To: Jannette Finch, Chair, Faculty Curriculum Committee  
From: Rhonda Swickert, Associate Chair, Department of Psychology  
RE: Changes to BS degree in psychology  
Date: September 30, 2010

At the end of the spring 2010 semester the Psychology Department voted to support a new BA degree and to substantially strengthen our existing BS degree. The proposal for the BA degree, along with many of the structural changes that we made to our curriculum, has already been reviewed by your committee. Therefore, the paperwork attached to this memo just addresses our plans concerning the BS degree. As was the case with the development of our BA degree, the changes proposed were generated after much deliberation and this process was informed by data from published work regarding best practices for education in psychology, a recent national survey of undergraduate psychology curricula, and guidelines generated by the American Psychological Association’s Council on Undergraduate Education.

Recall that our proposed BA degree program will primarily serve those psychology majors who do not plan to pursue graduate studies in psychology or related professional programs. In contrast, our BS degree program is intended to serve graduate-school bound students and so our curriculum has been modified to better prepare students for this challenging endeavor. Regarding our proposed changes to the BS degree, we now ask students to take additional psychology courses that provide a more thorough exposure to statistics and research methodology. This change will serve to strengthen the BS degree so that students are better prepared to engage in psychological research, a necessary skill in our empirical discipline. Students are now provided greater flexibility when selecting from the foundational courses that they are required to take (see Core A and Core B in proposal), but they are also required to take additional courses at the foundational level as well as more upper-division coursework (Psyc 351 and above). This flexibility, coupled with the additional hour requirements, will provide a better survey of the field and will allow students to make more informed decisions regarding their future professional goals in psychology. The requirement that a number of electives hours must come from PSYC 351 and above will provide additional opportunities to develop communication skills, as these course are now designated as writing and speaking intensive. Finally, students will now be asked to take more advanced coursework in mathematics. That is, BS students must take Math 111 or Math 120, and Math 250. After careful deliberation that included consultation with the Math department’s Chair and Associate Chair, we feel that these courses will better prepare our students in psychology to succeed at both the undergraduate, as well as graduate, level.
The Mathematics department has been notified of this change and you will find their letter of support at the end of this packet of materials. Taken together, we believe all of these changes serve to strengthen the BS degree in Psychology and serve to better prepare our students to continue on in the field at the graduate level.

We do recognize that because we are increasing the number of hours for the BS degree (from 36 hrs. to 48 hrs.), we will require more from our students. However, these requirements will continue to allow students to graduate in 4 years. Moreover, these expectations are in line with existing BS program requirements within and outside the College of Charleston. For example, the BS degrees in Chemistry and Geology at the College of Charleston require 56 and 42 hours, respectively, and the BS degree in Psychology from James Madison University requires 53 credit hours.

Because of the increase in credit hours for the BS degree, we understand that there may be some questions that arise regarding the resources required to implement these changes. Before the degree changes were voted on by the Psychology department we did address potential enrollment shifts as a result of these changes. One of the factors that we considered was the percentage of our majors who go on to graduate training programs in psychology. That number ranges in any given year, but we estimate that approximately 20% of our majors on average go on to graduate training in the field. Additionally, because we are increasing the number of hours required for the major (12 additional hours), we predict that the BS degree will attract only those students who are truly committed to working in the field. Finally, we also recognize that we are substantially increasing the rigor of our math requirement for the BS degree, as students must now take courses at the level of Math 111 and higher. We believe that the more rigorous math requirement (in combination with the other requirements) will produce our anticipated 80/20 split. Further, our BS students will be well served by taking these rigorous math courses (Math 111 or Math 120, and Math 250), as they will be better prepared for advanced coursework and will be more competitive for admission to Ph.D. training programs in Psychology. This change will also serve to differentiate those psychology majors who need this more advanced training to advance in the field versus those who have occupational aspirations that lie outside the discipline of psychology. In the case of the latter, those students will be well-served by our BA degree and will have a greater selection of math courses to choose from (i.e., Math 104 and above).

So, when considering these changes we estimate that approximately 80% of our students will eventually migrate to our BA degree in Psychology, and 20% of our students will declare a BS degree in Psychology. Given these predictions, we compared the number of sections that we currently teach with how our offerings might shift given the changes that we are proposing. Because approximately 80% of our 500 or so majors (N = 400) will be taking 3 fewer hours than is required by the current 36-hour BS degree, this exactly balances out the remaining 20% of our students (N = 100) who will be taking 12 hours more to fulfill

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1 In regards to this, when we last changed our math requirement in 2004, the number of majors in psychology dropped by 24% within two years. This finding suggests that only 20-25% of our students are interested in pursuing this level of math training within the context of their Psychology major.
the requirements of the revised BS degree (see graph below). As a result, no additional course sections will need to be offered. As can be seen in the figure, if the split is even more extreme (90% BA and 10% BS), we may actually teach one or two fewer sections than we do now. If only 70% of our students migrate to our BA degree, we may teach one or two more sections than we do now. We plan to closely follow the percentages as we implement this new degree, and we are prepared to modify our degree requirements, at least for the BS degree, if we find that our predictions in terms of percentages of BA vs. BS students are not in-line with actual enrollment patterns.

![Graph: Number of courses required as compared to current teaching load]

Given our new requirements for the Bachelor of Science degree in Psychology, we believe that we will now offer one of the best undergraduate psychology training experiences in the U.S. and we plan to market ourselves in that manner. As you consider our proposal, please let me know if you have any questions or concerns as I will be happy to address them.

Best regards,

Rhonda Swickert
Rhonda Swickert, Associate Chair
Department of Psychology
953-5046; swickertr@cofc.edu
Proposal to Change Degree Requirements For the Major

NOTE: All gray text boxes must be completed (even if you just put N/A into them), otherwise the committee must consider the form incomplete.

Contact person Rhonda Swickert  Email address swickertr@cofc.edu Phone 953-5046

1. Department: Psychology

2. Degree: BS

3. Semester and year in which degree change(s) will go into effect: Fall 2011

4. Change(s) Desired (Note: if the change includes deleting courses from the inventory, a Delete Course form must also be completed for each course, the Curriculum Committee does not assume the responsibility to delete the course):

Our proposal serves to strengthen the BS degree so that students are more competitive when applying to graduate training programs in Psychology, and are better prepared for both undergraduate and graduate-level coursework. As such, we have made a number of changes to our curriculum which include:

Require students to take Psyc 250 Psychological Statistics and Research Methods (rather than Psyc 211 and Psyc 220). This course is both more integrative and challenging in regards to statistics and research methodology. As a result, students will be better prepared for the additional higher-level methodological coursework that is required in Psychology.

Require students to take Psyc 390 Research Design and Interpretation. This course provides coverage of methodological issues at an advanced level and will serve to prepare students for their graduate-level coursework in research methodology.

Allow students greater flexibility in choosing their foundational coursework (Core A and Core B), but require 9 hours of coursework in both of these core content areas. These courses provide a good survey of the foundational knowledge in the field of psychology. Taking a wide range of these courses will also better inform students as to the subdisciplines of psychology, and as such, they will be better positioned to make good decisions regarding their professional goals and objectives.

Require additional elective coursework (15 hours). The majority of this coursework (i.e., 9 hrs) will be at the advanced level. The requirement that a number of electives hours must come from PSYC 351 and above will provide additional opportunities to develop communication skills, as these course are now designated as writing and speaking intensive.

Most courses offered at the advanced level (i.e., Psyc 350 and above) will now include statistics and research methods (Psyc 211 and Psyc 220 or Psyc 250) as prerequisites. This serves to ensure that the content at these courses will taught at a more advanced level. Note: This change in the prerequisites of our advanced classes was included in our BA proposal that the Curriculum committee reviewed in September.

This form was approved by FCC on 8/17/2010 and replaces all others.
Proposal to Change Degree Requirements For the Major

Require that students complete Math 111 or Math 120, and Math 250. Data that we collected indicate that students who have taken Math 111 or Math 120 do better in our statistics courses. In addition, we have consulted with colleagues who serve on graduate school admission committees and were told that the more advanced math a student has, the more competitive they will be. We have spoken to the Math department about this change and they are supportive of our proposal (see attached letter), as they see this change will better prepare our BS students for their coursework in Psychology at both the undergraduate as well as graduate level.

Bachelor of Science in Psychology – 48 hours

☐ Psyc 103 Introduction to Psychological Science

☐ Experimental Foundations
☐ Psyc 250 Psychological Statistics and Research Methods (6 hrs)
☐ Psyc 390 Research Design and Interpretation
☐ Psyc 46x Advanced Topics with Lab

Core A: 3 out of 4
☐ Psyc 213 Conditioning and Learning, Psyc 214 Behavioral Neuroscience, Psyc 215 Cognitive Psychology, Psyc 313 Sensation and Perception (renumbered 216)

Core B: 3 out of 4
☐ Psyc 307 Abnormal Psychology, Psyc 308 Psychology of Personality, Psyc 310 Social Psychology, Psyc 311 Developmental Psychology (renumbered 221, 222, 223, 224, respectively)

☐ Exploration and Integration: 15 elective hours
☐ 9 of which are at 351 or higher level
☐ Psyc 211 – Statistics and Psyc 220 Research Methods or Psyc 250 Statistics and Research Methods now serve as additional prerequisites for classes 351 or higher (except those that are exempt)

New math requirement for BS degree
☐ Students should take Math 111 Pre-calculus Mathematics or Math 120 Introductory Calculus, and Math 250 Statistical Methods

5. Justification for Change(s):
The BS degree has been strengthened considerably and we believe that our students will be better prepared for graduate level work in the field and will be more competitive when they apply to Ph.D. level programs. To illustrate, our BS students will be asked to complete additional upper-division coursework which includes advanced research methods and statistical classes. We consulted with the Math department, as well as colleagues in the field who serve on graduate selection committees, and both sources indicated that asking students to complete higher level math coursework will serve them well as they will be more competitive at the graduate level. So, our BS students also will be asked to complete a

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Proposal to Change Degree Requirements For the Major

more advanced calculus course and a higher level statistics class.

6. Does the change include deleting or adding courses from other departments? If yes, what
department/program? Please contact the department chair/program director and request a note or
email that they are aware of the proposed change and include that note with the proposal.
We are no longer allowing our BS students to choose which math courses to enroll in (from
a specified range). Rather, we now require them to take Math 111 or Math 120, and Math
250. Attached is a letter from the Math department that indicates that they are aware of this
change and are supportive.
Proposal to Change Degree Requirements For the Major

6. Signature of Department Chair (s) or Program Director(s):

[Signature]

Date: 9/30/10

7. Signature of Dean(s) of School:

Date: ____________________________

Date: ____________________________

8. Signature of Provost:

Date: ____________________________

9. Signature of Curriculum Committee Chair:

Date: ____________________________

10. Signature of Budget Committee Chair:

Date: ____________________________

11. Signature of Academic Planning Committee Chair:

Date: ____________________________

12. Signature of Faculty Senate Secretary:

Date approved by Senate: ____________________________

Completed form should be sent by the Faculty Senate Secretary to the Registrar. After implementation, information concerning the passed course and program changes will be provided by the Registrar to all faculty and staff on campus.

This form was approved by FCC on 8/17/2010 and replaces all others.
Dear Rhonda,

The mathematics department unanimously supports the proposal from psychology to create a BA degree in psychology with the same math requirements as the current BS degree in psychology, while increasing the math requirements in the BS degree to Math 111 or Math 120, and Math 250. We strongly recommend that psychology majors be advised to take their math requirements early in their undergraduate program, since delaying increases the risk of poor performance.

Sincerely yours,

Robert Mignone, Chair
Department of Mathematics