I. **Degree:** Master of Science in Applied Psychology Program

**Date of Review:** January, 2009

**Program Director:** Dr. Kristina Gorbatenko-Roth

**PRC Consultant(s):** Dr. Alexander Basyrov and Dr. Loretta Thielman

**Purpose of the Review:** To assess the quality of the M.S. in Applied Psychology program as part of the continual seven-year cycle of each UW-Stout degree program, as done by the Planning and Review Committee.

**Committee Findings:** The PRC recommends continuation of this program through the next scheduled review in 2015 and that the recommendations made by the committee be implemented. [Please note that some of the issues of concern have already been addressed as found in the Dean’s Response to this report.

II. **Abstract:** The M.S. in Applied Psychology program was initiated in 1996. It is a two year program offering a choice of three concentration areas: Program Evaluation, Industrial/Organizational Psychology and Health Psychology. Program strengths identified include: an emphasis on hands-on learning through numerous applied ‘real world’ classroom projects in the curriculum, the opportunity for students to have dual enrollment in two of the three concentrations (which can be completed within the two year period), a strong emphasis on student research and developing strong problem-solving skills, high ratings of the program by alumni together with high employer performance ratings of the program alumni.

Opportunities for program enrichment include: need for additional faculty, for additional student funding opportunities, for revising admission requirements, for increasing enrollment, for increased computer access and support, for continued efforts in curriculum development and revision and for improved communication between students and the Program Director.

III. **Process Followed for Current Review:**

The PRC Chair met with the Dean, Program Director and Chair of the primary department to discuss the review process. The PRC consultants also met with the Program Director to review the procedures and offer assistance. Data regarding several aspects of the program were collected from students, key instructors within and outside the department, program committee members and program graduates through surveys. The data were analyzed and returned to the Program Directors and PRC members. The Program Director then completed the self-study report and presented the report to the PRC. The consultants then wrote the recommendation report. This report was discussed and approved by the PRC and forwarded to the Dean, Department Chair, and the Program Director for their responses. The PRC forwarded the report to the Faculty Senate which approved the committee’s findings.
IV. Previous Review 2000-01:

The previous PRC review of the M.S. in Applied Psychology program was conducted during academic year 2000-01. That report was written by Sue Foxwell and Mary Hopkins-Best. Note that the program review process at that time did not make specific recommendations for the Dean, Department Chair, and Program Director, and so did not require individual responses. The committee’s recommendations as well as the available responses are submitted below.

Previous Recommendations for the Program

1. The program director and the key instructors, with support from the department chair and the dean, should develop a plan, including a timeline to continue to ensure that all courses needed for the three concentrations are available.

Response from Dean: The dean will meet with the department chair to discuss future course needs that will enable the effective growth and continuation of the program. The reality of providing additional FTE to support essential courses in the three concentration areas may be left to the department as it reviews its overall priorities among all its offerings. At this point, every approved course in each concentration is scheduled with existing staff.

2008-09 Summation of Consultants: Per 02/08/2001 dean's response and per 11/24/2008 self-study by Program Director, all courses have been approved and made available. When a course could not be offered due to low enrollment, the content of the course was delivered through independent study or the course was substituted by another offering.

Per 11/24/2008 self-study by Program Director, all required Program Evaluation courses are currently offered with healthy enrollment levels (mainly due to the dual-concentration status of most students). For the Health Psychology concentration, Psychoeducational Intervention was not always offered in the past due to sporadic enrollment, but the class might be offered for the Fall 2009.

2. The program director and the department chair should work together to develop a class schedule that best meets the learning needs of the students; taking into consideration the range of time of scheduled classes during a day and the needs of the non-traditional student.

Response from Dean: The dean will meet with the program director and chair to consider prospects for adjusting schedules to meet needs of non-traditional students. Student preferred class schedule needs might require the department to survey all students enrolled in the program to best determine the most optimal schedule for courses.

2008-09 Summation of Consultants: Per 11/24/2008 self-study by Program Director, there is no need for non-traditional formats since the program is currently offered for traditional on-campus based students. In the Fall 2008 the schedules considerate of student scheduling needs were established through collaboration of the current MSAP Program Director and the new Psychology Department Chair.

3. The program director should work with appropriate department chairs to assure the availability of applied statistics preparation to meet the needs of the Applied Psychology students.
Response from Dean: The MSAP Program Director, Dr. Richard Tafalla, will discuss with department chairs in math, statistics, and psychology the possibility of developing a graduate statistics course to be included in the MSAP major.

2008-09 Summation of Consultants: Per 11/24/2008 self-study by Program Director, in the initial years of the review period MSAP faculty identified the statistical content needed by students, and added the content to their courses. Recent efforts include the addition of MSAP specific section to Applied Research Design course. The self-study does not mention if any discussion with Chairs in Mathematics, Statistics and Psychology about the possibility of developing a Statistics course for MSAP major took place.

4. The program director, the department chair and the dean should work together to obtain additional staffing for the program through hiring an additional faculty member in the area of industrial organization.

Response from Department Chair: With regard to Reference Item 4, I assume the concern is about adequate staffing in the area of Industrial/Organizational Psychology within the MSAP. The reassignment of an I/O faculty that is referred to in the letter was a temporary personnel adjustment based on some performance issues for that faculty member. That reassignment did not affect course availability to students, as temporary hires were made to meet teaching needs. Those temporary hires were qualified by virtue of professional experience, and their teaching evaluations were very good.

In addition, with three concentrations in the MSAP, we implemented the program with expert faculty in each concentration. The I/O concentration has enjoyed the largest enrollments. Consequently, the department is currently nearing completion of a national search for a probationary faculty appointment with a doctorate in I/O Psychology. This search is based on department profiling to address staffing in the I/O concentration of the MSAP.

Response from Dean: There is currently a search underway for a faculty position in the area of industrial organization. This search, however, is for a replacement of a retired position. In developing a plan to address the concern referenced in item 6 below, a faculty member with an IO background was reassigned. In order to provide an “additional position,” it would most likely occur only if a replacement of an undergraduate teaching position were to take place and that position would then be filled with the IO credentialed hire. Additional FTE resources are not probable for the program in the near future.

2008-09 Summation of Consultants: Per 11/24/2008 self-study by Program Director a new Industrial/Organizational Psychology tenure track faculty was hired in 2001, and consequently resigned in 2006 by accepting a position with substantially better salary at another university. There have been two failed searches for a replacement hire since then. The department is currently searching for two MSAP dedicated faculty: (1) in Industrial/Organizational Psychology; and (2) a health focused Clinical/Counseling Psychologist or a clinically focused applied Health Psychologist.

5. The program director, along with key faculty, the department chair, and the dean, should continue to explore the development of an Applied Psychology Research Institute, focused on the three program concentrations. This initiative will build stronger relationships with the business/industry component, provide funding for internships and projects, and provide another arena for students to experience real-life problems like they will experience as they are employed in applied psychology related positions upon graduation.
Response from Dean: The need to establish an Applied Psychology Research Center/Institute is apparent. The dean will work closely with the chair to support the process of establishing this operation. The program director and chair are working closely with Stout Solutions and submitting a proposal for this institute. Initial funding will likely come from these grants and research contracts in the state and region. The dean will plan to include sufficient space in new or remodeled facility plans for this operation to develop and grow.

2008-09 Summation of Consultants: The center was opened in October, 2007 as a result of collaboration between MSAP faculty and Dr. Meridith Wentz.

6. The students’ faculty-student relationship concern needs to be further investigated. Focus group meetings or additional surveying of all students in the program could be done. An appointee of the dean or department chair and the program director should be involved in designing this process.

Response from Department Chair: With regard to Reference Item 6, some concern is expressed about faculty-student relationships in the MSAP. As department chair, I have been aware of only one faculty member who was perceived by students in the program to be of concern. This faculty member was reassigned temporarily so that he would teach no courses within the MSAP. Over the past one year that faculty member has been reintegrated into the MSAP with partial MSAP assignments, without student complaints to me. This action should be considered an appropriate response to student expressions of concern.

In our last assessment of MSAP students we evaluated students’ perceptions of faculty in the program and received satisfactory feedback. Those results follow:

Faculty have been available to me outside of class.
- Neutral (1)  Agree (3)  Strongly Agree (4)

Faculty have followed through with their commitments to me.
- Neutral (3)  Agree (3)  Strongly Agree (2)

Faculty have supported my personal progress in the program.
- Strongly Disagree (1)  Neutral (1)  Agree (4)  Strongly Agree (2)

Faculty have inspired me to pursue my career.
- Strongly Disagree (1)  Neutral (3)  Agree (2)  Strongly Agree (2)

There are some narrative comments supplied by students, possibly provided by only one student, which reflects on student-faculty relationships. However, the quantitative data are most reflective of the group of students, and I do not believe suggest any concerns out of the ordinary.

Response from Dean: This faculty-student concern has, for the most part, been addressed through the reassignment of the faculty person in question. His contact with graduate students has been minimized.

2008-09 Summation of Consultants: As follows from the responses, the issue was resolved in 2001.
V. **Program Review:**

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<tr>
<th>Program Strengths</th>
<th>Source</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. Applied focus generally; applied projects integrated into coursework</td>
<td>Advisory Committee, Key Instructors, Students and Program Director</td>
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<td>2. Availability of graduate assistantships</td>
<td>Advisory Committee, Key Instructors, Students and Program Director</td>
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<td>3. Quality of instruction and professional expertise</td>
<td>Advisory Committee, Key Instructors, Students and Program Director</td>
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<td>4. MSAP graduates have higher program satisfaction relative to other UW-Stout programs</td>
<td>Program Director</td>
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<td>5. High success in job placement for graduates in the field</td>
<td>Program Director</td>
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<td>6. Stable enrollments</td>
<td>Program Director</td>
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<td>7. Effective use of student cohorts, research training and communication skills</td>
<td>Advisory Committee, Key Instructors, Students and Program Director</td>
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<td>8. One of only four programs in the country which provides the breadth of training in Applied Social Science research with depth in a concentration area at the masters’ level</td>
<td>Program Director</td>
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<th>Issues of Concern</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. Recent staffing problems: need to successfully hire faculty for open positions due to several failed searches; retention of current faculty</td>
<td>Program Director, Students, Advisory Committee</td>
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<td>2. Need for expanded student funding opportunities in the form of additional graduate assistantships; the ability to offer an assistantship to a student at the time of acceptance (which is standard for most graduate programs) into the program is needed</td>
<td>Students, Program Director, Advisory Committee</td>
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<td>3. Need for review and revision of admission requirements for ensuring quality candidates and for recruiting students</td>
<td>Program Director, Students</td>
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<td>4. Need for increased computer/statistical software access, training, and technical support</td>
<td>Program Director, Students, Key Instructors</td>
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<td>5. Need to continue efforts in curriculum development and revision, particularly more courses in Statistics, and Health Psychology</td>
<td>Students, Program Director, Key Instructors</td>
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<td>6. Need for improved communication between students and the Program Director</td>
<td>Students</td>
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<td>7. Need for increased availability of the Program Director for the students</td>
<td>Students</td>
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**Recommendations for the Program Director:**

1. Work with the Department Chair and Dean to successfully fill vacant faculty positions
2. Work with the Dean to try to find additional funds for more graduate assistantships
3. Work with the Dean and Advisory Committee to review and revise the admission requirements
4. Work with the Dean and the Advisory Committee on student and faculty recruitment strategies
5. Work to improve student access to computers, statistical software and technical support, and to provide training as needed.
6. Work with the Chairs of the Psychology and Math., Stat., and C.S. Departments to develop and/or revise courses in Statistical Analysis and Health Psychology
7. Work to clarify program requirements and expectations to the students
8. Work on increasing your availability to the students

**Recommendations for the Chair of the Psychology Department:**

1. Work with the Program Director and the Dean in successfully filling vacant faculty positions
2. Work with the Program Director on the development and revision of the needed courses.

**Recommendations for the Dean of the College of Education, Health and Human Sciences:**

1. Work with the Program Director and the Chair to successfully fill vacant faculty positions
2. Work with the Program Director to find additional funds for graduate assistantships
3. Work with the Program Director and Advisory Committee to review and revise the admission requirements to the program
4. Work with the Program Director and Advisory Committee on student and faculty recruitment strategies

**NOTE:**

Some of the issues of concern listed above were addressed/clarified by the Dean’s response