

Graduate Program Review Appeals Committee
Informational Session: June 26, 2006

Industrial/Organizational Psychology M.A.

Program representatives: John Austin (associate professor, incoming director), Alyce Dickinson (professor, outgoing director), Wayne Fuqua (professor and chair), Thomas Kent (dean)

Program's Appeal Summary

Our appeal focuses on five central issues. Salient points in each area are summarized below.

1. The I/O Psychology program meets or exceeds all of the published GPR evaluation criteria. *We received ratings of 4 (out of 5) from the Dean and GPR team, and 5 from the department.*
The program is the premiere behaviorally oriented I/O program in the US, attracting and retaining students with GREs and GPAs above national norms. Graduates report 100% bona fide occupation and rate the overall quality of the program 4.67 out of a top rating of 5.
2. The I/O Psychology program is well aligned with WMU's strategic objectives:
 - From 2000-2005, I/O faculty authored 116 publications (with 80 students), made 139 presentations (with 135 students), and much of the research and application is in the area of occupational safety and health.
 - Economic Development is a strategic priority for WMU and the I/O program has consulted with over 80 local and national businesses to improve the performance of employees and ultimately the economic vitality of these businesses.
 - The national demand for I/O psychologists is high and increasing. Enrollment in our program has been steady despite university-wide declines.
 - The program is integrated with undergraduate training in terms of course work, research, and practicum. I/O faculty and students teach 15 undergraduate courses per year.
3. The program's size (number of graduate students) was consistently misrepresented in the Provost-level documentation sent to us on June 9, 2006. That material indicated there was 1 student in the program.
For the past three years, I/O faculty advised an average of 9 MA students and 8 Ph.D. students; and average of 4.6 students per eligible faculty member. Since 2000, the program has awarded 18 MA degrees with 0% attrition, and program faculty have graduated 11 Ph.D.s who specialized in I/O.
4. The I/O Psychology program is profitable, and closing the program will not save the university money. *In 2005-06 I/O Psychology made an estimated \$322,634 more than it cost the university.*
The Department ranks 6th university-wide in terms of revenue with the 5th lowest cost per SCH. The I/O program contributes about \$997,000 to the Department's \$7.2 million annual revenues.
5. The I/O Psychology program is not simply a track within the Behavior Analysis program. Courses and practicum training differ, preparing students for organizational interventions in contrast to working with individual clients in human service settings. The I/O degree increases the marketability of students and faculty allowing us to attract high-quality students and establish important contacts in the business community.

Committee's Questions *

1. Imagining a worst-case scenario in which you received no new resources, no new or replacement faculty hires, and no additional support for TAs, and had to self-fund 100 percent of your growth, what would your program look like three to five years from now?
We'd continue at our current level of productivity. It's possible we'd even see a small increase in our number of students.
2. What's the rationale for having an I/O master's program if you already have an I/O specialization within the Behavior Analysis Ph.D.? It almost appears as though Behavior Analysis is the parent program and I/O the orphan.
They're very different programs. Behavior Analysis graduates tend to work with autism and developmental difficulties; the IO folk tend to go into business management. Some students get a terminal master's degree and go out into industry, but it's important to remember that many of our Behavior Analysis Ph.D. students come through the master's in I/O. We'd also lose those students if we did away with the I/O M.A.
3. When employers see the I/O M.A., do they know what it entails?
Yes, an M.A. in I/O is more marketable. As we said, those students receive very different training, and they graduate with skills that the community wants.
4. Do you have the problem of external ranking being lumped in with psychology in general?
Yes, it tends to be lumped in by department.
5. You call this a "premiere" program. How is it possible to assert that in the absence of national rankings for I/O M.A.s?
We'd point to endorsements from those who refer their students to WMU from all over the country. Also, a co-editor of the leading journal in the field (*Journal of Organizational Behavior Management*) has been at WMU since 2000.
6. How many applicants do you have?
The average in the M.A. program is about 27. It's consistent. We bring in four to six students a year, which is in line with the national norm for I/O master's programs.
7. You've argued that you're very different from all other I/O programs. Where do you fit in with those programs?
Two other programs are following suit this year, but until now we've been the only behaviorally oriented program that is *called* an I/O Psychology degree. Most tend to be embedded in general psychology, etc.
8. How many I/O master's programs are there in the U.S.?
About 80.
9. What was your "in" for your graduate survey?
Six—a very small number on which to base results. Department-wide, we surveyed around 120 and got back about 62 responses from alumni who graduated in the last five years.
10. How would you sum up the basis for your appeal?
As we stated in our appeal summary, we're very productive, we graduate great students, and we make money for the University.

* Q&A text is not verbatim