Introduction

The San Francisco State University Department of Psychology, housed in the College of Behavioral and Social Sciences offers a BA in Psychology, an MA in Psychology with concentrations in Developmental Psychology, Psychological Research, and Social Psychology, and an MS in Clinical Psychology, Industrial/Organizational Psychology, and School Psychology. Graduating approximately 50 Masters students each year, the Department of Psychology provides a valuable service to the profession and community.

In recent years, issues in the graduate program have become over-shadowed by the gradual growth in the undergraduate program to approximately 1500 students at the same time the Department was facing significant faculty attrition. This combination of factors has led the Department to apply for impaction status, which will raise entry requirements for baccalaureate students and restrict the number of students entering the program. The change in admissions is expected to bring enrollments more in line with available faculty resources.

In this context, the Department undertook a self-study of its programs, which was followed by an external review by two consultants: Donald Truxillo from Portland State University and Ken Green from California State University, Long Beach. The external review was, in turn, followed by an internal review from the Academic Program Review Committee (APRC) of the Academic Senate, which examined all documentation from the Department and the external review. This Concluding Action Memorandum from the Provost finalizes the sixth cycle program review for the Department of Psychology.

Commendations

The Department is commended for:

- Consolidating courses across the different concentrations.
- Completing the application for impaction.
- Implementing the new undergraduate major.
- Revising the graduate programs.
- Developing a five-year hiring plan.
- Meeting all University standards for graduate programs.
- Continuing faculty research and professional engagement that includes students.
**Action Plan**

Based on the outcome of the academic program review and on the discussions resulting from this review, the Department of Psychology will take the following actions:

**Curriculum**

- Carefully track student enrollment, time to degree, bottleneck courses, student diversity, attrition from the major and SFR over the next few years as the effects of undergraduate impaction occur.
- Introduce the use of the GRE for the Level 1 MA writing requirement. Consider implementing a pre-thesis course that will serve as the Level 2 writing assessment. The course should include the basic content areas available for research and scholarship, as well as ethics and practical matters such as dealing with IRBs and IACUCs, legal regulations, and employment options.
- Continue to search for ways to consolidate the curricula in both the MA and MS concentrations, if possible without diluting student contact with professors.
- Review and discuss the culminating experiences across the six graduate concentrations with respect to possible differences in level of effort. To the degree these differences do exist across concentrations, they need to be leveled so that neither students nor faculty perceive concentrations as differing in strength or rigor.

**Students**

- Based on the external consultants’ report, develop and implement a peer advising system for undergraduate students.
- Continue to offer colloquia and concentration brown bag lunches as a way of enriching the program and promoting informal contact between faculty and students.

**Faculty**

- Develop common procedures across concentrations for admissions, including time of submission and review of applications, and announcements of acceptances. This process should include the requirement for students to specify their top three choices of potential faculty advisors.
- Prepare and submit an updated assessment report for the undergraduate and graduation programs by December 1, 2010 as agreed upon by the department chair and the AVP for Academic Planning and Educational Development.
Resources

- During the 2010-2011 Academic Year, undertake a careful study of the department’s capacity in order to determine the appropriate size of its undergraduate and graduate programs given the unlikely prospect of additional hiring in the near future.
- Follow the capacity study with the development of a 5-year plan that will address the issues of the number of graduate programs, the balance between graduate and undergraduate programs, instructional overload and the department’s extremely large undergraduate SFR.

Provo's Statement

The following statement from Provost Sue Rosser is intended to provide a context for addressing resource-related issues in all Concluding Action Memoranda: “Student demand is growing in many areas of the curriculum. Furthermore, given the current fiscal setting, we do not expect that overall funding for programs will increase at all beyond current levels. In fact, in the current financial environment, we expect that funding will likely be further diminished. Therefore, all academic units are being asked to examine the depth and breadth of offerings in their programs and to assess the extent to which they can be sustained. Accordingly, as with all academic units in the University, the College of Science and Engineering and the Department of Psychology must look at their ability to continue to offer the full array of current programs over the next several years.”
Authorization

We hereby approve this Memorandum of Understanding:

___________________________________    _______________
Sue V. Rosser, Provost       Date

____________________________________   _______________
Sheldon Axler, Dean       Date

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Julia Lewis , Chair        Date