Developing a Self-Evaluation System to Promote Program Quality

How good are we?

The impetus for this project comes from a set of factors and influences, both at a local and national level. To date, the SP program at Rutgers does not have a formal data-generating system that integrates critical program-related information. Specifically, there is no mechanism in place that systematically gathers and organizes information about the program, faculty, and students.
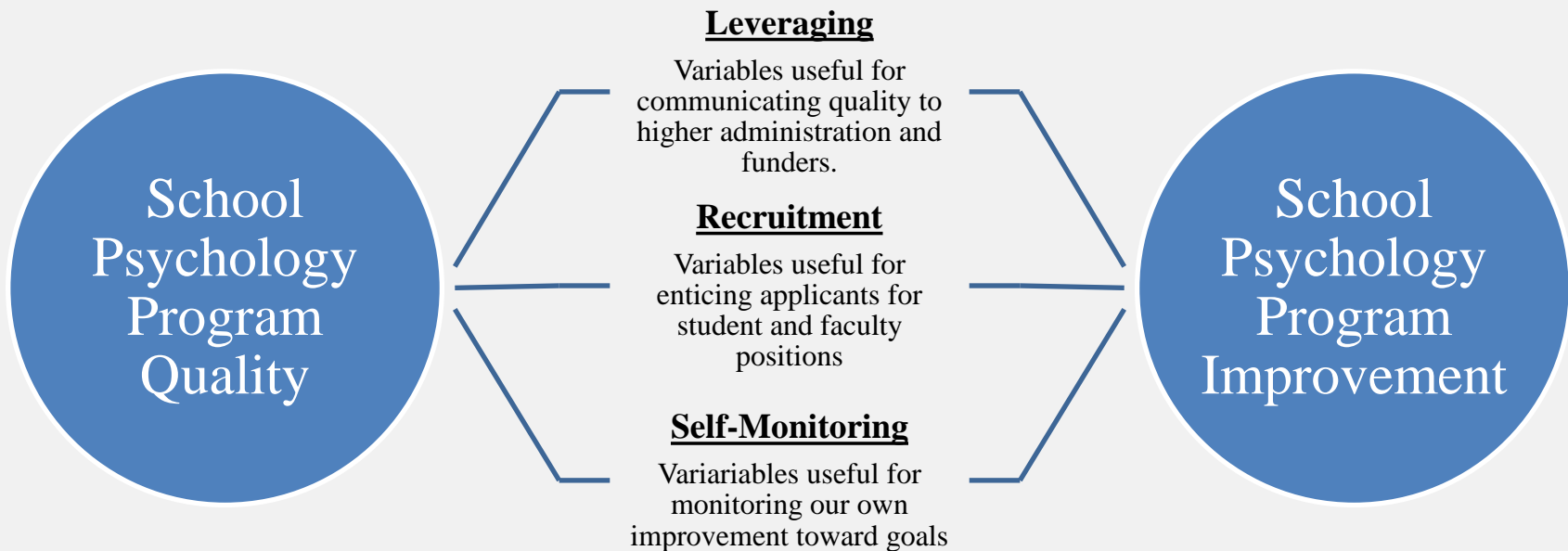
Second, there is a lack of a national ranking system of SP programs. Historically, SP program have not been included in national rankings of university programs and departments, in part, because of the highly specific focus and nature of training and practice. Without a formal ranking system, it is quite challenging for SP programs to normatively evaluate how they stack up to similar programs. Finally, because our SP program is accredited by the American Psychological Association (APA) and the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) and due to the increased focus on data-based decision making and accountability in education, there is a need for our SP program to monitor the quality of curriculum and programming, faculty productivity, and student outcomes.

The primary objective of this project is to develop a self-evaluation data-based system for the Department of School Psychology (SP) in the Graduate School of Applied and Professional Psychology (GSAPP). This self-evaluation system will provide the SP program with aggregated data about SP faculty on an annual basis regarding: (a) faculty scholarship, productivity, and service, (b) broad program outcomes, and (c) student outcomes. A central component of this self-evaluation system is technologically-based and efficient data management mechanism (i.e., based in Qualtrics) that efficiently gathers and organizes a large set of data. Gathering this data will enable administrators and SP faculty to accomplish three broad objectives: (1) leverage resources and supports, (2) support recruitment of students and faculty, and (3) self-monitor progress towards program goals delineated in the SP program strategic plan. The project is currently in the final stages. The remaining steps include analyzing pilot data to refine the survey (Fall 2016) and then administering the first official iteration of survey (Winter of 2017).

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SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY SELF-EVALUATION
MODEL

School Psychology Program Quality

Leveraging
Variables useful for communicating quality to higher administration and funders.

Recruitment
Variables useful for enticing applicants for student and faculty positions

Self-Monitoring
Variariables useful for monitoring our own improvement toward goals

School Psychology Program Improvement

In short, the primary objective of this project is to develop a self-evaluation system capable of generating a coherent set of aggregated data that will allow SP faculty to leverage resources and supports, recruit students and faculty, and self-monitor progress towards program goals delineated in their strategic vision.

The proposed project most directly addresses Goals 1 and 3. Drawing on preliminary work of a SP committee (on which I and two other faculty members served) that was commissioned to identify key indicators of program effectiveness, I will lead the initiative to further refine and develop these indicators and to also develop the mechanism to measure these indicators. Because this project is directly linked with our strategic plan and because some SP faculty members have worked on identifying the initial list of indicators, there is a strong level of interest and buy-in from faculty. Further, it is anticipated that the self-evaluation system will serve our program interests, both in the short-term and long-term. That is, data generated from this evaluation system will enable us to reflect about program quality on an annual basis and will promote data-based decision making regarding why and how we need to modify and/or sustain program practices.