**Psychology Department Results 2014**

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**Psychology Department Assessment Strategies:**

There is no nationally standardized examination available for introductory level Psychology courses. The full-time instructors in the Psychology and Sociology Departments collaborated to develop common pre-post test assessments for courses offered within the program. The department developed a rotation schedule to ensure that all courses periodically collect assessment data.

Based on the 2012-13 assessment results, additional sections of Abnormal Psychology and Social Psychology were offered at the ECC-Rolla campus. Furthermore, significant updates to the course content for Abnormal Psychology were necessary as the result of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual for Mental Disorder-5th edition (DSM-V) release in June 2013. For these reasons, the pre-post test for Abnormal Psychology was redesigned for the Fall 2013 term. During the Spring 2014 term, a pre-post test was administered in Social Psychology courses.

**Abnormal Psychology Pre-Post Test Results:**

Students from 2 sections of Abnormal Psychology completed both the pre- and post test. Data from the Fall 2013 academic semester are summarized below:

**Fall 2013**

* Number of Students Tested: 52
* Pre-Test Mean Score: 36.8% correct
* Post-Test Mean Score: 68.6% correct
* Percentage Change in Score: 33.8% correct

On an average there was a 33.8% increase in student scores in both sections of Abnormal Psychology.

**Social Psychology Pre-Post Test Results:**

Students from 2 sections of Social Psychology completed both the pre- and post-test. Data from the Spring 2014 academic semester are summarized below:

**Spring 2014**

* Number of Students Tested: 58
* Pre-Test Mean Score: 47.4% correct
* Post-Test Mean Score: 71.3% correct
* Percentage Change in Score: 23.9% correct

Additionally, a qualitative writing assignment was administered to determine how students perceived course content, including the textbook and other instructional materials used, as well as the various teaching strategies employed for specific content areas within these two courses. Faculty analyzed assessment results to make improvements to coursework offered in the 2013-2014 academic year.

**Discussion and Recommendations:**

The full-time faculty in the Psychology and Sociology Departments reviewed the test results for differences in mean scores between individual sections of Abnormal Psychology and Social Psychology. There were no significant differences between student averages at the Rolla campus and the Main campus. In addition to overall mean score differences, individual item analysis was conducted to determine any relationships in correct answers between pre-test and post-test responses. Through item analysis, faculty also examined patterns of similarity in responses that were incorrect across sections of the psychology courses evaluated. The results allowed faculty to discuss content areas where emphasis may be being less consistently applied across sections of the course. The full-time instructors discussed what teaching strategies may be employed to ensure both basic and advanced concepts are covered in a more standardized manner. The qualitative information yielded valuable information about the textbooks adopted for both the abnormal psychology and social psychology courses. The abnormal psychology text did not contain complete updated information to reflect DSM-V changes. This triggered a textbook review for the course. Consequently, a new textbook with on-line case study resources was adopted for the Fall 2014 term. The Social Psychology textbook was not popular among the majority of students enrolled in both sections of the course (Rolla and Main Campus). The specific reason cited most frequently was the conversational nature of the writing. There were no chapter summaries, vocabulary terms, graphics, etc. A textbook review for this course will be conducted during the 2013-14 year keeping these comments in mind.

The proposed the addition of one section of Abnormal Psychology and one section of Social Psychology to the ECC-Rolla course offerings for the 2013-2014 school year was successful. The full time instructors ensured consistently of course content by creating a common Moodle shell for each course and utilizing similar classroom activities and assessments throughout the term. This course development model was so successful that full time faculty plan to use this model to develop Adolescent Psychology course content, assessments, etc. for Fall 2014.

Because Psychology is currently the 6th most sought after major at East Central College, the enrollment numbers easily sustained the additional sections. Department faculty noted that the increase in Psychology majors at ECC is consistent with the national data trends. According to the American Psychological Association, the major is typically among the top three choices nationally. Although the 2012 department program review results recommended the need for additional full time faculty to support growing numbers, the college has elected to ignore this particular recommendation. In fact, the recommendation was forwarded and denied in 2013 Therefore, the challenge of finding qualified adjunct faculty to cover the increasing demand for departmental coursework remains. The full time faculty provides both informal and formal meetings with the part-time, temporary staff to help ensure consistency of course content taught as well as appropriate assessments.