

**Psychology, Undergraduate and Graduate, Faculty of Health**

**Cyclical Program Review – 2007 to 2014**

**Final Assessment Report and Implementation Plan**

**Reported to Joint-Committee on Quality Assurance:** April 28, 2017

**Program Description**

Program	Accepts 2015	Enrolment FTES 2014/15	Degrees Awarded 2015
Psychology BA, BSc	894	3795	Hons: 942 90-credit: 440 Minor: 43
Masters	145	239	125
PhD	55	252	32
Graduate Diploma			26

**Reviewers appointed by the Vice-Provost Academic:**

Dr. Jane Ledingham, Professor, University of Ottawa  
 Dr. Donald H. Saklofske, Professor, University of Western Ontario  
 Dr. Robert Drummond, Professor, York University

**Documentation Provided to the External Reviewers**

Prior to the site visit, the external reviewers are provided with the following:

- Department/Program Omnibus Statement (where applicable)
- Program Self-Study Brief, which includes program structure, curriculum and learning outcomes, program reflection, enrolment and retention data, resources, student input and quality enhancement opportunities
- Dean’s /Principal’s Agenda of Concerns
- Faculty CVs
- University, Faculty and Program planning documents

**Site Visit:** June 14 and 15, 2016

The Review team began the site visit with a meeting with Alice Pitt, Vice-Provost Academic. The Reviewers met with the following individuals: Harvey Skinner, Dean, Faculty of Health; Barbara Crow, Dean and



Associate Vice-President, Faculty of Graduate Studies; Susan Murtha, Associate Dean, Teaching and Learning, Faculty of Health; Joel Goldberg, Chair, Department of Psychology, Faculty of Health; Jennifer Connolly, Undergraduate Psychology Program Director, Faculty of Health; Jennifer Steele, Associate Undergraduate Psychology Program Director, Faculty of Health; Adrienne Perry, Graduate Psychology Program Director, Faculty of Health and the Master of Calumet College, Jennine Rawana.

The Reviewers visited Scott Library and met with Catherine Davidson, Associate University Librarian and the Associate Librarians from the Scott Library and. The Reviewers held meetings within the Faculty of Health on the Keele campus with the undergraduate and graduate staff, undergraduate faculty members, undergraduate students, including the Undergraduate Psychology Students' Association, Peer Assisted Study Session (P.A.S.S.) tutors, Student Health Ambassadors at York (SHAY) and Student Senators. The Reviewers met with Graduate faculty and with graduate student on the Keele campus and also met with Louise Hartley, Director of the York University Psychology Clinic.

The Review Team also met with Donald Ipperciel, Principal, Glendon College and Timothy Moore, Chair, Department of Psychology, Glendon College and visited the Frost Library which is located on the Glendon campus. A separate Implementation Plan has been submitted for the Glendon programs and further details about the site visit may be found there.

**Outcome:**

The Joint-Committee on Quality Assurance concluded that the Decanal response adequately addressed the review recommendations. Progress on the recommendations will be included in the Follow-up Report due November 2018. The next Cyclical Program Review will begin in the Fall of 2022.

**Strengths:**

The Dean's implementation Plan provided an excellent summary of the strengths of the program as noted by the Reviewers, and it is reproduced here in its entirety.

There are several unique features that the reviewers emphasized as favorable for faculty members and attracting high quality students both to the graduate and undergraduate program that include:

- four main undergraduate programs offering a broad range of courses, experiential learning opportunities (e.g., high impact practices such as community based research, thesis research in labs, etc.), and some courses in online formats that allow a diverse student body various degree routes to acquire a BA or BSc degree.
- innovative and high quality graduate programs providing opportunities for students to conduct research, learn, and acquire skills in different

areas of psychological specialization (7 disciplinary areas, two established clinical programs, as well as graduate diplomas in Health Psychology, Neuroscience, and Quantitative methods are offered).

- based on criteria such as publications, grants, Canada Research Chairs, international subject rankings, and quality supervision, faculty members can be considered among the 'best' for both research and teaching.
- openness to growth, redesign, and innovation to keep the program "at the forefront of psychological science and practice" which includes:
  - a new undergraduate proposal for a neuroscience program that anticipates a "shift and key future emphasis in both the discipline and practice in psychology";
  - development of new undergraduate writing and critical thinking courses that "go beyond the usual 'content only' focused courses";
  - a new graduate stream in clinical neuropsychology that is CPA accredited.

Strengths of the program pointed out by the reviewers:

- the program compares favorably to other Psychology programs within Ontario and across Canada;
- recent proposed changes to the undergraduate program have strengthened it and the course offerings;
- the program maps onto learning objectives;
- support and guidance from visionary and dedicated program directors and administrators have the support and respect of the larger university;
- faculty members are highly productive;
- continued success results from an ability to implement innovations because of alignment, support and problem solving approach from the Dean's office, the Chair, UPD, GPD, senior staff, to faculty members.

### **Opportunities for Enhancement:**

The Dean's Implementation Plan makes the following comments on the review report and the program's response and plans:

#### Weighing discrepancies between reviewers' comments and Chairs action plan:

The Chair, on behalf of the program, has written a considered response to the five recommendations outlined by the reviewers and aligned his comments with the recommendations from the self-study. The challenges and recommendations described by the reviewers fall into three main categories: staffing/succession planning, faculty complement, space/infrastructure.

Although the reviewers also spoke about attracting high quality students (by

maintaining and/or improving time to completion for grad students, using summer schools in an innovative way to attract students to the non-clinical programs, increasing communication with students to ensure needs are met, addressing community safety/labour disruption issues, greater shift to online/experiential course options and more person centered learning, addressing the demands of a diverse changing student body, engaging alumni, need for a greater number of full-time faculty teaching at the undergraduate level) and managing change (financial stress associated with new SHARP budget model, uncertainty created by the appointment of a new Dean, tensions between faculty members and administration when new directions are required) they did not list them as one of their five main recommendations and thus the program did not write a response to these.

Therefore, I considered these largely out of scope for this decanal implementation plan. Moreover, some of the issues are largely beyond the scope of the Dean (e.g., labour disruptions, broad community safety issues, the uncertainty of the new budget model). Never-the-less, it is worth pointing out that the Faculty at large has already started to address issues such as expanding digital learning, improving time to completion, new learning models and using our diversity as an asset.

### **The Dean's Implementation Plan**

The Plan submitted by the Dean provides an excellent compilation of the recommendations to be acted upon and the actions to be taken, as a well as a chart which lays out responsibilities and timelines for completion. The information below has been taken directly from the Dean's Implementation Plan.

#### Staffing/Succession Planning

Due to the administrative demands to ensure quality and integrity for a high enrollment program the recommendation by the reviewers is to support the hiring of an assistant/associate UPD (A-UPD). The program is eager to formally establish an associate UPD position, which would require an organizational change. The current A-UPD began a three-year term in a 'special advisor to the dean's role in 2015. Originally when this position was granted it was because the program was undergoing the cyclical program review and revising their program. While I am open to such a change, the program would need to carefully describe the job duties and expectations, how the role adds value, and provides a return on the added investment with respect to the priority goals of the Faculty and University's Institutional Resource Plan.

The reviewers also recommended that the program engage in succession planning. The program has begun succession planning to ensure inclusivity, continuity, and change implementation. They want to encourage interested

departmental members to participate in leadership development training, workshops, and retreat activities. I agree there is a need for succession planning and leadership development. It is also a priority with the University administration (e.g., AVP T & L) to create leadership and management skills development for Chairs, GPDs and UPDs. The first iteration of the Chairs and Directors leadership training took place in the Fall of 2016 focusing on people who were early in their tenure as Chair/Director. The Faculty of Health had one of our new Chairs attend this leadership training. Moving forward our aim is to encourage all new Chairs/Directors to participate in a leadership-training event. I understand that the intention is for the leadership training to also be open to those who are contemplating the idea of taking on the Chair/Director role. I will work with the Psychology Chair to ensure that such leadership development is available to faculty members interested in participating. Finally, there is continuity in administrative leadership, I have indicated a willingness to extend the appointments of the incumbents with the caveat that the end of the terms must be staggered across multiple years.

### Faculty Complement

The reviewers commented that as the program grows and faculty members age there is a “need to prioritize areas of research for replacement hires”. In addition, they noted that as new directions in Psychology emerge, it becomes important to support new hires. In particular, the reviewers supported an alternate stream hire to design and implement courses to teach writing and critical thinking. The program has submitted a complement plan proposing 12 strategic hires over the next few years. In 2016 there were 3 successful hires. In 2017 there were 4 requested positions including an alternate stream position for the teaching of critical thinking and communication to support the implementation of the revised curriculum. Both the previous Dean and I have been very supportive of Psychology attaining new hires. In 2015/2016 there were 4 proposed hires and three were successful. In 2016/2017, there were 5 hires granted (4 new plus 1 that was rerun due to a failed search from 2015/16) including the alternate stream hire. Two searches and negotiations are complete, three searches are complete and I am currently in negotiation with two candidates, and I await the hiring committee recommendations for the last candidate. The new hires directly address the department’s priorities in areas such as developmental, pediatric clinical neuropsychology, and writing//communication. Two other hires address emergent areas in psychology such as neuro-imaging and computational neuroscience/deep learning. The Provost has recently approved expedited searches to replace two faculty members (neurophysiology, quantitative methods) who have submitted resignations. In summary, despite stable enrolments, the Psychology Department has expanded at a faster rate than almost all other academic units on campus.

### Space/Infrastructure

The reviewers described the physical facilities for Psychology at Keele as

'tired, crowded, and scattered', unsuited to its functions, with classrooms that are not entirely functional and outdated equipment. However, the reviewers did not specifically include a recommendation. This may have been because their visit was concentrated in only a small number of buildings which host faculty, staff and students from the Department. That said, my long term objective is to develop a funding and space plan which will enable the Faculty of Health, including the Department of Psychology, to occupy new state-of-the-art building for teaching, research, clinical practice, and administration. Such a plan will need to be prioritized against other university needs. It will also require us to develop a plan to generate as much as \$120 million dollars.

In the near term, the University and Faculty of Health have taken some steps to improve our space and infrastructure. For example, shortly after the review, the University received significant funding to renovate one of our wet lab spaces, and to build a new Vivarium facility. We have also submitted a request for a small office addition to the Sherman building. We are also scheduled to renovate offices and research space in Stong/Calumet College, which may also provide highly functional new space for a small number of psychology faculty. We are actively exploring partnerships which might find off campus space which also helps us connect with the broader community and organizational partners. Finally, I should also point out that some facilities, such as the Sherman Health Science building, and the Life Science Building, which both host faculty and students from psychology are both relatively new and state of the art.

The reviewers indicated that there is no "space where informal communication between faculty and students can take place outside of the classroom." Their recommendation is to "initiate long term planning to refurbish and unify different facilities and allowance for common interaction sites." I agree. We have already created one new student lounge. The University's Academic and Operational plans have also made this an institutional wide objective. Plans are underway to create more informal student meeting and study spaces.

The Chair noted an eagerness to refurbish and renew the Behavioral Sciences Building (BSB), and consolidate space in Calumet College (affiliated with Psychology students as well as other programs students). As well as establish a lounge in BSB for informal communication opportunities between students and faculty members. I'm delighted that a new lounge is in the works for the BSB building. However, a major refurbishment of the BSB building has not been explored in depth. Given the building is largely made of concrete and cinder block and its inefficient design and inaccessibility to community groups, it is difficult to imagine a scenario which would justify a major upgrade. Rather, I favour minor modifications as a short and medium term solution while our long term focus is on developing and funding new state of the art facilities which not only meet teaching, research, and administrative needs, but help connect us with community groups and other external partners.

Finally, the reviewers commented on a need for continued support to maintain and supplement existing infrastructure. In particular, they recommended to “support administration of the program and thus funds for physical changes in undergraduate office for confidential discussions”. The Chairs response was that the program is eager to move forward with renovation plans in BSB 291-292. While I appreciate the need, such measures would be short term, and therefore, not the best use of scarce resources. Rather, we must keep our focus on long term opportunities.

### Plans and Actions Underway

Actions	Responsible Party	Timeline
Staffing and succession planning (appointment of an A-UPD)	Deans office	Current position until 2018,
Succession planning and Leadership development	AVP T&L	2017 and beyond
Faculty renewal (replace retirees, new alternate stream hire to support new program requirements)	Program	2015/16 – 3 new hires 2016/2017 – 5 hires (4 new plus 1 failed search from 2015/16) including the alternate stream. 2 searches and negotiations are complete, 3 searches are complete and the dean is currently in negotiation with 2 candidates, and is waiting for recommendations for the last candidate. 2 replacement hires already approved for 2018-19 complement plan.
Space – expand, refurbish, and to allow for common interaction site between faculty members and students	Program and Deans office	Short term solutions are being implemented in 2018-2019 and will add to the major new facilities already previously developed. A long term space, funding and facility plan is in development.

The Follow-up Report, due in November 2018, will provide an update on how these activities are progressing.

Alice J. Pitt  
Vice-Provost Academic  
York University