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**MEMORANDUM**

<b>ATTENTION</b>	Senate	<b>DATE</b>	November 9, 2015
<b>FROM</b>	Jon Driver, Vice-President, Academic and Provost, and Chair, SCUP	<b>PAGES</b>	1/1
<b>RE:</b>	Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences: External Review of the Department of Psychology (SCUP 15-37)		

At its October 21, 2015 meeting, SCUP reviewed and approved the Action Plan for the Department of Psychology that resulted from its External Review.

The Educational Goals Assessment Plan was reviewed and is attached for the information of Senate.

**Motion:**

That Senate approve the Action Plan for the Department of Psychology that resulted from its External Review.

c: Neil Watson  
J. Craig



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**MEMORANDUM**

<b>ATTENTION</b>	Jon Driver, Chair, SCUP	<b>DATE</b>	October 16, 2015
<b>FROM</b>	Gord Myers, Associate Vice President, Academic	<b>PAGES</b>	1/1
<b>RE:</b>	Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences: External Review of the Department of Psychology		

Attached are the External Review Report and the Action Plan for the Department of Psychology. The Educational Goals Assessment Plan is included, for information only, with the Action Plan.

Excerpt from the External Review Report:

*"This department is productive and highly functional, serving a significant number of undergraduate and graduate students, and offering strong curricula at both levels, as well as unique training opportunities in research."*

Following the site visit, the Report of the External Review Team\* for the Department of Psychology was submitted in June 2015. The Reviewers made a number of recommendations based on the Terms of Reference that were provided to them. Subsequently, a meeting was held with the Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, the Chair of the Department of Psychology and the Director of Academic Planning and Quality Assurance (VPA) to consider the recommendations. An Action Plan was prepared taking into consideration the discussion at the meeting and the External Review Report. The Action Plan has been endorsed by the Department and the Dean.

**Motion:**

**That SCUP approve and recommend to Senate the Action Plan for the Department of Psychology that resulted from its external review.**

**\*External Review Team:**

Brian Timney, Western University (Chair of Review Team)  
Wendy Craig, Queen's University  
Brian Cutler, University of Ontario Institute of Technology  
Neil Boyd (Internal), Simon Fraser University

**Attachments:**

1. External Review Report (June 2015)
2. Department of Psychology Action Plan
3. Department of Psychology Educational Goals Assessment Plan

cc John Craig, Dean, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences  
Neil Watson, Chair, Department of Psychology

## **Simon Fraser University – Psychology Department External Reviewers' Report**

**Brian Timney (Western University), Wendy Craig (Queen's University), Brian  
Cutler (University of Ontario Institute of Technology)**

### **Introduction**

The external review team was asked to: “assess the Unit and comment on its strengths and weaknesses, on opportunities for change, and on quality and effectiveness.” The reviewers were also asked to provide a list of formal recommendations that addressed their major concerns in the context of the available resources and the objectives outlined in the department's five-year plan. The team was provided with a number of documents, including a detailed *Terms of Reference*, the department's *Self-Study Report*, the *Five-Year Academic Plan* of the Faculty of Social Science, and several data tables summarizing various aspects of the department. In what follows, we have provided comments on our observations using the Terms of Reference as a template, and added our recommendations where appropriate.

### **The site visit**

The site visit took place on April 8, 9 and 10, 2015. Brian Timney was unable to attend the meetings of April 10, but received a briefing from the other members of the review team and joined the exit meeting by teleconference. Neal Boyd served as the internal member of the review team. Our itinerary, (attached as Appendix 1), was organized to allow us to meet with the Chair and the graduate and undergraduate Associate Chairs, as well as a full cross-section of the faculty, staff and students from the department. We also met with the Dean of the Faculty and the Dean of Graduate Studies, and with members of the Senior Administration. All of these meetings were extremely collegial and we were able to gather a great deal of information about the department and the Faculty. However, we note that a review like this is necessarily a snapshot of the department and we may not have taken all the relevant factors into account when considering our recommendations.

### **Review of the Unit**

#### **1. Quality of the unit's programs**

##### **1.1 Programs**

The department offers a full set of undergraduate degree programs, including three Majors and corresponding Honours modules, as well as several Joint Majors and two

Minors. The department also offers a Cooperative Education Program in which students engage in program relevant work experience over the course of their time at SFU. As far as we are aware, such a program is quite rare in Canada. The required courses for these programs are typical of any strong Psychology program and would provide a comprehensive background for any student who might consider moving into a graduate program. The additional breadth requirements ensure that students will graduate with a solid foundation, regardless of the career path they choose.

As is commonly the case in Canadian universities, Psychology is an extremely popular subject for undergraduates. The data provided in the Self Study show that only Economics and Criminology have larger numbers of Majors, but in terms of enrollments, Psychology teaches more students than any unit across the University. The data show that the department is a model of “efficiency”, in that it serves all of these students with relatively fewer faculty than any other unit. Despite this heavy workload, faculty members were very enthusiastic about the programs and enjoyed teaching in them, although they universally expressed their concerns that as enrollments continue to grow, they will be unable to offer their programs as effectively without additional resources in the form of new faculty. It is also worth noting that, in contrast to many departments, the bulk of the teaching in the program is done by full-time faculty, and they should be complimented for that.

We met with several members of the Psychology Student Union who were unanimous in their enthusiasm for the program and the training they received. They expressed some concern about class sizes and the reductions in tutorial offerings, but recognized that this was largely a budgetary issue. The other issues they raised were mostly practical: timetabling for the Behavioural Neuroscience program courses, number of fourth year courses available, and the difficulty of getting into some courses because of the prerequisite structure. Finally, they commented that they would like to see more “professional development” within the department, that is, opportunities for students to learn more about potential career options after graduation.

*Structure, breadth, orientation and integration of the undergraduate programs, including the cooperative education program.* Examination of the Academic Calendar shows a wide range of available courses that cover all of the foundational areas of Psychology, as well as a number of more specialized courses and the option to offer a number of Selected Topics courses. Although not all of these would be offered every year, there is ample choice for students. The degree program requirements are quite typical, and include mandatory courses in Research Methods and Data Analysis, as well as a course on Issues in Psychology, and History and Systems. Students also have the option to focus their coursework in concentrations offered by the department and to

participate in research with faculty members, graduate students, and fellow undergraduate students. The Honours module requires a thesis project and the BSc module requires a strong background in the basic sciences. The Applied Behaviour Analysis program is somewhat less usual, but it is innovative in that it is a joint program with Douglas College and is more practically oriented. While the other modules provide the depth for students planning to go to graduate school, the ABA degree provides the value-added component for students planning a professional career. We did not have a great deal of information on the co-op program, but this, too, would be very useful for students hoping to have a professional career in a psychology-related area. Overall, the department offers a very strong set of undergraduate programs that would compare favourably with any of the top tier departments in Canada.

One anomalous area that the department has recently taken over, is the Cognitive Science Program. As noted in the Self-Study, the future of this program will depend on student demand. However, the reviewers felt that the department should consider seriously whether it should make a decision more proactively.

**Recommendation: That the department begin a discussion on the viability of the Cognitive Science Program.**

*Structure, breadth, depth and course offering schedule of the graduate programs.*

Overall, the graduate program is very strong, with five separate areas of study that cover all the major fields in Psychology. The students are offered a number of core methodology courses as well as having several breadth requirements and area seminars. Students also take Comprehensive examinations. The CPA accredited Clinical program uses the well-established Scientist-Practitioner model that is found in almost all of the better programs. The Clinical program also benefits from having the in-house Clinical Psychology Centre. This is relatively rare and a great asset to the program. The department is to be commended for maintaining it.

*Graduate student progress and completion, and support for graduate students.* The data we were provided with showed that the completion rate, both in terms of time to completion and in graduation rates were the best in the Faculty (with the exception of Linguistics, a much smaller program). This is especially notable, given the existence of a Clinical Psychology program with its practicum requirements.

The greatest area of concern, expressed by both faculty members and graduate students alike, was funding. Apart from the overall level of funding, graduate students were concerned about the lack of guaranteed TAs and transparency regarding the allocation of funding. The data that we looked at showed that the average level of

funding per Psychology student was quite high relative to other programs across the university. However, it was clear that the funding model was a complex one, relying on a variety of different sources, including external awards and direct support from individual supervisors. This, coupled with a lack of a dedicated graduate support line in the department budget, does make for uncertainty for students. It was also surprising to see that there were no differential fees for international students. Although this is admirable, it is unusual to see this at a Canadian University. The reviewers were unaware if international students attracted BIUs from the provincial government, but if not, then these students are receiving a substantial subsidy from the department.

**Recommendation: That the department examine the funding model for graduate students and explore this issue with Graduate Studies to see if it is possible to create a simpler, more transparent, structure that reduces uncertainty from year to year.**

*Enrolment management issues at the undergraduate and graduate levels including, for the former, majors and service teaching.* As one of the most popular undergraduate programs at SFU, and one that engages in a large amount of service teaching, Psychology is faced with a significant problem in managing enrolment in the face of a reduction in the overall number of full-time faculty, and lack of sessional positions over the last several years. Psychology not only teaches the largest absolute number of students in the Faculty, but it does so with relatively fewer faculty members, meaning that the faculty/student ratio is very high. The commitment to undergraduate teaching among full-time faculty may have an impact on their ability to take on additional graduate students. As with all departments, the distribution of graduate supervision appears to be uneven, meaning that a number of faculty members are taking on a substantial workload.

There is no simple solution to this problem. Within limits, it is possible to increase class section size, and as has already been done, reduce the number of tutorials, but in the long run, the only solution is to increase the number of full-time faculty members, or reduce the number of courses available to students, which is clearly not desirable. This was a consistent message from every faculty group we met with, but it is well-justified. The 2012 department Strategic Plan lays out its priorities for hiring and also comments on the potential impacts if new positions are not allocated. We believe that the Faculty should pay heed to the requests and try to provide at least some support.

**Recommendation: That the Faculty recognize the substantial contribution of the department to the revenue of the Faculty and provide sufficient resources in the**

**form of new faculty hires to allow the department to maintain its status as a premier unit within SFU and across Canada, and to offer high quality programs.**

## **1.2. Educational Goals**

*Educational goals are relevant, meaningful, assessable, and align clearly with the curriculum.* Unlike other jurisdictions (such as Ontario) universities in British Columbia do not have a provincially mandated process to define Educational Goals or Degree Expectations. The program instituted by the SFU Provost is similar to that currently in place in Ontario and has a similar time frame. This program is in its initial stages and the summary provided in the Self Study outlines the major goals at both the graduate and undergraduate level. The five goals listed seem reasonable, are similar in general terms to those of the reviewers' institutions, and reflect learning goals that have been endorsed by professional associations in Psychology. The developers of the goals have been able to tie them closely to specific courses within the Psychology program. It is worth noting that although the goals are directed to a psychology program in particular, they also encompass more general real-life skills, such as critical thinking and ethical behaviour.

The issue of assessment is a more complex one. The developers have linked the goals to successful completion of specific courses or written reports, such as theses. Such measures will provide face validity to the goals, and will ensure that students will be exposed to the material relevant to them. The more difficult, and perhaps impossible, question is to find a way to measure the extent to which the students will be able to use the skills they have developed to practical use. As indicated in Goal Five, the developers have considered this in the context of post-graduate activities. These data may not be easy to gather, but they would be very helpful in assessing success and would be a useful tool in marketing the Psychology program.

## **2. Quality of Faculty Research**

### **2.1 Faculty/Research**

*Size and quality of the faculty complement in relation to the Unit's responsibilities and workload.* In the Department of Psychology, there are 33 faculty representing six areas of concentration. The research areas are: Social Psychology (three faculty members), Law and Forensic (five core members), Developmental (two faculty members), History, Quantitative, and Theoretical (seven members), Cognitive and Neural Science (seven members), and the Clinical area (ten members). There are also two senior lecturers in the department who make significant and invaluable contributions to teaching. The Department reorganized itself in 2011, and as a result there was a shifting of Faculty

within areas. In addition, since the last review, there have been some retirements and losses. For example, the Social area has lost three members and replaced one; Law and Forensic has lost one, with another retirement pending; The Development area has lost two members, and due to the recent reorganization, the members in the Child Clinical stream have moved to the Clinical stream; History, Quantitative, and Theoretical area lost two members in 2005; the Cognitive Neuroscience area lost two members; and the Clinical area had one recent retirement. Since the last review, the department has had a net loss of 8 faculty positions, about 18%. This reduction is significant and if they are not replaced in the near future there will be a significant impact on teaching capacity, the graduate program, and the maintenance of research areas. In addition to this loss of faculty positions, there is a high proportion of senior faculty. Fifty percent are Full Professors while only six percent are Assistant Professors. While this is similar to the current demographics at many Canadian Universities, it is extremely problematic. Faculty renewal is a primary issue that needs to be addressed in the department. Furthermore, there needs to be more clarity in the decision making process regarding requests for replacement positions and new hires at the faculty and provost levels.

All areas made the case for new positions, and there is no doubt that this need should be a high priority. This department is productive and highly functional, serving a significant number of undergraduate and graduate students, and offering strong curricula at both levels, as well as unique training opportunities in research. There is a need for new positions, but before the area of hire is defined, there is a need to revisit the departmental priorities and foci. Some areas are strong and well integrated, cohesive groups: Law and Forensic, Clinical, and Cognitive and Neural Science. Some areas are below a level of core faculty members that make it challenging to support the undergraduate and graduate training programs: Social and Developmental. The faculty members in these areas have strong individual research programs and offer excellent training opportunities, however, these areas cannot function without its secondary members or the support of adjuncts. Furthermore, there is a concern that they cannot adequately mount a graduate program with reliance on such few faculty and this in turn may influence their ability to attract highly qualified graduate students, despite the excellent research programs of each faculty member. In order for an area to effectively meet all of its objectives in teaching, research, and service, there needs to be a minimum of full time faculty in the areas, likely five. The consequences of having less than a critical mass includes unevenly distributed workload for these areas relative to other areas and a high reliance on part time faculty. In addition, one area has a high number of faculty members, but lacks strong cohesion with respect to research interests, the History, Quantitative, and Theoretical area. The faculty members seem to work well together and admirably strive to make connections, but in the opinions of the reviewers, the faculty research interests, though individually important, do not form a cohesive area



of study in the same manner as the other groups at SFU and other programs in Canadian psychology departments. The lack of commonality in this area is evident in looking at the diverse areas of research within the group, the challenge in mounting both undergraduate and graduate courses on topics represented within this broad area, and committee membership for theses.

In our discussions with the areas, we were interested in the members' perspectives on the future development of their areas. It was evident that some were clear in their future visions (Clinical, Law and Forensic), while other areas were struggling with their prospects, although for different reasons (Development, Social) or they were less cohesive (History, Quantitative and Theoretical). The HQT areas represent important fields in psychology but seem to have no clear natural linkages. This was the only place where we had some concerns. The discussions that need to take place in the department are challenging. The department should not limit its discussion to building up areas that have few faculty with new positions or expanding current areas that are less cohesive; rather, the department needs to vision the future and discuss potential reorganization of existing areas and prioritization of faculty resources within areas. We recognize that the department has had these discussions before and that the current organization resulted from a thoughtful, reflective, and consultative process. We nevertheless believe the department needs to further refine its structures and priorities. The critical question for the department is that it needs to define its strengths and the potential to link to its well renowned research centres and to other faculties and departments within the university. This restructuring may result in new areas, loss of areas, or the same areas, but it needs to move forward from a view to the future, rather than the placement of current faculty in the current organization.

**Recommendation: That the Department should revisit its current Strategic Plan to create a document that clearly states its vision and mission, as well as the principles that dictate future hires in the department including, undergraduate and graduate teaching needs, areas of research, the maintenance and development of research areas.**

**Recommendation. That the Department revisit the current organization of areas, identifying and building upon areas of strength. Consideration should also be given to whether the History, Quantitative and Theoretical area should be maintained in its present form.**

**Recommendation. That the Department identify a critical threshold number of faculty within each area that is required to maintain the feasibility of the research area and the graduate program in that area.**

*Teaching Contributions.* The prescribed modal faculty workload is three courses. However, since the last review, Psychology is serving more students at both the undergraduate and graduate levels, with fewer resources. In fact, they serve more students than any other department in the Faculty of Arts and Science. The growing demand with these limited and diminishing resources is a cause of concern. Although the department has a relatively large faculty complement relative to many other units, there is no question that the teaching demands are significantly higher and that the ability of the department as a whole to meet its responsibilities is becoming increasingly strained. Given that virtually all of the faculty are active researchers, their commitment to teaching is admirable, but over the long term serious consideration will need to be given to how the department can remain as a strong research intensive unit while striving to meet its teaching and administrative responsibilities. They are by no means in crisis at the moment, but the steady erosion in numbers will eventually have an impact on quality. We recognize the financial constraints of the University and know that there are no easy solutions, but it is important that the Dean work with the department to develop a longer-term strategy that would see a gradual replacement of the individuals they have lost over the past several years. The department's Academic Plan provides a starting point, but a tentative timeline should be established. The department might also consider whether they might wish to judiciously add teaching-only faculty who can help meet the demands in that regard.

*Research and Support Contributions.* Despite the above comments on the organization and workload of the faculty in the Department of Psychology, as individual researchers they are extremely successful and there are many metrics of their research successes. The faculty in the Psychology department have impressive track records with respect to publications, external funding, and awards as indicated in the Self-Study. The faculty members in the Department of Psychology have high external research support in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences. The faculty holds 43 grants (7 CIHR, 10 NSERC, 10 SSHRC, 16 from other sources). They average 2.2 million dollars a year in grant funding. In addition, they have a high level of funding support through contracts - the second highest in the Faculty. The Self-Study provides metrics of impact that indicate the Department of Psychology has higher impact than the university overall rankings, with a ranking of 101-150, which places the department alongside other prestigious universities in Canada and internationally. Furthermore, the number of individual faculty awards is extremely high, given the size of the department. Awards include: Henri Tajfel Scholarship, Canadian Institute for Advanced Research, Fellows of the Canadian

Psychological Association, Early career awards from the American Psychological Association, Governor General's Gold Medal for Academic Excellence, Jacobs Foundation Young Scholarship Award, LEEF chair, SFU University Professor Award, Canada Research Chairs, Michael Smith Foundation Career Investigator Awards, and a CIHR Chair. The Department of Psychology is extremely productive and successful in all aspects of research based on standard national and international metrics and should be celebrated for its excellence.

*Research Centres and Collaboration and Links.* In the self-study, there were four research centres listed:

- *The Mental Health, Law, and Policy Institute* that promotes interdisciplinary and truly international collaboration in research and training in mental health law and policy and links to other departments.
- *Behavioural and Cognitive Neuroscience Institute* focuses on the development of research networks employing human brain imaging technology that links to outside applied settings.
- *The Institute for the Reduction of Youth Violence* that aims to shape public policy regarding violent behavior.
- *The Clinical Psychology Centre, which is a clinical training site,* and mental health outpatient clinic that provides opportunities for research in Clinical Science.

These Centres provide critical service to the department in providing unique teaching, clinical, and research opportunities. In some cases, there are multi-disciplinary opportunities, as well as applied training opportunities. In some cases the Centres are well integrated (Mental Health, Law, and Policy Institute, and the Clinical Psychology Centre into the department). In others there is an opportunity to continue to engage more broadly in training and cross-disciplinary experiences. The Behavioural and Cognitive Neuroscience Institute could recruit more affiliations within the university and build more interdisciplinary training. The Institute for Reduction of Youth Violence could engage in a similar exercise but also link more closely with the Mental Health, Law and Policy Institute, building on its strong foundation and leadership. All of these Centres are impressive, have exceptional leadership, have achieved many successes, and likely represent strengths which can continue to be built upon in the future development of the department.

**Recommendation: That the Centres review their mandates to identify critical collaborations with the other centres in the department and the university, and**

**allow greater integration by creating multi-disciplinary teaching and learning experiences.**

*Service Contributions.* The Psychology faculty are active participants in the university community, in applied community settings, and to the larger academic community. The faculty are well engaged and through their work are making significant contributions in all these aspects. The departmental service workload is shared among all faculty. They provide service to the community through the clinic and many of the research centres. With respect to contributions to the profession, the faculty members hold a high number of positions such as editors of journals, and president of organizations and societies.

### **3. Participation in Departmental Administration**

#### **3.1. Administration/Support**

*Size of the administrative and support staff complement, and the effectiveness of the administration of the Unit.* The Department requires considerable administrative support given its size and mandates in research, teaching, and university, professional, and community service. Administration can be divided into three general categories: faculty governance, staff support, and technical support. The external reviewers found the Department to be strong in all three administrative support categories. With respect to faculty governance, the Department has had and continues to have chairs who are effective, well-respected, and well-liked by the faculty, staff, and higher level administration. No one uttered a complaint about the department chair or staff to the external reviewers during the three site visit days, in fact, they were unanimous in their praise for the way in which the Department functioned. Two Associate chairs, one charged with overseeing graduate education, and one charged with overseeing undergraduate education, assist the chair and provide additional leadership to the department. The division of Associate Chair responsibilities is reasonable and in keeping with many departments of psychology. Many additional faculty members contribute to faculty governance through committee work, representation roles, and pitching in when needed. There were no complaints of routine department business falling through the cracks.

The department has enjoyed continuous and effective leadership and support from the administrative staff. The staff complement has considerably longevity, well-defined, relatively independent sets of responsibilities, and appears connected socially as well as professionally. They take pride in their work, value their contribution to the department, and feel valued by the department.

The technical staff provide both IT and workshop support. All faculty and staff benefit from the IT support, and a subset of faculty members makes use of the workshop support. Here again, the department has benefitted from considerable longevity of the technical staff members, who take pride in their contributions to the department and feel valued by others. We heard no dissatisfaction with technical support services.

In sum, all administrative activities in the department appear healthy and at least minimally sufficient. We learned of no administrative challenges that needed attention or resources.

The department appears to have minimally adequate research laboratory space. Concerns were expressed in the self-study about the degree of geographic dispersion of laboratory space, but there was little attention to the dispersion issue during the site visit. The potential for isolation is greater for graduate students, who are housed in the labs, than for faculty members, whose faculty offices are co-located. Of greater concern is the need for maintenance in laboratories. We did not tour lab areas during the site visit so cannot comment from first-hand experience. The self-study alluded to challenges associated with deferred maintenance, and some of these problems were discussed during our area group meetings. Problems associated with water leakage and the potential for mould, equipment damage, and data and materials loss in some labs should be given a high priority and immediate attention if they haven't already. With respect to the library, departments of psychology rely heavily on peer-reviewed journals and benefit from modern consortia, databases, and electronic access. We learned of no shortages with respect to collections, access to information services, or library support for students. We also learned of no shortcomings with respect to availability of computers, software, network space, or any other resources. The counselling centre, where graduate clinical students receive practicum training, appears well-resourced and expertly managed.

All things considered, the Department appears well-resourced. We were not made aware of any vacant laboratory space, which sometimes happens when vacant faculty positions are not filled. As stated throughout this report, Psychology is in need of additional faculty members. The newly hired faculty will require adequate laboratory space.

#### **4. Working Environment**

##### **4.1. Working Environment/Relationships**

*Within the Unit and the University.* Quality of work life within the department appears to be enviably high. The faculty and staff with whom the external reviewers met consistently expressed high levels of satisfaction with their work environment and used descriptors such as collegial, friendly, mutually respectful, supportive, and relatively free of conflict, just a nice place to work. The graduate and undergraduate students with whom we met felt supported and had very good relationships with their advisors and instructors. Maintaining such a positive climate requires effort and selflessness, and we admire the department for the climate it created. The effort is evident, for example, in the work of a committee that actively plans period social events and celebrations. Seemingly small things, like available, good quality coffee and tea, pays dividends with respect to morale and opportunity for socialization. Notably, department life and socialization cuts across role boundaries. Faculty, administrative, and technical staff appear well-connected, and students are often included too.

*Between the Unit and the community.* The department faculty take seriously their roles in community service. Faculty members engage with the community in a variety of ways, including outreach through public talks and workshops, and having a voice in community groups and public policy. Indeed, some of the research programs involve community agencies and government ministries. Some of this work involves clinical populations (e.g., Down syndrome children with autism spectrum disorder, forensic psychiatric patients, and individuals with drug addictions serviced by local clinics). The department gave a high priority to continuing its history of community engagement in its long-term strategic plans.

*With alumni.* Little attention was paid to department-alumni relations in the self-study and in the meetings with the external reviewers. While some faculty members were aware of the notable accomplishments of graduate and undergraduate students, the information appears to not be systematically collected at the department level. This situation is not unique to SFU's Department of Psychology. The large numbers of psychology graduates, the transitory nature of graduates (including even electronic addresses), and under-resourced alumni offices at Canadian universities make tracking Psychology majors a challenge at many universities. One notable and laudable exception to this trend is the reliance on graduates who received clinical training to provide clinical supervision and training of current graduate students. Alumni relations is an area that the department should consider cultivating if resources permit.

**Recommendation: That the Department engage with the Faculty or University Alumni and Development Office to seek fund-raising opportunities.**

## **5. Future Plans**

The Department laid out its priorities in its 2012 Strategic Plan, although as we stated above, it is time to develop a new plan that acknowledges the significant reductions in personnel that have taken place over the last couple of years, and sets new goals and priorities for the future.

## **6. Issues of specific interest to the University**

### **6.1. Assess the Department's research focus and advise if additional areas of research should be incorporated. If faculty positions become available what areas of research should have priority?**

As highlighted in an earlier section of the report, there is some concern about the unequal distribution of faculty across the six areas, as well as a lack of cohesion within areas. As outsiders, it is challenging to make recommendations for hires within specific areas. We have suggested that the department conduct a visioning exercise to identify its strengths and build in those areas. As a result of this exercise, there may need to be an area restructuring that would enable the fulfilment of the vision and provide areas of research foci that can be supported currently and moving forward. The department has some unique strengths that are not matched elsewhere in Canada, such as their Law and Forensic program. There are also some areas that could be more connected, such as the Clinical area to the Law and Forensic program. SFU has strong faculty who do excellent research. The department needs to continue to build on areas that will strengthen their niches and be more selective in their representation of all areas of psychology.

### **6.2. Are there new cost-recovery or revenue-generating graduate programs or certificates that should be offered?**

Given the shortage of mental health practitioners in Canada and the broad reach of Psychology within the health, justice, and private sector industries, there are certainly opportunities to generate new cost-recovery and revenue-generating graduate and certificate programs in which Psychology is the leader or a partner. The department, however, is already stretched thin with its current complement of undergraduate, graduate and research programs and appears to be operating at capacity. Accordingly, should the department or university choose to develop new revenue-generating graduate programs that involve the department, it should do so using budget models that include new faculty resources to provide the needed instruction.

### **6.3. How can funding be leveraged to maintain an active and vibrant postdoc program?**

This was not an issue that was brought forward at any of our meetings and it is not clear what the current situation is with post-docs. At most institutions the bulk of the

support for post-docs is either from external awards, or from the grants of individual researchers, which tend to be limited in an NSERC world. If there is a strong interest in expanding the numbers of post-docs, there should be a commitment for funding from the office of the Vice-President (Research). A university fund that provides full or matching support for a limited number of “SFU Post-docs” could have a significant impact.

**Recommendation: That the Vice-President (Research) considers ways in which funds might be directed to increase the number of university supported post-docs.**

**6.4. The Department has a tradition of effective teaching, and wishes to embrace teaching innovation where appropriate. Faculty are experimenting with online courses, online video lectures, and implementations of the “flipped classroom.” To what extent is the Department keeping pace with developments at other universities? What specific improvements should be targeted while maintaining high standards?**

Experimenting with online courses, the use of technology, and classroom activities is commonplace in departments of psychology. In large departments, faculty may differ from one another in their teaching orientations, tastes for innovation, and willingness to experiment. Some departments in Ontario are experimenting with shared online courses with other universities and MOOCs as a way of achieving efficiencies and attracting new students. Considering the enrolments in departments of psychology in general, efficiencies are already present given large class sizes.

**Recommendation: That the Department continue to innovate and experiment to the extent that it meets broader goals of the Department. For example, the external reviewers recommend that the Department continue to develop its learning goals and assessments at the undergraduate and graduate levels.**

**6.5. Are there other innovative undergraduate programs like the B.Sc. in Behavioural Neuroscience that could be created, perhaps in collaboration with other departments?**

Although the idea of creating new interdisciplinary programs is an attractive one, the department should proceed cautiously, given the limitations in their resources. The creation of any new programs should be considered in that context. It should also be kept in mind that interdisciplinary programs introduce administrative complexities beyond those that are “in house”. In addition to the regular Psychology Major and Behavioural Neuroscience programs, the department has already taken advantage of the links with Criminology to create a joint Major there, and the Applied Behaviour Analysis program with Douglas College provides a very attractive practically oriented degree. In contrast, the Cognitive Science program appears to be struggling. Without a



clear knowledge of other disciplines across the University, it would be unwise of us to suggest specific interdisciplinary programs of study. The Department is not suffering from a lack of demand for its courses and clearly it can attract adequate numbers of students into the programs it already offers, so any new ones should only be introduced where there is a clear need or opportunity and an infusion of resources so that the Department's current programs are not drained.

**Recommendation: That the Department continue its current menu of program offerings and not consider new ones unless there is a demonstrated need and/or additional resources.**

**6.6. If additional resources became available, what would be the highest priority for their allocation?**

Assuming that the Department will continue to maintain its current complement of academic programs, it seems clear that faculty positions are the most pressing need. The addition of faculty members, however, may also require laboratory space. The Department has already stated its priority areas and the external reviewers felt that this was a decision that should be made at the departmental level. The external reviewers do not subscribe to the idea that all areas in the department areas need to be equal in size, but they do believe in the adequate representation of core fields in psychology.

The Department Self-Study highlighted facilities as another pressing need. Among the issues discussed is the need for more laboratory space, the need to consolidate laboratory space to create a better sense of community, the need for maintenance on existing space, and the need for social space. Touring the Department's lab space was not a priority during the site visit, so it is difficult for the external reviewers to comment on the adequacy of laboratory space.

**Recommendation: That a high priority be given to the general maintenance of departmental space to ensure the health of occupants and the safety of data and equipment.**

### Summary of Recommendations

- 1. Recommendation: That the department begin a discussion on the viability of the Cognitive Science Program.**
- 2. Recommendation: That the department examine the funding model for graduate students and explore this issue with Graduate Studies to see if it is possible to create a more simple structure that reduces uncertainty from year to year.**
- 3. Recommendation: That the Faculty recognize the substantial contribution of the department to the revenue of the Faculty and provide sufficient resources in the form of new faculty hires to allow the department to maintain its status as a premier unit within SFU and across Canada, and to offer high quality programs.**
- 4. Recommendation: That the Department revise their current strategic plan to create a document that clearly states its vision and mission, as well as the principals that dictate future hires in the department including, undergraduate and graduate teaching needs, areas of research, the maintenance and development of research areas.**
- 5. Recommendation. That the Department revisit the current organization of areas, identifying areas of strength and concentrate on building these**
- 6. Recommendation. That the Department identify a critical threshold number of faculty within each area that is required to maintain the feasibility of the research area and the graduate program in that area.**
- 7. Recommendation: That the Faculty work with the Department to develop a renewal plan, with a tentative timeline, that will ensure that they can maintain their quality and meet their teaching demands.**
- 8. Recommendation: That the Centres review their mandates to identify critical collaborations with the other centres in the department and the university, and allow greater integration by creating multi-disciplinary teaching and learning experiences.**
- 9. Recommendation: That the Department engage with the Faculty or University Alumni and Development Office to seek fund-raising opportunities.**

- 10. Recommendation: That the Vice-President (Research) considers how funds might be directed to increase the number of university-supported post-docs.**
- 11. Recommendation: That the Department continue to innovate and experiment to the extent that it meets broader goals of the Department. For example, the external reviewers recommend that the Department continue to develop its learning goals and assessments at the undergraduate and graduate levels.**
- 12. Recommendation: That the Department continue its current menu of program offerings and not consider new ones unless there is a demonstrated need and/or additional resources.**
- 13. Recommendation: That a high priority be given to the general maintenance of departmental space to ensure the health of occupants and the safety of data and equipment.**

## EXTERNAL REVIEW – ACTION PLAN

### Section 1 – To be completed by the Responsible Unit Person e.g. Chair or Director

<b>Unit under review</b>	<b>Date of Review Site visit</b>	<b>Responsible Unit person</b>	<b>Faculty Dean</b>
Psychology	April 8 – 10, 2015	Neil Watson, Chair	John Craig

**Notes**

1. It is **not** expected that every recommendation made by the Review Team be covered by this Action Plan. The major thrusts of the Report should be identified and some consolidation of the recommendations may be possible while other recommendations of lesser importance may be excluded.
2. Attach the required plan to assess the success of the **Educational Goals** as an addendum (Senate 2013).
3. Should any additional response be warranted, it should be attached as a separate document.

### **1. PROGRAMMING**

We will continue to provide an appropriate breadth of courses for our large complement of undergraduates, but our ability to maintain current offerings is threatened by faculty losses without replacement (See Section 5). Much of this specialist teaching cannot be made up with SI's -- in a recent example, five posted openings for sessional teaching in Social Psychology and in Developmental Psychology did not attract even a single application. We wholeheartedly agree with the reviewers' comments and specific recommendation regarding faculty staffing levels for teaching and research. In response to years of requests for expanded enrolments we have increased class sizes to the point that student: faculty ratios are now very high, as documented in detail in the department's Self-Study Report (Chap 4).

**1.1 Action/s (description what is going to be done):**

**1.1.1 Undergraduate:**

- (Recommendations 3 and 12 ) We will not plan for developing new undergraduate programs at this time, in accordance with the Reviewers' recommendation that no expansion in programming be contemplated unless demand and enhanced resources (principally faculty renewal) are present.
- Recent enrolment figures have confirmed that our BSc in Behavioural Neuroscience is a viable and growing program. We have commenced a process to address bottleneck issues within this unique program, particularly the pre-requisite structure and required courses, and will work to improve access to the core courses. New language reflecting these improvements will appear in the next edition of the SFU Calendar.
- (Recommendation 1) We will work to streamline communication between staff tasked with administration / student advising for the Cognitive Science Program, and the Director (and Steering Committee) of the Cognitive Science

Program. We will also arrange for periodic meetings with the Cognitive Science Program Steering Committee to discuss any matters of concern. However, the governance of the Cognitive Science Program is external to the Psychology Department – it is an autonomous program within FASS - and determinations about the longterm viability of the program lie with the CogSci Steering Committee and Dean of FASS, not the Psychology Department.

- (*Recommendation 11*) Our plan for Education Goals and Assessment is appended. Faculty will continue to use innovative, pedagogically appropriate approaches to engage students - leading to students achieving the Educational Goals. With ever-increasing class sizes and shrinking resources (for TAs, temporary instruction, etc.), and with fewer and fewer faculty members to share the teaching, innovation is driven by necessity as well as the desire of faculty members to become more effective educators.
- (*Recommendation 11*) Assessment of the Educational Goals is a 'work-in-progress', with meetings already scheduled to create the necessary Department Policies for the first round of data collection from courses in the 2015/2016 academic year (as specified in the schedule supplied by the VPA's office). Department faculty members have self-identified aspects of their own courses that they believe assess some aspects of the Educational Goals as specified in the External Review Self-Study, so the task will be to determine which appropriate set of courses to assess in Fall 2015 and which set to assess in Spring 2016. In addition, as noted by the Reviewers (sec. 1.2), Goal Five is considered to be "in the context of post-graduate activities", so we have begun discussions with staff in Institutional Research and Planning (IRP) to determine how assessment of this goal might be best achieved (we understand that IRP has been tasked with this function for the university as a whole, so these discussions will have many beneficiaries).

#### **1.1.2 Graduate:**

- (*Recommendation 2*) We will coordinate with the Dean of Graduate Studies to find ways to improve the clarity of the financial packages offered to incoming graduate students, and further, to identify best practices in communicating funding information to incoming and continuing graduate students. Unfortunately, the allocation of TAships is governed by the TSSU Collective Agreement, so we are unable to guarantee TAships beyond priority as specified in the collective agreement. As noted by the External Review Committee the average funding level for our graduate students is comparatively high, and contains elements -- e.g. a travel allowance of \$600 per annum, a research allowance, free office supplies and support -- that we believe to be uncommon.
- We will work with the Psychology Graduate Student Caucus to address concerns about transparency in funding decisions, and to develop language in our Graduate Student Handbook that explains funding more simply. We will also consult with the Dean of Graduate Studies to explore ways to provide funding opportunities for international graduate students, many of whom are ineligible for federal scholarships
- Although graduate students are represented on all Departmental Committees, we will explore methods to streamline

communication with the Graduate caucus; for example, by establishing a periodic meeting between the Chair's Advisory Committee and the Graduate Caucus, devoted solely to graduate matters.

- We will continue to support clinical training opportunities by directing resources to the Clinical Training Program and Clinical Psychology Centre. An important search is currently under way to replace the recently retired Director of Clinical Training -- success in this search is essential for the continued success of the clinical training program.
- We will explore the possible development of new premium-fee graduate programs leading to degrees or certificates, as we believe there may be significant demand for such (and revenue generated would be a boon for Departmental initiatives, such as funding postdocs). A few examples: quantitative methodology consulting; criminal risk assessment; interviewing and measurement techniques; neuroscience methodology. However, to quote the external reviewers: "should the department or university choose to develop new revenue-generating graduate programs that involve the department, it should do so using budget models that include new faculty resources to provide the needed instruction."

#### **1.2 Resource implications (if any):**

- As noted, we have commenced the Educational Goals Assessment exercise; resources provided to date have proven appropriate. The impact of the data collection phase on staff & faculty resources is uncertain.
- As described in several sections above, it is difficult to meet current programming needs due to faculty losses, so the principle resource required is faculty positions. The budget line for the Director of Clinical Training is a long-standing staff position.

#### **1.3 Expected completion date/s:**

- Educational Goals Assessment will be a continuing activity.
- We hope to have a new Director of Clinical Training in place by the end of 2015.
- Improved communications regarding graduate funding provisions should be in place in time for letters of acceptance and graduate handbook in early 2016.

## 2. RESEARCH

Summarizing their review of the research activity in the Department, the external review team state: "The Department of Psychology is extremely productive and successful in all aspects of research based on standard national and international metrics and should be celebrated for its excellence." The Department's Self Study Report provides detailed data to buttress this conclusion, showing a steady increase during the last decade in research success in terms of both input measures (e.g. grants and contracts) and output measures (e.g. publications and impact). As a department, our international QS ranking (101-150) is substantially higher than that of the University as a whole (228), and the HiBAR analysis of research impact described in the Self-Study ranks us alongside excellent departments at prestigious universities nationally and internationally. As the reviewers note (and we return to in Part 5), the greatest threat to this status is the need for faculty renewal.

### 2.1 Action/s (what is going to be done):

- As noted throughout this Plan, we will work with the Dean's Office to prioritize faculty hiring in Psychology.
- (*Recommendation 8*) We will explore ways to more fully integrate the Institutes into the Department's research and teaching missions. In particular, we will explore ways to maximize graduate and postdoc participation in Institute activities, and elevate the visibility of the Institutes within and beyond the Department. (See also the proposed External Relations Committee in Part 3)
- (*Recommendation 10*). The reviewers correctly note that the powers of the Department to expand post-doctoral participation are limited, and that post-docs are often externally funded. However, in recent discussions with VPR Joy Johnson, the Dept Chair conveyed willingness to explore the use of Departmental resources (such as funding from FIC instruction) to leverage contributions from elsewhere in the University, perhaps via matching grants of some sort. We will continue to explore innovative ways to encourage post-doctoral fellowships in the Department.

### 2.2 Resource implications (if any):

- Again, by far the most significant issue facing the Department is the provision of new CFL positions to maintain and improve our research and teaching activities.

### 2.3 Expected completion date/s:

- We are reliant on the Dean and VPA for CFL positions.

## 3. ADMINISTRATION

### 3.1 Action/s (what is going to be done):

- (Recommendation 4) In accordance with the recommendations of the Reviewers, we will start the process of developing a new Strategic Plan. The timing is fortuitous, as we will be able to dovetail our strategic planning with that of the Vice President Research, Joy Johnson, who has commenced the development of a new university-wide 5-year strategic research plan.
- (Recommendation 5) As part of the strategic planning exercise, we will specifically re-examine the Department's current Area organization, as we do every few years.
- (Recommendation 5) Several years ago, the HQT area was developed from the former Theory and Methods Area. We feel that the three foundational areas represented (History, Quantitative methods, and Theory) actually have a great deal in common, at least as practiced by the HQT faculty in this Department: our HQT faculty happen to work at the intersection of H, Q, and T and have strong interests in all 3 areas. The HQT area thus built directly onto strengths already present in this department. The area represents an important -- and distinct -- component of our undergraduate programming, and has experienced a 3-fold increase in graduate enrollment since its establishment. Nevertheless, we will explore ways to ensure that the mission of the HQT area is more clearly articulated.
- (Recommendation 9) We will develop an External Relations Committee to guide the Department in several objectives:
  - Improved alumni relations
  - extra-curricular programming for students (for example, workshops on career development)
  - Pursuit of fundraising opportunities for targeted projects (such as research infrastructure, endowed Chairships etc), in conjunction with University Advancement and the FASS Dean's Office
  - External promotion of the Department
  - Public Engagement through special events, such as public lectures
  - Development of social media and website-based communication.

We anticipate creating a RA position for at least one graduate student to provide social media support.

### 3.2 Resource implications (if any):

- RA funding
- Formation of a new standing committee necessarily involves investment of time by members. This will be construed



as part of the members' normal service load.

**3.3 Expected completion date/s:**

- establishment of an External Relations Committee will occur in Fall 2015 / Spring 2016 for a trial period of two years. If successful, the External Relations Committee Terms of Reference will be added to the Departmental Bylaws in 2017-18.
- Development of a new Departmental Strategic Plan will occur in 2015 – 2016.

## **4. WORKING ENVIRONMENT**

The reviewers were laudatory regarding the departmental working environment – “quality of work life within the department appears to be enviably high... we admire the department for the climate it has created” – and comments mostly centered on space issues.

**4.1 Action/s (what is going to be done):**

- (*Recommendation 13*) Although we must rely on external units for provision and maintenance of space, we endorse the reviewers' recommendation that maintenance issues receive priority. In particular, departmental washrooms are in need of renovation, and we continue to deal with water ingress problems, although a new skylight system currently being installed may help in the latter case.
- We will continue to work with the Dean's Office to deploy lab space as rationally as possible, while recognizing that certain infrastructure needs (chemical lab safety, for example) can no longer be met within RCB Hall. We anticipate a serious space shortage in the event of new hiring, coupled with highly successful programs that have recently attracted major funding -- and thus require expanded space.
- Despite its reputation as a friendly and collegial work environment, the Department suffers from a lack of social spaces (currently limited to a single uninviting, windowless lunchroom). We will pursue opportunities to expand the social space inventory -- in particular, we would like to add a departmental lounge for faculty staff and students. If appropriate space can be identified, the Department undertakes to bear the costs of renovating and furnishing the space.

**4.2 Resource implications (if any):**

- We anticipate the need for more office, lab, and social space in the near future, driven by both hiring and by the success and growth of research programs in the Department.

**4.3 Expected completion date/s:**

- Provision of space and problems associated with deferred maintenance are beyond our control.

**5. Faculty / Staff Renewal**

There is no doubt that faculty renewal is the most pressing problem confronting the Department. As detailed in the self-study report, the Department has suffered a steady decline in faculty complement: a net loss of 8 CFL positions or 18% of the total, since the time of our last external review. As repeatedly recommended by the external reviewers in several of their 13 recommendations – “faculty renewal is a primary issue that needs to be addressed in the Department” – we must embark on a program of hiring if we are to maintain the excellent research productivity, program delivery, and the overall reputation of the Department. Furthermore, given our growing international reputation for research excellence, and our very large graduate program that relies on successful researchers for graduate supervision, recruitment of additional teaching-specialist faculty (lecturers and senior lecturers) is not viewed as sufficient to meet these urgent needs.

**5.1 Action/s:**

- (Recommendations 3, 4, 7, 12) We will work with the Dean’s Office to prioritize faculty renewal in the Department.
- (Recommendation 6) We note that under our organizational scheme some members of the Clinical Science Area have cross-affiliations in other areas. Given this fluidity, we feel that the suggested establishment of a formal minimum number of faculty per area is unnecessary, but accept that the recommended minimum of 5 is useful guideline.
- We will incorporate succession planning into forthcoming strategic planning exercises. Several outstanding long-serving staff members who have played crucial roles in the success of the Department are nearing nominal retirement age. Planning for these transitions, establishing a process to capture and retain the “institutional memory” of individuals transitioning through key departmental positions, and perhaps aiding the development of potential replacement personnel, will minimize disruption and ensure continuation of best practices established over long

periods of time.

**5.2 Resource implications (if any):**

- We are reliant on the Dean and VPA for CFL positions

**5.3 Expected completion date/s:**

- ongoing

The above action plan has been considered by the Unit under review and has been discussed and agreed to by the Dean.

Unit Leader (signed)



Name ... Neil V. Watson PhD .....

Title... Chair, Dept of Psychology .....

Date

..... September 25 2015 .....

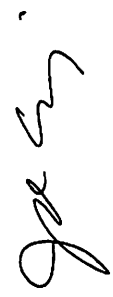
**Section 2 - Dean's comments and endorsement of the Action Plan:**

I met with Dr. Neil Watson, Chair of the Department of Psychology on 24 September 2015 to discuss the external review prepared by Professors Brian Timney (Western University) Wendy Craig (Queen's University) and Brian Cutler (University of Ontario Institute of Technology).

Our office has given close consideration to the external review and to the detailed response from the Department of Psychology. The external reviewers have produced a thoughtful assessment, capturing many of the strengths found in the Department and identifying some of the challenges it faces. The response from the Department is equally thoughtful and to be welcomed. I agree with the reviewers in characterizing the Department of Psychology as a premier unit within SFU and across Canada that offers 'high quality programs.'

The most pressing issue is the need for faculty renewal. This is entirely persuasive and we are committed to work with the Department to ensure they have the faculty complement to maintain the high quality of their work. Specifically, our office will seek the VPA's approval to hire 2 tenure track faculty as part of the Faculty's hiring plan for 16-17. We are confident that the Department will be able to make a strong case to the new Dean in order to continue the process of renewal.

Faculty Dean



Date

14 October, 2015

## Department of Psychology: Educational Goals and Assessment Action Plan

As part of the external review process, Psychology was tasked with developing educational goals and a tentative assessment plan. It is our understanding that developing program-level Educational Goals (Learning Outcomes) and a realistic assessment plan for a department as large and complex as Psychology typically takes 18-24 months and involves the whole department (Rogers, 2013), so the timetable (reproduced below) provided by the VPA's Office in late July, 2014 seems optimistic at best. The remainder of this document outlines the initial stages of the assessment process that will take several years, with both the goals and proposed assessment processes being *tentative* in nature and subject to change to reflect our practice.

Review Cycle Dates	Steps in Educational Goals Process (2015 Cycle)
Jan – Dec 2014	-Develop educational goals and preliminary assessment plan if desired, and incorporate into external review self-study.
Feb – June 2015	-External review-team visit/report. The terms of reference for the review will include consideration of the educational goals by the review team.
June – August 2015	-Usual post-review Action Plan developed by the unit, incorporating any recommended adjustments to goals and suggestions for the assessment plan. Action Plan goes to SCUP and Senate for approval.
Sept 2015 – Sept 2016	-Collect data relevant to assessment process.
Sept 2016 – Sept 2017	-Evaluate data and recommend changes (e.g. to curriculum, pedagogy, etc.).
Sept 2017 – Sept 2018	-Implement changes.  -Produce mid-cycle External Review Update report on progress of implementing the Action Plan, including status of assessment of educational goals.
Sept 2018 – Sept 2019	-Collect second data set.
Sept 2019 – Sept 2020	-Evaluate data and recommend changes.
Sept 2020 – Sept 2021	-Implement changes.  -Begin self-study for next review (incorporating any changes to goals and updating assessment process, results).

Some key assumptions that guided the planning process are listed below, so that department members, internal and external reviewers, university administrators and Senate Members understand the practical limits we see as inherent in this process – based on our acknowledged inexperience.

1. Educational Goals will have no or minimal impact on faculty members' teaching. This includes impact on faculty members' academic freedom, teaching workload, and any administrative aspects of teaching. No faculty member will be required to publish course-level Educational Goals (EGs).
2. Although Educational Goals for the program should be reflected at the Graduate and Undergraduate level, they must **not** be seen to supersede any existing Learning Outcomes in our Accredited Graduate Programs. Existing accreditation processes assess these programs.
3. There is no expectation that additional resources might be provided to develop undergraduate 'capstone' courses that could be required for all students, so all assessment of the Educational Goals must be done with existing course evidence (however, see #1 above).
4. As there will be no ongoing additional resources for departments (beyond the first cycle), any evidence collection and associated analysis must be done with existing data (possibly course grades), and at a minimal cost (staff time).
5. Given the cyclical and dynamic nature of the review process outlined in the timetable above, the EGs and tentative assessment plans are always 'in-progress' and should NOT be published beyond the requirements of the University Senate for at least the first complete review cycle. This is primarily an internal process and document. Existing documents already communicate the departmental goals and general learning outcomes (<http://www.psyc.sfu.ca/ugrad/>).

These assumptions have guided the development of a 'draft' set of program-level Educational Goals and some sub-goals that might be more easily assessed (recognizing that there is only one evidence source – student performance). Our tentative assessment process builds on the feedback we received from the external review team and will establish some benchmarks for future modifications.

#### Assessing Educational Goals in Psychology – Overview

Psychology at SFU has five Educational Goals. Each goal has sub-goals that can be assessed at either the Undergraduate (UG) or the Graduate (G) level. Only some of the sub-goals can be appropriately assessed while students are still 'in progress,' and other sub-goals are more appropriately assessed after graduation or recognized as a product of life-long learning (formal or extracurricular). We are currently planning to use of course grade distributions for 'in progress' assessment, and of other sources to provide evidence at graduation and beyond (e.g., Institutional Research and Planning – SFU-IRP). This document specifies the Educational Goals that are relevant for students completing courses for a Psychology Major and for students completing our Graduate Programs.

The five Educational Goals and sub-goals are described here were thoroughly reviewed by departmental faculty members, who were then asked to self-nominate which of their courses assessed specific sub-goals, and whether or not they believed completion of their courses constituted evidence of successful achievement of the sub-goal. For courses taught by regular faculty, we are assured that some component of their courses assess, in some reasonable way, the sub-goals, so we will assess course completion rates and grade distributions in this first round of assessment. Having established some benchmarks, we will begin to assess the quality of courses taught by temporary instructional staff.

#### Educational Goals, Sub-goals, and Sources of Evidence for Assessment Purposes.

Following are five tables with the global descriptions of the five educational goals, identification of sub-goals, and a *tentative* list of courses that may provide evidence at the end of the semester – Fall, 2015 or Spring, 2016 (as not all the listed courses are taught by regular faculty in any given semester). Where necessary, a sub-goal might be framed more specifically for the Undergraduate (UG) or Graduate (G) programs.

**Goal One: Knowledge and understanding of major psychology content areas.** Students completing an SFU UG degree in psychology will demonstrate knowledge and understanding of many major concepts, theoretical perspectives, research methods and findings, and historical trends in the core topics of psychology. Students completing a G degree will apply their continually expanding foundational and specialized knowledge of psychological theory, research, and other skills to complex psychological issues.

<b>Sub-goal Description:</b>	<b>Potential Evidence Source</b>
<p>1.1a UG students will be able to recall, explain and apply psychological concepts within a majority of the following content domains:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• biological bases of behaviour</li> <li>• perception and attention</li> <li>• language, motivation and emotion</li> <li>• history and philosophy in psychology</li> <li>• research methods &amp; data analysis</li> <li>• personality and individual differences</li> <li>• lifespan development</li> <li>• social and intercultural psychology</li> <li>• cognition, learning and memory</li> <li>• abnormal psychology</li> <li>• health and wellbeing</li> <li>• forensic psychology</li> </ul>	<p>Successful completion of Psych</p> <p>100, 280, 381(2)(3)(6)(7)            100, 221, 303, 330            100, 358,            100, 102, 308            100, 102, 201, 210, 301            102, 370            102, 250, 354, 355, 357, 385            102, 260, 358, 363            100, 221, 325            102, 241, 356, 371            102, 362, 365            268, 376, 379</p>
<p>1.1b G students will be able to identify and explain which core psychological concepts apply to common psychological issues and, within their area of specialization, demonstrate knowledge (breadth and depth) of current research and professional practices.</p>	<p>Any of 700, 744, 750, 770, 790, 806, 807, 810, 815, 820, 822, 830, 835, 836, 892, 897, 907, 944, 950, 960, 980, 990</p>
<p>1.2a UG students will be able to identify and describe several theoretical perspectives in Psychology and explain strengths and weaknesses of multiple perspectives.</p>	<p>100, 102, 250, 308, 355, 363, 376, 376, 370, 385, 391, 451</p>
<p>1.2b G students will be able to explicitly recognize the theoretical perspectives underlying their research and explain the implications of differing perspectives on interpreting the results of published research.</p>	<p>Any of 700, 744, 750, 770, 790, 806, 807, 810, 815, 820, 822, 830, 835, 836, 892, 897, 907, 944, 950, 960, 990</p>

<p><b>Goal Two: Scientific reasoning, research, and critical thinking.</b> Appropriate to the degree qualification (UG or G), students will be able to frame appropriate research questions, review and critique literature, design and conduct ethical and culturally sensitive research on meaningful psychological issues, analyze empirical data using appropriate statistical techniques, and produce APA formatted research reports for dissemination. Students will display a healthy skepticism about unsubstantiated claims about psychological issues and will use analytic thinking to evaluate evidence. UG students will refine their 'habit' of critical thinking as they identify and solve problems, and G students will demonstrate higher-order analytical and critical thinking essential for their specialized training.</p>	
<b>Sub-goal Description</b>	<b>Potential Evidence Source</b>
2.1a UG students will be able to find, read and accurately summarize psychological research, determine the empirical question being addressed, identify the research methods used, evaluate research claims, and distinguish between evidence for causal claims versus relational claims.	100, 201, 221, 250, 260, 280, 303, 330, 354, 355, 363, 370, 379, 381, 385, 391, 451, 480, 490
2.1b G students will be able to evaluate psychological research, provide critical analyses, offer alternative explanations, and suggest testable hypotheses to clarify any issues identified.	824, 980
2.2a UG students will use critical thinking and problem-solving skills in their efforts to evaluate the quality of evidence.	250, 280, 300, 303, 308, 330, 354, 355, 363, 370, 376, 379, 385, 451
2.2b G students will use higher-order and evidence-based analyses of psychological issues, including the ability to recognize and defend against the major fallacies of human thought processes.	705, 715, 815, 819
2.3 Students (UG & G) will be able to design and conduct research to address psychological questions (at the level appropriate for their training); frame research questions; undertake literature searches; critically analyze theoretical and empirical studies; formulate testable hypotheses; operationalize variables; choose appropriate methods; make valid and reliable measurements; analyze data and interpret results; and write research reports.	(UG) Completion of Psyc 201, 210, 301, 303, 354, 355, 370, 411, 490  (G) Completion of Master's Thesis, or PhD Dissertation  824, 892, 910, 911



<b>Goal Three: Ethical and social responsibility to others.</b> Students will explain academic and research-relevant ethical principles and will use their understanding to guide their academic conduct and professional behaviour. UG students will accept responsibility to act in ethical and socially responsible ways, and G students will adhere to the highest professional and ethical standards.	
<b>Sub-goal Description:</b>	<b>Potential Evidence Source</b>
3.1a UG students will use accepted academic and ethical standards to design, conduct, and evaluate psychological research.	201, 490
3.1b G students will use accepted ethical standards to design, conduct, and evaluate psychological research; will be able to explain and to be guided in professional clinical practice by the highest ethical standards.	MA/PhD theses, 892, 897, Practicum courses for clinical students
3.2 All students will demonstrate respect for individuals, their rights (including intellectual property), the limitations of all knowledge, and behave civilly when interacting with others.	100, 102, 201, 260, 300, 303, 354, 363, 451 815, 819, 824

**Goal Four: Communication and interpersonal skills.** Students will communicate effectively and respectfully using the appropriate medium (primarily written and oral). Students will produce original content, including reports of research adhering to Psychology discipline standards. Students will demonstrate effective listening skills and will offer respectful comments or feedback when relevant.

<b>Sub-goal Description:</b>	<b>Potential Evidence Source</b>
4.1a UG students will produce discipline-specific (APA format) written material that concisely communicates accurate information at an appropriate level of complexity.	201, 250, 260, 221, 300, 303, 308, 330, 354, 381, 385, 391, 411, 480, 490
4.1b G students will produce appropriately formatted written materials suitable for publication in peer-reviewed journals (APA) and other material required in professional contexts.	911 Scholarship & Grant Apps, Theses, Clinical Reports
4.2a UG students will communicate effectively in diverse groups by listening respectfully, asking questions and seeking clarification as needed, presenting material summarized from appropriate sources, and acknowledging others' opinions.	303, 354, 355, 370, 381, 451, 480, 490 Tutorial Presentations, Seminar Classes
4.2b G students will communicate effectively in professional contexts by listening respectfully, asking questions and seeking clarification as needed, presenting new material from original research, and acknowledging others' opinions.	Class Participation, Thesis Defenses, Conference Participation, Practica, Internships

**Goal Five: Application of psychological knowledge.** Completion of a degree in Psychology is part of a life-long learning process. **Depending on the degree credential sought**, students may use what they have learned (psychological content and skills) to do one or more of the following: find psychology-related employment; provide professional interventions; conduct basic or applied research; provide education in psychology; lead teams and problem-solve; or provide other degree relevant services.

<b>Sub-goal Description:</b>	<b>Potential Evidence Source</b>
5.1 Students will use their psychological knowledge and skills to provide services in appropriate domains (e.g., interventions, assessment, consulting, research, teaching, or others).	825 SFU-IRP
5.2a UG students will use their interpersonal skills and their knowledge of teamwork skills to integrate successfully into existing organizations.	260 SFU-IRP
5.2b G students will use their leadership skills to guide others, to develop and complete projects, and to speak with recognized authority for their employing organization, institution, or the discipline.	SFU-IRP

**References**

Rogers, G. M. (2013, August). Academy for Assessment of Educational Goals and Student Learning. Co-sponsored by the SFU Teaching and Learning Centre and the Office of the Vice-President, Academic.