SFU OFFICE OF THE PROVOST
AND VICE-PRESIDENT ACADEMIC

MEMORANDUM

ATTENTION	Senate	**DATE**	November 16, 2023
FROM	Dilson Rassier, Provost and Vice-President Academic, and Chair, SCUP	**PAGES**	1/1
RE:	External Review Report for the Department of Psychology (SCUP 23-37)		

At its meeting on October 25, 2023, 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: Tim Racine (tracine@sfu.ca)
      Laurel Weldon (fassdean@sfu.ca)

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY   ENGAGING THE WORLD

8888 University Drive, Burnaby, BC   TEL: 778.782.5731   vpacad@sfu.ca
Strand Hall, Room 3000   FAX: 778.782.5876   www.sfu.ca/vpacademic
Canada V5A 1S6

MEMORANDUM

ATTENTION	Dilson Rassier, Chair of SCUP	**DATE**	October 17, 2023
FROM	Peter Hall, Vice-Provost and Associate Vice-President, Academic	**PAGES**	
RE:	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:
"We were impressed by the commitment, openness, honesty, and thoughtfulness of all participants and would like to express our gratitude to them for their invaluable contributions. We also know that such exercises put additional demands on faculty and staff in preparing materials, participating in meetings, and in hosting the review team. We are grateful for the warm welcome we received and appreciate all of the work done in preparation for our visit."

Following the site visit, the Report of the External Review Committee* for the Department of Psychology was submitted in May 2023. 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 (Provost's Office) to consider the recommendations. An Action Plan was prepared taking into consideration the discussion at the meeting and the contents of 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.**

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*External Review Committee:
    Wendy Craig, Queen's University (Chair of External Review Committee)
    Chris Moore, Dalhousie University
    Chris Oriet, University of Regina
    Eric Beauregard (internal), Simon Fraser University

Attachments:
    1.   External Review Report (May 2023)
    2.   Department of Psychology Action Plan
    3.   Department's Response to the External Review Report
    4.   Department of Psychology Educational Goals Assessment Plan
    5.   Feedback on Educational Goals Assessment Plan

cc   Laurel Weldon, Dean, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences
       Tim Racine, Chair, Department of Psychology

External Review Report

Department of Psychology

Simon Fraser University

Date of Review: March 29-31, 2023

Reviewers

Eric Beauregard, PhD, Professor, Associate Director Research, Simon Fraser University
Wendy Craig, PhD, Professor, Queen's University
Chris Moore, PhD, Professor and Associate Vice President Academic, Dalhousie University
Chris Oriet, PhD, Professor and Associate Dean Planning and Programs Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, University of Regina

Context of Our Evaluation

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" and provide a list of recommendations. The review team was provided with a number of documents including: a comprehensive self study of the department of psychology; the faculty cvs in the department of psychology, the Terms of Reference for the department; and the five-year academic plan of the Faculty of Arts and Science. Based on our review of the aforementioned materials and our site visit, we have provided comments on our observations and recommendations. Over the course of the two and a half days of our review visit, we met 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.   Our itinerary is attached. All of these meetings were extremely collegial and we were able to gather a significant amount of information about the department, the programs, its strengths, the challenges and the opportunities. We are aware that this type of review provides a snapshot of the department and we may not have taken all the relevant factors into account when considering our recommendations.

The review process received full engagement and support across all levels of administration. We were impressed by the commitment, openness, honesty, and thoughtfulness of all participants and would like to express our gratitude to them for their invaluable contributions. We also know that such exercises put additional demands on faculty and staff in preparing

materials, participating in meetings, and in hosting the review team. We are grateful for the warm welcome we received and appreciate all of the work done in preparation for our visit.

1. Capacity to deliver undergraduate (including honours and advising) and graduate programs.

The single most glaring concern that emerged from this review is the capacity of the Psychology department to deliver its undergraduate and graduate programs.

1.1. Undergraduate programs

We did not review the structure or curriculum of the undergraduate program. To do so would have made our task unmanageable as the department offers many different courses across the four years of the undergraduate program as well as a set of courses in each of the six graduate program areas. We note that in addition to constituting the core Psychology program, Psychology courses form important components of a number of interdisciplinary degrees offered by Simon Fraser University, including Cognitive Science and Behavioural Neuroscience.

The Psychology department at SFU carries much more than its fair share of the load of teaching undergraduate students both in its Faculty and most likely in the University as a whole. But in this responsibility, it is not alone. Throughout the country, Psychology remains a hugely popular discipline with undergraduate students, and all programs are struggling to offer enough seats to meet the demand. Having said that, it is not an acceptable option to admit students into a Psychology degree program and then not provide enough opportunities for those students to take their preferred courses and to graduate on time. Unfortunately this seems to be the situation at the moment at SFU. This situation was evident from the self study documents provided to us ahead of time and from the most concerning meeting we had during our visit, that with the undergraduate student representatives. They expressed in moving terms how they are commonly not able to get into enough courses to progress in their programs and in some cases to graduate on time. Their concerns were backed up by data from a survey of undergraduate students which showed that of close to 400 students who responded, about 50% reported that their graduation was delayed by at least one semester and, in nearly 20% of cases, a year or more.

We heard that a variety of factors contribute to the capacity concerns at the undergraduate level. First, and most fundamentally, there are not enough seats being offered in Psychology classes each year for the number of students needing and wanting them. As noted, Psychology courses service not only Psychology majors, but also students enrolled in a variety of interdisciplinary programs (Cognitive Science, Behavioural Neuroscience, etc.), and likely also students looking for interesting electives. Essentially all courses are full with long waiting lists.

Simply put, there are not enough courses being offered and/or those that are being offered do not have large enough capacities.

The capacity problem appears to be exacerbated by certain operational issues. First, we heard that the current registration and waitlist policy enables students to sign up for more courses than they intend to take. This means that course availability appears to be even more limited than it may actually be, adding to students' anxiety.

<u>Recommendation 1.1. (University)</u>: put hard limits on the number of courses that students can register for and on the waitlists.

Student advising at SFU is currently carried out centrally for undeclared students (typically first year students) and then departmentally by staff for majors. There was some discussion about whether and how central advising for undeclared students might devolve to units. In our opinion, undeclared students should be advised at the Faculty not department level. Once students have declared their major, the department should take over advising. In Psychology (we do not know whether this is a university-wide model), advising is currently carried out by staff. There is one full-time advisor and some additional support. In our view this is not a good model. First, it is clear that in Psychology, the advisors cannot cope with the demand. We heard from students about unacceptably long wait times to see an advisor by appointment. It is certainly possible that students are making unfortunate course enrollment decisions before they get the advice they need to optimize their programs. Second, whereas staff may well be entirely competent to advise on program requirements, they cannot be expected to provide guidance on other issues such as what makes a good double major or what career options are available for Psychology majors. Advising should be a holistic exercise, not one that focuses narrowly on program requirements. We recommend that the department implement a system with at least some faculty involvement in advising. One possibility is that advising becomes a part of the job descriptions of lecturers, who currently have a very onerous eight course teaching expectation. Exchanging one or two courses for advising responsibility would seem to yield some benefit for all. An alternative solution is to assign an equal number of majors to each faculty member, who then serves as their academic advisor on more substantive matters. With 1700 majors and approximately 35 faculty members, each advisor would be responsible for approximately 50 or so students each year. If one-on-one meetings with these students are not feasible, an alternative is to host a large group meeting where students can be given ample opportunity to seek advice for their specific situations and career objectives, much of which will be common across all students.

Recommendation 1.2. (Department, Faculty): review the delivery of advising with an eye to increasing expertise and reducing student wait times. Consider shifting some of the advising responsibility to teaching faculty.

Leaving aside these operational issues, there are a variety of possible solutions for program delivery.

First, the department might limit enrolment into the Psychology major. Some Psychology programs around the country have a minimum grade requirement for entry into required 'gateway' courses, thereby constraining the number of students who can major. It was suggested to us that there might be negative resource allocation implications of such a strategy and it was not favoured.

Second, there could be an increase in course capacities, particularly for gateway courses. It appears that at SFU, Psychology has limited access to the very large classrooms that might allow them to increase the seats in their 1XX and 2XX courses. We were not able to assess or understand fully this situation but we recommend reviewing how classrooms are allocated to see if there are opportunities here to consolidate course offerings in the first two years of the major, thereby freeing up faculty resources to deliver upper level courses that are overenrolled.

Recommendation 1.3. (University, Faculty, and Department): review to what extent the capacity of first and second year courses in Psychology can be increased to free up resources for upper level teaching.

The department might modify the delivery of certain courses to allow online and/or hybrid versions. We heard that one major reason for the current crisis in undergraduate program delivery was the demise of CODE, which appears to have happened quickly and without a careful plan for how to address the shortfall in seats offered. We learned that CODE acted as a kind of pressure release valve whereby students could take courses offered through CODE when they were unable to get into all of the courses they needed for their programs. Importantly, CODE courses did not count towards faculty workload as TAs were entirely responsible for delivery, so in effect the department gained student course enrolments for almost no cost. With no CODE and no online replacements, all of this demand is now focussed on the traditional delivery model, which is not able to handle it. Developing online versions of certain very popular courses might help here. Similarly, offering certain courses in hybrid mode and making 50% less demand on classroom timetable capacity might be a solution. However, we were told that such hybrid arrangements are only helpful if they can be paired with another course due to the availability of suitable classroom space and that this pairing has to be arranged by the faculty teaching the courses. With such an arrangement, the utility of switching to hybrid courses seems limited.

Recommendation 1.4. (Department): Consider the development of a set of online versions of particularly popular and oversubscribed second and third year courses.

Finally, the department might increase the number of courses offered. Other things being equal, this solution will require additional faculty resources, either in the form of sessionals, lecturers, or professors. It seems that there is a consensus at SFU that an untrammelled increase in sessional teachers is not preferred. We would concur. Sessional teachers do not in general offer the quality of instruction and support for students that continuing appointments do. We are much more optimistic about the benefits of increasing the numbers of Lecturer appointments (and the ratio of Lecturers to Professors). These faculty, who have PhDs but are dedicated to a career in university teaching offer outstanding education for undergraduates and can build a Department culture where excellence in university teaching and undergraduate student support are valued. As noted earlier, they might also become more involved in student advising, so that this responsibility is not left to staff, who, notwithstanding their high standards and best intentions, are not experts in undergraduate programs or careers in Psychology and cognate areas.

Recommendation 1.5. (Department, Faculty): Add to the cadre of lecturers in the department to relieve pressure on research faculty and to build a culture of teaching excellence and student support.

None of these suggestions are short-term fixes; rather they will need to be worked out over the next few years. In the meantime, there are undergraduates students who are desperate, who are not getting into required or preferred courses, who are failing to progress in their programs and graduate on time. This is especially onerous for international students, who pay a considerable tuition differential relative to their domestic peers, and therefore experience particular hardship when encountering delays in their programs. In our view this is not an acceptable state of affairs for any university, much less one that prides itself on sitting at the top of the table of the university rankings in Canada.

Recommendation 1.6. (Department, Faculty): Commit to ensuring that no student will be prevented from natural progression in their program or from graduating on time.

1.2. Undergraduate Honours Program

We separate out the undergraduate Honours program here because the issues seem to us to be different. Unlike the general major program which is huge, the Psychology Honours program appears to be anomalously small compared to similar Psychology departments across the country. At SFU, there are about 1500 declared Psychology majors, but the number of Honours students is reported to be 12-17 per year. This is a tiny proportion of the students in Psychology

and we heard from the student representatives that many more students would like to be in Honours but are unable to find supervisors. By comparison at our three universities, the numbers are as follows (approximate annual enrolment of Honours/Majors): Dalhousie (40-50/900), Queen's (160 (of which 60 do honours thesis)/780), Regina (25-35/700). When we asked about the small size of the honours program, it was suggested that faculty were in general overworked and did not have the capacity to supervise additional students. However, faculty are welcoming many students into their research programs in other capacities (as volunteers, directed study students, etc.) and apparently doing a large amount of 'silent teaching' of these students in research skills and professional development. It is not clear why the department is not centralizing part of this teaching into a recognized Honours course, where a larger cohort of students can be provided with the general learning and skills needed to go on to graduate training. It is important to note that entry into research-focussed graduate programs in Psychology requires an Honours degree, so it is likely that many SFU Psychology students are currently being prevented from going on to graduate school in Psychology.

In addition, there was not a systematic and transparent manner that students applied to the Honours program, potentially leading to unfair advantages for some students to be able to do a honours thesis. We heard that the current model is essentially, "first come, first served" with those students who are fortunate enough to be in the right place at the right time to find a willing supervisor accepted into the program. There are models for systematic approaches to Honours programs. For example, at Queen's, all faculty members normally take two honours students as part of their workload and furthermore there is a formalized matching system where students indicate who with a ranked list who they wish to work with, faculty members interview and submit rankings, and then they are matched based on the rankings. Other departments require students to prepare an application including a letter of intent, which also serves as good practice for preparing a graduate school application.

Recommendation 1.7. (Department): Grow the Honours program to at least 50 students per year by providing appropriate support for research faculty who supervise such students and by ensuring Honours thesis requirements are reasonable. Create a transparent system for students to apply and work with potential honours thesis supervisors.

1.3. Graduate Program Delivery

We heard from graduate students and faculty that there is a dearth of graduate courses being offered. The area organization of the department requires that alongside core requirements for the graduate degrees, many area specific courses need to be offered. Currently, there is not the capacity among faculty to offer these courses as often as needed. This leaves graduate students

struggling to meet their requirements with makeshift reading courses or courses taken in other departments.

Recommendation 1.8. (Department): Review whether area requirements for graduate students are warranted and, if the decision is to continue with such area requirements, ensure that research faculty are able to fit such courses into their teaching expectation.

2. Graduate student support (funding and counselling)

The cost of living within commuting distance of SFU is perhaps the highest in the country. Graduate students feel this pressure acutely, citing financial difficulties as chief among their concerns. In the average Canadian psychology department, the typical amount of funding provided to graduate students (approximately $18,000 per year) would be reasonable. However, with the average monthly rent for a 1BR apartment hovering around $2400 and little to suggest that this amount has reached its ceiling, the funding provided is simply not enough for students to support themselves. In our conversations with students and the Dean of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies, we learned that one of the greatest challenges faced by students is the uncertainty associated with unexpected large increases in rent. The stress of managing such unpredictable costs is exacerbated by the department's piecemeal approach to funding in lieu of a University-wide guarantee of minimum funding for graduate students.

The absence of guaranteed funding for graduate students limits the University's ability to attract students to its programs, in turn jeopardizing the research productivity of its faculty members. Although the Department of Psychology has been fortunate to have a steady stream of high-quality graduate students in its programs, without a serious investment in increased funding for these students, this is unlikely to be the case going forward as graduate school at SFU will simply not be an affordable option for students. The researchers in the Department of Psychology bring in 25% of research revenue for the entire Faculty of Social Sciences but they cannot continue to compete successfully for tri-agency and other grants without graduate students in their labs. A number of universities are now establishing operating standards that require as a matter of policy graduate programs to develop their own arrangements for providing a university-wide minimum guarantee of annual funding to thesis-based students.

Recommendation 2.1. (University): A minimum funding standard, and a corresponding investment of resources, is urgently needed to support graduate students. The Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies should continue to explore avenues for developing stable, predictable funding structures that allow graduate students to have an acceptable standard of living.

Recommendation 2.2. (Department): In the absence of such a University policy, the department of psychology should explore more systematic approaches to funding that allow students to budget and to weather unexpected shifts in their financial situation. One model for distributing funding provided by Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies is to require students to submit a declaration - reviewed and approved by their supervisor and/or area chair - indicating how much funding they need for the upcoming year to reach a pre-specified target (e.g., $40,000, the target identified by the Dean of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies as the minimum standard for graduate students). Students would be expected to account for all sources of funding that have been guaranteed to them in determining their request including external awards, supervisor stipends, RA work, and program-related work for pay such as paid practica. The Terms of Reference for such base funding may preclude a needs-based approach to distributing funding, but this should be discussed with the Dean of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies to determine what kind of flexibility is possible.

We were very pleased to see that the department is well-supported by a dedicated team of administrative assistants, including a graduate program assistant who works with the Associate Chair, Graduate Studies to assist graduate students in navigating their programs. It is important that, as a relative newcomer to the role, the Associate Chair be given the resources and mentorship needed to be effective in responding to student concerns and serve as an advocate for graduate students in pressing their causes with the Deans of FASS and GPS, and the University's senior leadership team.

Graduate students raised the concern that there was limited information regarding how to handle conflicts with supervisors nor the support that a student may need who was in this particular situation. They felt that students need access to counseling support, as well as clear and transparent processes for handling conflicts within the department and the university and the department. Students were not clear who they could discuss problems with their supervisor with and were concerned about conflict of interest. They also noted that for a significant period of time the position of the ombudsman in the university has been unfilled.

Recommendation 2.3 (Department). In the student Handbook, there is a description of the process students can follow should they experience conflict with their supervisor. The process needs to take into account perceptions of power differentials and be centred on students.

Recommendation 2.4 (University). There is a clear need for the ombudsman position to be filled. Since these types of positions can be challenging to fill, It may be important to have an interim acting person in this position to ensure that students' needs are being met.

3. Faculty complement, workload, and the interaction with area organization

3.1. Overall faculty complement and workload

The Department has 36 faculty members and is organized into six research areas: Clinical Science (11 faculty), Cognitive and Neural Science (7 faculty), Developmental Psychology (3 faculty), History, Quantitative and Theoretical Psychology (6 faculty of which 3 are lecturers), Law and Forensic Psychology (4 faculty), and Social Psychology (4 faculty). The Clinical Psychology training program operates within the Clinical Science Area and offers graduate training in child clinical, forensic, neuropsychology, and general clinical psychology. There are several faculty members who are about to retire so these numbers will continue to decrease without the allocation of additional positions.

There is no doubt that the teaching workload of the Psychology faculty is high. The current faculty complement is unable to service the very large numbers of students in Psychology and related programs. When compared to national comparators (we note that at least some of the data presented in the self-study with respect to faculty complements at other universities are inaccurate), the overall student-faculty ratio appears to support the allocation of additional positions to Psychology. How these positions are allocated across areas and type (Professor vs. Lecturer) should be a matter of internal discussion and should reflect the needs identified in the strategic plan of the department.

Recommendation 3.1. (Department, Faculty): Recognizing impending retirements and student demand for Psychology courses, allocate additional faculty appointments to the Department of Psychology to bring the student-faculty ratio to the median of an appropriate set of national comparator Psychology Departments. Consistent with R1.5. ensure that the overall complement of Lecturers is increased.

3.2. Area organization

In our meetings with department members, we were struck by the cohesiveness and camaraderie of the faculty members within each defined area. Without exception, the members of each area expressed their appreciation for their area colleagues and credited the area structure for promoting a welcoming environment for new faculty members and support for longer serving members. While we do not dispute these benefits, we urge the department to consider what might be lost by retaining this organizational structure. We did note that the areas did not uniformly appear to be 'natural kinds.' For example, History, Quantitative, and Theory (HQT) appears in part to be a product of historical tendencies in the department rather than current research foci, as well as a grouping for anyone who does not fit cleanly into another area. Cognitive and Neural Science came about through a melding of two distinct areas

and we heard different opinions on whether this merger had been the right decision. The Clinical area and Law and Forensic area essentially constitute a Venn diagram with some faculty existing in one or the other and some in both. As the general trend toward interdisciplinarity continues, it is difficult to envision how a siloed organization by subdisciplines can continue to meet the needs of the department. This is especially salient in the context of new faculty hires. Again without exception, in every meeting we had with members of an area, a desire was expressed for additional faculty members. It is clear that every area could indeed do with a few more faculty members to achieve a stable complement, and the department has shown a quite impressive return on investment measured in terms of both enrolments and research dollars. At times, this desire was framed in competitive terms in much the same way a department chair might lobby the Dean for new positions in competition with other department heads. An alternative to this is to assess the needs of the department more comprehensively, without regard to area, and advertise for candidates who meet as many of those needs as possible. The current area structure works against this objective, since any new hire needs to be assigned to an area and therefore needs to be seen as doing substantial teaching and research on topics encompassed by that area. We also note that, in practice, lecturers are sometimes an awkward fit for the area they've been assigned to and that the area structure is muddied a bit in the forensic area with clinical forensic faculty belonging both to the forensic area and the clinical area.

As noted, there is no doubt that the department is in need of new faculty positions to meet the increasing demand for psychology courses and area majors. Before allocating these much needed positions, we would encourage the department to have strategic discussion about the benefits and costs for both teaching and research of retaining the current area structure. What are the strengths of the department and how do the potential areas highlight these strengths? How does the area structure help brand the department and highlight those strengths? What is the core number of faculty required for an area to implement undergraduate and graduate teaching needs? If the area structure is to be retained, is six the right number for a department of this size?

Recommendation 3.2. (Department): Engage in a strategic planning process focussed on costs and benefits of maintaining an area organization to generate a plan for new faculty recruitment consistent with the intent of R3.1.

4. Quality of space

We did not have the opportunity to tour all of the spaces that the department occupies. We spent most of our time in the office block. We were able to tour the Psychology Clinic, which is

very spacious and well-appointed. We heard from a number of people that research space is relatively ample but varies greatly in quality. Further, we heard the common complaint amongst researchers at many Canadian universities that renovations to space are very expensive and often prohibitively beyond the budgets of individual faculty, even those who are lucky enough to be awarded CFI, and also departments as a whole. The Psychology department seems to operate on a model of faculty enjoying individually assigned lab spaces. In fact it appears that previously shared lab spaces have, over time, been converted to individual labs. We understand that there are differences of opinion on whether shared lab facilities or individual space allocations offer the best space model. The majority of faculty who spoke to us about space seemed to favour the shared model at least by research area, but it is not clear whether the department has had a full and open discussion of how to allocate space.

Recommendation 4.1. (Department): The Department discusses creating more shared spaces for labs where there are overlapping equipment needs.

Recommendation 4.2. (Faculty/Department): There is a need to upgrade the psychology space in general. Perhaps a partnership could be established with university advancement to fundraise to upgrade teaching and lab spaces.

5. Staff

The department is well served by an enthusiastic and dedicated staff, led by a department manager, who is currently in an interim appointment. When we met with the staff, they were generous with their time and honesty. Although their different roles are clear, a number of them expressed some concern about changing demands, not clearly reflected in their job descriptions. As is common, job descriptions are often not amended as responsibilities shift, leading to responsibility creep. We recommend that once the continuing appointment of manager is settled, an annual review of job descriptions is conducted with all staff, and, where warranted, job descriptions are amended as required. After this review is completed, it would be advantageous to ensure that there is sufficient staff to support the department's functioning.

Recommendation 5.1. (Department). Review staff job descriptions to ensure that they map onto the current work that is being conducted.

Recommendation 5.2. (Department). Put in place a formal annual review process for the staff to ensure that they are supported, their professional development goals are being met; and there is an opportunity for feedback.

6. Equity and Diversity Issues

First, both undergraduate and graduate students highlighted the importance and value of seeing themselves in the faculty representation. A focus in hiring should be to ensure that attention is paid to this issue.

Second, there were several issues raised with respect to transparency of the process. For example, in the Honours program, it is not transparent who is available to supervise students and how students get matched with a supervisor. It may be helpful to create processes around the Honours program to ensure that there is equal access to doing a honours thesis.

Third, the department may want to consider providing an honorarium for students and their committee participation. It is a recognition of their time and the work they do on committees that is unpaid. Unlike faculty members whose duties include administrative service, for students and adjuncts this may be unpaid work. The work they do on committees is incredibly important and it is important to formally recognize their contributions.

Recommendation 6.1. (Department). **The Equity committee may want to review key procedures (Honours program, allocation of teaching assistants and funding in the department) to ensure that these processes are done in a transparent and equitable manner.**

7. Funding

It was noted that the department has very little discretionary money that may limit its ability to be nimble to requests. At some universities, a portion of the overhead monies from grants and/or contracts flows down to the department level. This way the department benefits from its record in research. This flow of money could be directed towards supporting research activities of graduate students or renovations for infrastructure, or professional development such as training in statistical or clinical workshops, etc. Adapting such a model would increase the discretionary funds at the department level.

Recommendation 7.1. (University/Faculty/Department). Consider ways to increase discretionary budget available to the department. For example, institute an overhead policy that rewards contract holders by returning some portion of overhead to the departments that generate it.

8. Future Opportunities

The new medical school at SFU is an exciting opportunity for growth and development for the university but also for the department of Psychology. Psychology is a multidisciplinary area that

has many natural intersections with Health Sciences and medicine. It would be beneficial for the department to participate in discussions of curriculum development, as well as research foci within the medical school as the opportunities for interdisciplinary collaborations are significant. For example, the clinical or developmental area can partner with psychiatry or pediatrics. From a research perspective, psychology can partner with faculty in the medical school to increase funding applications and research support for the new program. We would highly encourage the Department of Psychology to partner early in the development of the medical school.

Recommendation 8.1. (Department/Faculty). The Department of Psychology actively participates in the development of the curriculum and research in the new medical school and builds new collaborations with its faculty to expand funding and training opportunities for students. Explore the potential of new joint appointments between Psychology and cognate departments in the new Medical School.

Thank you for the opportunity to review the Psychology Department.

EXTERNAL REVIEW – ACTION PLAN

Section 1 – To be completed by the Responsible Unit Person e.g. Chair or Director			
Unit under review Psychology	**Date of Review Site visit** March 29, 30, 31, 2023	**Responsible Unit person** Tim Racine	**Faculty Dean** Laurel Weldon
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Notes
1. *It is **not** expected that every recommendation made by the External Review Committee 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 a separate document (Senate 2013).*
3. *Should any additional response be warranted, it should be attached as a separate document.*

1. PROGRAMMING

Our biggest challenges are: (1) providing a sufficient number of courses and seats to meet student demand and (2) graduate student funding.

Although Psychology teaches an average of 105 courses per year and more AFTEs than any other department in FASS, we are not able to meet student demand. We can partially redress this problem by attempting to change the ratio of teaching/research faculty. However, this is not a panacea. We are a first-rate research-intensive university. As such, we must also continue to attract and retain top-tier researchers.

Sufficient and predictable graduate student funding is an ongoing concern. Although we agree that graduate students would benefit from adequate financial support throughout their studies, many sources of funding are outside of the control of the Department. We will continue to advocate for our graduate students to receive fair, equitable, transparent, and predictable funding.

1.1 Action/s (description what is going to be done):
  1.1.1 Undergraduate:
  - (Recommendation 1.2). SFU is in the midst of an in-depth review of Academic Advising. We look forward to the final report as it will inform our plans for advising in the Department. As a result of staff resignations and secondments, we have been understaffed in undergraduate advisors. We currently have 2 full time advisors and expect to return to 2.5.
  - We will update out website to improve transparency on how to apply for honours, research engagement, and directed studies.
  - (Recommendation 1.3). We will study the implications of assigning first- and second-year courses to teaching faculty (currently, teaching faculty teach first-year courses as well as 201W and 300W). This could free up research faculty for the more specialized upper-level and graduate courses.

- (Recommendation 1.4). The Undergraduate Studies Committee (UGSC) will identify courses that should be targeted for online and blended delivery (in addition to in-person delivery). We will consult with the instructors of those courses to identify supports the Department (and FASS) can provide during the conversion process. We will continue to encourage all faculty to consider developing online/blended versions of their courses, where such conversion will not compromise the quality of student experience.
- (Recommendation 1.5). The Department Manager, Academic and Administrative Services, in consultation with the Chair, will do a careful analysis of current and anticipated teaching needs and enrollment pressures in the Department. The outcome of this analysis will be an estimate of the ideal proportion of teaching to research faculty. This will be reflected in ongoing FRPs until the desired ratio is achieved.
- (Recommendation 1.7). The UGSC will conduct a review of the current Honours program including admission processes, alternative models (e.g., course-based honours), and implications associated with the current and alternative models. The UGSC will bring their findings to the department for discussion and possible action.

1.1.1 Graduate:
- (Recommendation 1.8). Area coordinators will review their current graduate program requirements in light of the teaching capacity of research faculty. Area coordinators will be asked to ensure that all program requirements remain relevant and important, and to make changes where warranted. Our response to Recommendation 1.5 includes a careful review of the optimal proportion of teaching and research faculty. This will supplement information about teaching resources for graduate-level courses that area coordinators can consider in their review process.
- (Recommendation 2.2). Graduate student funding is mostly out of the control of the Department. We have very few discretionary funds and the size of those funds is dwindling. We plan to apply for a Graduate Coordinator position to supplement our Graduate Program Assistant. If approved, the Coordinator would manage the administration of awards adjudication and student funding, and link our graduate students up available scholarships and bursaries. Our hope is that this more departmentally-centralized way of managing funding would address concerns about equity and transparency.
- (Recommendation 2.3). There are a number of student-centred University policies and structures that are potentially implicated when there is conflict between a student and their supervisor. The Graduate Studies Committee will be asked to make these more explicit in our student graduate student Handbooks.

1.2 Resource implications (if any):
- Graduate Coordinator position request (APSA)

1.3 Expected completion date/s:
- (Recommendation 1.2) December 2023
- (Recommendations 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.7, 2.2, 2.3) August 2024
- (Recommendation 1.8) December 2025

2. RESEARCH

The external review team did not offer specific recommendations for improvements in this area. We would like to think that this is because our research productivity is excellent. Funding secured by faculty in Psychology averaged 1.55 M per year between 2014/15 and 2021/22. Between 2015 and 2022 our average annual publication record was 111 journal articles, chapters and reports; books, handbooks and manuals; and 159 scholarly presentations. However, two indirect research recommendations occur later in the document.

2.1 Action/s (what is going to be done):
- (Recommendation 7.1). We agree with the reviewers that the Department should benefit from its strong research record by having overhead monies from grants/contracts form a discretionary fund that could be used in turn to support student and potentially faculty research. We invite the University and FASS to consider this possibility.
- (Recommendation 8.1). In due time, we will establish an ad hoc committee to consider possibilities for interdisciplinary research collaborations that may obtain through SFU's medical school.

2.2 Resource implications (if any):
- Unknown

2.3 Expected completion date/s:
- (Recommendations 7.1, 8.1) Unknown (dependent on external factors)

3. ADMINISTRATION

At the time of the site visit, the Department was in transition. The Department Manager had recently resigned and our long-term Coordinator, Student Affairs moved into that position on an interim basis. The Assistant to the Chair had recently retired and a new staff position was created, Coordinator, Research Grants & Projects. In spite of the many transitions, the review team recognized the cohesiveness of our staff. Our new Department Manager is reviewing and, where appropriate, updating all staff job descriptions. We are also instituting regular check-ins and annual performance reviews.

3.1 Action/s (what is going to be done):
- (Recommendation 5.1). Two staff JDs are currently being updated. There is a plan to update the remaining JDs. However, it currently takes many years for an updated JD for a filled position to be reviewed by HR. By the time a revised JD is reviewed, it is potentially out of date.

- (Recommendation 5.2). We agree that a formal annual review is warranted. The Department Manager has been in the permanent position for a few months. He has been asked to consider this recommendation.

3.2   Resource implications (if any):
- None

3.3   Expected completion date/s:
- (Recommendations 5.1, 5.2) Ongoing

4. WORKING ENVIRONMENT

The external review team noted the very positive work environment shared by faculty and staff and did not offer specific recommendations for improvement. The team's staffing recommendations (in 5.1, 5.2) underscore the potential importance of creating transparent ladders for staff promotion such that staff feel both valued and see the value in remaining in the Department. We will be mindful of such opportunities as we review and revise our JDs.

5. FACULTY COMPLEMENT AND FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES

As SFU moves toward establishing a medical school, faculty renewal is an immediate and urgent need. We are not able to meet student demand with current faculty and with approaching retirements, the situation will become acute. As new faculty come in, we will need lab space to support their research. We are looking carefully at space. To accommodate future lab requirements, we will create collaborative space, when needs overlap. To do this, we will require renovation funds.

5.1   Actions:
- (Recommendation 3.1). With pending retirements (four) and approved hires (four as of June 15, 2023), we will have 35 research faculty and 3 teaching faculty. The outgoing Chair reported that she had discussions with six other faculty members who have retirement in their short-term plans. As such, in each of the next three years, we anticipate that Psychology will require three faculty hires. Depending on the proportion of teaching faculty we will require, this could include one Lecturer each year and two research faculty each year. This will be reflected in our Faculty Renewal Plans. As per external review comments in Section 5, Equity and Diversity, faculty representation will continue to reflect a focus on EDI.
- (Recommendation 3.2). The Chair's Advisory Committee will undertake a review of various research area organizational structures adopted in similar-size Psychology Departments in Canada. It will consider the pros and cons of various organizational structures

and recommend the best structure for Psychology at SFU. As per external review comments in Section 3.2, *Area organization*, the Department will also consider the potential benefits of interdisciplinarity in relation to its existing area structure.

- (Recommendation 4.1). In the past several years we have worked towards creating shared lab space, when it is appropriate. We will continue to pursue this goal. To be successful, we must secure renovation money. We cannot simply go from independent labs to shared labs without modifying the space to meet changing needs. We will continue to prioritize capital planning and submit to the Dean's Office on an annual basis a list of the most urgent renovation projects to support shared lab space.
- (Recommendation 4.2). Improvements are needed to Psychology space generally and for creation of additional offices for staff. We will continue to prioritize capital planning and submit to the Dean's Office on an annual basis a list of the most urgent renovation projects for the Department.

5.2   Resource implications (if any):
- A net increase in faculty compliment is needed. In light of upcoming retirements, this means at least three faculty positions in each of the next three years.
- Renovation money is needed to convert individual labs to shared labs, to upgrade Psychology space, and to create more staff offices.

5.3   Expected completion date/s:
- (Recommendations 3.1, 4.1, 4.2). Ongoing
- (Recommendation 3.2). August 2025

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)	Date
[signature] Professor and Chair	September 28, 2023
Name ……………………………………… Title……………………………………………..	……………………………………………………………………….

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

FASS appreciates the work put into the external review by the Department, the Provost's Office and the external review committee. FASS is proud of its well-regarded Psychology department, whose faculty members include many accomplished researchers and award winning teachers The Department is one of SFU's largest and most popular among students, with 40 Faculty members and 2,000 students and 15 support staff. The very scale of the Department's operations, however, presents some challenges. The external reviewers pointed out the need for expanded access to undergraduate classes in general and to honours programming in particular. FASS takes very seriously the commitment to admitted students and agrees that "It is not an acceptable option to admit students into a PSYCH degree program and then not provide them enough opportunities for students to take courses and graduate on time." The Dean's Office has worked with the Department to identify bottlenecks and ensure that we can offer enough seats in Psychology classes for our admitted students (1.3; 1.4). We are glad that the Department will explore the possibility of expanded on-line and blended course options as a way of expanding seats (1.5). However, the Dean's office also agrees with the Department and the external reviewers that a significant commitment to Faculty Renewal will be necessary to meet this commitment if the current number of students is to be maintained (3.1). Given the number of current and expected official retirements and separations of which we are aware, we agree that the Department should be able to hire three faculty members this year and in each of the next two years. Our FASS Faculty Renewal Plan that incorporates this commitment is still being reviewed by the Provost. We plan to support the Department's faculty renewal requests in our future faculty renewal plans.

In terms of shared labs (4.1), the Dean's Office is committed to working with the Department to develop these facilities. As of May 2023, the Department has submitted requests for four capital projects that aim to convert lab space to shared lab space in 2024-25. We have earmarked funds to allow the Department to move forward with these plans, though there may be logistical delays that push these renovation plans further out.

We also join the external review committee in emphasizing the importance of interdisciplinarity as a hallmark of the cutting-edge departments, and we join the committee in encouraging the Department in thinking of ways to re-organize or otherwise collaborate across internal and external boundaries of sub-field and department (see section 3.2 of external review report). The Dean's Office is glad the Department has agreed to consider these questions, either through a dedicated committee (as suggested by the Department in referencing committee recommendation 8.2) or through its broader process of reviewing its internal organization (3.2).

We also commend the Department in its commitment to EDI, already manifest in the activities of the relevant committee, which span hiring, graduate student well-being and other areas. The review committee pointed to the importance of increased transparency and equity in graduate funding and urged the Department to take on the challenge of diversifying the faculty so as to enable the Department to better represent and respond to its students (3.1). We are pleased that the Department is continuing its good work in this regard.

The committee also recommends that the Department and Faculty consider dedicating some of the revenue that accrues to the Faculty through indirect costs and overhead funding related to grant funding (all such FASS funding is currently returned fully to individual faculty members) to a

Department and/or Faculty Strategic Research Fund (Recommendation 7.1). The Dean's Office will consult with the Psychology Department about the feasibility and desirability of such a move, and the form it could take.

Many items identified by this external review committee have been identified by external reviews of other departments in the past including minimum graduate student funding and improved undergraduate advising (1.5, 2.2). These areas, like approval for our Faculty Renewal request (3.1), fall under the purview of the Provost and President. Although these recommendations go beyond our areas of responsibility, we agree with the external review committee that they are important areas for action.

Faculty Dean

………………………………………………………………

Date
October 12 2023

…………………………………………………………………..

Department of Psychology

Full Response to External Report

July 16, 2023

1. Undergraduate and Graduate Teaching

Recommendation 1.1. (University): put hard limits on the number of courses that students can register for and on the waitlists.

As the Review Team identified, this is entirely within the jurisdiction of the University.

Recommendation 1.2. (Department, Faculty): review the delivery of advising with an eye to increasing expertise and reducing student wait times. Consider shifting some of the advising responsibility to teaching faculty.

SFU is in the midst of an in-depth review of Academic Advising. We look forward to the final report as it will inform our plans for advising in the Department.

At the time of the external review, we had 2.5 advisors, not one with some additional support. We understand how this may have been misunderstood by the Reviewers. Shortly before the site visit, the Manager of Academic and Administrative Services in Psychology resigned to take a position in Surrey. We moved a long-term Advisor into the Manager's position for a 3-month period, leaving us with 1.5 advisors. The Manager's position has now been filled and we have hired a full-time advisor bringing us back to 2.5 advisors in Psychology. This will release some of the immediate pressure on advising. We will continue to monitor the adequacy of advising services to undergraduate students.

Having continuing faculty in advising roles represents a significant shift in workload and in department management. If we provide course release for teaching faculty to do advising, the pressure on enrollments will continue. If we assign advising to research faculty, it will have a significant effect on workload (as course releases would not be possible).

We believe that advising should remain the responsibility of our professional staff. This is very complicated and nuanced work that, in our view, should not be distributed to faculty. Faculty will continue to provide informal advising to students, as they have done in the past.

Information about how to enrol in Research Engagement, Directed Studies, and Honours is, in our opinion, transparent. We have an annual lab fair that is advertised to all UG students, an annual Honours information event, and web pages with information on how to apply for these programs. We will review and update the web pages to make the processes clearer and we will use social media to direct students to these resources. This will occur in the Fall 2023 semester.

Recommendation 1.3. (University, Faculty, and Department): review to what extent the capacity of first- and second-year courses in Psychology can be increased to free up resources for upper level teaching.

We have a gateway course that limits enrollment into the Psychology major. Students must earn a grade of C or higher in PSYC 201. Student must also complete PSYC 100, 102 and 210 before declaring a major in Psychology.

PSYC 100 and 102 at the Burnaby campus are currently capped at about 450 students each. Our second-year courses are capped at between 100 and 250 students. We will study the implications of assigning first- and second-year courses to teaching faculty (currently, teaching faculty only teach 201W and 300W. This will free up research faculty for upper-level and graduate courses. To do this, we will have to change the ratio of teaching to research faculty. This can only be done in the context of upcoming faculty renewal plans.

Recommendation 1.4. (Department): Consider the development of a set of online versions of particularly popular and oversubscribed second- and third-year courses.

We recognize that online, and to a lesser extent blended, courses provide students with scheduling flexibility and so there is benefit in offering these alternative delivery formats.

We currently have 10 courses offered in blended or online formats. Continued development of this delivery format will alleviate some of the pressure on enrollments, particularly where room capacity restricts class sizes. However, class sizes are also capped for pedagogical and workload reasons.

The Undergraduate Studies Committee will identify courses that should be targeted for online and blended delivery (in addition to in-person delivery). We will consult with the Instructors of those courses to identify supports the Department and FASS can provide during the conversion process. We will continue to encourage all faculty to consider developing online/blended versions of their courses, where such conversion will not compromise the quality of student experience.

Recommendation 1.5. (Department, Faculty): Add to the cadre of lecturers in the department to relieve pressure on research faculty and to build a culture of teaching excellence and student support.

We agree. For decades, we have had three teaching faculty who provided excellent instruction in our first-year courses as well as 201W, 210, and 300W. All three retired within 18 months of each other. Through recent hires, we have returned to three teaching faculty, but this is not enough.

The Department Manager in consultation with the Department Chair will do a careful analysis of current and anticipated teaching needs and enrollment pressures in the department. The outcome of this analysis will be an estimate of the ideal proportion of teaching to research faculty in the department. This will be reflected in the ongoing FRPs until the desired ratio is met.

Recommendation 1.6. (Department, Faculty): Commit to ensuring that no student will be prevented from natural progression in their program or from graduating on time.

This is a worthy goal. It is difficult to craft a particular action plan as the work to achieve this goal is multi-dimensional. However, we understand the importance of being aspirational.

One concrete step toward this goal will be to have two teaching faculty teach the required 3rd-year writing course, 300W. This will provide students with some variety in course content and ensure the course is offered more regularly.

Recommendation 1.7. (Department): Grow the Honours program to at least 50 students per year by providing appropriate support for research faculty who supervise such students and by ensuring Honours thesis requirements are reasonable. Create a transparent system for students to apply and work with potential honours thesis supervisors.

The current Honours program has developed over the years and the final thesis for many students is more like a Master's thesis than an undergraduate thesis. The benefit of this model is enormous for students who complete an honours degree in Psychology at SFU. The drawback is that we cannot run this as a large class. If we increase the size of the honours class, we must scale back the rigour of the program. The trade-offs will have to be considered very carefully before decisions are made.

We will ask the Undergraduate Studies Committee to conduct a review of the current Honours program including admission processes, alternative models (e.g., course- based honours), and implications associated with the current and alternative models. The UGSC will bring their findings to the department for discussion and possible action.

In the interim, we will update the web page on "how to get involved." This will include how to work in a lab, complete Research Engagement, Directed Studies, and how to find an honours supervisor. This is designed to increase transparency and access to these programs.

We currently host annual honours info session and grad school info sessions. We will continue to do so and will advertise the sessions widely.

Recommendation 1.8. (Department): Review whether area requirements for graduate students are warranted and, if the decision is to continue with such area requirements, ensure that research faculty are able to fit such courses into their teaching expectation

This is an excellent suggestion and one that should be done on a regular basis. All area coordinators will be asked to review their current graduate program requirements, in light of teaching capacity of research faculty. Area coordinators will be asked to ensure that all program requirements are still relevant and important and to make changes where warranted.

Our response to Recommendation 1.5 includes a careful review of the optimal proportion of teaching and research faculty. This will provide information about teaching resources for graduate-level courses that area coordinators will consider in their evaluation of graduate level courses.

2. Graduate Student Support

Recommendation 2.1. (University): A minimum funding standard, and a corresponding investment of resources, is urgently needed to support graduate students. The Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies should continue to explore avenues for developing stable, predictable funding structures that allow graduate students to have an acceptable standard of living.

We agree.

Recommendation 2.2. (Department): In the absence of such a University policy, the department of psychology should explore more systematic approaches to funding that allow students to budget and to weather unexpected shifts in their financial situation.

Graduate student funding is mostly out of the control of the Department. We have very few discretionary funds and the size of those funds is dwindling. We agree though that equitable distribution of available funds is a worthy goal. One model, that we have considered and rejected in the past is to permit faculty

to admit graduate students only if they are able to guarantee funding for the duration of the graduate student's time at SFU. This disadvantages faculty who are not able to attract, or do not require, large external grants. It also disadvantages students who wish to work with those faculty. The Department will continue to monitor and discuss this issue.

Recommendation 2.3 (Department). In the student Handbook, there is a description of the process students can follow should they experience conflict with their supervisor. The process needs to take into account perceptions of power differentials and be centred on students.

We sympathize with students who are in conflict with their supervisor. However, although we must acknowledge and be aware of power differentials, they are intrinsic to student-supervisor relationships and cannot be eliminated.

There are a number of student-centred University policies and structures that are potentially implicated when there is conflict between a student and their supervisor. The Graduate Studies Committee will be asked to make these more explicit in our student graduate student Handbooks.

Recommendation 2.4 (University). There is a clear need for the ombudsman position to be filled. Since these types of positions can be challenging to fill, it may be important to have an interim acting person in this position to ensure that students' needs are being met.

We agree.

3. Faculty and Workload

Recommendation 3.1. (Department, Faculty): Recognizing impending retirements and student demand for Psychology courses, allocate additional faculty appointments to the Department of Psychology to bring the student-faculty ratio to the median of an appropriate set of national comparator Psychology Departments. Consistent with R1.5. ensure that the overall complement of Lecturers is increased.

With pending retirements (four) and approved hires (four as of June 15, 2023), we will have 35 research faculty and 3 teaching faculty. The Chair has had discussions with six other faculty members who have retirement in their short-term plans.

As outlined in our response to R 1.5, the Manager and Department Chair will do an analysis of teaching needs and pressures. One outcome will be to recommend a proportion of teaching faculty.

In each of the next three years, we anticipate that Psychology will require three faculty hires. Depending on the proportion of teaching faculty we will require, this could include one Lecturer each year and two research faculty each year.

Recommendation 3.2. (Department): Engage in a strategic planning process focussed on costs and benefits of maintaining an area organization to generate a plan for new faculty recruitment consistent with the intent of R3.1.

The area structure has many benefits. As the reviewers identified, it fosters a very warm and productive environment for faculty and for graduate students This is particularly important as we continue to welcome diverse faculty and students into Psychology. The area structure also provides critical administrative support to the Chair, organizes colloquia and events, and represents the needs of the area to ensure the Chair has all the information needed to make important decisions.

The area structure is not without challenges. One, identified by the external reviewers, is that each area is committed to maintaining and/or growing its resources. This will always be a point of tension within a department. It is our view that the benefits of the area structure far outweigh the challenges.

However, we recognize that it advisable to review the area structure periodically. The Chair's Advisory Committee will undertake such a review to consider: other organizational structures that could be adopted; if the current area structure should be retained including the costs and benefits or retaining it; if it should be retained, should adjustments be made.

4. Quality of Space

Recommendation 4.1. (Department): The Department discusses creating more shared spaces for labs where there are overlapping equipment needs.

This is an ongoing effort in the Department. Shared space is both fiscally responsible and pedagogically beneficial. However, we must be strategic with creating shared space to avoid creating a new set of problems.

We have made several advances in this area including a shared wet-lab, shared space for graduate students in the social area, and shared lab space for forensic faculty and graduate students. It is our intention to continue with this model.

To be successful, we must secure renovation money. We cannot simply go from independent labs to shared labs without modifying the space.

We will continue to prioritize capital planning and submit to the Dean's Office on an annual basis a list of the most urgent renovation projects to support shared lab space.

Recommendation 4.2. (Faculty/Department): There is a need to upgrade the psychology space in general. Perhaps a partnership could be established with university advancement to fundraise to upgrade teaching and lab spaces.

We would be delighted to investigate this and other opportunities to upgrade space in Psychology.

5. Staff

Recommendation 5.1. (Department). Review staff job descriptions to ensure that they map onto the current work that is being conducted.

This is an excellent idea that is currently in progress. Two staff JDs are currently being updated and will be submitted to HR in the next short while. There is a plan to update the remaining JDs. However, it currently takes many years for an updated JD for a filled position to be reviewed by HR. By the time a revised JD is reviewed, it is potentially out of date.

Recommendation 5.2. (Department). Put in place a formal annual review process for the staff to ensure that they are supported, their professional development goals are being met; and there is an opportunity for feedback**.**

We agree that a formal annual review is warranted. The Manager Academic and Administrative Services has only been in the permanent position for a few months. He has been asked to consider this recommendation.

In fact, more frequent informal reviews, as they are currently conducted, help us to stay in touch with staff to ensure we are serving them as well as they serve us.

6. **Equity and Diversity Issues**

Recommendation 6.1. (Department). The Equity committee may want to review key procedures (Honours program, allocation of teaching assistants and funding in the department) to ensure that these processes are done in a transparent and equitable manner.

In our view, our EDI committee would not be the best place for such a review.

Transparency of access to the honours program, and any related equity issues, are addressed under 1.7. *Allocation of Teaching Assistants though is tightly controlled by the TSSU Collective Agreement. As such, we have almost no flexibility in assigning TAs.* Transparency of access to graduate student funding is addressed under 2.2. Here we add that *there are very few funding sources within the department. What is available (travel awards, money for MA and PhD work), is available in the same amount and with the same frequency for all graduate students.*

7. **Funding**

Recommendation 7.1. (University/Faculty/Department). Consider ways to increase discretionary budget available to the department. For example, institute an overhead policy that rewards contract holders by returning some portion of overhead to the departments that generate it.

We agree.

8 Future Opportunities

Recommendation 8.1. (Department/Faculty). The Department of Psychology actively participates in the development of the curriculum and research in the new medical school and builds new collaborations with its faculty to expand funding and training opportunities for students. Explore the potential of new joint appointments between Psychology and cognate departments in the new Medical School.

We agree.

We will establish an ad hoc committee to consider how we can participate in the development of the medical school.

Educational Goals Assessment Plan Template

Unit/Program: Psychology

Contact name: Rebecca Cobb/Matt Sigal

Date: August 4, 2023

This template is designed to help units implement assessment of Educational Goals after receiving feedback from their External Review. Units are not expected to assess every Educational Goal every year. *(Textboxes will expand as you type)*

1) **Who were the members of your Educational Goals Assessment team?** Outline who has worked on the assessment.

   Rebecca Cobb, Matt Sigal, Ryan Fitzgerald, Allen Yee

2) **Are your program's Educational Goals current, or do any of them need to be revised?**
   In some cases, Educational Goals may need to be revised to keep apace with changes in the discipline or in the program's course offerings, or to ensure they continue to align with a unit's mission and values. Feedback from the External Review may inform revision of Educational Goals.

   The goals are current and in a recent review of the goals, we solicited feedback from the entire department about whether they believed any new goals should be added or the existing goals should be revised. We received several comments, but upon reflection by the committee we decided that no changes were required.

3) **Is your program's curriculum map up to date?**
   A curriculum map may need to be updated to reflect any major changes to the program's course offerings (i.e. new or substantially revised courses, courses that have been removed).

   We completed curriculum mapping last year (2022) in advance of our external review and self-study. The entire department (save one individual) participated in the curriculum mapping and almost all courses were mapped (two were not mapped).

4) Assessment Plan

For each Educational Goal, outline what data you will use to assess student learning. Indicate what direct evidence you will draw on - which key courses you will sample from and, if possible, the course-based assessments you plan to use. These can be described in general terms (e.g. research paper, final exam questions targeting a particular Educational Goal). Indicate also whether or not you plan to gather indirect evidence (e.g. surveys, focus groups, interviews, etc.). The same indirect evidence method (e.g. a survey) can be used for multiple Educational Goals. Describe what would indicate to you that students had met the Educational Goal. Add or delete rows as needed.

Educational Goal 1: **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.			
Description of Assessment Methods: (e.g. Term paper from Course X, will randomly sample 20% of student work; exit survey of graduating students)	**What would indicate that students had met the EG?**	**Is this direct or indirect?**	**When do you plan to collect the data?**
Completion rates in psychology courses	That most students pass the course and with few failing or incomplete grades (e.g., <3%)	Direct	This information is available at any time from IRP
Curriculum mapping	That all or almost all courses are indicated as meeting this goal by the regular faculty instructors	Indirect	Every 6 years (just before each self-study)
We will access data provided by the BC Provincial Government through the BC Student Outcomes Office (http://outcomes.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/Default/Home.aspx) and their Baccalaureate Graduates Survey (BGS).	Average ratings of "good" or "very good" on the following questions: How good was the core program of required courses in your program in terms of providing for a comprehensive or full understanding of this field of study?	Indirect	This information is collected annually
Educational Goal 2: **Goal Two: Scientific reasoning, research, and critical thinking.** 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.			
Description of Assessment Methods: (e.g. Term paper from Course X, will randomly sample 20% of student work; exit survey of graduating students)	**What would indicate that students had met the EG?**	**Is this direct or indirect?**	**When do you plan to collect the data?**

Successful completion rates in Psyc 201, 210, 300W, 410, 411, and 499 (other relevant courses may be identified through syllabi review).	A successful completion rate of at least 97%	Direct	This information is available at any time from IRP
We will access data provided by the BC Provincial Government through the BC Student Outcomes Office (http://outcomes.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/Default/Home.aspx) and their Baccalaureate Graduates Survey (BGS).	Average ratings of "helpful" or "very helpful" in response to the following prompts: Please identify how helpful [Name of institution] was in developing the following skills? "Read and comprehend material," "Analyse and think critically," "Conduct research," "Learn on your own."	Indirect	This information is collected annually

<table>
<tr><td colspan="4" style="background:#c00;color:#fff">Educational Goal 3: Goal Three: Ethical and social responsibility to others. 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.</td></tr>
</table>

Description of Assessment Methods: (e.g. Term paper from Course X, will randomly sample 20% of student work; exit survey of graduating students)	**What would indicate that students had met the EG?**	**Is this direct or indirect?**	**When do you plan to collect the data?**
We will access data provided by the BC Provincial Government through the BC Student Outcomes Office (http://outcomes.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/Default/Home.aspx) and their Baccalaureate Graduates Survey (BGS).	Respondents were asked "How helpful was institution/program in developing the following skills?" (question 14) and "How useful are the following skills or abilities in your main job" (question 26; rated from *Very useful* to *Not at all useful*). Scores at or above the midpoint of the scale.	Indirect	This information is collected annually
Completion of courses in which understanding of and application of ethical principles are covered (psyc 100, 102, 201, 300W, 490)	A successful completion rate of at least 97%	Direct	This information is available at any time from IRP

<table>
<tr><td colspan="4" style="background:#c00;color:#fff">Educational Goal 4: 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.</td></tr>
</table>

Description of Assessment Methods: (e.g. Term paper from Course X, will randomly sample 20% of student work; exit survey of graduating students)	**What would indicate that students had met the EG?**	**Is this direct or indirect?**	**When do you plan to collect the data?**
Completion of courses in which written and oral assessments are completed and peer evaluation (e.g., Psyc 201, 260, 300W, 362, upper division seminars)	Successful completion rate of at least 97%	Direct	This information is available at any time from IRP
We will access data provided by the BC Provincial Government through the BC Student Outcomes Office (http://outcomes.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/Default/Home.aspx) and their Baccalaureate Graduates Survey (BGS).	Average ratings of "helpful" or "very helpful" in response to the following prompts: Please identify how helpful [Name of institution] was in developing the following skills? "Ability to resolve issues or problems," and "work effectively	Indirect	This information is collected by the BC survey

	with others," "Write clearly and concisely" and "Verbally express opinions or ideas clearly and concisely." Scores at or above the midpoint of the scale.		

<table>
<tr><td colspan="4" style="background:red;color:white">Educational Goal 5: 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.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Description of Assessment Methods: (e.g. Term paper from Course X, will randomly sample 20% of student work; exit survey of graduating students)</td><td>What would indicate that students had met the EG?</td><td>Is this direct or indirect?</td><td>When do you plan to collect the data?</td></tr>
<tr><td>We will access data provided by the BC Provincial Government through the BC Student Outcomes Office (http://outcomes.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/Default/Home.aspx) and their Baccalaureate Graduates Survey (BGS).</td><td>Responses to the following questions; Since graduation, have you taken any other formal post-secondary education or training?" and "Are you currently enrolled in formal post-secondary education or training?" "Are you currently working at a paid job or business? "How related is your [main] job to the program you graduated from at [Name of institution]?" "How useful are the knowledge, skills, and abilities you acquired during your baccalaureate education in your work?"</td><td>Direct</td><td>This information is collected annually</td></tr>
</table>

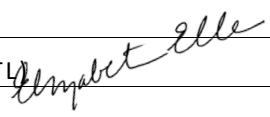5) **How do you plan on sharing your findings within your unit?**

A written summary of the findings will be prepared and shared with the department through email and a verbal summary will be shared in the department meeting.

6) **Assessment Timeline**

Mid-cycle review – review data from the BC Baccalaureate graduates student survey and completion rates in relevant courses

End-cycle review – complete curriculum mapping and review data from the BC Baccalaureate graduates student survey and completion rates in relevant courses

SFU OFFICE OF THE
VICE-PROVOST, LEARNING & TEACHING

MEMORANDUM

ATTENTION:	Deborah Connelly, Chair, Department of Psychology
FROM:	Elizabeth Elle, Vice-Provost, Learning & Teaching (for SCUTL) *Elizabet Elle*
RE:	Psychology Educational Goals Action Plan
DATE:	August 22, 2023

The Vice-Provost, Learning and Teaching and the Senate Committee for University Teaching and Learning has recently been charged with providing feedback to units regarding their assessment of educational goals.

As part of your preparation for your recent external review, you reviewed your educational goals, and completed a curriculum map. Thank you for engaging with these important aspects of the work. In your Action Plan, you propose to use indirect evidence from the BC Baccalaureate Survey. This indirect evidence can be a useful way to reflect on your program and the achievements of your students, but it provides very general information. You do not identify what you might do with the information gained; I suggest that by your mid-cycle report, you would benefit from reflecting on what the surveys indicate and consider how to address any gaps you notice in the survey data.

You also suggest using grade information and completion rates. These data are poor indicators of the attainment of skills and attributes as defined through educational goals, because most courses address multiple EGs and sometimes at multiple levels. Given the work you've already completed identifying courses that map to particular educational goals, I strongly encourage you to consider using assignments embedded within identified courses (for example, Psych 300W for your communication goal). Using existing assignments with carefully designed marking rubrics is likely to provide you with much more useful information, without adding to workload. There is no need to collect information from all courses; I normally suggest choosing courses that are required, upper division, and capstone (if you have them) as you will learn the most about student achievement from these courses.

There are resources available on SFU's dedicated educational goals website to help you with next steps, including examples of useful sources of information and advice on how to engage with this work for the maximum outcome without adding significantly to faculty workload. It may be useful for you to reach out to LEAP, the Learning Experiences Assessment and Planning group in the AVP-LT portfolio (email them at: leap@sfu.ca). There are staff on the team with expertise in EG assessment and survey analysis, and they are here to help you.