)	65 (1)	62 (1)	61 (2)
Social (2)	58 (2)	64 (2)	64 (2)	48 (2)	63 (1)
Statistics/Methods (3)	53 (3)	51 (4)	56 (4)	44 (3)	46 (4)

The Clinical/Abnormal and Social areas are consistently strong in this broader view; the dip in the Social area in 2015 seems to simply reflect an academically weak class since the Social area still maintains its number 2 position in rank. Despite the relative weakness of the 2015 class, it is interesting that Clinical/Abnormal scores remained at the same, high level, suggesting this is a real strength among the students in our program. The same is true for programs nationally, however, and compared to that group, Wells is not particularly strong. Social is another area in which Wells students are strong and again, the same is true nationally; in this case, however, Wells' strength appears to equal their national peers' strength (the 2015 class notwithstanding). The Developmental area had enjoyed third place ranking historically, but has ceded this rank to S&P/Physiology and Statistics/Methods in the past two years and has even slipped to 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> place the past two years. This is curious, because the Wells faculty are especially strong in the Developmental area. It also suggests that the high individual performance scores for Social/Developmental this past year is entirely driven by the scores in the Social area, further highlighting just how strong our students performed in that area. Statistics/Methods and S&P/Physiology share 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> place in our institution's performance ranking; if we compare this to the national means, S&P/Physiology compares favorably but Statistics/Methods does not. Finally, our students' scores are historically low in the Memory/Cognition area (although Developmental ranked lowest this year) but again, if we look at the national scores, this is true everywhere: Memory/Cognition is ranked 6<sup>th</sup> in the national data. The fact that our institutional mean is only 3 points lower than the national institutional average suggests that our students are actually relatively strong in this area.

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**iii. Discussion.** The ETS Test performance supports our anecdotal impression that the 2016 class in psychology was stronger academically than the 2015 class. This was supported by the overall ETS score, the individual subscore differences from the national means, and the institutional Assessment Indicator differences from the national means (with the exception of the Clinical area). Our students' performance still falls short of the national overall mean score, but it is heartening that over 30% of the 2016 Wells cohort scored above the national mean. It is possible, as many of our students will attest, that Wells students are particularly poor test takers or are simply inexperienced and unpracticed at multiple choice tests because it is not a common form of evaluation here. If that is the case, then we should always expect lower-than-national performance and the validity of the test for such a cohort might even be called into question. Nonetheless, the pattern of performance can be revealing and should be the focus of analysis and interpretation. The relative ranking of Assessment Indicators across years indicates that as a group, the relative strength of our seniors' knowledge of content areas is roughly in the order of: Clinical and/or Social, followed by S&P/Physiology and/or Statistics/Methods, followed by Developmental and/or Memory/Cognition. But the local performance is not all that meaningful without comparing it to the national performance. If we look at how the local performance compares nationally, then we should actually be impressed by the performance of our students in the Memory/Cognition, S&P/Physiology, and Social areas, since our students compare quite favorably to the national means in these areas.

What questions should we be asking based on this year's test results? We should be wondering why Clinical took a dip this year in comparison to the national data. Most likely, this is simply an anomaly; we will take a look next year to see if performance bounces back to national levels and not dwell too much on this isolated data point now.

We should also be wondering why the Developmental knowledge base seems to be on the decline when it has been historically strong and when we have three faculty with particular expertise who each teach courses specifically addressing different points in the lifespan and another course specifically on the development of women. A fourth faculty member covers perceptual and cognitive development in some of her courses while an adjunct faculty member is a developmental psychologist himself. One might reasonably predict, then, that knowledge of developmental psychology would be particularly strong among our students. But here are two guesses as to what is happening: First, the education minors who tend to be particularly strong in developmental psychology are now majoring in education and thus, no longer in our cohort, causing the scores to drop to some degree in that area. This is not a phenomenon that we can address via a programmatic change, but the second 'guess' is one that can be addressed in that way: That the very richness of our offerings in the developmental area is 'watering down' our students' knowledge of development *across the lifespan*. Since our students are only required to take one course in development, they might take a course focused solely on the development

of children, *or* adolescents, *or* adults, *or* women, and never learn much about the rest. But the test evaluates knowledge of *all* of these. The obvious solution to this is to require a survey course in Lifespan Development, or combine the Child & Adolescent Development courses into one course, but neither of these may be practical options at the present time. We could and should give equal attention to each point in the lifespan in PSY 101 and not focus too heavily on the knowledge area of the instructor who happens to be teaching it. As academic advisors, we could also encourage students to take more than one course in the developmental area. Alternately, we could interpret the results in the context of our curricular offerings, acknowledging that this is an area in which our students may achieve depth at the expense of breadth, as they focus on the area of development of most interest and value to them and their educational and career goals.

The ETS results tell us that we should also wonder what we can do to improve our students' understanding of Statistics and Research Methods. Consistency in the faculty teaching Statistics, and integration of this course with the behavioral sciences, would help. The addition of an upper level Research Methods course would help as well. Although all majors are required to take a 200-level Foundations and Methods course, only half of the course is dedicated to research methods. For a variety of reasons – some avoidable, some not -- four of the 2016 cohort of 32 did not take Foundations & Methods in Psychology until the spring semester of their senior year. This is actually a decrease from the year before in relative terms, since four out of 15 students in last year's cohort were in this position as well. We are trying to decrease this number even more by raising the course cap size to accommodate all sophomores and juniors who request it. Still, there will always be students who for one reason or another (e.g., study abroad, course conflicts, leaves of absence, late declaration of Psychology major) cannot take the course until their senior year. Since methods is offered in the latter half of the course, these seniors would not have experienced formal coverage of research methods prior to taking the ETS test and might be expected to not score very well in this area. Given how large the class size has become in the past few offerings, it may need to be offered each semester. Or, perhaps offering the course in the fall instead of the spring would make it easier for students to take. Finally, although students are also exposed to research methods in all of their psychology courses, an upper level course that offered the opportunity to conceive, design, conduct, analyze, and report on an empirical study would cement an understanding of research methods and statistics in a uniquely powerful way. If such a course were offered in the spring semester, and Foundations and Methods in the fall, then this would maximize students' opportunities for significant exposure to methods and statistics. As academic advisors, we should encourage students to take Statistics and Methods as early in their academic career as possible and help them find ways to have a research project experience. Taken together with other findings discussed in this assessment report (e.g., Exit Interviews), it is obvious that this is the one area of our curriculum that needs to be addressed and as such, will be a focus of our efforts in the 2016-2017 academic year.

**c. Class of 2016 Post-Wells Plans**

**i. Method.** In conjunction with the Exit Interview, we ask students to indicate their post-Wells plans. From this, we compile responses into various categories, including types of employment and further education/training they will pursue.

**ii. Results.** Below are categorized data and responses. The categories are not mutually exclusive (e.g., some stated they would work while in graduate school) and some are aspirational (e.g., some students had not been admitted to graduate school or found employment when they described their plans). Thus, these numbers will not add up to 100%.

***Entering the workforce:*** 72% (23 of 32) of our seniors indicated they would be working either full or part time immediately following graduation, many in a psychology-related occupation. Named employers included: Taberg Residential Center for Girls (youth aid), Ithaca Community Childcare Center, King Ferry Vineyard (vineyard worker), Ithaca Department of Social Services Office – Special Services, City of Gardena (CA), Darien Lake Amusement Park (security officer), Mental Health Association of Fulton and Montgomery County, Wells College Athletics (assistant coach), Dicks Sporting Goods (sales), Rasa Spa (licensed massage therapist), Bay State College (MA; graduate assistant in the Office of Student Activities), Basset Hospital (nurse's aide).

***Pursuing further education, training, or experience:*** 59% (19 of 32) expressed intentions of pursuing some form of further education, training, or experience. Sixteen indicated that this would take the form of graduate or professional school following Wells. Seven of these will be pursuing masters degrees in the fall in the following programs: MS in Health Policy and Economics at Weill Cornell Medical College, MA in Educational Administration – Student Affairs and Academic and Career Advising at the University of Rochester's Warner School of Education, MA in Mental Health Counseling at Canisius College, MS (and CAS) in Professional School Counseling at The Sage Colleges, MA in Disability Support Specialist at CUNY, MA in College Student Development and Counseling at Northeastern University, and MBA at University of Bridgeport (CT). Nine others expressed interest in pursuing graduate study at a later time. Almost all of these intend on pursuing a masters degree in a psychology related field (school counseling, social work, human factors) at graduate institutions such as Alfred University, Brooklyn College, and SUNY Oswego. Beyond the masters level, there is one student who intends on pursuing a PhD in clinical psychology and another who plans on pursuing a DO in integrative medicine. The former will be gaining research experience by participating in the Pediatrics Summer Undergraduate Research Program at Case Western

Reserve University, while the latter will be taking post-baccalaureate pre-med courses to prepare for entry into a DO program. Two students will be pursuing training for certification in fields such as substance abuse counseling and fire/arson investigation. Finally, two students plan on pursuing internships at non-profit entities in order to gain experience in the non-profit sector (e.g., public administration, small farm management).

**Service:** 6% (2 of 32) will be committing to a year of service work with Americorps. One will be working at a non-profit called Willis Dady in Cedar Rapids, IA, supporting and helping homeless individuals. The other does not have her placement yet, but she is looking for a placement as a human resources or public administration professional with Americorps VISTA.

**Undecided:** 13% (4 of 32) indicated they were undecided about their post-Wells plans at the time of the Exit Interview.

**iii. Discussion.** We intend on continuing to incorporate career and graduate training conversations across the curriculum at all levels, particularly in the Introductory, Foundations, and Senior Seminar courses. We have also become more mindful of including this focus at all stages of development through academic advising conversations and across the entire curriculum, as well as enhancing coverage in the Foundations course. This was a change that was instituted in the spring 2016 offering of the course, but it would not necessarily have trickled up to this year's senior class yet. We will continue to discuss ways in which we can enhance students' exploration and preparation via internship choices, curriculum inclusion, academic advising, and classroom guest speakers. We will consult and collaborate with Alicin Welsh, coordinator of the Office of Experiential Learning and Career Services, to develop ideas for better preparing our students for their post-Wells plans. Finally, we intend on initiating a psychology page for Wells psychology alums to share what they are doing or for current students to reach out with career and internship related questions.