

1998-1999 APA SURVEY OF UNDERGRADUATE  
DEPARTMENTS OF PSYCHOLOGY

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## Background and Introduction

In response to an ongoing interest by the American Psychological Association's (APA) Office of Ethnic Minority Affairs (OEMA) and increased requests for undergraduate application and enrollment data, the APA Research Office conducted the *1998-1999 APA Survey of Undergraduate Departments of Psychology*. The survey's purpose was four-fold. The first three sections examined institutional characteristics, departmental characteristics, and faculty characteristics, respectively. The fourth section, student characteristics, was created to examine the implications of recent declines in federal and state support of affirmative action programs in conjunction with a decline in the enrollment of ethnic minority students in psychology graduate programs. This section, specifically, looked at enrollment and graduation rates of undergraduate students of color in psychology in an effort to obtain trend information regarding enrollment in graduate psychology programs.

The survey was mailed to 2,724 undergraduate departments of psychology in Spring, 1999. Of those departments, 1,054 were in two-year institutions, 366 were in four-year institutions with any graduate programs, and 1,304 were in four-year institutions without any graduate programs<sup>1</sup>. A reminder postcard was sent to all departments four weeks after the original survey was mailed. Once data collection was completed, surveys were edited for incorrect and incomplete information and responding departments were contacted for clarification. Overall, 870 departments responded to the survey. Some departments did not provide useable surveys because they offered only graduate degrees, did not offer undergraduate

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<sup>1</sup> All four-year institutions included in this survey have *undergraduate* psychology programs, however, they may have *any* type of *graduate* program and are not limited to only psychology. Therefore, throughout the report, when discussing four-year institutions with or without graduate programs, the graduate programs may be of any type (e.g., mathematics, biology, chemistry, economics, etc.).

psychology degrees, or were slated to be closed. Once these departments were excluded, and duplicate and unidentifiable surveys were accounted for, there were 795 useable surveys yielding an overall response rate of 30%.

The current report summarizes the results of the data collected during this effort. All data are reported in the aggregate and cannot be used to identify specific universities, colleges, schools, departments, or individuals.

### Caveats

Readers should be aware of the possible sources of error when using the information provided in this report. The analyses are based on a subset of departments, those responding to the survey, rather than all existing psychology departments. It is noteworthy that these data are in line with both previous data collection efforts conducted by APA, as well as the results of national surveys. However, these data should not be used as the sole source for decision making and the reader is urged to locate other data sources to bolster any discussions or applications. Finally, data should be interpreted with caution when N is small.

## Institutional Characteristics

According to Table 1, it appears that responding departments were represented equally across public and private institutions, 52% and 48%, respectively. However, striking differences were found when the type of institution was taken into consideration. While four-year institutions with graduate programs were almost equally distributed across public and private settings, 51% and 49%, respectively, 85% of four-year institutions without graduate programs were privately controlled.

Most four-year institutions **without** graduate programs described themselves as liberal arts colleges (80%), while 71% of four-year institutions **with** a graduate program described themselves as universities. Almost all of the two-year schools identified themselves as public institutions (92%) and, as expected, 91% classified themselves as a community or junior college. Of those departments responding to the survey, the largest single percentage were in universities (38%) followed by liberal arts colleges (34%) and community/junior colleges (22%). The remaining 7% were found in denominational schools or other types of institutions such as technical schools or satellite campuses.

Degrees by institution. As previously mentioned, the majority of departments in four-year institutions without graduate programs were liberal arts colleges. Not surprisingly then, 45% of liberal arts colleges reported offering only baccalaureate degrees while 35% offered both baccalaureate and graduate degrees (see Table 2A). The majority of universities awarded both baccalaureate degrees and graduate degrees and almost all community and junior colleges granted only associate degrees.

Respondents also indicated the degree levels that their institution awarded in psychology. As reported in Table 2B, baccalaureate degrees in psychology were primarily awarded by

universities (50%) and liberal arts colleges (47%). Master's degrees were predominantly granted by universities (86%), and to a lesser extent, liberal arts colleges (12%). Likewise, institutions offering doctoral degrees were mostly classified as universities (95%).

Enrollment. Overall full-time undergraduate enrollment was reported to be approximately 3.3 million (see Table 3). This number is based on data reported by *only* 30% of all departments of psychology. Therefore, the *actual* overall full-time enrollment figure is likely to be much higher.

Since 1992-1993, the distribution of undergraduate enrollment in public and private institutions has remained virtually unchanged (Cooney & Griffith, 1994). The present data indicated that 81% of all undergraduate enrollees attended public institutions while only 19% of students were enrolled in privately controlled schools. Similarly, the *Digest of Education Statistics-1998* reported that the bulk of undergraduate students (81%) were enrolled in public institutions in both 1995 and 1996. In addition, current survey results indicate more than half of all students enrolled in four-year public institutions with graduate programs while only 13% of all students enrolled in four-year private institutions with graduate programs. Surprisingly, students enrolled in two-year public institutions represented 19% of all enrollees. Four-year institutions without graduate programs accounted for a combined total of only 9% of all enrollees with 3% in public institutions and 6% in private institutions. Sixty-one percent of students were found in four-year public institutions followed by four-year private institutions (19%) and two-year public institutions (19%). In general, four-year schools with graduate programs have undergone a 14% increase in enrollment since 1992-1993, while two-year schools have experienced a 30% decrease (Cooney & Griffith, 1994). This change could be attributed to the increase in availability of financial aid including scholarships, work-study programs, and federal loans and grants.

According to current survey results, public institutions with and without graduate programs had the highest median enrollments, 8,525 and 3,150, respectively. Specifically, public institutions with graduate programs reported a median enrollment five times that of their private counterparts, and public institutions without graduate programs enrolled almost three times as many as similar private institutions. The U.S. Department of Education (1998) also found that most public institutions have higher total enrollments compared to private institutions and particularly that the majority of public institutions with graduate programs reported overall enrollments over 10,000.

#### Departmental Characteristics

The majority of departments (65%) were Departments of Psychology (see Table 4). Four-year schools were most likely to have an actual "Department of Psychology", while psychology programs in two-year schools were more likely to have some other name or fall under the auspices of another department. Departments not specifically named "Department of Psychology" were most often labeled "Department of Social Science" or "Department of Behavioral Science."

Eighty-eight percent of all departments operated on a semester system. About 8% of departments worked on a quarter system while the remaining 4% used either a trimester or other type of academic schedule.

Enrollees and Graduates. Similar to the increase in enrollments for four-year institutions, these institutions also saw an increase in psychology majors. In 1992-1993, over three fourths of psychology majors were enrolled in four-year institutions while the remainder were enrolled in two-year or other types of institutions (Cooney & Griffith, 1994). Since that time, enrollment in

four-year institutions has increased 23% while two-year schools have undergone a 79% decrease in enrollment. According to Table 5, 96% of all full-time undergraduate psychology majors enrolled in four-year institutions while the remaining 4% enrolled in either two-year or some other type of school.

Overall, undergraduate psychology departments enrolled a median of 110 psychology majors per department. As expected, departments of psychology in public institutions had more psychology majors than departments in private institutions by a ratio of almost three to one. Also, similar to previous undergraduate enrollment data, four-year public institutions reported having 59% more psychology majors than four-year private institutions. The distribution of psychology baccalaureate recipients from public and private institutions has remained unchanged over the past seven years (71% and 29%, respectively) (Cooney & Griffith, 1994).

Minority graduates of undergraduate psychology departments represented 14% of all baccalaureate recipients (see Table 7), which is an 18% increase from 1992-1993 (Cooney & Griffith, 1994). Public institutions awarded more degrees to minorities than did private institutions by a ratio of almost four to one. Minority graduates represented slightly smaller percentages of degree recipients from two-year institutions. Specifically, minorities comprised 10% of all graduates from two-year institutions whereas minorities made up 15% of graduates from four-year institutions.

Women accounted for more than half of all undergraduate psychology degree recipients (see Table 8). Results indicated that 53% of all degree recipients in public institutions were women while women made up 60% of degree recipients in private institutions. Sixty-five percent of all female graduates were from four-year public institutions while 31% were from four-year private institutions.

## Faculty Characteristics

Faculty Appointments. The distribution of total faculty appointments in responding departments is directly related to the size of student enrollments. Specifically, public institutions, having the largest overall enrollment and the largest enrollments in departments of psychology, also had the highest total number of psychology faculty (see Table 9A). Likewise, public institutions also reported almost double the average full-time-equivalent (FTE) appointments as private institutions.

The majority of faculty who taught both undergraduate and graduate psychology courses had appointments in public institutions (56%) (Table 9B). These results are in line with previously stated data in this report in which most public institutions were designated as universities that had both undergraduate and graduate programs. The majority of faculty employed by privately controlled institutions taught only undergraduate courses (62%) while the remainder taught either a combination of graduate and undergraduate courses (32%) or only graduate courses (7%).

According to Table 10A, most full-time and part-time faculty were employed in four-year institutions (88% and 71%, respectively). In addition, most faculty employed by four-year schools had full-time appointments (66%) while two-year institutions employed mainly part-time faculty (62%). Similar to the results found in Table 9A, Table 10B shows that 64% of faculty in four-year schools with graduate programs taught both graduate and undergraduate courses. Again, as a result of employing more faculty than other institutions, four-year institutions with graduate programs had, on average, more than twice as many FTE appointments than four-year

institutions without graduate programs and almost four times as many FTE appointments as two-year schools.

Demographic and employment characteristics. According to Table 11A, female faculty members accounted for approximately the same percentage of all faculty across both public and private institutions. Specifically, women represented 40% of faculty in public institutions and 46% of faculty in private institutions. A greater disparity between men and women in public and private institutions can be seen when examining full-time faculty (see Table 11B). Men outnumbered women by a ratio of almost two to one in publicly controlled schools. Likewise, there were 29% more men than women employed as full-time faculty in private institutions. Among part-time faculty, however, women were much more visible (see Table 11C). According to Table 12A, male faculty outnumbered female faculty in four-year institutions by 32%; however, women constituted the majority in two-year institutions (54%). A closer examination of two-year schools found that women were predominantly employed as part-time faculty (59%) rather than full-time faculty (see Table 12B and 12C). As seen in Table 12B, the largest gender discrepancy for faculty was found for full-time employment in four-year institutions with graduate programs. Overall, 44% more male faculty were employed full time than female faculty. In contrast, part-time employment in four-year schools with graduate programs is almost equal across genders.

In general, according to Table 11A, minority faculty represented approximately 10% of all faculty. This percentage only varies by 1% or 2% for full- and part-time faculty (see Tables 11B and 11C). Overall, African American/Black faculty represented 5% of all faculty, followed by Hispanic (2%), and Asian/Pacific Islander (2%). American Indian/Alaskan Native and other racial/ethnic backgrounds constituted the remaining 1%. Similar distributions were found for

four-year and two-year institutions (see Table 12A). However, minorities represented slightly higher percentages of faculty in part-time positions when compared to full-time faculty in all types of public and private institutions (see Tables 11C and 12C).

Regardless of institutional control, the largest single percentage of faculty in psychology departments were full professors (see Tables 11A, 11B, and 11C). Full professors accounted for 34% of all faculty and 45% of full-time faculty across all institutions. When compared to similar data in 1992-1993, there has been an increase of 10% for all faculty and a 5% increase for full-time faculty. Only 9% of part-time faculty were reported as full professors. The majority of part-time faculty were employed as lecturers (72%), in contrast to only 4% of full-time faculty who were employed as lecturers.

Faculty distribution in two-year and four-year institutions showed that 35% of faculty in four-year schools and 26% in two-year schools were full professors (see Table 12A). Associate and assistant professors followed full professors, representing about one fourth each of faculty in four-year institutions. Lecturers represented a higher percentage of faculty in two-year institutions (56%) than four-year institutions (20%).

Most full-time faculty were employed by four-year institutions (91%) (see Table 12B). Of those full-time faculty in four-year institutions, 45% were full professors, 28% were associate professors, 25% were assistant professors, and the remaining 2% were lecturers. Only 8% of all full-time faculty were employed by two-year institutions. According to Table 12C, two-year schools employed more part-time than full-time faculty with the majority of part-time faculty employed as lecturers. Specifically, more than half of all faculty in two-year schools were lecturers and 91% of all lecturers were employed part-time. In contrast, only 18% of all faculty in four-year institutions held the rank of lecturer and, of those, 2% were employed full-time.

The most common degree held by all faculty in both public and private institutions was the PhD, according to Table 13. The PhD was also the degree mainly held by full-time faculty (91%), as well as part-time faculty (50%). Faculty with master's degrees accounted for most of the remaining half of part-time faculty (42%). The remaining degrees (PsyD, EdD, bachelor's degrees, and other degrees) were held by less than 3% of faculty in full-time positions and 7% of faculty in part-time positions.

As illustrated in Table 14, faculty holding PhDs were most commonly employed in four-year institutions. However, two-year institutions employed more faculty who held a master's degree than a doctoral degree. Specifically, 51% of full-time faculty and almost three quarters of part-time faculty in two-year institutions held a master's degree.

Table 15 shows the distribution of full-time undergraduate psychology faculty in public and private institutions by major subfield. Overall, about one fifth of full-time faculty were in clinical psychology, making it the most common subfield, followed by social psychology and developmental psychology each comprising 12% of the full-time faculty. Similar results were found for faculty in four-year institutions where clinical, social, and developmental psychology remained the most common subfields (see Table 16). However, when comparing health service provider (HSP) subfields and non-HSP subfields, a striking difference emerged. Although clinical psychology is the most common subfield, the other HSP subfields (counseling and school psychology) only accounted for an additional 8% of all full-time faculty. The remaining 71% of full-time faculty have their degrees in the non-HSP subfields. Therefore, although clinical psychology accounts for the single highest percentage of faculty degrees, the overall majority of faculty held their degrees in non-HSP subfields.

## Student Characteristics

Chairs were asked for demographic information on students enrolled in their departments. According to Table 17, women comprised the preponderance of undergraduate psychology majors overall (70%) and in both public (69%) and private institutions (71%). These results are similar to those found in the *Digest of Education Statistics-1998* where women accounted for almost three fourths of undergraduate students receiving a degree in psychology. Women also outnumbered men by more than 2:1 in four-year institutions with graduate programs and two-year institutions and almost 3:1 in four-year institutions without graduate programs (see Table 18).

Minorities accounted for approximately 22% of undergraduate psychology majors in both public and private institutions (see Table 17). African American/Black students comprised the largest single percentage of minorities in both types of institutions, followed by Hispanic, Asian/Pacific Islander, American Indian/Alaskan Native, and other racial/ethnic backgrounds. Two-year institutions enrolled the highest percentage of minority students (33%), followed by four-year institutions with graduate programs (26%) and four-year institutions without graduate programs (15%) (see Table 18). Compared to 1995-96, these results show a 5% increase in the number of minority students entering and completing undergraduate degrees in the field of psychology (U.S. Department of Education, 1998).

In 1992, full-time undergraduate enrollments accounted for 66% of all students (Cooney & Griffith, 1994). Since that time, full-time enrollments have increased by 21%. Specifically, full-time students represented 80% of undergraduates in public institutions and 92% of undergraduates in private institutions (see Table 17). In addition, Table 18 shows that full-time students make up 85% of all undergraduates enrolled in four-year institutions; a 6% increase

since 1992. Two-year institutions also had more full-time than part-time enrollments, however, the difference was less pronounced than four-year institutions. Full-time students represented 58% of enrollments in two-year institutions while the remaining 42% were enrolled part-time. Plans after graduation. According to Figure 1, immediate full-time employment was the most common goal for students in both public and private institutions after undergraduate graduation. A furthered education was the next most popular response with 22% of students from public institutions and 9% of students in private institutions pursuing a graduate education in psychology.

Figure 2 also shows that full-time employment was the most common future plan for students from all institution types. The percentage of students from four-year institutions with and without graduate program(s) going on for a graduate education was in line with expectations. Consistent with previous results that most two-year institutions award only associate degrees it is logical that graduates from two-year institutions would move on to something other than graduate school. In fact, results indicated that an average of 14% of graduates from two-year institutions transferred to a four-year institution to pursue completion of a bachelor's degree.

In general, however, response to this question was low and most department chairs responded that this information was either not readily available or was simply not collected. Therefore, these results should be viewed with caution.

## References

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