

# **Psychology Program Review**

College of Arts

## Dean's Summary

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Submitted by:

Dr. Jacqueline Nolte, Dean, College of Arts

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Accepted by:

Senate in April 2021

Academic Planning and Priorities Committee in March 2021

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## MEMORANDUM

Academic Planning and Priorities Committee

APPC Chair: James Mandigo

APPC Assistant: Melinda Saretzky

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**TO:** Dr. Joanne MacLean, Chair, Senate

**FROM:** Dr. James Mandigo, Chair, Academic Planning and Priorities Committee

**DATE:** April 1, 2021

**RE:** Psychology Program Review

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The Psychology department underwent a program review in 2019-2020. The Academic Planning and Priorities Committee reviewed all of the documentation related to the program review and accepted them at the March 17, 2021 meeting.

The external review panel noted that the program is functioning well, but there is also room for growth. The APPC commended the Psychology department for a great review, and it was noted that a plan for Indigenization will be forth-coming.

### **MOTION:**

THAT Senate accept the Dean's Summary Report of the Psychology Program Review as presented.

Attachments:

- Dean's Summary Report

All other documents can be located here <S:\Public\UFVinfo\APPC\Psychology Program Review>

## **Program Review of Department of Psychology**

### **Deans Summary, March 2021**

The department of Psychology delivers an Honours in Psychology, a Major and an Extended Minor in the BA and a certificate in Extended Studies in Arts: Psychology Honours. Program content is currently delivered by thirteen full time faculty members and a range of sessional instructors. Psychology has 87 sections taught by fulltime faculty and 48 sections in the part time budget.

In November 2020, the External Review Committee submitted their review of the Department of Psychology, following on from an online visit that took place over the course of a week.

The committee concluded that the department is “productive” and “convivial”, and “poised for further development because it is relatively free of challenges that require its energy to overcome.” The committee noted that the department has all the “right goals and approaches to helping undergraduates in psychology to be ready for the workforce at the BA level (e.g., human resources, police work, marketing) as well as preparing them for graduate school and thus professional work in the field.” (p4)

The committee identified as a department strength the opportunity to build on the research of students and faculty and its history of delivering in the online environment. (pp11-12)

The committee recognized that the department is “metaphorically, bursting at the seams” and that it wants to do more yet “ feels pinched in terms of some resources, rather than comfortable with the resources it currently possesses.”(p10) They noted that accomplishing this potential depends on addressing a few key needs:

- regaining lost research and ensuring research lab space for faculty and students (p12)
- adding instruction in counselling psychology (see below)
- eliminating the long waitlists and lost students caused by too few sections of Psyc202 (p4)

### **Ongoing Improvement in the department since the 2015 external review recommendations**

#### *1. Hire a replacement for a retired clinical psychologist.*

The department has been unsuccessful in recruiting a permanent clinical psychologist and has rethought the idea of co-developing a Masters in Counselling. It has shifted toward offering an upper-level counselling course taught by sessional instructors.

#### *2. Have more discussions among faculty members regarding their teaching and evaluation strategies.*

The department has held discussions about teaching adult learners and methods for hybrid and online teaching. The department has agreed on department standards for Psych 101 and 102.

*3.Add lab components to Introductory statistics course (PSYC 110) and Intermediate research methods and statistics (PSYC 301).*

This has not happened due to unsuccessful requests for increased lab assistance and dedicated computer lab access. An ongoing lab assistant position was in the 2020-21 budget prior to the pandemic. The Dean's office will continue to explore ways of accommodating this, and the space requests are under discussion with the head and have been submitted to CPWG.

*4.Continued support for the Student Psychology Association (SPA).*

Due to changes in funding of student organizations, changes to the common student space in D125, and the pandemic, this has not taken place. Going forward, the faculty liaison and the department head will try to help the SPA find more members and will support their events.

*5.Conduct an annual review of the strengths and weaknesses of the Honours program.*

The Honours program is not reviewed annually but small improvements are made as needed. Changes are underway to the seminar course and in response to surveys of previous Honours students. Discussion continues on the cap of seminars and accommodating demand for honours research.

*6.Review the minor options in support of related disciplines to create greater option for non-majors.*

The department decided not to offer a minor as it too closely approximated the current extended minor.

*7.The Psychology department should work within the existing contract to increase classes in first year.*

The department decided to retain at least 20% for written assignments in Psych 101 and 102 and therefore not increase class sizes. Psych 110 has had 2 sections collapsed into a large section with tutorials, but this has not been to free up resources for upper levels.

*8.Move forward with planning for the introduction of the Applied Master's in Counselling Psychology*

Student demand remains high, but the department abandoned this plan as the two faculty spearheading this retired and the department has been unable to hire replacement clinical psychologists. In addition, the program would need to be developed in combination with Education and would require multidisciplinary collaboration and significant university investment to succeed.

*9.If resources currently used for first year can be shifted and the current vacant faculty position is filled, the department should deploy faculty resources to enhance third- and fourth-year courses.*

See above. The department has added seminar classes at the 400 level.

*10.Develop a collegial system for mentoring new and existing faculty to support research and PD.*

Done

*11.Explore ways to increase the number of labs, research opportunities, community outreach opportunities, and other experiential components available to students in the third and fourth years of the program.*

Research opportunities and community interactions have been expanded, but space is severely limited.

*12. Develop a statistics course that incorporates statistical packages such as SPSS and reduce reliance on calculators.*

The department can do this on a small scale only due to the absence of a dedicated lab and assistant. Part of the request for space, equipment, and resources, as well as for moving statistics classes from 3-credits to 4 credits, would facilitate this goal. To this end, a budget model was worked on by the Dean's office, but this was compromised due to the effects of the pandemic on projected revenue.

*13. Introduce steps to encourage more on-campus presence and interaction with students.*

D125 has been repurposed to be a Psychology Research and Study Space. A bi-weekly Journal Club meets in D125. Research faculty hold regular meetings with students, adding extra tutorial times for students to get assistance with statistics and research methods.

### **Contribution to the University's Strategic Goals, Vision, Mission, Plans and Values**

The department has a strong focus on student learning. Its goals are embedded in curriculum and programming, and they correlate with the five goals of the UFV 2025 Education Plan

Despite positive indicators of flexibility and responsiveness some impediments were identified in terms of flexibility e.g., the waitlists for Psychology 202.

The committee noted that the department has had limited progress in facilitating international experiences, but that it is nevertheless interested in establishing international peer student support programs and exploring opportunities for forming international research partnerships. They encouraged the department to provide additional experiential learning opportunities for students, with a focus on internationalization. It was noted that other opportunities for students to participate in experiential learning opportunities may result from further development of local community partnerships and co-op experiences. (p6)

Reviewers viewed the beginnings of indigenization in Psych 101 as a positive development, so too Psychology's participation in the Indigenous Academic Success Cohort. They suggested this be further enhanced through the continued indigenization of psychology curriculum, support for Indigenous students and recognition of indigenous knowledge systems, making use of indigenous-oriented teaching processes, and participation of elders and other knowledge keepers.

### **Alignment with Institutional Learning Outcomes**

The reviewers noted that all the institutional learning outcomes were met with a couple needing further attention.

Strengths in the Majors and Honours program include demonstration of informational competency; critical and imaginative analysis; proficient use of skills and knowledge; initiation of inquiry and development of solutions to problems; effective communication. A particular strength is the teaching of engagement in respectful professional practices. (p8)

The area of contributing regionally and globally was the least-well delivered learning outcome although they noted Honours students are given opportunities to present their research knowledge at

conferences and disseminate their findings to broader audiences. The Majors reported less support. This would also assist in delivery of the learning outcome of pursuing self-motivated and self-reflective learning. The department is also encouraged to attract and support more international students into its program and to develop more international initiatives e.g., through partnerships. (p8)

The committee also recommended that the department attend to the learning outcome of engaging in collaborative leadership.

### **Ministry, Professional, Industry and Academic Standards**

The committee noted that all standards are met with respect to admission requirements, the mastery of graduates' learning and the delivery of sound curriculum. It was noted that the department exceeds standards in its breadth of course offerings in the program.

### **Standards of Educational Practices**

Reviewers noted as laudable the department's commitment to meeting or exceeding these standards and to continuing to increase its online courses. They noted that currently all educators are currently challenged to meet standards in the "forced near-universal use of online teaching" and that academic integrity is on the rise everywhere and needing to be addressed. (p10)

### **Utilization of Resources**

The reviewers recognized the important skills of the new faculty department members, lending expertise to supervise honours students. They mistakenly noted that one new faculty member would be able to teach more Psych 202 sections, whereas the new faculty will be teaching Psych 110 and 301.

They commented on new faculty members feeling well supported and mentored by the senior faculty. However, they also observed that some sessional faculty members expressed a need for more formalized mentorship and better communication.

Reviewers identified a need for a faculty member with clinical-counselling skills, which the department supports.

The department assistant was noted as providing excellent support but one gap in staffing is in lab assistance. (p11)

### **Space**

The department has grown beyond the available space for offices, classrooms, meetings, and research. The department has a well-used resource room that has been re-purposed to support some research activities. However, the department requires more research space and over the years has actually experienced a net loss of such space. This loss is increasingly problematic given the hiring of four new research-oriented faculty members and the numbers of Honours and directed study students who are actively conducting research studies.

### **PROGRAM REVIEW RECOMMENDATIONS:**

1. Seek additional research and lab space for the department.

**Action:** The department's response is that this has been requested for several years without success and this is a top priority for the department. The department has been asked to submit a space planning package to be sent to Campus Planning through the Dean this semester.

2. Hire someone to teach counselling psychology.

**Action:** The department is in support of this but has had difficulty recruiting a clinical psychologist with clinical-counselling skills. Psychology had hoped to co-host a Counselling Masters in Psychology, a plan abandoned after years of unsuccessful attempts to recruit a clinician. The department will improve advising information to students to better explain the distinction between Counselling Masters programs and Psychology graduate school programs.

3. Increase the offerings of Psychology 202.

**Action:** The department has already begun to address this issue, and this current year offered 5 sections of 202 over the 3 terms, with most seats reserved for Psychology majors. With the help of IR, the department will determine if more seats are needed to serve program students.

4. Begin the development of a Masters program.

**Action:** The department notes that a Masters is of little use to Psychology students without its leading directly into a PhD program and that if the reviewers meant a Counselling Masters programs that these are generally housed in Education or Counselling departments. The department is more interested in looking into innovative applied credentials that would benefit students in their careers, e.g., micro credentials that might require additional hiring.

5. Find ways to increase the population of international students.

**Action:** The department is open to increasing offerings that appeal to international students with a view to supporting their success. The department will work on study abroad opportunities and draw on faculty who have international connections.

6. Foster more experiential learning.

**Action:** The department has already started to address this. However, it requires either the return of its lab to enable this work or the provision of a new one. Plans include developing more Honours and directed study research opportunities with the new faculty (also requires space to conduct the research). A new workload model is required to accommodate supervision of increasing numbers of Honours and directed studies students. More research space will enable the delivery of the hands-on neuroanatomy component of the second-year brain and behaviour course as a tutorial. The department plans to improve data analysis skills at all years (e.g., providing workshops on R Software to Honours students; having students analyze raw data in lower and upper level statistics courses both by hand and using statistical software; providing opportunities for students to conduct qualitative research interviews and data analysis) and it is working with the Arts practicum coordinator on finding psychology practicum opportunities that faculty are able to supervise in the fall or winter.

7. Include sessional instructors more in emails and meetings.

**Action:** In the past year, the department head has been working on increasing the mentorship for sessional instructors. This includes making sure the general department emails on teaching topics and planning of upcoming semesters are sent to sessionals, providing content and feedback on course outlines, and supporting the development and teaching of online courses with video meetings with some sessional instructors. As sessionals are not compensated for time spent attending department meetings, it will be made clear that attendance at the meeting is not a job requirement. They will be invited to participate in the Psychology Journal Club.

8. Collaborate more with community-based researchers and organizations.

**Action:** The department agrees and several of the new faculty were hired with this direction in mind.

**Additional recommendations:**

Although the department had a Psychology Student Society, it should be revived and developed.

More information could be provided about pathways from the program courses to careers in applied, academic and professional psychology. Some institutions have a faculty member who guides and facilitates their Student Psychology Societies to provide direction and support in their activities.

**Action:** The department thinks both of these points are very important and has put plans in place to address them. It has a department liaison to the Student Psychology Association (SPA) but a combination of student graduation and Covid restrictions left the SPA non-functional this year. As soon as the university is back to normal operations, it will assist students in reviving the SPA and support them in their activities.

The second point speaks to student confusion about counselling and clinical psychology, their wish to know more about research opportunities, and the need to be able to plan better for upper-level courses.

The department is addressing this in several ways:

- The department head and assistant are currently working on constructing an interactive Psychology department Blackboard site with many of these issues addressed and an opportunity for students taking Psychology to ask questions about the program. The content under development includes information about content streams in courses, counselling careers and programs, other applied programs, the Honours program, and interviews with former Honours students and Psychology alumni.
- Faculty in the department have volunteered to improve the information on the department website about directed studies and other topics.
- Each term, group emails are sent to all Psychology students to provide information to help them plan their registration, for example: research opportunities available for volunteering, directed studies, and possible honours; the topic and instructor of any special topics course and any new upper-level courses.

Once UFV returns to campus with in-person meetings, drop-in sessions will be held in the Psychology Research and Study Space (PRASS) on specific topics of interest to Psychology students (e.g., grad school, counselling, honours program, careers, etc.). In the short term while the PRASS remains closed, Zoom sessions will be scheduled for interested students.