

We Saved Our Program! If We Weren't So Exhausted, We'd Celebrate

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On April 15, 2020 our university announced the School Psychology graduate program would be closed and faculty laid off or re-rostered. We survived (so far). This is our story.



Jan 2020 Early Tremors
Undergrad Enrollment not strong, SP applications down, Warning from Dean of possible cuts; Ironically we also celebrated our 50th Anniversary

2020 Options and Alternatives
Submitted program options to Dean of possible cuts; Submitted program and options to administrators

April 2020 Program Stated for Closure
April 15, 2020 - Due to Budget, Program stated for Closure and faculty warned of possible layoffs (2) and re-rostering (1)

Advocacy & Planning
Met with directors & superintendents, legislators & professional orgs; Worked w faculty union; Submitted our own data to university budget committee; Wrote grant with MN Dept of Ed; Contacted other Sch Psych programs for advice on alternative models; Consulted with NASP; Developed partnership with rural co-op for remote "grow-your-own" student for 2020 pilot; Senior faculty negotiated retirement to reduce costs

Sept 2020 Moved from Closure to Suspension: Breathing Room and More Work to Do
September 2020 - Moved from Closure to Suspension with 1 year to Redesign Program.

Advocacy & Planning
Continued Advocacy, met with Focus Groups and Advisory Committee, Consulted with other Programs doing Hybrid/Online Delivery; Implemented Grow Your Own Pilot; Worked with University Admin, partners...While Teaching (undergrad and grad), Advising, Supervising, and Mentoring During COVID....

Winter Break - Decision Making Time and Attack of the Sticky Notes
Gather Support, Flex, in a ...

May 11, 2021 - Off of Suspension!
Taken off of Suspension! after University Curriculum approval and laying out Communication and Marketing Plan
CELEBRATE???? Just kidding, no time...

Who are We?

- Part of MN State Univ. System
- 1 of 3 Programs in State-- Only Specialist-only Program
- Cohorts of 8-12 per year
- 2.5 FTE (faculty)
- Located in NW MN and serving rural districts

End Result? New Opportunities: Curriculum and Delivery

- **Updated curriculum** with strengthened coverage in key areas like DEI, SEL and mental health.
- **Increased flexibility & accessibility** for non-traditional students, including a remote Grow-Your-Own option for districts and a few place-bound students per cohort. This takes pressure off local practicum sites and enhances recruitment. Flexibility will also benefit traditional students.
- **Better integration of technology**

We can now meet the needs of our traditional in-person students and give students like Laura the chance to become School Psychologists



"I chose MSUM because of their ability to adapt their program to fit my unique needs and because of their reputation for producing excellent school psychologists. It was hard to believe I was going to get both quality and flexibility in a program, but that is what MSUM provided me!"

Keys to Survival and Lessons Learned

- 1. Be ahead of the curve.** Work on relationships, recruitment, and budgetary solutions early.
- 2. Demonstrate the need for and value of School Psychologists.** Focus on the needs of children and schools.
- 3. Link to goals/priorities** of the University and Community, including mission, diversity, and equity.
- 4. CONNECT FAST and long term.** Outside support is crucial. Local, regional, state, national.
- 5. Be data-based problem solvers.**
- 6. Know NASP Graduate Education Standards** and communicate importance of NASP Approval. Communicate with NASP PAB.
- 7. Proactively propose real solutions** to administration. Stay positive -but persistent.
- 8. Maintain commitment to quality.**
- 9. Already have positive relationships** and a solid reputation within and outside the university. We had key allies within administration working with us.
- 10. Be visible and engaged.**
- 11. Be willing to be innovative.** For us this resulted in more flexibility and better service to districts through a Grow-Your-Own option.
- 12. Solutions need to fit your situation** – we already taught large undergrad sections.

BE LIKE GUMBY! Always flexible...

