



Strategic Plan

Spring 2023-2028

Approved November 29, 2022
Revised April 25, 2025

Strategic Planning Process

*Approved August 14, 2000
Modified 2006, 2010, 2017*

Strategic Planning Advisory Committee

A standing departmental committee is appointed at the beginning of each academic year to guide the implementation of the Department's strategic plan. The committee's five members will be elected by the faculty (3 members) or appointed by the Department Chairperson (2 members). The committee will elect a member of the committee as chairperson. The Department Chairperson will be an *ex officio* member.

Strategic Planning Document

Every 5 years, the Strategic Planning Advisory Committee forwards a departmental strategic planning document to the Department of Psychology faculty for adoption. This document describes the Department's Vision and Mission with corresponding Strategic Actions that guide departmental policy and management. Accompanying each Strategic Action is a set of suggested evaluations to determine current departmental performance in these areas.

Strategic Actions

Each academic year, the Strategic Planning Advisory Committee will prioritize the Strategic Actions to be addressed during the academic year and seek feedback/approval from the faculty. The new Advisory committee recommends to the chair the formation of Strategic Action Committees based on the priorities adopted. Throughout the year, the Strategic Planning Advisory Committee acts as a resource for the Strategic Action committees. The Strategic Action Committees should provide a report to the faculty each semester.

Strategic Action Committees

Based on recommendations for committee structure from the Strategic Planning Advisory Committee, the chair will appoint 3-5 faculty members to serve on the Strategic Action Committees. One member of the Strategic Planning Action Committee will serve on each Strategic Action Committee. The role of each committee is to evaluate existing conditions related to strategic action(s) to determine whether discrepancies exist between the Department's stated objectives and current performance. If a disparity is found, the Strategic Action Committee will propose changes in departmental policies and processes designed to improve performance in this area. The faculty and the department chair must approve proposals.

The Role of the Faculty

The Strategic Plan is developed, maintained, and implemented by the Department of Psychology faculty. The faculty elects members to the Strategic Planning Advisory Committee and receives a report from this committee at faculty meetings. The faculty approves the Strategic Planning Document and all changes to it, approves the prioritized inventory of the strategic actions, and votes on all motions forwarded by the

What Have We Accomplished from our Last Strategic Plans?

Following each Strategic Goal (2017-2022) is a statement assessing our progress in the area, summarized by the SPAC from the [State of the Strategic Plan \(2022\)](#) document.

Goal 1. Formalize Internal Communication

2022 Assessment: The tools to formalize internal communication (e.g., newsletter) have been developed but underutilized. Lack of interest from the faculty has been the biggest challenge to the utilization of our newly developed means of intentional communication.

Goal 2. Create an External Communication Plan

2022 Assessment: Unfortunately, little progress has been made toward this goal. An alumni email list was obtained, but little else was accomplished.

Goal 3. Study the Undergraduate Psychology Degree

2022 Assessment: Our degree was examined during spring 2021 through periodic comprehensive review as well as external review. Strengths of the program were identified. Specifically, our curriculum (41 hours) allows students to develop skills and experiences that prepare them well for next steps after graduation. We have also made useful additions to the curriculum (e.g., courses on applying to graduate school) while maintaining flexibility and including the faculty in curriculum decisions.

Goal 4: Resource Allocation and Acquisition

2022 Assessment: We have been successful in obtaining additional space across campus. More specifically, space has been secured in University Hall for the Psychology Clinic, the Psychology Department, and AGE Labs. Additional space has also been secured in Edwin-Duncan for research labs, teaching space, and graduate student work space. Grants and contracts, as well as graduate assistant funding, have increased from AY 2017-2018 to AY 2021-2022. Multiple NTT/VAP lines have been converted to TT assistant professor or clinical assistant professor positions. Two new positions have been created in the department and a new TT line has been obtained.

Goal 5. Incorporate PsyD Program into Departmental Operations

2022 Assessment: The PsyD program has received positive feedback on their intention to apply for accreditation in 2020 and the application for accreditation on contingency was reviewed in April 2022. Clinical faculty remain involved in undergraduate teaching and two fourth-year students have taught independent sections of undergraduate courses in spring 2022. PsyD students are serving the broader community through the Psychology Clinic and ASC centers located in Watauga, Ashe, and Alleghany counties.

Goal 6. Develop Innovative Projects and Programs

2022 Assessment: Two new undergraduate concentrations were added to the BS degree in AY 2017-2018: Educational Studies and Sustainability. The PsyD program began in 2019-2020. The IOHRM program developed the IOHRM+MBA and IOHRM+MS Applied Data Analytics dual-degree programs, received recognition of the program by Society for Human Resource Management, and developed the Annual HR Summit.

Our Mission

The mission of the Department of Psychology is to engage in teaching, scholarship, and service, in order to promote and advance understanding of the science of psychology, its application, and its utility to our students, fellow scholars, the University, and the public.

Our Vision

- We will promote the value of the science of psychology.
- Our teaching will prepare students for their future.
- Our research will influence science and practice.
- We will be recognized for our excellence in education and scholarship.
- We will serve as leaders in the University community.
- We will make meaningful contributions to our local and professional communities.

Our Values

- We value **collaborative relationships** with multiple stakeholders: faculty and students in the Department, alumni, people across the University, and those beyond our campus.
- We value **learning** and the acquisition of knowledge and skills. We seek to instill this in our students to prepare them for their lives, their roles as citizens, and an evolving job market.
- We value **data-driven decision-making** processes.
- We value and reward **varied contributions** to the mission of the department, including teaching, mentoring, research, and service. We are active in our local and professional communities.
- We value the production and propagation of **impactful science** and the translation of basic research into applied settings.
- We respect our colleagues, students, and other stakeholders. We welcome, recognize, and celebrate strengths that arise from our differences in terms of demographics, backgrounds, identities, and opinions and strive to foster an **inclusive environment** for all.

Strategic Goals 2023-2028

1. Promote And Cultivate An Environment That Supports Faculty Well-Being Across Personal And Professional Domains

Goal A: Develop and distribute a faculty climate survey (assessing perceptions of the work environment and perceived importance of the factors) to examine indicators of workload, role stressor, and other common threats to well-being, job attitudes (e.g., satisfaction, commitment, engagement), and work-life balance. Attempt to obtain and use Department level COACHE data.

Goal B: Review and share climate survey results.

Goal C: Identify resources targeting issues identified in climate survey.

Goal D: Review departmental policies and practices to maintain and create opportunities that enable faculty to thrive.

Goal E: Consider a departmental exit survey for faculty and staff who leave.

2. Build Reputation Through Increased Engagement

Goal A: Identify our audiences (university, community, potential students, etc.) and our goals for each audience (turn heads, have true impact, etc.).

Goal B: Explore appropriate channels for reaching out to our audiences for the purpose of building reputation (e.g., social media outlets and mechanisms/procedures for using them; popular press; presence at conferences; regional/national research competitions and awards; student work/papers).

Goal C: Incentivize the activities of faculty and students developed as a result of work accomplished in Goal B.

Goal D: Identify what resources undergraduate and graduate programs need to accomplish Goals A, B, and C.

3. Stakeholders Will Treat Psychology As A Science

Goal A: Educate stakeholders that psychology is a science.

- Talk with admissions regarding the messaging used about Psychology during tours.
- Meet with CAS Dean's office to emphasize all of the reasons why Psychology is science.
- Create an explicit education outreach effort to further reinforce that Psychology is a science.
- Collect data regarding the extent to which undergraduates understand: 1) What is Science? and 2) that Psychology is a science.
- Reach out and educate Appalachian State and advisors in the College of Arts and Sciences regarding psychology as a science and provide materials (including subdisciplines) to help reinforce this message.
- Reach out to Career Development staff to educate them about the knowledge, skills, and abilities of Psychology majors.
- Engage in community outreach about how Psychology is a science (e.g., AGE lab "Buildfest").

- Create collaborative relationships with the "hard" sciences (e.g., Biology, Health Sciences).
- Consider discussing the way we talk about Psychology, including what each of us does, to present it in a way that shows how the process of science is involved.

Goal B: Change the visible symbols to reflect that Psychology is a science.

- Explore changing the name to Department of Psychological Sciences.
- Review and edit department prospective student brochure.
- Review and edit department website (including University Communication pages).
- Review and edit course labels and descriptions to include scientific terminology.
- Work on a banner design for the outside of Smith Wright Hall emphasizing that Psychology is a science.
- Investigate whether our Undergraduate CIP code is STEM. If not, consider changing it.

4. The Department Of Psychology Will Have The Resources (Space, Money, People, Time) Needed To Accomplish Its Mission.

Goal A: Increase transparency.

- Get a full accounting of our money (grants, contracts, etc.).
- Examine resources generated by us versus resources provided to us.
- Audit funds to reconcile that what we bring in is equal to what accounting says we have.

Goal B: Obtain access to our funds.

- Create entities (e.g., LLC, not-for-profit) to generate, hold, and manage external funds.

Goal C: Generate additional resources and/or mechanisms to more efficiently use our resources.

- Examine capacity for class sizes.
- Communicate that our limited teaching resources (people) will/may limit our ability to offer seats/sections to meet need.
- Examine options to help students develop their skills in psychology and engage in revenue generating activities (e.g., Psychology Clinic).
- Explore revenue-generated funding (e.g., summer) for adjuncts and graduate students to teach.
- Identify additional revenue streams (e.g., conferences, institutes, workshops, continuing education).
- Examine entrance criteria to the major (e.g., minimum GPAs, statistics or 3100 grades). Consider ways that these criteria might improve the quality of majors and allow the department to more optimally use faculty resources.
- Develop guidance for spending operating funds, particularly faculty travel funds.

5. Ensure the departmental climate is welcoming to all students, faculty and staff.

Goal A: Evaluate the current climate of the department.

Goal B: Use the climate evaluation data to guide the development of initiatives.

Goal C: Maintain a welcoming environment for personnel and students.

SPAC Recommendations

The SPAC will recommend the creation of Strategic Action Committees to pursue specific strategic goals each year.

For each goal, the Strategic Action Committee will be charged with

- a. developing an action plan, with timelines;
- b. indicating responsible parties for executing each step in the action plan;
- c. identifying measurable outcomes that will provide evidence of success; and
- d. measuring the outcome indicators.

The SPAC notes that each goal will likely require multi-year efforts. Progress toward each Strategic Goal will be evaluated annually by the SPAC.

It is the SPAC's responsibility to guide the implementation of the Department's Strategic Plan. Thus, the SPAC will monitor the progress of Strategic Action Committees' work.

Finally, the Committee cautions the Department that the Strategic Plan is a living document that should be used for departmental decisions *and* that should be continuously evaluated as the Department and the environment change.