

DATE: June 5, 2018

TO: Dr. Thomas Chase, Provost and Vice-President (Academic), University of Regina

FROM: Academic Review Committee (Drs. Valerie Thompson, University of Saskatchewan, Chair, David Dozois, Western University, Scott Thompson, University of Regina)

RE: Academic Unit Review of the Department of Psychology

The Academic Review Committee visited with staff, students, faculty, and administrators during our site visit April 12-13. We also had access to the Department's self-study document and a strategic plan dated April 30, 2010. We had many frank conversations with the parties involved, and think that we were able to form a clear picture of the Department's strengths, weaknesses, and challenges.

During several of our interviews with senior administrators, it became clear that Psychology is viewed very favourably around the University. On several occasions, we heard it referred to as the "Jewel in the Crown" and, as detailed below, we agree that this is an incredibly successful department that definitely punches above its weight. That is, although the Department may be large by the standards of the University of Regina, it is relatively small by national standards. Nonetheless, the Department has created a significant national profile and has three major strengths: 1) it has attracted and kept internationally renowned researchers; 2) it has established and maintained a nationally accredited graduate program in Clinical Psychology; and, 3) it has done so while providing excellent educational opportunities to over 500 undergraduate majors. This profile is exceptional for a department of this size. The Review Team recognizes and congratulates the faculty, staff, and Head who have worked hard to create this successful outcome.

During our exit interview with the Provost, we were asked whether the status quo was sustainable. Our initial reaction then is the same as the more considered one that we give now: Unlikely. The department has been operating at the margins for some time, and continued cutbacks in terms of faculty and administrative staff means that the already hard-working department members must take on additional work, or let something go.

We were cautioned several times that resources are very scarce and that we should provide justifications for any resource requests. Our response is that the success of this "Jewel" should not be taken for granted. A key issue is faculty retention, in terms of both junior and senior faculty. They have established national and international profiles, and will readily be able to find opportunities elsewhere. A second issue is the need to maintain accreditation with the Canadian Psychological Association (CPA), which is under jeopardy on two fronts: The need to be able to offer, on a yearly basis, practicum- and intern-placements for the Clinical students, and the ability to offer, on a regular basis, graduate courses in Neuropsychology (we note that this is also a critical issue for the undergraduate program, given that there is only one faculty member who teaches in this area). With regard to the issue of practicum placements, as described in detail in section 3.3.1

below, hiring a Director of the Training clinic is a priority to ensure ongoing access to practicum placements for Clinical students. A third issue is that Psychology is the work-horse of the Faculty, and undoubtedly is an economic engine for the Faculty. We note also that there is room for growth, particularly in the Experimental and Applied graduate training program. The Department has lost access to a specialist in the field of Forensic Psychology. There is enormous student demand, both at the graduate and undergraduate levels, for training in that area, so bringing in a new faculty member in that field will provide avenues of expansion for both graduate and undergraduate training. Finally, it would be worthwhile considering additional administrative resources. In particular, as the Sun Life Financial Psychology Training Clinic develops, additional clerical staff will be needed to work reception, keep books, appointments, etc. It is clearly impossible that the current clerical staff will be able to take on any additional responsibilities.

The detailed rationale for these recommendations, along with other comments and suggestions for the Psychology Department are presented in three sections below. The first deals with department-wide issues, followed by a detailed analysis of challenges and considerations pertaining to the Undergraduate and Graduate training streams.

1. Departmental Strengths and Challenges

1.1 Faculty Complement

We note that the Department has a number of strengths on which it can draw. It is clear from our conversations with people that it is a collegial and welcoming place to work. Young faculty feel that they have been well-mentored, and alumni speak positively about their experiences in the program. Faculty generally feel supported by their colleagues and their Head. The relationships with the affiliated colleges are strong, and collaborations between them and the Department ensure that valuable teaching resources are used effectively. The BSc program that was launched in 2013 has been very successful, and the Department enjoys a collegial and cooperative relationship with the Faculty of Science (who are also very pleased with the success of the collaboration).

We also note a number of significant challenges. The faculty complement has varied between 13 and 16 tenured faculty since 2008. Going into the 2018-2019 academic year, the complement will be at the lower bound, 13, given the loss of three faculty positions. This small complement will be tasked with:

1. Providing undergraduate training to close to 600 students, the vast majority of whom are majors. This represents an increase of 12% since 2010, when the faculty complement was last at 13.
2. Maintaining 2 viable graduate programs, including a nationally credited Clinical Training program. Students in this program are required to take 35 cu of taught courses, in addition to supervised practica and internships. These courses must be offered in regular rotation (some annually), and requires a large commitment of faculty resources. This program provides an enormous benefit, not just to the University, but to the community and province. Many of the people who are trained in this program become employed and stay on to provide much needed mental health services locally and provincially. Maintaining

- accreditation of this program must be a priority for the University.
3. Managing several million dollars in grant income. We note that over the past 10 years, the faculty have managed to accrue an astounding 53 million dollars in external grants and contracts.

This is an absolutely phenomenal list of achievements, and goes beyond what would be expected of a department of 16 faculty. It is much less clear how much of this can be sustained with a reduced faculty complement of 13. As above, we caution against taking this success for granted, and suggest that the University find ways to continue to resource this very productive department.

We understood, in conversation with the Head, Dr. MacLennan, that the Department agreed to reduce its reliance on sessional teaching in return for an increase in tenured faculty members. There are soon to be 3 vacant faculty positions that may not be filled. In a small department, this is a big hit that manifests itself in both obvious and less obvious ways. For example, the Department needs to admit a cohort of Clinical students each year in order to maintain CPA accreditation. Fewer faculty means that each remaining faculty member is under increasing pressure to continue to accept students, even if they do not have the capacity for more. More obviously, loss of faculty members means the loss of coverage of key areas, such as Neuropsychology and Forensic Psychology. Finally, this also represents a loss of resources for the University, as fewer faculty inevitably translates to fewer student taught.

1.2 Administrative Staff

There is currently only one full-time administrative staff working in the Office. We need to stress that this situation is completely unsustainable. Ms. Yung is the first contact for all enquiries made through the office (from 500+ undergraduate students, 50 graduate students, the faculty, and the public). In addition, she handles all of the administrative work of this very active department, including all graduate admissions (letters of offers to students, payroll, defences, etc); she also manages the financial side of the enormous number of research grants that faculty have (paying expenses, hiring research personnel etc.), organizes department events, keeps track of the department finances, and manages the Sun Life Financial Training Centre. She works evenings and weekends and is not able to take long vacations. There needs to be a separate, full-time office person. We also recommend that she be given a quiet office that is away from the reception area in order to complete her work. Once the Sun Life Financial Training Centre is running at capacity, additional administrative staff will be needed to manage that, also.

1.3 Space

One challenge for the department is that it lacks space to house all of the researchers and students. We heard this concern expressed in nearly every meeting that we had. Some faculty members still do not have lab space in which to conduct their research, despite having significant research funds. Graduate students also need space to work, either in their supervisor's lab, or in a separate space. Another problem is that the currently available space is spread out all over the campus. This works against a sense of community and creates barriers to collaboration and communication.

1.4 Departmental budget

We were astonished to learn that discretionary spending is as little as \$20,000. This is entirely allocated to mundane and routine expenses, meaning that other needed expenses, such as equipment and computers cannot be replaced.

1.5 Fit within the Faculty of Arts

In addition to space, the clearest message that we received concerned a perceived lack of alignment between the vision of the Department and that of current Dean of Faculty of Arts. There was considerable concern to the effect that the Faculty Vision Statement expressly excludes research and graduate education as being outside its scope and focusses on undergraduate teaching. In a Department that has excelled in both research and graduate education, including maintaining a nationally accredited Clinical Psychology graduate program, this is interpreted as a strong signal that the activities valued by the Department are not valued by the Faculty. The impact of this disconnect was expressed to us in numerous ways:

1. Grants with teaching release. Many researchers have obtained release monies to allow them to pursue their research. The monies go to pay sessional lectures. Two young scholars were apparently refused permission to apply for a grant because it would have entailed teaching release. Although they were eventually granted permission to apply, they took this as a strong signal that the Faculty's values do not align with theirs. Several researchers expressed concerns that a policy forbidding teaching release with grant money may be formalized into a policy. Managing large research grants requires an enormous amount of time. Given the relatively high default teaching assignment in the Department, we are concerned that such a policy might pose a serious barrier to maintaining the Department's research profile.
2. Part of the concern expressed by the Dean and the students with respect to sessional instructors was that the quality of instruction is not as high as with regular faculty (we note, however, that only one of the students we had met with had ever been taught by a sessional lecturer, so this seems more speculative than factual). One way to deal with this concern (real or perceived) is to establish a formal program to mentor, evaluate, and motivate sessional faculty. This could include review of course outlines and other course materials, attendance at a lecture, a formal system of evaluation, and possibly a regularized mechanism for rewarding or acknowledging teaching excellence.
3. Many faculty expressed concern that graduate teaching and supervision is neither recognized nor acknowledged in performance reviews and resource allocation. The same was felt to be true for taking on national leadership roles on granting councils and other organizations. Once again, we stress that maintaining two large graduate programs demands an enormous amount of faculty resources. Faculty have no choice but to offer courses at the graduate level and to supervise (sometimes large numbers of) students. We encourage the Faculty to acknowledge this important contribution during performance reviews, tenure and promotion decisions, and resource allocation exercises (we were told that the budget allocation formula punishes those departments that do a lot of graduate teaching)

4. Another concern that we heard frequently is that faculty may have leave to travel only if they do not miss more than one-3hr class per semester. We fully understand that instructors should do as much as possible to schedule both personal and professional development travel so as not to conflict with teaching duties. On the other hand, this seems unnecessarily prohibitive in terms of enabling faculty to take part in conferences, workshops, and other professional development opportunities.
5. Faculty members frequently expressed disappointment in what they perceived to be grudging performance reviews, especially ones that complain that they is not doing enough teaching (possibly because the graduate teaching they had done was not acknowledged).
6. We would also note that the teaching assignment of 4 classes per year is high for a department of this calibre, by national standards. We encourage the Faculty to take this into consideration when making teaching assignments and allocating resources.
7. We need to be clear that not all faculty voiced dissatisfaction with the emphasis on teaching. In fact, we heard from some who would like to put more emphasis on teaching, and be acknowledged for taking on that role. One possible path would be to allow faculty to self-select into “research emphasis” and “teaching emphasis” streams. More teaching and less research would be expected of the latter, and their performance reviews could reflect this emphasis.

There were several other examples of a perceived misalignment between the vision of the Department and the vision of the Faculty. Most of them were not large issues, but they were expressed often, and spoke to the same feeling of not belonging and not being valued. There are other, practical concerns too. We were told by several people that they have turned down offers to go elsewhere, largely because they had been able to find accommodation for their goals and ambitions within the Department and Faculty. We encourage the Faculty to continue to accommodate these goals.

Several faculty suggested that one way to address the perceived misalignment would be to move to another Faculty, such as Science. We also heard support for a reorganization of the Faculty of Health studies, which might be a better fit, given the Department’s emphasis on clinical training. However, it is important to note that this conversation has not yet been had in the Department proper. We strongly advise the Department to consider having a planning session, possibly a retreat, to meet and talk about their goals for the future. This would also be an opportunity to revise the strategic plan, which was last done in 2010.

2. Undergraduate Program

2.1 Structure

The Department of Psychology offers several undergraduate programs—a Bachelor of Arts (BA) in Psychology and an Honours BA in Psychology within the Faculty of Arts, and similarly a Bachelor of Science (BSc) and an Honours BSc within the Faculty of Science. Undergraduate degrees are offered through the University of Regina, although students may be on the Main campus and/or Luther College or Campion College. As is evident from the enrollment trends (p. 15

of the Psychology, Self-Study Report 2017-2018), students who major in psychology have been steadily increasing since 2010, though students who minor in psychology have remained fairly constant. There are however, many more psychology majors (587) than minors (48 in 2017). In short, enrollment is healthy.

Offered since 2013, the BSc in Psychology is a relatively recent addition. According to Dr. Nader Mobed, Associate Dean of Science, this undergraduate program is running very well with 43 students already graduated. Indeed, 25% of psychology majors are enrolled in the BSc, and reported student reactions on the whole are quite positive. Within the Faculty of Arts, Psychology is the largest department with high quality students, as suggested by Dr. Joseph Piwowar. There are many moving parts here within the Department of Psychology: faculty and students located between three campuses, the administrative independence and necessary collaboration between each of these, and undergraduate programs within both the Faculty of Arts and the Faculty of Science. Undergraduate students commented on some of the superior professors here at the University of Regina and its colleges. Truly, the faculty and students are doing remarkable things within this department.

Having said that, various themes emerged through the Program Review regarding the undergraduate program that are consistent with those uncovered in the Self-Study (p. 20-21). Many such identified issues that impact the graduate program also impact the undergraduate program. In order to avoid redundancy, the focus here will be upon those (somewhat) unique issues of the undergraduate programs.

2.2 Challenges and Considerations

1. Academic Advising. For undergraduate students, career options post-degree, including accessing graduate programs, was identified as an issue. For example, students mentioned that they had difficulty accessing information about the Honours Programs here at the University of Regina. Somewhat related, there was apprehension that faculty letters of reference for graduate schools may be weighted more heavily than those completed by sessional instructors.

In short, the academic-advising offered by the Faculty of Arts was not seen as sufficiently specific for psychology undergraduates; this concern was not voiced for the affiliated campuses, Luther and Campion College. This is likely due to the smaller class sizes offered by faculty in those colleges, which would therefore enable more contact with professors. Students felt that professors provided the most valuable counselling; it seems as though students were seeking advice particular to the discipline and ongoing study/practice of psychology, and not just information about program requirements.

Considerations . There is an Undergraduate and Honours Committee (UHC) in place, and there is a liaison faculty member to the undergraduate programs. Perhaps a series of information sessions on key topics may be digitally recorded (e.g., details and issues to consider when applying to graduate school) for student use.

A related issue is that sessions for undergraduates have not always been well-attended, which

might be ameliorated by better communication, such as a central website for undergraduates, and/or social media campaigns, etc. This communication issue may be related to the need to increase staff support for the Department, (as identified within this Report). An additional staff person (1.2 above) could send out reminders, etc. In other words, it seems that some of the things students need are already in place, in which case they simply need to be communicated better to students.

Regarding the Honours Programs in particular, obviously, part of the matter here lies with departmental capacity; however, the student advisement piece, just identified, may be of use for students.

The (undergraduate) Psychology Student Association (PSA) suggested some ongoing structured time with faculty, such as some office hours bi-weekly or monthly dedicated for the PSA; this and/or participation in some PSA meetings.

2. *Sessional instructors.* Consistent with the Self-Study report (pp. 20-21), there was undergraduate concern about the quality of teaching by sessional instructors.

Considerations As already articulated in this report, establishing a formal mentorship program for sessional instructors may be helpful.

3. *Faculty resources.* As stated in the introduction, the focus here is upon those issues unique to the undergraduate program; there is an attempt here not to duplicate points. Having said that, in the graduate program section, there is the suggestion to replace faculty in particular areas. It may be noteworthy that undergraduate students strongly identified a need for a permanent faculty member within forensic psychology.

Considerations As noted in the graduate section of this report, faculty replacements would also assist with the increased supervisors available for undergraduate students.

4. *Sequencing of required courses.* There was concern that some students were taking the relevant statistics course too late in their undergraduate degree to be of use in interpreting research findings in their senior courses. Faculty complained that they could not count on students' ability to read the primary literature, even in senior level courses. We understand that there are two statistics courses required in years 3 and 4, and a research methods course if students are pursuing an honours degree; and one statistics and research methods course if not pursuing an honours degree.

Considerations The Undergraduate and Honours Committee (UHC) and/or the Curriculum (scheduling) Committee should meet to determine if this is an advising issue or a curricular sequencing issue, and whether making them pre-requisites for senior courses would help.

5. *Teaching resources.* There was a concern that undergraduate education is being favoured over graduate education in terms of resources and policies. There was a suggestion that there is a disparity in teaching roles with the undergraduate and graduate programs; the latter requiring more supervision and time commitments.

Considerations

In so far as the undergraduate program is concerned, generally speaking the data we received from students indicated that they were satisfied with the program, albeit some wished for greater access to the honours program, and more consistent teaching across faculty and instructors. There may be a resource issue here; perhaps the department could consider permanent Instructor positions. That is, a position whose job description it is to primarily teach in the undergraduate program and not to conduct research. Such a position may continue to foster and build upon teaching quality.

6. *Sustainability and Indigenization* are two significant themes from the University of Regina's Strategic Plan (see <https://www.uregina.ca/strategic-plan/priorities/indigenization.html>). There are several faculty making different kinds of efforts in this regard; there are different activities with the aim to Indigenize. Some faculty are researching within First Nations communities, for example; however, as far as the curriculum is concerned, it would appear that these efforts are directed mainly toward the graduate courses in the form of cultural awareness (see Self-Study Report, p. 4).

Considerations

Perhaps a section or unit somewhere in the undergraduate program, such as the introductory course, could include some content on acknowledging and introducing First Nations approaches to healing, and/or decolonizing the practices of psychology, and/or psychology within social justice frameworks, etc. Another suggestion is to develop a course that specifically addresses these issues, or to build in relevant content to existing courses.

3. Graduate Training and Supervision

3.1 Structure

The Department of Psychology at the University of Regina offers graduate training programs in both Clinical Psychology and in Experimental and Applied Psychology (EAP). The Ph.D. program in Clinical Psychology has been accredited by the Canadian Psychological Association since 2003. The program is overseen by a Director of Clinical Training. Practicum placements are organized by a Clinical Placement Coordinator. Faculty in each of these positions receive a course teaching release.

The clinical psychology program is designed to train students in the scientist-practitioner model so that they are well-positioned for careers related to teaching, research, and/or practice. Research and clinical training is sequential and integrated. Students are trained well in courses that will assist their thesis and dissertation requirements (e.g., research methods and statistics) and professional development (e.g., ethics and professional standards of practice, assessment, intervention). At the Master's level, students complete their course work in the first year, leaving the second year for thesis-related research and a four-month internship. The M.A. is comprised of 37 credit hours in total. At the Ph.D. level, students complete courses to demonstrate competency in the main cognates required for accreditation (history and system, biological, social, and

cognitive-affective bases of behaviour). They are also trained in psychometrics and in more advanced assessment and intervention courses. Ph.D. students also complete their comprehensive examination which is comprised of both written and oral components. Additional practica placements, a Ph.D. dissertation, and a one-year pre-doctoral residency are also completed, for a total of 66 credit hours.

There is a broad range of research interests and expertise among the Clinical Psychology faculty members, including anxiety disorders, depression, the interface of reproductive hormones and mood, internet-delivered CBT, pain, aging, women's health, Indigenous people's health, and child psychopathology. These diverse research interests provide excellent opportunities for clinical graduate students to engage in both research and clinical training. During their tenure in graduate school, clinical students have the opportunity to work with the core faculty or community supervisors to pursue work with children, adults or seniors in a variety of settings including mental health, psychiatric, acute care, rehabilitation, neuropsychology, counselling, and forensic settings. Student training also takes place in the newly renovated Sun Life Financial Psychology Training Clinic. The clinical psychology graduate program had successful re-accreditation reviews/site-visits in 2009 and 2015, with the longest period for re-review (seven years) granted after the last site-visit.

The EAP program is designed to train students to become independent researchers in preparation for careers in academic settings or as researchers in industry or the public sector. The program is overseen by a faculty member, although no course reduction is associated with this role. EAP psychology graduate program is a relatedly recent addition to the department, with the first graduates in 2006.

Students complete courses in research methods, statistics, ethics, and content areas relevant to their thesis work. In addition to their coursework, students complete an M.A. thesis and, in the Ph.D. program, comprehensive examinations and a dissertation. There are a total of 30 credit hours at the M.A. level and 61 credit hours at the Ph.D. Faculty in the EAP program engage in research on topics that are experimental and/or applied, including measurement and statistics, cognitive psychology, developmental psychology, forensic psychology, neuroscience, theoretical psychology, and social psychology.

There are 37 students in the clinical psychology program and 17 students in the EAP program. In both programs, the Master's degree is considered preparatory for further work at the doctoral level. The programs are overseen by the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research. Although a relatively small department, there is a broad range of research interests of faculty which provides graduate students with numerous options for scholarly output and graduate supervision.

3.2 Quality of the Program and Instruction

The Psychology Department's self-study document outlined a number of strengths in the graduate training at the University of Regina. Students in the graduate programs, for example, indicated that they have many opportunities to participate in research projects under the supervision of internationally renowned experts in the field. The students mentioned that faculty are available for

consultation and mentorship, knowledgeable, approachable, and generous with their time and resources. The current study body also suggested that the department is generally supportive and that there is a positive synergy and collegiality among graduate students. Students were also impressed with the Sun Life Financial Psychology Training Clinic which provides an outstanding training facility. The clinical psychology program also has an excellent reputation within the local community as well as nationally.

The Review Team met with current graduate students and alumni. Consistent with the survey data from the unit's self-study, current students and alumni generally reported high satisfaction with the program and the training provided in both graduate programs.

Notwithstanding the many strengths of the graduate programs, there are a number of challenges as reflected in the department's self-study report and in our interviews with senior administration, faculty, current graduate students, and alumni. The main challenges are elucidated below.

3.3 Challenges

1. Sun Life Financial Psychology Training Clinic. The Review Team was taken on a tour of the exceptional clinical training facilities at the SunLife Financial Psychology Training Clinic, which opened in 2014. Faculty and students alike were very pleased with the support they have received from the establishment of this clinic. Unfortunately, training at the clinic is underutilized, in part, because there is a real need for a full-time Ph.D. Training Director. Practicum supervision at the clinic is provided by core faculty members who already have extremely busy teaching schedules and research careers. (Recall that students must complete several supervised practica as part of their program, as required to meet CPA accreditation standards.

Considerations. The clinical psychology graduate program would benefit tremendously by hiring a Director of the Training Clinic. According to the accreditation requirements of the Canadian Psychological Association, supervision of clinical graduate training must be provided by doctoral-level registered psychologists. Given the shortage of psychologists in the community who are able to provide supervision, along with numerous cuts to residency positions, a more appropriate model of training for the use of the clinic would be one in which more junior students could be trained "in house." This would provide quality control and consistency of training. Moreover, this model would also free up supervisors in community settings as less supervision hours would be required (i.e., more junior graduate students require a higher ratio of clinical hours to supervision hours than do more senior, and better prepared Ph.D. students). That is, they would only be asked to supervise students who had already received some training, reducing the burden on community partners and increasing the probability that they would agree to undertake practicum supervision. Our understanding from the faculty, as well as the senior administration of the University of Regina, is that there is strong support for such a hire.

A second, important, issue that arose with the clinic tour is the need for better accessibility to the clinic. It is currently not accessible for mobility-challenged people, a situation that urgently needs to be remedied. This would involve installing motors on the doors in the corridor leading

to the clinic, so that they would automatically open to admit a person in a wheel chair or other mobility aid.

2. *Reduction of Clinical Placements in the Community.* Opportunities for clinical placements in the Clinical Psychology Program have become scarce, which threatens students' competitiveness for residency placements (a requirement of a Ph.D. in clinical psychology) and the program's ability to attract high-quality students. As noted above, hiring a Director of the Training Clinic would help to ameliorate the supply and demand issue for community placements.

Considerations. It might also be beneficial for the Psychology Department to foster stronger collaborations with psychologists in the community. When the Review Team met with alumni from the graduate program, the feedback was very positive. The alumni stated that they received excellent training, and felt very positively toward the program. They recognized the need to try to get newer psychologists in the community involved in the program and to facilitate better connections between the department and the community. One way to do this would be to provide formal adjunct appointments to supervisors in the community (whereby they would receive the status of being affiliated with the university and receive other benefits; e.g., library privileges). There are other ways in which good collaboration could be established with minimal costs involved. For example, providing a listing of adjuncts (e.g., on the website) who can provide research and clinical training opportunities would allow students to know who they can contact and also make adjunct faculty feel more involved and integrated into the program. In addition, regularly inviting adjunct faculty and community supervisors to participate in functions of students and faculty, would foster the idea that they are partners with the department. This is also congruent with the university's strategic plan: Together we are stronger. Better partnerships between the department and the community could also go a long way toward advocating for psychology within the province (e.g., advocating the Saskatchewan Health Authority regarding the loss of 50% of residency placements in the Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region).

3. *Managing Feedback from Students.* The graduate students were surveyed as part of the department's self-study. A number of students indicated that the lack of support was a relative weakness of the department: *"In my experience, our program has not been as receptive to constructive feedback as it could be. In fact, there have been times when feedback has been actively discouraged. This can be disheartening because many students have great ideas for strengthening the program but don't feel comfortable coming forward as they fear this feedback will not be well received."*

Considerations. During its meeting with the current graduate students, it became apparent that the department does not have a good mechanism in place for dealing with student feedback or difficulties. Many of the graduate students felt as though their concerns were not heard or appreciated, or worried about raising issues because of the power differential between students and faculty. The Review Team recommends that the department establishes a Graduate Student Advisory Committee to serve as a liaison between students and faculty. This committee could be comprised of students elected by their peers and a faculty member serving as ex-officio.

4. Mental Health Needs of Students. Another issue that was brought up during our discussions with the graduate students pertained to the need to have better access to mental health resources. According to the survey data, “[a]ccessibility to mental health services is limited. We are not able to access services from Counselling Services at the U of R or other similar services because of a potential future conflict of interest (e.g., we cannot get therapy from a psychologist who could potentially provide us with clinical supervision). However, we have not been provided with an acceptable alternative for services.” This is a difficult issue and one that has the potential to perpetuate stigma regarding mental health.

Considerations. The Review Team does not believe that there is a conflict of interest in a psychologist assisting a graduate student and then later working as his or her practicum supervisor (although we recognize that such a situation would have to be handled delicately). Thus, students should be allowed to access the Counselling Services available to other students. Another possibility might be to develop a list of private practice psychologists in the community who are willing to see students at a reduced rate. The department may also wish consider including a statement on their website indicating that students may wish to pursue therapy for personal or professional reasons (and be encouraged to do so; cf. <http://www.psychology.uwo.ca/research/clinical/therapy.html>).

5. Funding for Students. The issue of graduate student funding came up repeatedly throughout the self-study document, and in our discussions with faculty and students. It appears that the main issue is that funding for graduate students is not guaranteed. Although the situation is apparently better than it used to be, there remains considerable confusion and uncertainty over graduate funding formulas. Our understanding from Dr. Nilgun Onder, Associate Dean Research and Graduate Studies in Faculty of Arts, Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, is that the university will be addressing the issue of lack of guaranteed funding. Fortunately, the department has a number of faculty members who have incredible records of scholarship and grant support. These supervisors are able to support their students financially from their grants. However, there is no teaching credit for graduate student supervision and the Faculty of Arts, unfortunately, undervalues graduate teaching and instead prioritizes undergraduate education. As one faculty member put it, “This is really unfortunate, as research is what distinguishes a university from a college.” The lack of consistent graduate funding also creates inequities among the faculty within the department. For instance, some faculty members are currently supervising 8 graduate students whereas other faculty members are not supervising any graduate students because they are not able to offer them financial support. Graduate supervision is a key function of universities and should be supported and valued; the system as it is currently operating, is inequitable and creating a differential incentive issue. There is apparently pressure to continue to take on graduate students but this is not reinforced and not considered in terms of the workload of individual faculty members. The lack of guaranteed funding also impairs the department’s ability to attract the best graduate students from across the country.

6. Need for Faculty Replacements. The department of psychology is the largest department at the University of Regina in terms of both undergraduate and graduate teaching. Based on its discussions with the senior administration, the Review Team had the strong impression that the department of psychology is highly valued in terms of its contributions to teaching and

scholarship. In fact, the Review Team heard on a few occasions that “psychology is the jewel in the crown at the university.” The senior administration seems to hold a very positive opinion of psychology and acknowledges its international reputation, strong research, performance in securing external grant funding, innovativeness, and excellent teaching at both the undergraduate and graduate levels.

Considerations. The psychology department has lost a number of positions mainly due to retirement. In terms of the graduate curriculum, there is a real need for a faculty member who has expertise in neuroscience. Currently, the department is heavily reliant on one faculty member to teach neuroscience courses. In addition to representing a core content area, neuroscience is also important for clinical graduate students to meet their cognate requirements for accreditation with the Canadian Psychological Association. Another position that would significantly enhance both the undergraduate and graduate curriculum involves hires in the area of forensic psychology. Some of the faculty members we met with indicated that if two new forensic faculty were hired, the department could launch a forensic program which would increase graduate enrolment and also be popular at the undergraduate level.

In addition to meeting the content requirements of the Clinical Psychology and EAP programs, not recruiting new faculty has a strong negative impact on the existing faculty. For example, both the graduate program and undergraduate programs have increased in enrolment over time; given that the faculty complement has not increased accordingly means that the workload for existing has increased dramatically.

The Review Team recognizes the difficult in allocating resources across the university. For example, we were told that the senior administration needs to take into account fact that other departments have lost numbers which has impacted their ability to offer their programs. Given the need to cover off core areas of the graduate program in clinical psychology and experimental and applied psychology coupled with the fact that the department is considered the “jewel in the crown” at the University of Regina, we believe that faculty should be increased within the department of psychology – this is a department with a demonstrated record of excellent and the potential for important growth in this area is very promising.

7. Graduate Supervision Needs to be Reinforced and Validated. A number of faculty members pointed out the problem that graduate teaching and mentorship are not really acknowledged or supported by the senior administration. Rather, the focus is on undergraduate teaching. This is a very unfortunate state of affairs. A university’s reputation is largely based on the research produced by its faculty which is enhanced through graduate education.

8. Lack of Clear Guidelines for Graduate Students. The graduate students in the Clinical and EAP programs indicated that there is a lack of guidance on the various tasks needed to complete their degree requirements and recommended completion dates. A document is apparently being prepared to address this issue; we encourage the development of such a document and regular updates so that students are clear about the expectations of their respective programs.

9. Graduate Student Space. Another concern raised by the graduate students had to do with office

space on campus. Office space is very important for graduate students to be productive researchers and to be able to complete their degree requirements. Adequate space should be provided to all graduate students in the department.

Summary of Recommendations Related to Graduate Teaching and Supervision

1. The clinical psychology graduate program would benefit tremendously by hiring a Director of the Training Clinic. According to the accreditation requirements of the Canadian Psychological Association, supervision of clinical graduate training must be provided by doctoral-level registered psychologists.
2. Accessibility to the Sun Life Financial Psychology Training Clinic needs to be improved.
3. The Psychology Department should foster stronger collaborations with psychologists in the community.
4. The Psychology Department should establish a Graduate Student Advisory Committee to serve as a liaison between students and faculty.
5. The Psychology Department needs to have a viable mental health strategy for their graduate students.
6. There needs to be consistent, guaranteed funding for graduate students. Such funding would help with recruitment and retention of graduate students and also bolster the reputation and research output of the university.
7. The Psychology Department needs faculty replacement to offset the unreasonable workload of current faculty, enhance and expand programming, and meet the fundamental teaching needs at the graduate and undergraduate levels.
8. Graduate supervision must be valued by the senior administration. The university should consider incorporating graduate supervision into the teaching loads of faculty members and making this a formal part of the evaluative process of faculty members.
9. The graduate programs need to provide clear guidance documents for students in terms of expectations and time lines for completing the various components of their degrees.
10. Graduate student space needs to be enhanced.

SUMMARY.

The Department of Psychology is deservedly thought of as the “Jewel in the Crown” of the University of Regina. As an example, we have recently just been appraised of a presentation given by Dr. Malloy demonstrating that the impact of the department’s research (in terms of citations) stacks up well against much larger and more prosperous departments from the Universities of York, Waterloo, etc. All in all, it is a small department with outsized contributions in terms of research funding, graduate student training, and undergraduate enrollments. We urge the University and Faculty administration not to take the success of this Department for granted, and instead, to ensure that it is adequately resourced and supported in ways that allow its success to continue.