

Report to the Dean & Faculty Senate: Associate of Arts, Psychology

Matthew D. Mingus
Faculty Senate Curriculum Committee Chair

The University of New Mexico – Gallup’s Associate of Arts degree program in Psychology was recently reviewed at the 14 November 2015 meeting of the Faculty Senate Curriculum Committee. In a unanimous decision, and after carefully examining the material submitted by the Division of Arts & Sciences, **the Committee decided to recommend discontinuing the Associate of Arts degree program in Psychology.**

While the committee ultimately decided to recommend discontinuing the Psychology AA degree, it should be noted that the program review document was relatively well-written and complete. The one concern committee members had was the lack of an adequate assessment plan. For more detailed information concerning the Committee’s evaluation of the submitted materials, please contact the Dean’s office and request a summary of our compiled rubric sheets regarding this program.

It is undeniable that the Psychology AA degree has done an excellent job of preparing a small cohort of students for transfer to other institutions (most notably, the “American Indians into Psychology” program at Oklahoma State University). The committee also wanted to recognize the valuable commitment and dedication of Dr. Stephen Buggie and Mr. Ralph Casebolt in maintaining this program over the past decade. However, the committee is convinced that the current Associate’s degree in Psychology is unsustainable and fails to meet the needs of the majority of our students. As it stands now, the Psychology AA is offered only within a very strict rotation of coursework – a rotation that can easily be disrupted by the loss/retirement of faculty. In order to maintain this rotation and consistently offer 200-level classes, current Psychology faculty heavily overload their survey courses (a practice that the committee both frowns upon and cannot expect from incoming faculty hires). Graduation rates are relatively low, and the committee is not convinced that students are employable with only a two-year degree in Psychology.

While the Committee believes that coursework in Psychology (including occasional 200-level coursework) is incredibly valuable to our students and our community, we also believe that the majority of liberal arts offerings at UNM-G should primarily focus on helping students complete their “core” academic requirements. The committee would prefer to see Psychology added as a “concentration” within the larger and more flexible Associate of Arts degree in Liberal Arts. Therefore, we recommend an immediate “teach out” of the program.

Matthew D. Mingus
Assistant Professor of History
Faculty Senate Curriculum Committee Chair