



# Northern Illinois University

**2022 Program Review Report**

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August 2022

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## Executive Summary

Per the [Illinois Board of Higher Education \(IBHE\) 23 Illinois Administrative Code 1050.50](#) Review of Existing Units of Instruction, Research and Public Service, academic programs and research and/or public service centers must be reviewed on an eight-year cycle with findings from these reviews reported in a standardized format to the IBHE each year. NIU has aligned disciplinary accreditation cycles with program review, leveraging external accreditation feedback for program review. Reviews are conducted locally at the college level (or division level when the program or center is not housed within a college). Results from the reviews are reported annually to the Executive Vice President and Provost (EVPP), reviewed by the Academic Planning Council, and presented to the Board of Trustees.

This report provides findings for eighteen programs that were reviewed in the 2021-2022 academic year. Directions for completing the report along with a template were forwarded to colleges at the beginning of the spring semester. Each college/unit level report includes the following four areas: 1) Major changes in the degree program; 2) Major findings and recommendations from the current review; 3) Actions taken since the last review; and 4) Actions taken as a result of this review.

In summary, all eighteen programs and centers were found to be in good standing including: two programs from the College of Business; two programs from the College of Health and Human Sciences; ten programs from the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences; two centers reviewed by the Division of Outreach, Engagement and Regional Development (OERD); and two centers reviewed by the Division of Research and Innovation Partnerships (RIPS).

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## College of Business

### M.S. in Data Analytics (52.1301)

#### Major Findings and Recommendations:

- Major changes in the program: The Master of Science (M.S.) program in Data Analytics (MSDA) was launched in January 2019 and is going through its first review. The program provides students the advanced knowledge and skills to analyze organizational data. The use of analytics is accelerating due to technological advancements, exponential growth in data, and increasingly sophisticated application by organizations. MSDA is an online program that prepares students for data-driven leadership and problem solving. Graduates of the MSDA program will be data-driven thinkers to approach business decision making more rigorously and confidently, while effectively communicating data findings, interpreting complex data, and guiding their organizations in making more informed and actionable strategic decisions. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics sees strong growth in the data science and analytics field and predicts the number of jobs will increase by about 28% through 2026. To give that 28% a number, that is roughly 11.5 million new analytics jobs in the field.
- Major findings and recommendations: Within three years of the program launching, enrollment in the M.S. in Data Analytics program (MSDA) has exceeded the growth predictions with over 150 students in fall 2021. The retention rate in the MSDA program has been approximately 87% for the past three years. The percentage of female students has ranged from 37% to 40% from 2019 to 2022. The program is committed to student diversity, and it appears that the program is successful in recruiting and retaining female students. Because the MSDA program is a somewhat unique degree (combination of business, technology, and data) that does not map directly to one or two occupations, it is difficult to identify a number of job openings nationwide. However, the extremely high growth rates predicted for the data analytics area taken up by program graduates signal a strong employment market. Faculty research was ranked number 81 in the University of Texas Dallas Top 100 Business School Research Rankings for Productivity in 2020. The program would like to cap 200 students in the MSDA program to ensure sustainability.
- Actions taken since the last review: This is the first MSDA program review.
- Actions taken as a result of this review: The program will remove the joint Data Analytics certification with SAS. Since market demand of using SAS in data analytics is not strong, the program will reduce teaching on SAS programming and SAS Enterprise

Miner. The program will enhance the Python programming component in the MSDA curriculum and work with the college to offer a certificate of Artificial Intelligence Application for the MSDA students. The program will work with the Wiley Education team to attract qualified students to study in the program and improve the student retention rate. The program will request an additional faculty position to help teach the needed additional course sections due to the program's high enrollment.

#### Outcome

- Decision:

x Program in good standing (review in three years, i.e. 2024-2025 to align with AACSB, its disciplinary accreditor).

Explanation: The MSDA program enrollment is strong. The program is very competitive in terms of tuition and cost-per-credit compared to similar programs from other institutions in the Data Analytics market.

#### **M.S. in Digital Marketing (52.1499)**

##### Major Findings and Recommendations:

- Major changes in the program: The Master of Science (M.S.) in Digital Marketing (MSDM) program provides advanced study in marketing and digital marketing to prepare students for the challenges of working in the digital marketing field. The program's online format and professional orientation provides an opportunity for potential graduate students to obtain the advanced degree without the need to commit to either a full-time or location-based program. The program is designed to meet the needs of both full-time students and working professionals who desire to earn the degree while continuing to work. Graduates of the MSDM program are equipped with a set of marketable skills along with the business acumen needed to identify, engage, and continue meaningful relationships with both business customers and consumers. Job postings in the Digital Marketing fields have increased significantly from 2012 to 2019 (311,000 in 2019). Northern Illinois University (NIU) is in a high state demand relative to the population and its MSDM program meets this opportunity.
- Major findings and recommendations: Master's level marketing is a saturated market with about 2,300 graduates in 2020, an average program size of 26 students, with 38% of the programs offered online. Most programs compete on cost and speed as more schools compete for fewer students. The ten largest programs claim 45% of the students. Within this market the demand for digital skills is increasing rapidly. In the last 12 months the number of job postings in this area totaled 363,000. Marketing Research analysts and specialists have the best opportunity to scale compared to Marketing managers. With nearly 100 students enrolled, the M.S. in Digital Marketing program from NIU is in line with this positive trend. NIU's students are primarily mid-career professionals that take classes part-time, average about seven credit hours a semester, and take a little over two

years to graduate. It is one of four programs in the nation that is AACSB accredited, from an R1/R2 institution, and offered from a business school.

- Actions taken since the last review: This is a new program that launched in fall 2018 and as such this is its first review. However, the program monitors the market developments and makes course corrections in a continuous manner. The department has rebalanced the ratio of instructors from the industry and its own tenure/tenure-track professors to ensure inclusion of rapid developments in the industry in its curriculum alongside academic rigor. Several new electives have been introduced. An advisory board has been put together that meets regularly and provides a curricular adviser to keep the program aligned with market needs.
- Actions taken as a result of this review: Based on the recent review, co-curricular enhancements have been planned keeping in mind the emerging market needs for Artificial Intelligence (AI) applications in Digital Marketing. Starting in fall 2022 a new required class on AI in Digital Marketing is being introduced. The program is also rationalizing the current course offerings speaking to data collection, cleaning, visualization, and analytics into a more cogent homogeneous structure. It also plans to create a required course centered on data use and application in digital marketing. In the medium to long-term, the program envisages strengthening its leadership in digital marketing research with focused tenure-track faculty hires. It also plans to strengthen the advisory board with a focus on bringing enhanced experiential learning elements in collaboration with board partner organizations.

#### Outcome

- Decision:

x Program in good standing (review in three years, i.e. 2024-2025 to align with AACSB, its disciplinary accreditor).

Explanation: The program enrollment is reaching a steady state with about one hundred students enrolled at any time and thirty-five students entering and graduating every year. The program graduated thirty-nine students in 2021.

## College of Health and Human Sciences

### B.S. in Fashion Merchandising (19.0901)

#### Major Findings and Recommendations:

- Major changes in the program: The Bachelor of Science (B.S.) in Fashion Merchandising at NIU prepares students for diverse employment opportunities in the fashion industry. As the name implies, the program's focus is on the merchandising side of fashion, though the degree serves as a solid foundation for students who wish to pursue additional studies in fashion design or graduate school. Students learn skills in Adobe Illustrator,

Photoshop, and/or InDesign, in multiple required as well as elective courses which enhances graduates' marketability and skill set as they embark on careers in an increasingly digitized industry. Career opportunities for fashion merchandising graduates are plentiful. Positions in store management, buying, visual merchandising, allocation planning, product development, e-commerce and many other areas provide opportunities in both corporate and store settings. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Occupational Outlook Handbook (2021) provides indications of job growth in related employment areas between 2020 and 2030 (e.g., seven percent growth in sales manager positions, five percent growth in wholesale and manufacturing sales representative positions, thirteen percent growth for web developers and digital designers).

- Major findings and recommendations: Enrollment for the B.S. in Fashion Merchandising has been modest but steady over the last five years. Between fall 2017 and fall 2021, the number of students has ranged from 52 to 59 respectively. For the same years the number of students with the minor has ranged from 10 to 14 respectively. All courses are taught by full-time faculty, and the relatively small size of the program allows a high level of one-on-one faculty interaction with students. The program has a diverse representation of students as indicated in the most recent five years (41.6% White, 31.2% Black or African American/non-Hispanic, 13.9% two or more ethnicities, 9.8% Hispanic or Latino/Latina, and 2.9% Asian). The program has conferred sixty-eight degrees between 2016 and 2020.

Students have the opportunity to experience co-curricular program development through their participation in the student-run, faculty-supervised NIU Fashion Industries Organization (FIO). In addition to fundraising, hosting industry speakers, and taking field trips, FIO members learn visual merchandising skills in creating presentations for the Wirtz Hall display cases. They also acquire skills in styling as well as event planning and execution in putting on the annual spring fashion show, historically funded by Kohl's Department Stores. FIO is a major strength of the Fashion Merchandising program that cultivates camaraderie among the students and allows them to stretch their creative muscles beyond the confines of the classroom. The organization attracts students from outside the major as well.

The program has successfully cultivated relationships with potential employers of students from the region, including its own alumni, and obtained input on various program concerns, including effective marketing of the degree. Through these relationships, alumni have garnered a variety of industry positions at diverse companies [e.g. recent graduates occupy positions in allocation (TJX Australia; Claire's, Inc.), buying (Claire's, Inc.; Von Maur), visual merchandising (Claire's, Inc.; The Buckle; Primark), product management (GCE International, Inc.), digital styling (Nordstrom Trunk Club), digital systems coordinating (Modern Luxury), e-commerce (Club Colors), and executive training (Von Maur)]. Several of these positions underscore the value of developing the technology content in the curriculum. The potential to streamline delivery of this content by updating an upcoming course will be addressed in the "Actions Taken as a Result of This Review" section.

- Actions taken since the last review: Growing the program has continued to be the program's priority. Toward this end, one of the major changes since the 2014 review has been the program's name change from Textiles, Apparel and Merchandising to Fashion Merchandising. The program effected this change so that prospective students would more readily understand what the program was about and be able to find it more easily. In keeping with actions suggested in the last review, the program has utilized NIU's Student Recruitment Communication System (Slate) in contacting admitted students over multiple semesters to encourage enrollment numbers. Additionally, the program has arranged a degree completion program with Harper Community College in Palatine, IL. In an effort to increase program visibility and attract students to the major, FSMD 262, Design Trends in Western Costume, was developed into a general education course and is among the courses in NIU's Creativity, Innovation, and Change general education pathway. Recruiting efforts have also included participating in university open houses and admitted student days, speaking at high schools, and attending the spring FCCLA (Family, Career and Community Leaders of America) state conference in Springfield, Illinois. Curricular changes since the previous review have included the identification and development of coursework to meet the university undergraduate writing intensive course requirement (FSMD 347 Professional Development in Fashion Merchandising and FSMD 466 Economics of the Textile and Apparel Industries) as well as the human diversity requirement (FSMD 464 Social Psychology of Dress and Appearance). Additionally, two elective courses were made required courses (FSMD 272 Merchandising Promotion and FSMD 458 Omni-Channel Fashion Retailing). FSMD 272 introduces skills using Adobe software that will be used in future courses and also includes other content that the program believes to be necessary for all majors. FSMD 458 includes basic retailing concepts students previously learned through coursework in the College of Business (MKTG 365 Principles of Retailing), but with a focus on fashion merchandise and implementation of Adobe software in creating digital retailing content. Finally, there was a general increase in the curriculum's technology content since the last program review. The 2015 addition of a clinical faculty member with expertise in fashion industry computer applications has enabled the program to more fully incorporate industry technology into the curriculum. Students now learn skills in Adobe Illustrator, Photoshop, and/or InDesign, in multiple required as well as elective courses. Learning activities that were previously carried out using less sophisticated methods are now completed using industry technology, thereby strengthening the curriculum and enhancing graduates' marketability and skill set as they embark on careers in an increasingly digitized industry. Furthermore, using funds donated by Kohl's Department Stores, the program purchased subscriptions to Gerber Yunique PLM, an apparel product development software widely used in the industry, and incorporated it into its courses in Apparel Product Analysis (FSMD 353) and Apparel Product Development (FSMD 456).
- Actions taken as a result of this review: Faculty will continue to explore strategies for growing the enrollment. This will include continued use of the NIU's Slate system, either by faculty and/or student peers, to contact admitted students. The program will maintain its efforts toward improving program visibility on campus and in the region, including updating and/or creating new promotion materials, continuing to pursue a degree completion arrangement with the College of DuPage, and cultivating relationships with



area businesses to help place students in internships and jobs. As conditions permit, the program will resume pre-COVID interactive marketing activities with potential students. In addition, as technology takes on an increasingly larger role in the curriculum, the faculty are investigating the possibility of offering an updated version of FSMD 367, Computer Applications in Fashion Merchandising (a course that hasn't been offered for many years) as a required prerequisite to all FSMD courses that incorporate computer technology. Currently, the introduction to industry software is embedded in courses that implement this technology early in the curriculum. By introducing these computer applications to students in a course dedicated to this purpose, more time may be devoted to exploring industry uses of these skills in later courses. The program will also need to consider the advantages of offering courses online. Since COVID19, there seems to be greater student demand for online learning as they balance work and family responsibilities with their college education. Program faculty will consider what information can be gathered to effectively inform decisions on course delivery modalities moving forward. Finally, the program plans to continue to refine its assessment activities utilizing feedback from the NIU University Assessment Panel.

#### Outcome

- Decision:

   x Program in good standing (review in 8 years, i.e. 2029-2030).

Explanation: The program has had consistent enrollment over the last eight years, made course modifications (specifically to online teaching during COVID), developed relationships with industry leaders and sought out partnerships with community colleges. A greater level of social media presence may enhance the program's visibility resulting in increased enrollment. In addition, new relationships with community colleges and industry partners may provide for degree completion opportunities.

#### **B.S. in Human Development and Family Sciences (19.0701)**

##### Major Findings and Recommendations:

- Major changes in the program: The Bachelor of Science (B.S.) in Human Development and Family Sciences (HDFS) at NIU prepares students for a wide range of employment and graduate school opportunities to serve individuals, couples, and families. The HDFS program provides students with a theoretical foundation and practical application on the relations between human development, family dynamics, and the broader social context across the life span through teaching, research, and community services. The HDFS program is comprised of three emphases: Child Development, Family Social Services, and Family Relations, Prevention, and Wellness. The program provides substantial preparation for its students to receive the credentials and certifications they need to enter the workforce (e.g. the Illinois Gateways family specialist credential, the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services credentials, the revised Illinois Gateways credentials for childcare workers, and NCFR certification as a Certified Family Life

Educator (CFLE)). The program has established strong partnerships with many social service agencies in the greater Chicago area. Through the internship experiences, students gain first-hand knowledge and skills in directly working with families and individuals. As a program, it is unique in that the experiences are built into the curriculum.

According to the 2021 Occupational Outlook Handbook, (U. S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics), the predictions for graduates prepared to work in such careers are promising and opportunities for jobs are projected to be plentiful through the year 2030. The growth rate for industries needing graduates with expertise in assisting families and individuals is predicted to grow by 12 percent over the 2020-2030 period, faster than the average for all occupations adding approximately 346,900 jobs. Many of our graduates will eventually work in very high demand occupations such as substance abuse, behavioral disorder, and mental health counselors (23% expected job growth), marriage and family therapists (16% expected job growth), and social workers (12% expected job growth).

- Major findings and recommendations: Enrollment for the B.S. in the Human Development and Family Sciences program between the 2016-2020 academic years steadily climbed and then had a modest decline with the onset of COVID-19. For the 2016 through 2020 academic years, enrollment numbers ranged from 259 to 302. In addition, students from majors across NIU continually declare Family and Child Studies as their minor every semester. The program is fairly diverse with students from various ethnicities (i.e. 36.7% White/non-Hispanic, 36.2% Black or African American/non-Hispanic, 15.5% two or more ethnicities, 8.9% Hispanic or Latino/Latina, and 2.1% Asian). The program has produced a number of graduates with 662 degrees conferred between the years 2014 through 2018. Graduates are doing well and obtaining jobs after graduation (e.g. family advocate, caseworker, ABA therapist, abuse intervention service director, child welfare specialist, etc.).

Faculty have frequently incorporated undergraduates into their research programs, which has helped to facilitate undergraduates' development of scientific and problem-solving skills. Since 2017, over 60 students have been engaged in these programs. The majority of these students were able to participate and present at NIU, state, and national conferences to present their research projects.

Students have also demonstrated engagement by participating in student organizations housed within HDFS. The NIU Student Council on Family Relations (NIUSCFR) is a student affiliate chapter of the National Council on Family Relations (NCFR). The Illinois Council on Family Relations (ILCFR) is the state-level NCFR organization in Illinois. Although students from all majors are welcome to become involved in the organization, the NIUSCFR is affiliated with the school and specifically marketed to HDFS majors. Students in NIUSCFR have opportunities to attend both national and state conferences, discuss family issues and policy concerns, provide service to the community, and to engage in meaningful research activities. The HDFS program has also encouraged student engagement through events such as hosting an annual advisory board meeting (prior to COVID-19) and a Family Social Services Internship Day. Through

these activities, it has built strong professional relationships with potential employers of students from the region, including its own alumni, and obtained input on various program concerns, including effective marketing of the degree.

Faculty have been very productive in obtaining grants. For instance, in 2019, HFDS faculty and staff at CDFC wrote and received a more than 1.6-million-dollar grant through the U.S. Department of Education to support student parents who need childcare assistance to attend and stay at NIU. Currently the program pays for 100% of costs. This grant helps to recruit and retain students beyond the major, but it is beneficial to recruit and retain students in other majors at NIU. The Preschool For All Expansion (PFAE) grant was awarded (\$1.1 million from Illinois State Board of Education) to HDFS faculty and staff over 5 years and provides high quality childcare services for local DeKalb residents as well as qualifying children of NIU students.

- Actions taken since the last review: Since the last program review in 2014 several major changes have taken place including: (1) changing the program name from Family and Child Studies to Human Development and Family Sciences to align more closely with similar programs at other higher education institutions, to be more descriptive of the content that is taught in the courses, and to emphasize the profession of Family Science as outlined by the National Council on Family Relations (NCFR). (2) the addition of Gerontology as an undergraduate minor, undergraduate certificate, and graduate certificate (3) the creation of the Child Development and Family Center, (CDFC) which was the result of the merger of the Child Development Lab and Campus Child Care in 2018. This center provides more space for children and increases opportunities for students by providing the opportunity to engage in hands-on learning and training in a state of the art facility. (4) changes to the program's admission policy such that students declare their major in their freshman year, allowing better mentoring and connection with the faculty (5) the hiring of five new tenure-track faculty in the areas of Child Development, Family Relations, Prevention, and Wellness, and Gerontology, a program director for the NIU Marriage and Family Therapy program, and a new clinic director for the Couple and Family Therapy Clinic.

In addition to the above changes, considerable efforts have been made to recruit students to both the undergraduate and graduate programs including finalizing articulation agreements with four community colleges (College of DuPage, Kishwaukee Community College, Waubensee Community College, and Illinois Valley Community College), the development of an accelerated (3+3) law degree program to recruit high achieving Family Relations, Prevention, and Wellness (FRPW) students, the development of an accelerated (3+2) master's degree program that will allow high achieving FRPW students the ability to complete their undergraduate degree, and a master's degree in Applied Human Development and Family Sciences in only 5 years, the addition of a new minor for students to receive in financial counseling, and a new concentration in Child Welfare which allows students to be eligible to receive DCFS Child Welfare licensure.

Finally, the three emphases in the program made significant curriculum revisions to reflect the changes of time and the discipline.

- Actions taken as a result of this review: Faculty have discussed and will continue to explore strategies for facilitating increased enrollment such as the addition of new general education courses to improve visibility for its programs across the university (e.g., HDFS 284: Intro to Family Relationships).

As previously outlined, beginning in the Fall 2022 semester, students in the FRPW emphasis can apply to be in the accelerated (3+2) that will allow them to complete their undergraduate degree, and a master's degree in Applied Human Development and Family Sciences in only 5 years. As part of this review faculty have also considered expanding this option to both the Child Development and Family Social Services emphases if it can be worked out in the curriculum.

The program's faculty will continue to refine its assessment plan and processes to further its goals for students. As the field continues to grow and evolve it is important that students are learning all of the skills and content necessary to be prepared professionally to work with individuals, couples, and families.

#### Outcome

- Decision:

   x Program in good standing (review in seven years, i.e., 2028-2029, extension granted from 2020-2021).

Explanation: The Bachelor of Science (B.S.) in Human Development and Family Sciences (HDFS) program has had consistent enrollment over the last eight years, made course modifications (specifically to online teaching during COVID-19), developed relationships with industry leaders and sought partnerships with community colleges to expand their enrollment. While the trends in the industry evolve, the program is staying abreast and adapting to increase student's marketability and skill sets.

## College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

### B.A./B.S. in Anthropology (45.0201)

#### Major Findings and Recommendations:

- Major changes in the program: The Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) and the Bachelor of Science (B.S.) programs in Anthropology at NIU teach students about cultural and biological diversity through active learning experiences including field schools and international research. Students are prepared to become global leaders who work to build a better society by promoting social justice.
- Major findings and recommendations: The number of Anthropology majors (B.A./B.S.) has declined since 2016, with a high of 49 in 2017, and a low of 29 in 2020. The program attributes this loss to several factors: the 5-year delay in the renovation of the Stevens

Building that required the program to be rehoused on the outskirts of campus and to close all of its research labs; the net loss of faculty over the last eight years; and, the restructuring of the General Education program in 2015 that resulted in Anthropology offering a smaller percentage of General Education classes than previously, thereby reducing its ability to recruit new majors. However, their opening of the Stevens Building in 2018 and the hiring of two new faculty since 2019 has resulted in positive change. In the fall of 2021, the Anthropology program had 38 majors, a 30% increase from 2020. The students that select Anthropology as their majors are half female (2016-2019: range 42-52% annually) and the percentage who were non-white during this same period ranged from 25-35%. Retention rates were higher for non-white students (50-80%) than for white students (49-63%) during the same period. These data suggest that although the program should strive to recruit more BIPOC (Black, Indigenous and people of color) students into the degree, the ones who join the program do well. The program will also continue to develop methods to promote student success in its General Education classes, so that these can better serve as recruitment classes. The faculty have begun meeting once a semester to discuss effective methods for connecting with students to improve their success rates in its classes, and it will encourage faculty to work with the Office of Student Success and participate in the Center for Innovative Teaching and Learning (CITL) programs to achieve this same goal.

Program faculty frequently involve undergraduate students in research and scholarship, and it will continue to do so in the future. Much of its research is conducted off-campus and frequently is at international sites. The faculty have facilitated student participation through Study Abroad programs (e.g., Madagascar) and through funds from the Office of Student Engagement and Experiential Learning (OSEEL). On campus, the program incorporated 25 students into faculty-led research through OSEEL supported programs (Research Engagement and Academic Diversity, Research Rookies, Student Engagement Fund, and URAP), Honors thesis projects, and independent studies. Students work in research labs housed in the department and interview local community members as part of linguistic and cultural anthropology projects. This research experience provides students the opportunity to present their work at campus conferences such as the NIU Undergraduate Student Research and Artistry Day, the Southeast Asian Studies annual student conference and national conferences such as the Society for the Anthropology of Food and Nutrition and to co-author research articles with program faculty in journals such as *Neotropical Primates*.

- Actions taken since the last review: Several years ago, the program faculty developed optional emphasis areas for undergraduates (Environment and Evolution; Social Complexity and Inequality; Language, Culture and Mind, so that students could focus on a particular theme in their studies. In the fall of 2018, the Anthropology department moved back into the new Stevens Building with its state-of-the-art research and classroom laboratories, and it has opened three research laboratories (nutrition, linguistic, and paleoethnobotany). These new laboratory spaces allow its undergraduate students an opportunity to participate in research training and in classroom lab assignments related to primate anatomy and evolution, and stone tool and pottery identification. The program has supported the curriculum changes through providing undergraduates opportunities to

work in the new laboratories in the Stevens Building through independent studies and the Student Engagement Fund and Research Rookies programs. Students also engage in hands-on class activities with the program's fossil, osteological and archaeological collections in its new classrooms and in the Pick Museum of Anthropology. To support its students' career development further, the program has rejuvenated its Alumni Advisory Board to connect its current students with internship and career opportunities through annual Anthropology Career events. The program has also made changes to how it assesses the success of its classes. In 2019, program faculty revised the assessment plan for the department and rewrote the Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) to clarify the outcomes for each subfield and measure how well it prepares students for careers and advanced degrees. Department faculty, staff and students have also been meeting monthly to discuss ways to adapt its classes to promote decolonizing practices and antiracism in its teaching. As part of these efforts, the program has compiled a department resource bank of materials.

In the last two years, the program faculty have made a number of changes to promote diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) for its students, faculty and staff. The department has formed a Racial Equity committee that meets monthly. Department faculty, staff and graduate students have discussed approaches to adapting its classes to promote decolonizing practices and antiracism in its teaching. As part of these efforts, it has compiled a department resource bank of materials that it can use to decolonize its courses and promote antiracism in the classroom. In addition to adding new content related to promoting diversity, equity and inclusion in existing classes, the program has also added a new General Education (ANTH250) class called, "Dismantling Global Racism" that also fulfills a Black Studies requirement, and an upper-level class (ANTH 403) that is cross-listed with Black Studies called "Africas in the Americas". As a result of these efforts over the last two years, its courses support the mission, vision and values of NIU, the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (CLAS), and the department.

- Actions taken as a result of this review: The program will continue to seek opportunities to increase the number of BIPOC faculty in the department, particularly in the subfields of archaeology, biological anthropology and linguistics that are currently understaffed. If the program diversifies its faculty, this will help them to recruit more BIPOC students into its major. Additionally, faculty will continue to discuss ways to adapt classes to promote decolonizing practices and antiracism in their teaching, including adding Student Learning Objectives to the undergraduate program related to decolonizing practices and anti-racism. It will also develop methods to help retain students once they begin the program by working with the Office of Student Success and participating in other university programs to help reduce the number of students who receive low grades or withdraw from Anthropology classes. The program will continue to involve undergraduate students in its research, offering them exciting opportunities to work in its laboratories, at its fieldsites and to pursue their own independent research projects. The program will seek ways to stay better connected to its alumni, so that its undergraduates can gain networking opportunities to pursue internships and find employment through alumni connections. Anthropology has already a strong interdisciplinary approach to curriculum and research, which will continue by working closely with academic and

student centers, including the Study of Women, Gender and Sexuality, Latino and Latin American Studies, Black Studies, Southeast Asian Studies (CSEAS), the Institute for the Environment, Sustainability and Energy (ENVS), and the Asian American Resource Center. By strengthening the links between Anthropology and these other units, the program will provide its students with opportunities to take interdisciplinary classes and engage in transdisciplinary research with faculty from across various units. It also will continue to create new classes and re-envision existing classes to strengthen ties to other units on campus. In spring of 2022, the program is teaching a new class, Dismantling Global Racism ANTH 250, a course that is cross listed with Black Studies and an elective course for the BKST minor. Over the last eight years the program has added other new classes that are cross listed with other units and contribute to the certificates, minors and majors in those units (Center for Nonprofit and NGO Studies, CSEAS, ENVS). It added two new honors classes this academic year, and regularly offer mini-honors sections in three of its 200-level classes. The program will continue to look for ways to work closely with the Honors Program, particularly if it is given the opportunity to hire more faculty. In addition, it has begun discussions with Black Studies as to how it could develop a joint minor.

#### Outcome

- Decision:

  x   Program in good standing (review in eight years, i.e., 2029-2030).

Explanation: While the program is one of the smaller undergraduate degree programs with the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, its faculty have an interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary research focus and the curriculum supports many of the diverse academic centers on campus. The program met many of its objectives from the prior review in 2013 both for curriculum and strategic planning, and the college supports their future attention to support undergraduate students in lower division and general education courses, potentially attracting more students to the field.

#### **M.A. in Anthropology (45.0201)**

##### Major Findings and Recommendations:

- Major changes in the program: The Master of Arts (M.A.) program in Anthropology at NIU teaches students about cultural and biological diversity through active learning experiences including field schools and international research. Students are prepared to become global leaders who work to build a better society by promoting social justice.
- Major findings and recommendations: In 2021, despite the pandemic, the program completely reversed the previous years' downward enrollment trends and enrolled 17 new graduate students. As a result, it now has 27 students enrolled in the M.A. program, the same as it did in 2017. Its current 27 M.A. students include five international, eight

BIPOC (Black, Indigenous and people of color), and several first-generation college students. Seventeen of the 27 current M.A. students are women. From 2015-2019 the program conferred 56 MA degrees: 75% of these graduates were women, and 23% were non-white students. Of the 17 students who began the program in 2021, 56% are BIPOC and 50% are women. The program plans to continue to diversify its program by actively recruiting BIPOC students through its contacts at other institutions and at regional and national conferences. It also aims to continue its efforts to retain students. For example, the program established the Anthropology Graduate Council to connect students with one another through social events, offer feedback to faculty on the program, and organize seminars where students and faculty can present and discuss their research. Students also work with faculty to organize professional development workshops (e.g., grant writing, job seeking, applying to doctoral programs). These efforts have led to an increase in its retention rates over the last two years, therefore, it will continue to support and expand the efforts of the Council. Furthermore, it will promote the Graduate School's professional development courses and training sessions to provide students with the best graduate experience possible. The program's instructors and tenure/tenure track faculty are members of the graduate faculty; they serve on committees within and outside of the department, and frequently include NIU students in their scholarship activities. Most of the M.A. students select the thesis-track, meaning they design and execute independent research in collaboration with their advisor. Students are frequently involved in international fieldwork (e.g., primatology in Bolivia and Madagascar, archaeology in Peru, cultural anthropology in Haiti and Cambodia, and linguistic anthropology in Tonga). Post-fieldwork, faculty guide students through data analysis and presentation: for some students this includes lab analyses in archaeology or primate nutritional ecology within the department's research labs. Additionally, students have worked with faculty on projects related to regional sustainable initiatives and social media disinformation, local food systems initiatives and at regional sites such as the Cambodian Association of Illinois' National Cambodian Heritage Museum. Students present their work at annual campus events such as the Graduate Student Research Association and Southeast Asia Student Conference, at national conferences like the Meeting of the Society for Anthropological Sciences. Students also co-author research articles with faculty in journals such as the American Journal of Primatology. Program graduates secure employment due to these experiences following completion of their degrees.

- Actions taken since the last review: In the fall of 2018, the Anthropology department moved back into the new Stevens Building with its state-of-the-art research and classroom laboratories, and it has opened three research laboratories (nutrition, linguistic, and paleoethnobotany). These laboratory spaces allow its graduate students additional research training opportunities. Several of its students have completed research for their theses, conference presentations and publications in these laboratories. Since the last review, the program has taken several initiatives to improve recruitment and retention of graduate students, with the explicit goal to diversify its student body. It has dropped the GRE requirement for applicants, as it is an expensive test that is not indicative of an applicant's potential and can hinder diversity and inclusion. The program has worked closely with the graduate school's recruitment team to follow up with all prospective students they meet at graduate fairs and other events. It has revised and updated the



department web site to make it easier for prospective students to find information about the M.A. program and submit their application. The program has reinstated quarterly meetings of the Alumni Advisory Board and produced an alumni newsletter in the fall of 2020 to better connect current students with alumni to help find them internships and employment and to increase donations to its foundation account to support graduate research projects. Due to the net loss of faculty since the last review, the program has not been able to pursue the Ph.D. program it considered developing in 2012. It has also made changes to how it assesses the success of its classes. In 2019, the program revised the assessment plan for the department and rewrote the Student Learning Outcomes to clarify the outcomes for each subfield and measure how well it prepares students for careers and advanced degrees.

In the last two years, it has made changes to its M.A. program to promote diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI). The department has formed a Racial Equity committee that meets monthly and is open to all graduate students, staff and faculty. The committee discusses approaches to adapt its classes to promote decolonizing practices and antiracism in its teaching. As part of these efforts, it has compiled a department resource bank of materials that it can use to decolonize its courses and promote antiracism in the classroom. It has also added a new graduate-level class (ANTH503) that is cross-listed with Black Studies called “Africas in the Americas”. As a result of these efforts, its courses better support the mission, vision and values of NIU, CLAS and the department.

- Actions taken as a result of this review: The program will continue to seek opportunities to increase the number of BIPOC faculty, particularly in the subfields of archaeology, biological anthropology and linguistics that are currently understaffed. It will continue to recruit BIPOC and international graduate students into the program. The program will strengthen its efforts to adapt its classes to promote decolonizing practices and antiracism in teaching, including adding Student Learning Objectives to its graduate program related to decolonizing practices and anti-racism. It will support workshops and one-on-one mentorship to increase its degree completion rates and decrease the time to completion. It will seek ways to connect alumni to its graduates to provide them with networking opportunities to pursue internships and find employment. It will continue to involve graduate students in research, offering them opportunities to work in its laboratories, at its field sites and to pursue their own independent research projects. Finally, the program will also continue to work closely with NIU’s Academic Centers, including the Study of Women, Gender, and Sexuality; Latino and Latin American Studies; Black Studies; Southeast Asian Studies, the Institute for the Environment, Sustainability and Energy, and the Asian American Resource Center to provide its students with opportunities to take interdisciplinary classes and engage in transdisciplinary research with faculty from across various units.

## Outcome

- Decision:

\_\_x\_\_ Program in good standing (review in eight years, i.e., 2029-2030).

Explanation: The graduate program is one of the smaller degree programs within the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, but its faculty have an interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary research focus that trains future students at the graduate level to conduct research in and consider diverse perspectives, which is valuable to the college and NIU. The college supports the program's continued recruitment and retention efforts for graduate students, especially students from diverse backgrounds with an emphasis on career development with the Graduate School and alumni.

### **B.A./B.S. in Psychology (42.0101)**

#### Major Findings and Recommendations:

- Major changes in the program: The baccalaureate program in psychology trains students in broad content areas of psychology (e.g., neuroscience, developmental, cognitive, social, psychopathology) and to understand the process and utility of research in the field. Through lecture, discussion, and hands-on learning, students learn about human behavior, theories that explain its causes, and research that is used to test those theories. After completing Introduction to Psychology, students take elective courses in different areas of psychology (providing breadth of training in different content areas) as well as a series of research methods courses, which help students comprehend, evaluate, and engage in research. This curriculum prepares students for employment in a wide variety of fields in the areas of health, social services, education, business, and nonprofit organizations. The breadth of these employment positions highlights the adaptability of a psychology degree, and positive growth is expected in a number of jobs that typically involve a bachelor's degree in psychology: human resources (increase 10%), social workers (increase 6%), and personal service, entertainment, and recreation managers (increase 7%; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2021).
- Major findings and recommendations: The trends in enrollment suggest the demand for the degree is quite strong. The number of students pursuing a B.A./B.S. in psychology has been rising even as overall student enrollment at the university is declining. Specifically, from 2018 through 2022, the number of students at the university decreased by 7% (from 12,788 to 11,834) but the number of undergraduate students pursuing psychology increased by 24% (from 646 to 804). This is consistent with national trends, showing high demand for psychology programs from undergraduate students. The number of degrees conferred per year ranged between 175 and 185 from 2018-2021, which should rise in coming years given the recent increase in students pursuing the degree program. With the growing number of students participating in the major, one improvement to the program would be in developing service-learning curricular activities that could help students develop helping skills in the process of being a support to other students on campus. Although undergraduate B.A./B.S. students are not sufficiently trained to provide mental health services, they could help fellow students adopt healthy behaviors that tend to support mental health. Partnering with campus student support centers, this could provide a hands-on learning opportunity for students to learn about wellness and to support other students in that pursuit. Several actions have been initiated

to understand and address the experience and success of students from diverse backgrounds. First, the department initiated a climate survey to evaluate the experiences of all students, with an analysis strategy focused on diversity. The sample in 2018 included 76 students and climate for diverse groups was assessed using a 5-item scale (Hutchinson et al. 2008). There were no significant differences found as a function of gender, sexual orientation, African American race, White race, disability status, academic class, commuter status, and caregiver status. It is worth noting, however, that students who were food insecure or housing insecure reported poorer climate for diverse groups. The department alerted faculty to this result and began a discussion of how to support these students. Second, instructors in the department have engaged in conversations and trainings aimed to increase awareness of policies that may undermine success of BIPOC students. Conversations about more flexible policies that also have clear boundaries have been ongoing. Finally, the department can envision curricular enhancements to support the success of students from diverse backgrounds. First, it may be beneficial to increase the number of courses that directly include diversity in their content. To balance the two upper-level seminars related to diversity, a 200-level elective course that focused on a broad topic related to diversity (e.g., Psychology of Cultural Diversity, Mental Health Disparities) would help anchor diversity as a core content area in the curriculum and reach a larger number of students.

- Actions taken since the last review: Since the last review, the undergraduate psychology program has expanded its reach to increase access to education. First, in Fall 2019 NIU began a partnership with a regional 2-year community college (Harper Community College) to help students navigate the transition between a 2-year college and a 4-year university. Students in this program matriculate to NIU after finishing their Associates Degree at Harper, and then take their NIU courses at the Harper College University Center. The Department of Psychology is the largest of the three NIU programs identified to be part of this initiative and the first cohort of students graduated with a psychology degree in May 2021. Second, the Department of Psychology has increased its offering of online courses. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic approximately 7 online courses were offered online per semester. Upon returning to campus, the department offered 17 online courses during Fall 2021 and 16 online courses in Spring 2022, marking a 136% increase from pre-pandemic teaching. Moreover, the types of courses offered online has broadened such that all major requirements can be completed online, although not every semester. The department will be carefully monitoring the success rate of the students participating in the online courses and compare to in person or hybrid classes.

The department has noted across time that only about two-thirds of alumni surveyed 18-24 months after graduation (65% who graduated from 2006 to 2009 and 68% who graduated from 2013-2017) reported being employed in a job related to their degree. Although this may reasonably reflect the array of career paths open to students with a B.A./B.S. degree in psychology, the department postulated that their graduates were working in fields related to psychology, but the students did not realize the breadth of psychology. In response, the department has added a one-credit course to help students learn what psychology offers as a discipline and the opportunities they have available in pursuing this program. To address this concern, the course was designed to help students

1) explore the discipline, 2) learn about career options, and 3) access curricular and extracurricular activities to achieve their goals.

Another change that had been planned for some time but not yet realized was the addition of full-time, professional advisors to assist B.A./B.S. students in course selection and degree progress. The department was a strong supporter of changing the structure of advising at the college level to expand advising to the psychology department. This change occurred in Spring of 2020 (just at the beginning of COVID-19). The retention rate for undergraduate psychology students increased from Fall 2019 to Fall 2020, suggesting that providing full-time psychology advisors may have improved retention, although it decreased again in Fall 2021 (both data points were in the context of COVID-19). Although department faculty no longer advise students on program requirements, they are still involved in advising students on career specializations and preparing for graduate school. Moreover, faculty frequently incorporate undergraduates into their research programs through the independent study course (PSYC 485), with an average of 96 (mean 2016-2020) undergraduate students enrolling in individualized independent study each year. This activity increases the students' sense of belonging in the department and allows for informal advising for curricular issues as well as for admission to graduate or professional school. Students' participation in independent study research often results in presentation at the annual departmental Psychology Undergraduate Research Conference (held in December) and the university Conference for Undergraduate Research and Engagement (held in April). Summed across the past 5 years, 399 undergraduate students have presented research at on-campus research conferences.

- Actions taken as a result of this review: The program has made adjustments to its curriculum in support of improving student learning. For instance, a key student learning outcome for the B.A./B.S. program aims for 80% of students to meet expectations in demonstrating their ability to write effectively about psychological theory and research. Regular evaluations of students' writing samples showed that students needed greater support. This led to a curricular change to provide greater support for students between their general research methods course (PSYC 305) and the 4-credit lab courses (from which the writing samples were taken). In new curriculum, students take the general research methods course (PSYC 305), followed by a second research methods course focused on communication and writing about research (PSYC 306), and then only one, 4-credit lab course. The new, intermediate course (PSYC 306) contains a recitation and is designed as a bridge between the general research methods course and the specific, 4-credit lab course. The Department also plans to update assessment procedures of the undergraduate curriculum. The changes take two forms. First, the new approach will embed assessments at various points in the curriculum rather than primarily at the end of the program. Second, it would be informative to begin collecting data relevant to student demographics (e.g., race, ethnicity) as part of assessment to evaluate whether the achievement of student learning outcomes varies across social identity categories. This will allow the department to evaluate whether it is achieving its standards for all students.

## Outcome

- Decision:

x Program in good standing (review in 7 years, i.e. 2028-2029, APA aligned).

Explanation: The psychology B.A./B.S. program is one of the largest majors at NIU with a growing enrollment and a very strong program. Since the last review, the department modified its curriculum based on its assessment of student learning outcomes and the career choices of its alumni; we anticipate the curricular changes will further attract students into the program and need to plan for this growth through diversifying the faculty.

## M.A. in Psychology (42.0101)

### Major Findings and Recommendations:

- Major changes in the program: The M.A. program in the Department of Psychology largely prepares students for entry into its Ph.D. program. The exception is a small portion of students admitted to the school psychology specialist program, which in 2020 became its own certification and unified the specialist-level training already offered in the department into a coherent whole (M.A. plus the 30 credits of post-Master's requirements in school psychology). All M.A. students develop familiarity with the methods of research relevant to the discipline and gain a broad understanding of the field through coursework in areas such as clinical, cognitive, developmental, social, and neuroscience. Students planning to enter the Ph.D. program complete a master's thesis, an original research project that contributes meaningfully to the field. Students in the clinical and school areas of psychology also acquire applied professional skills through a sequence of graduated practicum experiences. The majority of NIU students who complete the M.A. go on to complete the Ph.D. and there are many career opportunities for students who complete their doctoral training in psychology. Those who do not are in the school psychology entitlement/certification program, which fills a crucial employment need. The Occupational Outlook Handbook (October, 2021, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics), reported that employment opportunities for "clinical, counseling, and school psychologists" are expected to grow by approximately 10% through 2030. This publication states that the "employment of school psychologists will continue to grow because of an increased awareness of the connection between mental health and learning."
- Major findings and recommendations: Demand for the program is strong in that the number of applications far exceeds the number of students admitted per year (mean acceptance rate is 6% across the past 5 years), with the number of students at the M.A. level ranging from 47 to 62 across the past four years. The fall-to-fall retention rate is quite strong, between 88% and 100% in the past 5 years. The department has put effort into recruiting and retaining students from diverse backgrounds. As of 2020-2021, 32% of M.A. students identify as non-White, which is part of a positive trend. Efforts to attract

diverse applicants include co-hosting the Chicagoland Diversifying Psychology Event, making explicit statements to encourage BIPOC students to apply, and encouraging one-on-one conversations with faculty and program coordinators about opportunities for students from diverse backgrounds. Other efforts have been designed to support students once they are in the program, which is particularly important given the high portion of students expected to continue on to the Ph.D. program. The orientation for new graduate students has expanded to include a diversity training component. In addition, the department has partnered with the university Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion to offer trainings for graduate students, staff and faculty on an ongoing basis. Faculty and faculty-mentored graduate students help facilitate university-sponsored anti-racism trainings and are also active in diversity initiatives within their national organization. The department has proposed that the admission practices be clarified for its graduate programs. Currently, students are required to apply directly to the M.A. program even though all of them intend to complete the Ph.D. or S.S.P. The department has approved a change that would allow students to apply directly to the Ph.D. and S.S.P., which should reduce the confusion for prospective applicants and streamline the process. None of the M.A. program requirements are proposed to change but the streamlined admission process will bring the Department of Psychology into alignment with other “terminal” Ph.D. programs on campus. Another concern that is beginning to be considered is the lack of community for new graduate students in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, as both students and faculty are more likely to work off campus. Incoming graduate students may need more departmental support to create and maintain a sense of community to foster peer relations and collaboration. All first-year students take an in-person sequence of statistics courses their first year. This has the benefit of bringing students together to get to know each other and to build a sense of community. The department is considering ways to arrange office space and design coursework to support cohorts of students into the second year and beyond, which will ultimately support student retention and success.

- Actions taken since the last review: A significant change to the M.A. program was the establishment of the Specialist in School Psychology certification, which elevated the sequence of requirements for specialist-level students in school psychology to become its own certification (completion of the M.A. in school psychology plus 30 credits of post-M.A. requirements). The establishment of this certificate program was approved by IBHE in 2020 and by the Higher Learning Commission in 2021. It formalized the requirements, helps to simplify the description of the program to prospective students and potential employers, and aids students in maintaining financial aid while completing post-Master’s requirements.

In addition to the above, a renovation of the space housing research animals, which is central to the research and teaching activities of faculty and students in the neuroscience and behavior curricular area was completed in 2019. The primary goals of this major project were to address problems in ventilation, increase the control of temperature and humidity, and to refurbish and modernize the research spaces. This improved space now meets requirements to house three types of animals: rats, mice, and prairie moles.

- Actions taken as a result of this review: A shift has occurred in the clients being seen by the training clinic, the Psychological Services Center, where students in the clinical and school psychology programs learn the skills of being mental health clinicians. Until recently, the clinic has seen a combination of clients from the community and clients who are university students, but demand for mental health services on campus has risen such that almost all of the clients being seen in the training clinic are university students (and the waiting list is long). Although it is helpful to be able to provide relatively low-cost services to the community, it is critical to meet student demand. Additional staff may be needed to offer training to clinical and school graduate students on how to conduct group therapy sessions on topics relevant to the university population, such as procrastination and social anxiety. This would both provide opportunities for clinical graduate students to develop skills in conducting group session, as well as help meet the needs of students.

The M.A. program was impacted by COVID-19 when courses previously taught in person were offered online from March 2020 to May 2021. During fall 2021 most courses were once again taught in person, but the skills that faculty developed with flexible modalities has expanded the training opportunities for students. One training opportunity that will be retained even after COVID-19 no longer impacts modality is to include telehealth as part of practicum experiences for students in the clinical program. It is recognized that telehealth is valuable for providing service to clients who might not otherwise be able or willing to come to a clinic in person. Moreover, telehealth adds a unique perspective surrounding several client-centered training issues, such as obtaining consent remotely, protecting clients' health data in new ways, and awareness of different aspects of privacy.

#### Outcome

- Decision:

x Program in good standing (review in seven years, i.e., 2028-2029, APA aligned, its disciplinary accreditor).

Explanation: The M.A. program in psychology is a strong program that prepares graduate students for continuing into the doctoral program or trains students to become a school psychologist through the M.A. program with a Specialist Certification in school psychology. Both paths are successful with high retention and graduation rates with a growing diversity of graduate students enrolling. The department has provided supports previously for the graduate students but realizes the pandemic may require re-thinking how to foster community and belongingness for incoming M.A. students.

## Ph.D. in Psychology (42.0101)

### Major Findings and Recommendations:

- Major changes in the program: The Ph.D. program in psychology prepares students for a wide variety of professional settings including academic, human services, educational, mental health care, business, and government. The workforce projections for graduates with a doctorate in psychology is promising. In the list of 30 occupations with the highest projected growth from 2020-2030 (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics report, September 2021), several involve skills honed by advanced training in psychology, including postsecondary teachers in health specialties (projected 24% growth); behavioral health, substance abuse, and mental health counselors (projected 23% growth); data scientists (projected 31% growth); and statisticians (35% growth). Moreover, three jobs where employees with advanced degrees in psychology are sought (psychologists, human resource managers, and training and development specialists) are among the least likely to be impacted by automation (The Hamilton Project, March 2021).
- Major findings and recommendations: The department has slightly over 100 graduate students (Mean = 111, averaged across the last five years), and as the pipeline for the Ph.D. program, roughly half are in the master's program. At the Ph.D. level, retention (ranging from 93% to 100% in the past five years) and degrees conferred (ranging from 10 to 23 in the past five years) is strong. The somewhat reduced number of students entering the M.A. program in recent years will impact enrollment at the Ph.D. level going forward. The department has several initiatives focused on recruitment, retention, and success of BIPOC students, which are yielding positive results. In the previous review (reporting data from 2007 - 2011), 14% of students in the program defined themselves as a member of a BIPOC category and 11% of the Ph.Ds. that were conferred were earned by BIPOC students. Current data, from 2016 - 2020, shows a considerable increase, such that 23% of the students overall reported being a member of a BIPOC category, and 19% of the degrees were conferred to BIPOC students. These numbers are encouraging and are likely a result of department and university initiatives. The department's commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion is evident in learning opportunities and research. The curriculum includes diversity and teaches the ethical treatment of all people in research, teaching, and applied contexts. In the past 5 years, 17 faculty (68%) have performed diversity-focused research and nearly all involved graduate students. Topics include how cultural variables influence children's socioemotional development; impact of racial trauma and gender stereotypes; mental health in refugees; biased language use in schools; managing diversity in the workplace; and identity management. Even though the number of BIPOC faculty is lower than desired, there is strong support for diversity initiatives and the importance of diversity in the department.

Faculty publish research in peer-reviewed journals at a rate of 2.8 publications per faculty member per year (averaged across the last five years), present at national and international conferences, and serve as editorial board members and associate editors of journals. Faculty also seek external funding and are successful in those pursuits (average of \$7.48 Million awards from the last five years). These grants and contracts support



research and the application of psychology to help solve regional challenges and beyond. Graduate students are critical to these endeavors. The prominence of graduate students in faculty-led research is reflected in the high percentage of graduate students as co-authors of research products. From 2016 - 2020, at least one graduate student co-author was included on 258 (73%) of faculty publications and 595 (88%) of faculty conference presentations. Not only are the faculty-student relationships productive, but also rewarding; a survey of graduate students conducted in Spring 2021, showed that 100% of the students who responded to the survey (N=25) reported a positive relationship with their primary research advisor. Moreover, both undergraduate and graduate students are directly involved in faculty research, which provides opportunities for graduate students to train as research mentors to undergraduate students. While the department is incredibly successful in securing grants and contracts, there is room for building additional interdisciplinary and community partnerships to maintain a flourishing graduate program.

In addition to gaining research experiences, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, students in the clinical and school programs have developed skills in tele-health whereby students see and treat clients via online platforms. This is an increasingly important skill for clinicians and the department sees value in continuing this type of training after the pandemic because it expands treatment options to more clients, especially those who are geographically restricted. Moreover, COVID-19 provided the context for graduate students to develop their online teaching skills. The students took advantage of NIU's extensive courses and supports for teaching online that were made available to graduate teaching assistants.

Finally, among students who graduated from 2016 - 2021 almost all secured a position that directly involved either academic or applied research (46%) or psychological practice (50%). Consistent with this, graduates from 2014 - 2017 who were surveyed 18-24 months after graduation showed that 100% of the students (N = 25) agreed with "Overall I am satisfied with my degree" and 92% (averaged across the years) agreed that "My degree program at NIU prepared me well for my current job."

- Actions taken since the last review: The department has expanded its course offerings, both within and beyond the department. Three courses on ethics are now part of the course offerings, two are part of the accredited programs, and a new course is focused on ethics in research and organizations. The addition of the latter course was a response to awareness in the field that there was a greater need for transparency in the process of data collection and reporting. Course offerings have also expanded to utilize expertise at the university outside the department, specifically in quantitative analysis. Students now regularly complete research methods requirements by taking certain courses offered by the Department of Educational Technology, Research, and Assessment, on topics such as nonparametric analyses, structural equation modeling, and multi-level modeling. At the time of the last review, it was noted that the high demand of the undergraduate program constrained the number of graduate courses that could be taught, so these courses outside the department supplement those offered in the department.

In addition, the program has added a specialization within the clinical Ph.D. program focused on trauma, responding to the needs of communities with high trauma exposure and utilizing the expertise within the faculty. This was a logical extension of the high research productivity of the Center for the Study of Family Violence and Sexual Assault, which has many faculty affiliates in the psychology department. The program has established a specific “track” within the clinical Ph.D. program whereby students take courses on issues related to trauma and its treatment and engage in practicum experiences directly related to trauma. The department has also established the Trauma Services Center in its training clinic.

- Actions taken as a result of this review: The degree program is healthy and successful at present, but it is also important for the department not to become complacent, especially as the world changes. Some strides have been made to modernize degree requirements in some areas of specialization, but a more formalized effort along these lines is warranted. For example, several of the areas of specialization have moved toward a portfolio approach to establishing candidacy for the Ph.D. program. Specifically, rather than completing a more traditional exam, students compile a set of products that establish their candidacy (e.g. submission of a manuscript to a peer-reviewed journal, research presentation at a regional or national conference). The logic in this approach is to align training goals more closely with assessment of candidacy. The intent is to establish a better measure of candidacy for the Ph.D. and to create coherence for students so that the program goals and assessments align more closely. A recent change in the catalog language has expanded the types of activities that can be used to evaluate program requirements, which is a foundation for further conversation and program innovation. Another way in which the department can expand training of doctoral students is to offer opportunities for them to learn how to teach online, and to mentor students in these pursuits. Given the increased demand in online courses in the profession going forward, graduate students who know how to design, manage, and implement effective online learning will be in high demand. Faculty have developed considerable skill in offering online courses to teach effectively, and graduate students teaching assistants are in a good position to develop these skills as they are mentored in teaching by faculty supervisors.

## Outcome

- Decision:

  x   Program in good standing (review in eight years, i.e., 2029-2030).

Explanation: The doctoral program in Psychology is the largest within CLAS and successful in recruitment, retention and graduation of doctoral students who are increasingly diverse. The faculty are successful in conducting research with their graduate students, increasing the students’ and the department’s success in publications, conference presentations and external funding. To support the program further, it would be appropriate to consider a faculty hire that diversifies the faculty and contributes to greater community-based research or interdisciplinary research.

## **B.A./B.S. in Sociology (45.1101)**

### Major Findings and Recommendations:

- Major changes in the program: Students come to NIU to study sociology because they are interested in the topics and problems that define the discipline, including crime and justice, social mobility and change, social inequality, and health and medical sociology. The program's core curriculum is focused on the logic and tools of sociological inquiry, connecting theoretical insights plus the ability to think abstractly and logically with real-world issues and contemporary social problems. The program engages students with the practice of social scientific research with supervision from research-active faculty. Overall, the program's students develop sociological knowledge and critical thinking skills on multiple levels throughout the curriculum. The Social Science Research Learning Lab (SSRLL) offers students the opportunity to leverage the logic and techniques of research methods and analysis with advanced analytical software technology appropriate to the social sciences. Preparation for employment in sociologically-related careers is centered in core courses and augmented by the internship program. The research, reasoning, and writing skills throughout the curriculum are sought by employers in a variety of career sectors. These skills equip students with the ability to adapt to larger social changes that affect the structure of job opportunities. Career opportunities for graduates of the baccalaureate program are extensive, which also makes gauging exact occupational demand for students earning bachelor's degrees in sociology difficult because graduates pursue a wide variety of occupations. For example, the curriculum prepares students for careers in social services, educational settings, human services, criminal and juvenile justice, research, and many types of private industry careers in addition to post-graduate education. According to the Occupational Outlook Handbook (2020-21 Edition) overall employment for these fields are all predicted to grow by 2030 (social services work to grow more than 15%; public law enforcement (local police departments and sheriff's offices) to grow about seven percent and private investigators and security is expected to average approximately 13%; market researchers to grow 22%; human resource specialists to grow 10% faster than average through 2030). While these are just a subset of all the possible careers for those with a baccalaureate in sociology, all these occupations are expected to have greater than average growth. These forecasts suggest that the job market will continue to demand sociology baccalaureate degree holders.
- Major findings and recommendations: Over the 2017-2021 period, the sociology program averaged a major enrollment of about 220 students. The program experienced a decline in enrollments with the enrollment of 189 students in Fall 2021, representing a 24% decline since 2017. The enrollment decline was larger compared to the CLAS (-16%) and NIU (-12%) enrollment trends. It is worth noting, however, that the demographic characteristics of the program's students make them more vulnerable to stop-out and/or not return during economic downturns, pandemics, or other instabilities. The program has recently undertaken a key step to try to counter the observed enrollment trend: re-introducing the Criminology emphasis in the B.A./B.S. program due to the success of the Criminology Certificate program. In terms of the student population, a

significant percentage of the program students are students of color (Black or Latinx), female, first-generation, and Pell-eligible college students. From 2017-2021, about 36% of our majors were Black, 27% were Latinx, 66% were female, 61% were first generation, and 69% were Pell-eligible, numbers that all increased over the time period. The program conferred 85 B.A./B.S. degrees per year on average from fiscal year 2015 through fiscal year 2020.

The Sociology faculty routinely engage in scholarly research activities with undergraduate students. Undergraduate students gain hands-on research experience through participation in an independent study course, through a research project supervised under either the Research Rookie program or the URAD/CURE program, through an in-course honors project, or through an Honor's Capstone project.

A key change that has occurred for the department has been the loss of four tenured faculty since the last review and the loss of several instructors over just the past two academic years. While the program is still able to offer its core curriculum every semester and meet the demand for general education and its majors, the program recommends replacing faculty and/or instructor positions lost since the last review period. The program's ability to meet the demand is currently based on the strength of faculty to teach in "adjacent" fields to their own.

Finally, it is clear that the sociology curriculum continues to well prepare NIU graduates. Using the Alumni Survey data from 2014-2018, the three employment categories most common for the program graduates are Government (31.1%), Business (23.2%), and Non-Profits (12.6%), which together comprise about two-thirds of respondents. Those same three categories accounted for roughly 70% of respondents in the program's last program review.

- Actions taken since the last review: Previous program reviews led to the development of a rigorous core curriculum for the B.A./B.S. program in Sociology that the program maintains in practice today. One of the main changes that has occurred in the program recently is the reintroduction of the emphasis in criminology. Initially, the department added an optional Criminology Certificate program and this was immensely popular based on enrollment, both within and outside the major. Based on the continued strong demand for criminology courses, the Sociology Department decided to re-introduce the emphasis in criminology to the major, while also keeping the Criminology Certificate program available for non-majors. This enables students to complete the degree in a timely fashion while also free to pursue a concentration of coursework in a chosen specialty area. As noted during the Fall 2021 State of the College Address, criminology was the major that the College received the most calls/inquiries about. The program believes this is because rather than being a "cop shop" focused on enforcement, the program is built on understanding the structural issues around crime, criminality, and punishment.

In other approaches to increase enrollment and meet the needs of its students, the program eliminated the limited admission ("pre-sociology") status of the program,

because it was interpreted as a barrier to major enrollment, and it was no longer serving its previous purpose. The program also changed its Bachelor of Science requirements to add flexibility and bring its requirements in line with those in other CLAS programs and the revised CLAS requirements.

The program has continued to modify and improve its assessment practices, including the creation of several new student learning outcomes in spring 2019 and the pilot testing of new assessments. Due to a number of unexpected and intervening situations, including the disruption of the COVID pandemic, the program still needs to formally complete the full revision process for its student learning outcomes and assessment plan. The Assessment Committee will be working on finalizing this important work.

- Actions taken as a result of this review: The program has several specific actions planned as a result of both preparing for and undergoing this review. First, the program will continue its efforts to grow the major, including through the new criminology emphasis. The program is hopeful this emphasis will increase the number of majors, enrollments, and credit hours. This would require obtaining the approval to hire a criminologist with expertise in the criminal justice system and punishment. Second, the program plans to evaluate the course offerings every year to ensure appropriate diversity in course modalities to maximize the best fit for its students' needs. The program will also examine DFW rates in online courses and face-to-face courses to make sure online courses are positively benefitting student progress. Prior to the onset of the COVID pandemic, nearly all of the program's courses were delivered in the face-to-face modality, with most of the online courses only during the summer terms. The shift to online teaching in March 2020 was an abrupt shift for most faculty. A large majority of Sociology faculty have now taken multiple courses through the Center for Innovative Teaching and Learning in the past 18 months to improve the online delivery of course content and all are now comfortable in the online environment. This academic year the Department has broadened the course offerings that are online and the overall percentage of courses that are online, with a mix of about 75% face-to-face and 25% online.

Finally, the program will be working to complete important ongoing work in several areas, including the work noted in the prior section regarding formally completing revisions to its SLOs and assessment plan. Also as noted in the prior section, the Department has created a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion committee, and its work is just beginning. The committee plans include examining DFW rates, course policies, and syllabi, as well as creating a department-level climate survey. Overall, the program looks to align with President Freeman's goals on closing equity gaps (Goal 2B), incorporating social justice and anti-racism work throughout the curriculum (Goal 4A), as well as work to actively recruit, retain and develop diverse faculty and staff (Goal 4B). The program realizes that many of these goals are forward facing, however, the program believes that Sociology at its core is interested in DEI issues, and many of its faculty have been active on these issues, especially as it relates to First Generation, Women, and BIPOC students/faculty/staff. A final area of ongoing work is in alumni relations. The Department's Alumni Relations committee is currently working to improve its

interactions and communications with alumni and is specifically seeking to strengthen ties with alumni through regular communication, events and alumni awards.

## Outcome

- Decision:

x Program in good standing (review in eight years, i.e., 2029-2030).

Explanation: The B.A./B.S. program in Sociology has declined in students since the last review, perhaps to a more sustainable size and with curricular and program improvements in the degree path. The emphasis on criminology within the major is predicted to help further stabilize enrollments while still allowing student to personalize their undergraduate curriculum to meet their interest and career goals. The program serves as a home for many of NIU's and CLAS' students from diverse backgrounds.

## M.A. in Sociology (45.1101)

### Major Findings and Recommendations:

- Major changes in the program: The graduate program in sociology seeks to train students in the advanced theories and methods of sociological inquiry necessary to analyze the complex diversity of social life. The program fosters students' abilities to think critically and reason logically, to write and speak persuasively, and to apply hands-on empirical analysis to a range of intellectual and policy questions. The program prepares students for teaching and research in sociology, for positions in public and private agencies, and for additional advanced study in Ph.D. programs. The program has found that the same foundational skills it provides its students for a Ph.D. program also prepares its students for the job market and makes them valuable and in-demand employees. The program equips students with skills needed for many varied positions in the fields of criminal justice, teaching, social services, and social science research in private or public institutions. Students in the program obtain skills that qualify them for careers projected to experience growth. These are criminal justice, social services, teaching, and research analyst positions. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), employment in community and social service occupations is projected to grow 12 percent from 2020 to 2030, faster than the average for all occupations. The program has students in these and other related positions in the criminal justice field, with titles such as FBI agent and U.S. Pretrial Services Officer. Students in the program are also in coordinator positions at social service organizations, such as those focusing on at-risk youth and public health. Students may also teach sociology with a M.A. degree in many settings or assume positions in advising or administrative roles. According to BLS "employment of postsecondary teachers is projected to grow 12 percent from 2020 to 2030, faster than the average for all occupations". The position of Survey Researcher falls under the category of social science occupations in the BLS and "is projected to grow 8 percent from 2020 to 2030" and the state of Illinois is one of highest employers for this position (BLS). The program has students who obtain positions as researchers in the medical field, in social

justice research centers, and in market research. Students have the ability to engage in both qualitative and quantitative research, combined with theoretical social analysis valuable to many employers. Recent placement data for graduates demonstrates the program prepares students for a variety of careers, including Ph.D. programs, criminal justice positions, research positions, and teaching/advising positions.

- Major findings and recommendations: From 2016 through 2021, enrollment in the M.A. program has remained relatively stable and has averaged around 15.5 full-time enrolled students per year; the number of enrolled students has varied between a low of 12 students (FY18) and a high of 20 students (FY20), which is lower than at our last review (2013-2014) when there was an average enrollment number of 28 students. From 2015 through 2021, the M.A. program awarded 42 degrees in total; on average, it conferred six degrees per year, while the number of degrees awarded each year varied between 2 (FY16) and 11 (FY21) degrees. Internal records show the overall graduation rate as 72% of all students initially enrolled from 2014 through 2019. Last year, in FY21, the program awarded its single largest number of degrees, with 11 degrees conferred. Indeed, taking into account the results from the last review in 2014, 11 is the single largest number of conferred degrees it has awarded in a single fiscal year since FY08. In the last review, it awarded 7.8 degrees per year on average. Considering that it enrolled roughly 12 fewer students per year during the current review period, it is worth pointing out the following finding: on average, the program conferred a relatively similar number of degrees (6 vs. 7.8) in both review periods. This finding demonstrates that the program's recent retention efforts and strong advising support structures have been paying off in terms of improved graduation outcomes for the program participants. The improvement in the recent graduation rates can also be seen in the "new graduate student time to degree" data with an improvement in the time to degree progress that began in 2015. In 2012 and 2013, the program graduated fewer than 40% of its graduates within three years. Since 2015, both the two-year and three-year percentages have improved to be consistently at or over 67%. The program is actively recruiting students with diverse backgrounds, and in alignment with other NIU departments, it eliminated the requirement of the GRE test for graduate admissions, instead using more holistic measures. Since 2018 about half of the program graduate students have been students of color, which is a marked increase from the last review when only 12-17% of enrolled students were students of color. An additional concern noted in the last review was the issue of graduation rates for students of color. Since that review, the graduation rate for students of color has improved substantially, with data showing graduation rates at 83% for students of color enrolled between 2016-2019. Overall, the graduation rates have improved since the last review, and especially since 2015; these data show the program has similarly improved the graduation rates for both students of color and females. For students of color, the 2-year graduation percentage is almost 50%, but it increased to 60% since 2015, with a 3-year percentage of 67%. For females, the 2-year graduation percentage has increased since 2015 to 57% (35% for the entire period), while the 3-year percentage has increased since 2015 to 72% (52% for the entire period). Part of the success of graduate students rests on the ability to conduct research with faculty. Since the last review, there were 11 peer-reviewed publications co-authored between a member of the faculty and one or more graduate students. The student/faculty ratio allows for a high degree of one-on-one mentoring. The

Great Journeys assistantships have been beneficial for faculty production and graduate student research training. To continue and build upon the excellent progress in the M.A. program, especially for students with diverse backgrounds, the program needs to continue to fund full-time graduate assistants (GAs\_) for two years. The program's student demographics includes a significant representation of first-generation, low-income students who need to be funded to attend the M.A. program. The program has utilized its budget efficiently and has consistently worked on developing financial resources for sustainability, including placing students as GAs in other departments and centers.

- Actions taken since the last review: The degree emphases have remained very similar to those offered during our last review, which includes either a general sociology track or a criminology specialization track, but the program has now added “race, gender, and social inequality” as an additional area of study. More importantly, it has reinstated the option for an internship capstone pathway, and thus students in either track can choose to complete either a thesis or an internship capstone to satisfy the Master's degree requirements. The reinstatement of the internship capstone pathway was due to many external factors, including shifts in the job market and declining sociology Ph.D. program enrollments. The program purposefully modified the structure of the current internship capstone pathway to address the key issues that led it to eliminate it previously in 2011. The modifications include faculty supervision for all students on the pathway and an added requirement of passing a comprehensive exam on theory and methods prior internship participation. The internship capstone pathway has proven to be both a recruitment and retention device for the program. For example, the program re-enrolled and graduated five graduate students that were not going to graduate in the absence of this pathway because writing a thesis did not align with their career objectives. Further, it has generated enrollment from new students seeking a more applied career after graduation, and it is especially attractive to those seeking training through community engagement. The internship pathway has strengthened its career placements in the applied fields of criminal justice, social services, and research analysis for both private and public organizations.

The program has also made some changes to its admissions procedures. In 2019, it entered into an agreement with the NIU Honors program to prioritize Honors students in admission to the program. In the Spring of 2021, the faculty voted to remove the GRE as an admission requirement for the M.A. program, which brings it into alignment both with NIU's policy on standardized tests for undergraduate admission and with the large number of other graduate programs no longer requiring the GRE. In its place, the program instead will use more holistic measures taking the entire academic record of the student into account. The main suggestion on curriculum matters in the last review was to add more elective seminars just for graduate students, rather than only offering electives taken with undergraduates in the combined 400/500-level courses. Since then, the program has provided new seminar opportunities, including in criminology and one on Teaching Sociology. Aligning with the addition of the race and gender inequality field of study, the program also added a graduate seminar on race and ethnicity. Although the last review stated that it had a diverse student population, it also noted that its graduation rates for students of color were low. Since the last review and especially since 2017, the



program has increased efforts at recruiting students of color, as well as increasing the graduation rates of all students, including students of color and females.

- Actions taken as a result of this review: The program has several specific changes planned because of both preparing for and undergoing this review. First, it intends to continue to increase 600-level seminar electives under the listing of Proseminars enabling graduate students to have graduate seminar courses not shared with undergraduate courses. Based on student demand, some of these courses will be proposed as permanent seminars. The program will continue to seek approval to hire an additional professor to contribute to both undergraduate and graduate criminology courses, especially ones with a criminal justice and punishment focus. Second, the program has decided to move its SOCI 674 course (“The Research Process in Sociology”) from the first to the second semester for first-year students. This course discusses the role of the social scientific method in the social research process, and moving this course to the second semester gives the students their first semester to determine initially what topic they might want to pursue via their chosen pathway (thesis/internship capstone). Third, this review has made clear that the program is now more effectively helping its graduate students successfully navigate the demands of the program. It has achieved this largely through increased mentoring and advising, especially via the Director of Graduate Studies position. There is a need to maintain this momentum and to continue helping students make timely progress on their pathway towards graduation. To that end, the expanded mentoring and advising practices that have been developed over the past four years have now been institutionalized into the Director of Graduate Studies position. The program’s future goals include continuing to create effective, measurable mechanisms for enhancing diversity, equity and inclusion and program sustainability in terms of both enrollments and degrees conferred. Along those lines, it will be developing an exit survey/interview for the program graduates; this survey/interview will help the program to better understand their experiences in the program, the strengths and weaknesses of the program, areas for improvement, and to connect with them about their next steps. Finally, with the introduction of the internship pathway, the program needs to complete the work already begun in terms of its assessments of the program, including revisions to the SLOs and modifications to the assessment plan that accounts for both formative to summative assessments applicable to both pathways.

## Outcome

- Decision:

  x   Program in good standing (review in eight years, i.e., 2029-2030).

Explanation: The M.A. program in Sociology has adjusted well to the smaller size of NIU by strengthening its criminal justice focus for the graduate program as well as the undergraduate program, in alignment with the NIU’s and CLAS’ vision and mission. They have recruited, retained, and graduated students with diverse backgrounds at a high rate compared to other graduate programs and adapted their program pathway to recreate the internship track that appeals to students pursuing a career pathway rather than doctoral studies.

## **B.A. in World Languages and Cultures (16.0901)**

### Major Findings and Recommendations:

- **Major changes in the program:** Since the last program review, a significant change to the department was to consolidate the separate majors and minors into a single degree program with different emphases or language options. The three separate majors (French, German, and Spanish) are now a single degree program, “Major in World Languages and Cultures (B.A.),” with an emphasis in French and Francophone Studies, German Studies, and Spanish and Hispanic Studies. These emphases within the major can be combined with the Educator Licensure program to prepare students to teach language classes. The program’s eight minors (Chinese, Classical Studies, Deaf Culture, French, German, Japanese, Russian, and Spanish) are now grouped under one degree program, “Minor in World Languages and Cultures,” with specific language options. The programs, whether as a major or minor study, provide a definite advantage to students’ overall career success as they acquire knowledge of a foreign language, literature, and culture. The department provides several avenues for its students to acquire such experiences, such as through study abroad to countries in Asia, Europe, and Central and South America and the programming associated with NIU’s Centers for Southeast Asian Studies, one of the few federally sponsored Centers. In today’s hyper-connected, multicultural global society, the need for knowledge of a foreign language has become even more critical. Students with second language skills are better prepared to compete for jobs with peers around the world, and they are better equipped to address issues of global diversity. Graduates from World Language and Cultures (WLC) get jobs as teachers, interpreters or translators; they work in government (CIA, Defense Department, Immigration, Department of Justice), as lawyers, in industry, and banking, just to name a few. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, future job prospects for graduates are good (projected growth between 2019 and 2029 for the following professions: foreign language teachers, 4% increase; interpreters, 20% increase; government analyst, 11% increase; lawyers, 4% increase; and foreign correspondent, 11% increase).
- **Major findings and recommendations:** The number of students enrolled in the three B.A. degree emphases in WLC have declined along with the overall enrollments of the university during the past 5 years. The decline has been rather uneven among the three major emphases with very few students pursuing the emphasis in German but many more enrolled in Spanish and stable enrollment in French. Thus, one recommendation is to phase out the German major emphasis while retaining the minor emphasis. The total number of scheduled credit hours has also declined with a 10.6% decline over the past 3 years, however that decline reflects the decline in undergraduate students pursuing a B.A. major in general as 86% of the total attempted hours are for students outside the major. The reduced scheduled credit hours also have accompanied a decline in the number of teaching faculty and instructors in WLC. Since the class fill rate is high in the department, with Introductory and Intermediate language courses filling at over 90%, another reason for the reduced total credit hours could be the reduced teaching capacity. In 2014 when the department submitted the previous program review, WLC had 19

faculty members and 20 instructors. In the current reporting year (2020-21) WLC has 15 faculty (-21%) and 14 instructors (-30%).

The department educates a very diverse population of students. Over the course of the five-year span of data, the number of students in the WLC major who identify as female has hovered between 64% (2015) and 66.7% (2019). Students who take classes in WLC self-report as 33% White, 59% Hispanic, 8% Black, and 3% Other. The department also has succeeded in attracting a substantial number of first-generation students. Between 2015 and 2019, enrollments of first-generation students have averaged 53%. One driver for the diversity in the department is the Foreign Language Residence Program (FLRP), where students live in a section of the residence hall with a native speaker. The program provides an immersive experience for the students, began in 1972, and is the oldest continuing foreign language immersive program in the United States. One critical area the department contributes to the overall education in the United States is in providing Southeast Asian language classes. WLC houses courses supported by the prestigious Title VI National Resource Centers (NRC) federal grant awarded to the Center for Southeast Asian Studies (CSEAS). NIU is one of only eight universities in the U.S. to have a National Resource Center, and WLC supports the center in teaching these languages.

Students in the department have demonstrated a high rate of successfully passing their courses and have found success obtaining employment upon graduation. In the academic year 2019-20, 91% of WLC students successfully passed their coursework. The program's teacher licensure students have had a 100% job placement rate consecutively for the last four years. The overall placement rate of graduates continues to be successful and steady. As an example, the French faculty looked at 18 recent graduates in French (2018-2020), and found that nine got jobs in teaching, four went on to graduate school, two are employed with law firms, and one in banking.

- Actions taken since the last review: Since the last review, the program merged the B.A. in French, German, and Spanish into one B.A. degree. Students may now major in World Languages and Cultures with an emphasis in French, German, or Spanish. Similarly, the department now offers one minor in World Languages and Cultures with emphases in the different languages. A recent change that the program hopes will increase enrollments and create better stability for the program is a dual-credit agreement it has now signed with the College of DuPage (COD) for the French, German, and Spanish programs. Students at COD may take two 300-level courses at COD that can now transfer to NIU, which will allow students transferring to the program to be a semester ahead of where they would have been had they only completed the standard four-semester courses in the basic language program at COD.

Since the last review, the number of faculty and instructors has decreased. The program has worked to upgrade facilities to support its students, even as the teaching capacity has been reduced. At the close of 2019, the Language Learning Center (LLC) devoted funds to purchase 50 new computers to replace the computers for students in language courses. This spring semester, the program was approved to upgrade the LLC with new modular desks, laptops that can be checked out, and new chairs. This will drastically improve the

learning environment for the students and provide additional support, especially for students in the introductory and intermediate courses.

- Actions taken as a result of this review: With the decline in enrollment in the German emphasis, the program recommends phasing out the major and focusing on the minor. It also recommends eliminating Portuguese as an offering and making the Classic Studies emphasis in the WLC minor more interdisciplinary, creating better defined connections with English and History. This will streamline the department's curriculum offerings so it can focus on areas of strength: American Sign Language, French, Japanese, and Spanish. These proposed changes align well with the budgetary constraints the college is currently undergoing. The department also intends to place the Chinese program on hiatus for a couple of years due to staffing, and then revisit the prospect of hiring an instructor or assistant professor who is qualified to teach Chinese language and culture.

From a course delivery standpoint, WLC plans to continue to offer a richer selection of online courses, as non-traditional students tend to work and offering online courses provides these students with a pathway to complete their degrees. The department would like to upgrade its minor in Japanese to a major due to the robust enrollment. This would require hiring a new tenure track faculty member in Japanese.

## Outcome

- Decision:

  x   Program in good standing (review in eight years, i.e., 2029-2030).

Explanation: The B.A. in World Languages and Cultures is a central component to providing rich cultural experiences for the many undergraduate students through the general education requirements for any major and then a deeper experience for students who pursue their B.A. degree in WLC. In addition to their own programs, the department supports the academic and cultural centers on campus to offer unique experiences to undergraduate students and the campus community, preparing them to be informed and engaged citizens in a global society.

## M.A. in World Languages and Cultures (16.0905)

### Major Findings and Recommendations:

- Major changes in the program: The Master of Arts (M.A.) in Spanish and Hispanic Studies in the Department of World Languages and Cultures is committed to quality teaching, research, engagement, and outreach. In its classrooms and the Language Learning Center, students work on achieving high standards (in accordance with the standards of the American Council for the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL)). At the same time, students develop a deeper understanding of and an appreciation for cultural, linguistic, and literary differences in the regions where Spanish is spoken, thus preparing them to be informed and engaged citizens in a global society. Issues of multiculturalism, diversity, and internationalization lie at the heart of the M.A.

curriculum. All of the program's graduates are able to synthesize knowledge and conduct research even though many of the graduates are K-12 teachers who continue careers in middle and high schools where research is not necessary. The goals of the M.A. program are to prepare students to find jobs primarily in education. Students are prepared for dynamic careers in the global economy, in areas like translation, business, tourism, service industries, banking and education. Acquiring knowledge of a foreign language including that country's literature, and culture is a definite advantage to students' overall career success. The department provides several avenues for students to acquire this experience. The Spanish classes are taught completely in Spanish. The program also has study abroad programs in Spanish-speaking countries in Europe, and Central and South America.

- Major findings and recommendations: Enrollments in the M.A. program have declined since the pandemic began in March 2020. Over the past five years, enrollment in the graduate program declined from 43 in 2017-2018 to 27 students for the past three years. The student credit-hour production has likewise declined from 290 scheduled credit hours in 2017-2018 to 202 for the past 3 years. However, the graduation rate is quite steady with 2 to 4 students graduating per year. While a small graduate program at NIU, the program believes that it is critical to support the need for teachers in secondary education in Illinois. The greatest pool of M.A. students come from its own undergraduates, especially those in the Educator Licensure program who benefit from the knowledge the graduate curriculum provides to use in their classes, as well as from the increase in salary and ability to offer AP courses at the high school level.

The WLC faculty has been productive in research and recognized for exceptional teaching. During the past five years, the faculty in the department have produced 9 books, 27 articles, and 16 book chapters. They have published widely and have been proactive in incorporating topics of gender, race, equity, and inclusion into their scholarly products. For example, Dr. Tharaphi Than published "Lost in Translation: Feminism in Myanmar" (2018) and Dr. Linda Saborio published "Conversations with the Past: Rearticulating Gendered and Historicized Scripts in Two Contemporary Mexican Plays" (2021). Underscoring the faculty's productivity is the high caliber of their teaching. In 2018, Dr. Mandy Faretta-Stutenberg (Spanish) received the National Early Career Scholar award from American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL), the national body for teachers of foreign languages. In this same year, Professor Karen Lichtman (Spanish) received national recognition by the National Council for the Accreditation of Education Preparation.

- Actions taken since the last review: As indicated above, the major action since the last review was the sunseting of the masters in the French program. This was in response to the reduced demand for the M.A. in French, along with reduce capacity with the loss of faculty. The elimination of the M.A. in French allows the department to focus on the Spanish M.A. program, supporting the diversity goals of NIU and CLAS. Spanish is the largest non-white population in the United States, and a large part of the population of Illinois. Among the program's teaching members, over 50% are minorities, and 73%

identify as female. The department supports the efforts of both CLAS and the university to educate its students about the importance of seeing their world as diverse and vibrant.

The M.A. in Spanish curriculum was recently revamped to better serve the graduate student population and provide greater flexibility with program completion. The newly proposed curriculum changes include the requirement that the M.A. students complete a research methodologies course offered through the English department. In addition, the program recently added the option of taking a comprehensive M.A. exam (plus an additional course) in place of the M.A. thesis for degree completion. The first M.A. comprehensive exam was administered in fall of 2019. Further, to make the curriculum more accessible to teachers who work during the day, graduate-level classes in fall 2021 and spring 2022 were all online. The program will monitor the success of the students in these classes, adjusting delivery if needed.

- Actions taken as a result of this review: The department is prioritizing filling the role of Director of Graduate Studies. The faculty member chosen to fill this role will be charged with actively recruiting current B.A. students and recent graduates from the Educator Licensure program to enter the M.A. program in Spanish. Furthermore, the new director will work on prompt communication with incoming students and provide clear guidance and support for degree completion. The program will invest in the director recruiting potential students at regional conferences, such as the Illinois Council of Teachers of Foreign Languages, where there is a large presence of high school teachers. Further, it will need to continue to offer a wide variety of courses at the M.A. level in all three areas of interest: linguistics, translation/interpretation, and literature/culture. Finally, the department is committed to promoting the combined M.A. plus Educator Licensure program and highlighting this option in its marketing materials.

## Outcome

- Decision:

  x   Program in good standing (review in eight years, i.e., 2029-2030).

Explanation: The M.A. in World Languages and Cultures - Spanish provides a valuable program to the graduate portfolio by supporting continuing education for K-12 teachers in the northern Illinois region. In addition, the department faculty and students contribute to diversifying the research, teaching and engagement through their support of academic and cultural centers on campus, including the Center for Latino and Latin American Studies.

## M.P.A. in Public Administration (44.0401)

### Major Findings and Recommendations:

- Major changes in the program: The mission of the Department of Public Administration is to advance excellence in professional public management through scholarship in teaching, research, and service. The Department is committed to strengthening the

knowledge and skills that enhance the management and leadership capacity of individuals pursuing public service careers. The program recruits students who plan to engage in a career in public management and students who are currently professionals in the field, wishing to receive additional training and a pivotal academic credential. The Master in Public Administration (MPA) prepares their students to be ethically grounded leaders and managers, who effectively work with diverse internal and external stakeholders, communicate effectively with diverse audiences (oral/written) and incorporate a professional code of ethics to guide decisions. The MPA program's high national ranking is grounded in its premier paid internship program, whereby pre-career students work in local governments and nonprofit agencies.

- Major findings and recommendations: Graduate enrollments in Public Administration courses increased steadily during this review period with some fluctuations, reaching the highest enrollment to date in the spring of 2020 (123 students enrolled), which includes students in the Certificate and MPA programs. The growth in 2018 is driven by the launch of the online programs. The online programs have attracted students in the middle of their careers, shrinking the numbers of students in the classroom sections; however total enrollment remains strong. The MPA specifically has retained enrollments with an average over the past 5 years of 85 MPA students and 37.6 degrees awarded each year. Enrollments could increase for the internship students starting their careers if staff could devote time to campus visits in key feeder schools in IL, WI, IA, and MN. Recruitment requires maintaining relationships with key public affairs faculty in feeder schools and introducing second and third year undergrads to the idea of a local government career.

The MPA is accredited by the Commission on Peer Review Accreditation (COPRA) of the Network of Schools of Public Policy, Affairs and Administration (NASPAA). As part of the COPRA accreditation and aligned with international accreditation standards, the MPA program competencies prepare their graduates to be ethically grounded leaders and managers, who effectively work with diverse internal and external stakeholders, communicate effectively with diverse audiences (oral/written), incorporate a professional code of ethics to guide decisions, meaningfully engage with diverse perspectives, and evaluate programs in terms of equity, efficiency, effectiveness, and economy. Developed with MPA's diverse board of advisors and student body, the program is implementing the second Five Year Strategic Diversity Plan, addressing student, faculty, and curricular issues to enhance program diversity, equity and inclusion. The program uses contractual funding for internships to recruit women and other underrepresented persons into the local government management (LGM) profession and community-based nonprofit organizations through the MPA program assistantships. The program leverages the fact that 1/3 of Illinois municipal managers have an MPA from NIU, enabling placement of MPA students from diverse backgrounds who are critical to improving the diversity of the profession.

- Actions taken since the last review: There have been several changes as a result of the prior review to the MPA degree program, as well as changes to the program due to opportunities. The 2012-2013 program review identified growing enrollment as an objective, which has been realized and strengthened by the move to offer the MPA

(2019) and the Graduate Certificate in Public Management (GCPM) (2018) fully online. The GCPM provides a concentration of courses in public management (total of 15 credit hours to receive the certificate), supporting working professionals and allows students to engage in the MPA program course work, without committing to the full degree program. About 80% of the GCPM students use the 15 credits to continue studies and complete the MPA. While some of the courses were already available online, the department's effort to provide their curriculum completely through an online modality was substantial and to fully realize its potential, will need additional resources for faculty and staff to support the program. In addition, the department revised the double degree JD-MPA program to make it easier and faster for graduate students to earn both degrees in less time. The MPA takes 12 JD credits as an MPA specialization (Public Service and Law) and the Law School takes 12 MPA credits toward the JD. MPA students can also earn double degrees in Kenya and Thailand with partner master's programs in public policy. These joint programs may provide additional enrollment, but it will take time to see the impact.

- Actions taken as a result of this review: The current plan for the department is to implement their 2021-2025 strategic diversity plan (SDP) draft, having recently used the annual faculty retreat to help develop goals for student recruitment and retention, faculty recruitment and retention, and diversity, equity and inclusion in its MPA curriculum, including the internship experience. While the diversity of the students is growing, especially with the targeted internship placements, the program is working to further their recruitment of underrepresented students.

## Outcome

- Decision:

x Program in good standing (review in seven years, i.e., 2028-2029, NASPAA aligned, its disciplinary accreditor).

Explanation: The M.A. program in Public Administration is a valuable graduate program, training students in both theory and practice through their program requirements. The College is very supportive of the fully online M.A. in Public Administration and Certificate in Public Management for it has removed a barrier for their students at multiple stages of their career, most especially in the mid-career range, and is an opportunity to increase their enrollments and degree production.

## Centers and Institutes

### Center for Governmental Studies (90.451)

Major Findings and Recommendations:

- Major changes in the program: The Center for Governmental Studies (CGS) was established in 1969 and is NIU's unique multidisciplinary unit particularly designed to



provide policy research and assistance, public management support, and data and training services to national, state, and local governmental entities, as well as civic-focused not-for-profits and other institutions. The Center recently celebrated its 50th anniversary as a leading academic-based applied research organization. Its mission as the University's "think and do tank" is to provide the resources and expertise that assist decision makers at all levels of government with the implementation of efficient, sustainable, and effective approaches to a broad spectrum of policy and governance issues. When the Division of Outreach, Engagement, and Regional Development (OERD) was created in 2001 to enhance NIU's ability to deliver outreach and engagement activities statewide, CGS became an integral component by advancing NIU's Service and Stewardship values via six major program and practice areas: Association Management; Data Informatics; Strategic Management, Policy and Community Development; Survey Research and Data Visualization; Organizational Development, Governance and Training; and Workforce Development. As of June 30, 2021, the Center's personnel consisted of 46 members: 27 full-time staff, 11 part-time and extra help staff, 6 graduate research assistants/interns, and 2 undergraduate student workers. This represents a 39% reduction in full-time positions since the 2013 review, with a significant portion of both the rise and eventual reduction in staffing levels during the period attributable to the transition of NIU's Public Opinion Lab (POL) into the OERD and CGS. In addition to CGS staff, over the past eight years, nearly 20 University faculty collaborators have contributed to both funded and public service projects as integral partners with CGS and its six practice area teams.

Adaptation and change have been the watchwords for the Center since its last review in 2013. In recognition of the CGS's active role in the University's School of Public and Global Affairs since 2014, the Center was made a full voting member of the School in 2018. An array of staffing changes in the past eight years have given rise to new leadership and the reconfiguration or discontinuation of three program areas at the Center. These changes at the director level resulted in the designation of new leaders for two key teams – Workforce Development and Economic Impact, and Public Management and Training (PMT). The Public Management practice was reimaged, resulting in the establishment of a newly defined program area now entitled Strategic Management, Policy and Community Development. Additionally, the training element of the former PMT team was reframed as the Organizational Development, Governance and Training team, which includes the Center's 18-years-old Civic Leadership Academy. In total, four new practice areas were established or redefined since the last review: Strategic Management, Policy and Community Development; Data Informatics; Survey Research and Data Visualization (created from the absorption and redesign of POL), and Organizational Development, Governance and Training.

- **Major findings and recommendations:** CGS's array of staff and practice areas offers a depth and breadth of skills and expertise to help analyze, address, and respond to governmental challenges, opportunities, and emerging trends that range from ongoing and structural challenges to those which have surfaced due to changing demographics, economic strain, climate change, and the ongoing pandemic. At the same time, the Center has continued to deepen its support and assistance to internal constituents of the University and the host communities of DeKalb, Sycamore, and DeKalb County. During

the review period, the Center's staffing and practice area designs have been refined and adjusted to adapt to the dynamics of public policy and public management as well as the evolving needs and challenges of its civic stakeholders and governmental client organizations. CGS's financial model has traditionally been built around both internal University support and external financial support from clients and partners. During the reporting period, general revenue support for the work of the Center has seen a notable decrease from \$909,420 in FY14 to \$190,665 in FY2021, a reduction of 79%. The decrease in General Fund revenue designated for the Center has been significant and reflects the overall financial challenges that have been faced by the University during the same period. Despite these challenges, CGS remains committed to its mission and intends to maintain its operations by dedicating itself to generating new and steady levels of external funding. During the review period of fiscal years 2014 through 2021, the Center produced an annual average of \$2,629,098 in outside funding from service contracts and some grants, from a high of \$3,046,850 in FY17 to a low of \$2,191,270 in FY18. As of February 2022, \$1,789,795 in local funding for FY22 has been received, with an additional \$1,125,300 in local funding that is committed or in the pipeline for the remainder of the current fiscal year.

CGS has also continued its tradition of contributing its teams' time and talent to NIU, the surrounding community, and civic programs, projects, and initiatives, contributing the equivalent of over \$1.4 million in staff time to public service activities over the past eight years. Between FY14 and FY21, a total of 485 funded projects were undertaken by CGS teams, representing 237 unique (unduplicated) clients, including 90 municipalities, 34 special service governments, 20 colleges or universities, 19 state agencies, 17 governmental consortiums, 14 non-profits, 10 associations, and a mix of 34 other public and private organizations. Over 35% of the Center's requests for service come from repeat clients and partners. While client organizations pay for services, CGS is routinely seen as a trusted and objective partner and source for assistance. The fee-for-service model is part of an overall relationship that not only allows for the provision of high-quality services, but brings NIU the unique perspective that only in-depth work with clients can create. In fact, CGS and faculty collaborators at NIU and beyond have turned insights and observations from many of these engagement experiences into original research and commentary in the Center's longstanding publication, Policy Profiles. The publication was paused in response to the challenges and fiscal constraints that came with the pandemic, but the Center's senior leaders remain committed to resuming its publication in conjunction with partners in the School of Public and Global affairs and other current and former faculty members.

- Actions taken since the last review: The most significant developments occurring since the last review are linked to three significant happenings: (1) the ability of the Center to grow its external funding sources and income flow to replace shrinking General Fund allotments in a challenging fiscal environment for the University, (2) becoming a full member and partner in SPGA as the only non-academic unit in the School, and (3) the realignment of overall staffing and the redesign and replacement of programs where external support was fading or unreliable to support the creation of new program and practice areas to meet growing needs and demands. The latter includes the formation of

the Data Informatics practice, the absorption of POL and resulting redesign of Survey Research services, the creation of a Workforce Development team, and partnering with other OERD units to assist with the establishment of a Research Data Collaborative to address large data opportunities that are often associated with significant external funding.

Other notable improvements since the last review include the implementation of an updated performance management system for staff and the creation of a project tracker tool for use by the Center's various programs and practice areas. In the prior review, a notation was made regarding the plan to revise and refine the performance management tool and approach for staff members. Over the review period, the Center's performance review tool was also revised, refocused, and refined to put more emphasis on collaboration, teamwork, quality, and creativity. At the senior level, the performance focus is on goal attainment and overall management of team leaders' practice areas. In the area of performance management and tracking, a new project tracker tool was introduced which is readily available on a shared drive for use by the six teams at CGS. The project tracker allows for the sharing of information on the current status of both current and prospective projects and helps to gauge resource use in present projects. This tool also creates a pipeline for future projects and assists with identifying likely revenue flows and resource demands for future projects and programs.

- Actions taken as a result of this review: Actions are underway over the next two to three years to address four key improvement or enhancement areas identified through and prior to the 2022 review: (1) enhance and improve the Center's performance measures and internal data tracking platforms, (2) update the strategic plan for CGS, (3) continue to cultivate and act on alternative strategies to help diversify and solidify funding sources to fit a changing governmental and global landscape, and (4) continue developing and refining a pandemic response strategy that has been framed by the Center's leadership as a way to combine skills and abilities across its teams to help governments, leaders, and communities as they adapt to the new environment shaped by the pandemic.

In summary, this program review exercise for FY2014 through FY2021 has affirmed that the Center, along with its long-time academic partners across the University, continues to lead the way as a steady contributor of thinkers, advisors, and researchers in governmental leadership, management and civic engagement field that have been a hallmark of NIU. Since 1969, CGS and its multidisciplinary teams have had a proven record of bringing to life the theories and models used in research and the classroom through innovative yet practical applications in the field. The civic and governmental questions that lay ahead and emerging client needs are challenges that the Center and its team of professionals stand ready and committed to meet.

## Outcome

- Decision:

  x   Program in good standing (review in seven years, i.e., 2028-2029, extension granted from 2020-2021).

Explanation: The Center for Governmental Studies continues to fulfill Northern Illinois University's mission. The Center generates considerable external funding that directly benefits the university. The staff continues to collaborate with other departments within the university on important civic projects throughout the State of Illinois, and the Center will carry out the action items identified in the program summary.

## Center for Child Welfare and Education (90.4407A)

### Major Findings and Recommendations:

- Major changes in the program: The Center for Child Welfare and Education (CCWE) aims to assist the education and development of children and youth who have been abused or neglected. CCWE's work contributes to the body of knowledge, and influences training and practice, to positively affect educational outcomes of this unique population. There are four major objectives: (1) to promote best practice, (2) to contribute to the preparation of the professional workforce, (3) to influence policy analysis and development, and (4) to engage in research. State funding for the center, and other organizations of this type, has declined during the review period. Between FY17 and FY21 state funding was reduced from \$1,258,228 to \$1,116,487, a reduction of about 11 percent. This reduction has had substantial impact on the services for clients in need.
- Major findings and recommendations: The CCWE administers two grant programs: the Educational Access Project (EAP), and the Northern Region Permanency Enhancement Project (PEP). For two years during this reporting period, CCWE also sought to help the Department of Children and Family Services facilitate their Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) program. All technical assistance provided by EAP is based on referral. EAP served on average 1500 children per year and trained on average 260 professionals and parents per year during the review period. To promote access to services and programs that address youth's educational needs, EAP Education Advisors provide technical assistance as well as work to build capacity in the field that fosters academic and social development. DCFS and POS welfare staff and administrators, caregivers, youth in care, school personnel, and others make referrals to EAP education advisors for technical assistance when youth in care encounter educational issues. During this period, EAP provided 3940 technical assistance activities to address school barriers. Also, CCWE continues through PEP in the northern region, to address family preservation to reduce the rate at which children are brought into the child welfare system, to reduce disproportionality and disparity of children and families of color, reunification - increase the number of children who are returned home in a timely manner and improve adoption/guardianship permanency outcomes.

CCWE provided DCFS consultation and services to facilitate the ICWA program. These included assessing youth's ICWA eligibility, securing services and documenting, advising on policy changes required to promote equity/diversity in employment, and developing connections within the Native American community.

- Actions taken since the last review: Since the last review, CCWE has been able to maintain limited state funding for programs and services. Despite difficult economic times and the pandemic CCWE has continued to successfully meet its objectives.
- Actions taken as a result of this review: As a result of this review, the Center for Child Welfare and Education will work to expand information and education in the area of child abuse and neglect and work to develop partnerships with faculty within NIU to engage collaboratively in potential external funding efforts. An example of this is working and supporting the Simulation and Learning Center at NIU.

CCWE continues to foster communication and collaboration between child welfare and education, community stakeholders and providers, and school professionals on behalf of children and families to effect system change at the local, regional and state levels. In concert with the NIU Mission of public service, CCWE has opened channels of communication and forged partnerships across state institutions, local school districts, community providers and families to improve the lives of children and families in the state while working to improve the educational outcomes of children and youth in care. Through the partnership with DCFS, private agencies and schools over the 24-year history, CCWE is viewed as the expert when it comes to the education of children and youth in the care and custody of the state. This has allowed the center the privilege of advocating for increased access to educational services, attain enrollment, improve attendance, reduce disciplinary actions, and to support youth to attend and remain in school. CCWE has a demonstrated track record in assessing the needs for staff development and in developing and providing high quality training and staff development for child welfare personnel as well as the advocacy needed for children to receive access to and support for appropriate educational services. CCWE is a source of information and resources for current and former foster youth and their families, child welfare, legal, and school professionals.

CCWE over the last 5 year reporting period experienced successes in all four of its major objectives: promoting best practices, contributing to the preparation of the professional workforce, influencing policy analysis and development and engaging in research. Areas of improvement include enhancing the CCWE database for advanced data collection and reporting needs, and expanding the research and publication agenda. These areas will be addressed by exploring partnerships with other units within NIU. Another area of need is seeking additional external funding. Partnerships within NIU will be the first priority.

## Outcome

- Decision:

    x Program in good standing (review in seven years, i.e., 2028-2029, extension granted from 2020-2021).

Explanation: The Center for Child Welfare and Education has addressed well the public service goals. Clients are accessing services they may not be able to afford elsewhere. CCWE makes important research and practice contributions to the field of child abuse and neglect.

## Center for Latino and Latin American Studies (90.0501)

### Major Findings and Recommendations:

- Major changes in the program: Over the last five years, the Center for Latino and Latin American Studies (CLLAS) has been extremely active and successful. The Center has continued recruiting and enrolling students in the Latino and Latin American Studies (LATS) minor from different colleges and departments, thereby maintaining a strong program over the past four years. The Center continues meeting students' needs and requests for culturally competent curriculum. It has engaged faculty and students from diverse backgrounds. Through collaboration with other institutions, the Center has expanded the NIU Latinx Oral History Project, providing research opportunities for CLLAS students to experience the process of data collection, analysis, and reporting of oral history. Partnerships are being sought with Universidad Externado de Colombia in Bogota, Colombia, and internships in K-12 settings in the Chicago area with the College of Education and NIU Foundation, with a flexible timeline for achieving desired activities. The Center offers a Graduate Certificate in Latin American Studies, which requires twelve hours of coursework. The online courses delivered during the pandemic offer the opportunity to seamlessly include courses from different departments. Associates of the Center demonstrated high research productivity with 354 presentations, 66 artistic works; 81 journal articles, eleven books, and 51 book chapters; external funding submissions; internal funding; and extensive outreach including social media, classroom visits, monthly electronic newsletter, and Center tours.
- Major findings and recommendations: Although the Center is highly successful, there are areas for consideration by the Center and university administration which would help ensure its continued success. Development of Memoranda of Understanding agreements (MOUs) among academic diversity centers and academic units on-campus could diminish issues around course offerings and interdisciplinary research. The MOUs would support the retention and recruitment efforts of the Center and help develop graduate programming. When feasible, the hiring of faculty should be purposely sought and coordinated across departments, colleges, and the Center to serve the interdisciplinary nature of the Center and the needs of the students. The Center is advised to benchmark against comparable and aspirational Latino/Latin American units to help develop a strategic plan for the next five years. Benchmarking of curriculum, research and

scholarship, and budget and personnel levels would be useful. A peer institution cohort might include public institutions, HSI institutions, and faculty associate staffed centers/units. The director of Decision Support and Analysis is available to work with the Center on benchmarking activities. The five-year strategic plan should provide goals, objectives, and implementation strategies. The Center is encouraged to engage broad participation in the development of the strategic plan (e.g., students, faculty associates, departments, academic units, colleges, and RIPS).

Over the past several years, the Center has faced a declining operational budget, with a recent restoration to FY20 levels. The Center encounters challenges offering consistent curriculum for students in the LATS minor. The Center, RIPS, and CLAS should investigate venues to incentivize inter/transdisciplinary work such that researchers, administration, associates, and students will benefit in the long-term with sustainable programs and activities.

The Center advances the NIU mission, vision and values especially related to diversity, equity, inclusion, and research. Elevating the work of the Center is important as an effective resource for student, faculty, and staff recruitment and retention. As the percentage of Latinx students increases at NIU, NIU aspires to become a Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI). The Center can play a critical role in achieving the designation and should be involved in planning discussions. If the university receives HSI funding, the Center would be qualified to compete for a larger pool of grant funding.

COVID19 provided an opportunity to offer online courses from different departments. Moreover, the Center has received inquiries about the online graduate certificate program already offered. The possibility of expanding the program should be explored. Scarce funding limits affiliate participation. A seed grant program could focus and better develop the research agenda of the Center.

- Actions taken since the last review: This is the first review by the Division of Research and Innovative Partnerships (RIPS).
- Actions taken as a result of this review: The actions taken as a result of this review by the center or institute will be assessed during the next review.

## Outcome

- Decision:

x Center is in good standing (review in three years, i.e., 2024-2025, the RIPS division reviews its centers every three years).

Explanation: Over the last five years, CLLAS has been active and successful. The center has demonstrated the faculty affiliates with a strong commitment to support the Center and high levels of current and projected future scholarly productivity.

## Center for Southeast Asian Studies (90.0501)

### Major Findings and Recommendations:

- Major changes in the center: Over the last five years, the Center for Southeast Asia Studies has continued to be an extremely active unit and has maintained its status as one of the premier Southeast Asia study centers in the country. The center has continued to obtain large, impactful grants for programs on the NIU campus and for cultural exchange programs with Southeast Asia. For example, in 2018, the Department of Education awarded the center \$2.48M to maintain its status as a National Resource Center, and the Luce Foundation awarded it \$275K to enhance graduate education. The Center has attracted external funds from the Department of State to support the Southeast Asia Youth Leadership Program (SEAYLP) and Engaging Young Advocates in Environmental Preservation and Peacebuilding (PYLP). Associates of the Center demonstrated high productivity including faculty research (313 presentations, 115 journal articles, 9 books, and 31 book chapters), external funding, awards (e.g., 66 Fulbright scholars), and outreach (e.g., podcast series). The Center scholarly productivity and activities are competitive with R1 institutions. Finally, the Center has also demonstrated the high level of engagement with MOUs with institutions in Cambodia, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, and Thailand.
- Major findings and recommendations: Although the Center has demonstrated great strengths, there are areas for consideration. A collaborative strategy among academic diversity centers and certificate programs on-campus could be developed to elevate the voice, concerns, and cultures of the students participating in the Center. This type of collaboration could create stronger programmatic synergies, especially with the Asian American Certificate program helping to support, elevate and bring visibility to both programs at NIU. The hiring of faculty should be strategic across departments, colleges, and the Center to serve the needs of the Center in the areas of research, language, and Title VI status requirements. The strategic plan must demonstrate a clear plan for the next five years. The plan should include goals, objectives, and the strategies to be followed within the five-year timeframe. The plan requires a proposed hiring plan with faculty hired on a common research theme(s). The Center may decide to develop a theme within a country or language to pursue as part of the strategic plan to align goals, objectives, and resources. For example, if tenure-track faculty are hired to teach Indonesian and Tagalog, these faculty members' research interests should fit within broader research themes of other Center associates or other centers on the NIU campus. This would help strengthen the ties of the Center to other units, and potentially incentivize more collaborative research between Center associates and other faculty. The Center is clearly concerned with declining numbers of faculty associates, and fears its status as a nationally recognized center may be in jeopardy if faculty lines are not retained.
- Actions taken since the last review: This is the first review by the Division of Research and Innovative Partnerships (RIPS).



- Actions taken as a result of this review: The actions taken as a result of this review by the center or institute will be assessed during the next review.

## **Outcome**

- Decision:

x Center in good standing (review in three years, i.e., 2024-2025, the RIPS division reviews its centers every three years).

Explanation: The Center for Southeast Asia Studies has a strong, well-earned reputation locally, regionally and nationally due to great scholarly productivity and outreach activities. Institutional support will be necessary to ensure continued success.