

Final Assessment Report for the 2022-2023 Cyclical Review of the Department of Psychology Programs and Brantford Psychology Program

INTRODUCTION

In accordance with Laurier's Institutional Quality Assurance Procedures ([Policy 2.1](#)), this Final Assessment Report provides a summary of the cyclical program review process for the undergraduate and graduate Psychology programs offered at both the Brantford (Faculty of Human and Social Sciences) and Waterloo (Faculty of Science) campuses, prepared by the Quality Assurance Office, along with an identification of strengths of the program(s) under review authored by the Deans of the Faculties of Science, Human and Social Sciences and Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies. All recommendations made by the external review committee in their report are listed, followed by a summary of the units' response, and the relevant decanal responses. Recommendations prioritized are listed in the Implementation Plan, with those not being prioritized for implementation noted as well.

The Final Assessment Report is reviewed and approved by the Provost and Vice-President: Academic. Following completion of the Final Assessment Report, it is approved by the Program Review Sub-Committee and Senate Academic Planning Committee. Approval dates are listed at the end of this report. Final Assessment Reports are submitted to Senate as part of an annual report on cyclical reviews, and to the Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance for information. Final Assessment Reports and Implementation Reports are posted on the public-facing page of the [Quality Assurance Office](#) website.

The Implementation Plan for the recommendations prioritized in the Final Assessment Report can be found at the end of this report. Units will submit their first Implementation Report two years following approval of the Final Assessment Report at Senate. The Implementation Report will include comments from the unit on actions taken toward the completion of recommendations, comments from the relevant Dean(s) related to the progress made, and comments from the Program Review Sub-Committee, which is responsible for approving the Implementation Report and deciding if further reports are required. The Implementation Report is submitted to the Senate Academic Planning Committee for information.

SUMMARY OF REVIEW PROCESS

The last augmented cyclical program review of the undergraduate and graduate programs in the Department of Political Science and Psychology Program took place during the 2014-2015 review cycle.

The Psychology Self-Study was authored by Paul Mallet (Associate Professor of Psychology), Roger Buehler (Chair of Psychology at Waterloo) and Chris Alksnis (Program Coordinator at Brantford). A broader review committee was established that included the above individuals along with Christian Jordan (Associate Chair of Psychology and Chair of the Psychology Undergraduate Curriculum Committee) and David White (Psychology

Graduate Coordinator). The Committee met as needed to oversee the process and prepare the Self-Study. The Self-Study also notes the contributions made by administrative staff in the Department and Program. In addition to the Self-Study (Volume I), the units also submitted a copy of faculty curricula vita (Volume II), a volume of course syllabi, and a list of proposed external reviewers (Volume III). A draft of the Self-Study was reviewed by the Quality Assurance Office, the Dean of the Faculty of Science, Dean of the Faculty of Human and Social Sciences, and Dean of the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies prior to submission of the final version.

Following Laurier's IQAP, the external review committee for the review consisted of two external reviewers from outside the university, and one internal reviewer from Laurier but outside of the unit. The review committee was selected by the Program Review Sub-Committee on December 1, 2022, and a virtual external review took place during the week of May 1-5, 2023.

The review committee consisted of **Dr. Pam Bryden** from the Department of Kinesiology and Physical Education at Wilfrid Laurier, **Dr. John Lydon** from the Department of Psychology at McGill University, and **Dr. Scott MacDougall-Shackleton** from the Department of Psychology at Western University. During the external review, the committee had virtual meetings with the following individuals and groups:

- Dr. Roger Buehler, Chair of the Department of Psychology and Dr. Chris Alksnis, Psychology Program Coordinator (opening and closing meetings)
- Dr. Anthony Clarke, Dean of the Faculty of Science
- Dr. Bruce McKay, Dean of the Faculty of Human and Social Sciences
- Dr. Brent Wolfe, Associate Vice-President and Dean: Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies
- Dr. Heidi Northwood, Interim Provost and Vice-President: Academic
- Full-Time Psychology Faculty at the Brantford campus
- Full-Time Psychology Faculty at the Waterloo campus
- Undergraduate students at the Waterloo campus
- Undergraduate students at the Brantford campus
- Ms. Sara Neziol, Ms. Lori Lougheed, Dr. Todd Ferretti, and Dr. Kim Roberts, student advising representatives
- Ms. Lucy Carreiro, Ms. Kristina Malecki, Ms. Rita Sharkey, Ms. Janet Reimer, Mr. Andrew Pietak and Ms. Doreen Weise, Psychology administrative staff
- Psychology graduate students
- Psychology Contract Teaching Faculty
- Ms. Charlotte Innerd, Head of Collections and Acquisitions, and Mr. Mark Weiler, Liaison Librarian
- Dr. David White, and Dr. Diano Marrone, Animal Care Representatives
- Ms. Sally Heath, Manager: Academic Program Development and Review and Ms. Jessica Blondin, Executive Assistant

The review committee submitted their completed report on June 20, 2023. The executive summary from the report, and its recommendations, are provided below.

External Reviewers' Report Executive Summary

Psychology is a flagship department at Laurier and well respected by colleagues across the country. The faculty teach and train a very large number of undergraduates in addition to its thriving graduate program. Specific issues and needed resources are mentioned above but there seem to be at least two broad issues the department is grappling with at this time. One is working out the relationship between the Brantford and Waterloo campuses and concerns about the unknowns regarding the new Milton campus. The other broad concern is how to maintain the strengths of a small university community while contending with numbers more reflective of a large comprehensive university. The department has loyally made efforts at amalgamation since its last review, but it sees itself at a tipping point and in search of a way forward that consolidates its strengths while exploring and developing some new academic possibilities.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND RESPONSES

The External Reviewers' Report included 10 recommendations to improve the quality of the academic programs of the Department of Psychology and Psychology Program. All recommendations have been listed verbatim below, followed by a summary of the unit's response, and the relevant decanal responses. The Deans of the Faculties of Human and Social Sciences and Science collaborated on their responses, which have been provided jointly.

Recommendation #1: The department (including members of the Waterloo and Brantford campuses) should engage in a full review of its program learning outcomes and course offerings to ensure that the degree level expectations are met efficiently and aligned with the department and university's strategic vision. Organizing this review around department-wide retreats or other similar gatherings may also serve to re-engage department members that feel disconnected and burned out from the pandemic.

The department needs a full curriculum review process, especially in light of the challenge of increasing enrollments in courses. Does the department have an alternative or compromise strategy to the one the dean has set out? A full review of the curriculum and degree level outcomes should provide a rationale for the number and content of courses to inform these decisions. Such a curriculum review could also identify skills that need greater emphasis, such as preparation for non-research careers and supporting a transition to writing intensive courses. Even the best of programs needs periodic review and renewal and given that the last learning outcome review was some time ago and the growing pressure of class sizes, such a review seems overdue. Part of this review should include seeking better, and more equitable, synergies between programs and course offerings at both campuses.

Unit Response: We agree with the recommendation to conduct a curriculum review of program learning outcomes and course offerings for all our undergraduate programs. In line with the reviewers' comments, we believe this review will help us to provide a clearer rationale for course offerings in Psychology, to identify skills

that may need greater emphasis in our programs, and to find possible synergies between programs and course offerings across campuses. We also see this as an opportunity to reflect on how the curriculum can better incorporate Psychology department values of justice, equity, diversity, inclusion, and Indigeneity.

As mentioned in the self-study, the Psychology DUCC began work on such a curriculum review back in 2019-2020, with the guidance of a facilitator from the Teaching and Learning office, but this process was derailed by the pandemic and was never fully completed. We will renew the process in 2023-24. We appreciate the reviewers' suggestion to have facilitators involved in the process and will again plan to invite a resource person (e.g., Shirley Hall from Provost's Office) to engage in the process.

The curriculum review process will be initiated and led by the Psychology DUCC under the direction of the DUCC Chair (and Psychology Associate Chair) Dr. Christian Jordan; this committee already includes members representing each of the program areas within Psychology, including from the Brantford Campus. To ensure that we review the Psychology curriculum through an equity lens, the DUCC will partner on this project with the Psychology department committee on justice, equity, diversity, inclusion, and Indigeneity (JEDI). In line with the reviewers' suggestion, we will also plan to incorporate a department-wide retreat or other similar gatherings into the review process; we also agree that this endeavour should include interested stakeholders from the department at large, as well as student representatives.

We anticipate that the DUCC will begin work on the curriculum review process in Fall 2023 and that the review will unfold in Phases that include: generating clear statements of program learning outcomes that align with the department and university's strategic vision (Phase 1), mapping our existing courses on to these learning outcomes (Phase 2), and recommending changes to program requirements and/or course offerings stemming from the review (Phase 3). We also plan to hold a department-wide retreat as part of this process as suggested by the reviewers, most likely in Spring 2024. Our goal is to complete the curriculum review process by end of December 2024.

Dean of the Faculty of Science and Dean of the Faculty of Human and Social Sciences: We are fully in support of a thorough review of program learning outcomes and course offerings.

Dean of the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies: I agree that this would be a very useful exercise. The Recommendation appears to focus on the undergraduate programs (i.e., Recommendation #3), but this should be done with an eye towards how the review may influence the graduate programs.

Recommendation #2: Psychology should review how students can find supervisors for honours theses and for the graduate programs. Information on this process may already be available but hard to find. Working to demystify the hidden curriculum aspect of finding a research supervisor will further the department and Laurier's EDI goals. The department may want to explore models where students apply to a general applicant pool and then have some form of matching process to be paired with suitable supervisors.

Unit Response: We appreciate the recommendation to review our application processes for Honours theses and for graduate programs, and to consider alternative models of aligning applicants with supervisors. Indeed, for the PS499 undergraduate honours theses at the Waterloo campus, we have recently begun to explore this issue.

Until now, the process of matching students with supervisors has been relatively unstructured, with students reaching out individually to potential supervisors. Although this unstructured approach worked reasonably well for many years, we see room for improvement, and have recently considered the issue at a department meeting (March 11, 2023). There was clear consensus that we should explore moving to a new model, much like the one suggested by the reviewers, in which students apply generally to the thesis course (and list potential supervisors), then faculty members review and rank the applicants they would like to supervise, and a subsequent matching process is used to pair applicants and supervisors. Accordingly, the DUCC is currently researching models used in other psychology departments and will present a recommended model to the department during Fall 2023. Our goal is to have a new application process developed by the end of Fall 2023 so that it can be implemented for the upcoming cycle of applications for Honours Theses in 2024-25.

At the Brantford campus, undergraduate Psychology students interested in pursuing an independent research project may take the newly created UU499 Thesis course, which is counted as an elective in their Psychology Honours BA or BSc program. The UU499 course will be offered for the first time in 2023/24; the application process utilized for the 2023/24 cohort was the same as the one currently used to enroll in the PS499 course at the Waterloo campus. Any improvements made to the PS499 application process will also be considered for UU499.

For graduate programs, we were not aware of serious challenges encountered by applicants in identifying potential supervisors, and so we greatly appreciate the reviewers bringing this concern to our attention. Based on this feedback we plan to conduct a review of the information that is provided to prospective students on the outward-facing webpages to see how it could be clarified. We will also review the application process itself to consider alternative application models that may help in the pairing of grad-student applicants with suitable supervisors. The review of application procedures will be conducted by the Department Graduate Curriculum Committee (DGCC) during 2023-24 with recommendations brought to the department for consideration, and changes implemented where appropriate by the end of December 2024.

Dean of the Faculty of Science and Dean of the Faculty of Human and Social Sciences: We are supportive of exploring a new process to match undergraduate thesis students to faculty supervisors.

Dean of the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies: For several years, I taught a 3rd year course in Geography and Environmental Studies (GESC360 – Research Methods and Thesis Preparation). The course was designed to prepare students for undertaking an undergraduate Honours thesis by aligning their research interests with a potential supervisor and drafting a proposal. It was a highly successful model that is readily transferrable to other disciplines, and substantially enhanced our Honours thesis program while further establishing this as an important gateway to graduate studies. Feel free to reach out to me if you would like to discuss further (e.g., I can provide a course outline).

Regarding outward-facing webpages to help serve for recruitment at the graduate level, once our Communications Coordinator position is (hopefully) re-filled, they would be able to provide support for this.

Recommendation #3: There seems less need for a full-scale program-level review and course mapping for the graduate programs, but the current course offerings should be evaluated to determine if some can be changed to milestones or similar designations.

Unit Response: We appreciate the reviewers' overall positive feedback on the Psychology graduate programs, and we agree that the current course offering should be reviewed. In line with the recommendation, we plan to conduct a review of the structure and requirements of each program over the coming year. This review will be completed by the DGCC under the direction of the Graduate Officer, Dr. David White. As part of that review, we will evaluate existing courses to determine whether some could be changed to "milestones" or similar designations as suggested by the reviewers. Our aim, more generally, will be to ensure that the degree level learning expectations are met efficiently through an appropriate combination of coursework and supervised research and practicum experiences. Notably, the Community Psychology area is currently engaged (Spring 2023) in an extensive program evaluation process that addresses these issues within their program. The broader review of all the Psychology graduate programs, along with any recommended changes to the curriculum structure and requirements, is expected to be complete by the end of December, 2024.

Dean of the Faculty of Science: I fully support this planned effort to reduce the load on both the faculty members and students, particularly for thesis-based programs where the focus should be on conducting research and not in the classroom (such as where a doctoral program currently requires, e.g. six formal courses on top of the four that would have been taken for the MA).

Dean of the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies: I agree with the comments from the Dean of the Faculty of Science. Strong consideration should be given to reducing the courseload demand for the research-intensive graduate pathways.

Recommendation #4: The department should work to provide transparent and easily accessible information on its undergraduate and graduate programs, including program requirements and processes for advancing through programs. Currently, many students seem to be operating under insider, ad hoc systems for navigating the graduate student program, and graduate handbooks should be produced by the department rather than by the students themselves. Most of this information must exist somewhere but making it transparently accessible to reduce 'hidden curriculum' should be a priority.

Unit Response: We fully concur with the need to provide students with transparent and easily accessible information on the undergraduate and graduate programs, and we have continually tried to accomplish this goal over the years. At the undergraduate level, for example, we have provided worksheets summarizing the requirements of each program, posted information about program requirements on the student-facing FHSS and Faculty of Science department websites for Brantford and Waterloo-based students respectively, and created an additional information site on the MyLearningSpace platform that appears as a "course" in which all Waterloo-based Psychology undergrads are registered. We have also offered optional information sessions at both campuses throughout each academic year on specific aspects of the program (e.g., whether to choose a research-focused program, whether to complete a thesis, what to know about applying to graduate schools). Notably, since the time of the external review, the department has also compiled a Psychology Undergraduate Student Handbook (prepared by the Psychology academic advisors and Department Chair) for the Waterloo-campus

Psychology students, which is consistent with the reviewers' recommendation. The handbook has been emailed to all Waterloo-campus Psychology students and posted on the Psychology information site on MyLearning Space.

The reviewers have suggested that the department should also create a graduate handbook that makes information on how to navigate the graduate student program more transparent and accessible. To this point there has not been a graduate handbook in all areas, and the existing handbook for Community Psychology was compiled by students in that program. Following on the reviewers' suggestion, our plan is to have the DGCC look into the feasibility of creating a graduate level handbook (or area-specific handbooks) that will serve students in all our graduate programs during Fall 2023, and to work on compiling the handbook(s) during the Winter and Spring terms of 2024.

Notably, with the introduction (or reintroduction) of student handbooks, the department will also need to come up with mechanisms for ensuring that the content of the graduate and undergraduate handbooks is updated regularly. This may require the formation of a small departmental committee tasked with information and communication, which updates the handbooks annually and ensures that student information on department webpages is current, informative, and easily accessible.

Dean of the Faculty of Science and Dean of the Faculty of Human and Social Sciences: As noted in the response above, there is significant content available to undergraduate Psychology students already – information is available on many student-facing websites, there is a detailed undergraduate academic calendar, there are worksheets to keep track of progress towards degree completion, academic advisors are knowledgeable and accessible, and self-advising is available through MyDegree. Adapting the Waterloo campus focussed Psychology student undergraduate handbook for undergraduate Psychology students in Brantford would be useful. Also, we fully support the development of sub-discipline specific graduate handbooks.

Dean of the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies: As noted in the Self-Study, I encourage the department to consider developing an annual progress and activity report for its Master's students (similar to the report required of PhD students) to aid in tracking and ensuring progression.

Recommendation #5: The University, the Faculties, and the Department should work together to ensure that required resources are directed to maintaining academic integrity across different forms of instruction. This will require combinations of TA support, IT support and physical space appropriate for effective assessment in a variety of methods.

Unit Response: Although the department fully agrees with the need to ensure that resources are directed to maintaining academic integrity, we believe this is an issue that requires ongoing institutional resources and guidance, and as such, it is not possible to provide a timeline for "completion" of this recommendation. That being said, we are happy to work with the Faculty of Science and the broader institution on initiatives to address concerns about academic integrity.

In Psychology, one place where we see a need for change is in the assessments in Psychology online courses (OC). In recent years, faculty members developing OC courses have typically been discouraged from including in-

person, proctored assessments as these requirements could reduce the flexibility of students to complete the courses from a distance. However, there appears to be an emerging consensus within the department that there is a need to return to a greater use of proctored assessments in these courses if we are to preserve academic integrity. We would appreciate institutional support and guidance on how best to implement proctored forms of assessment in OC courses that will not be administratively burdensome for the instructors or students, especially for OC courses with high enrolments.

We would also appreciate institutional support for instructors of intramural courses who would like to have students write exams online (via laptop) in person within the classroom. This exam format can help to prevent misconduct by allowing instructors to select individualized sets of questions for each student from a large test bank and randomize the ordering of questions and response options; however, to date instructors have often encountered technological problems when trying to implement this approach. Moreover, the examinations office does not support this exam format for final exams conducted in the examination halls, making it difficult to implement in our high-enrolment courses. We would like to continue working with the university to find ways to implement computer exam technologies within the classroom.

Finally, it is worth noting that many instructors within the department are grappling with the serious challenges posed to academic integrity by emerging developments in Generative AI. For example, in our writing intensive 300- and 400- level courses it can be extremely difficult to know whether students are doing their own written work. These are challenges shared across the sector, and work on addressing these issues has already begun at Laurier (e.g., the Associate VP Academic's office is overseeing a Generative AI working group, and Teaching and Learning Laurier has created AI-related resources for instructors). Again, the Psychology department looks forward to working with administration on addressing the challenges (and opportunities) posed by advances in Generative AI.

Dean of the Faculty of Science and Dean of the Faculty of Human and Social Sciences: Ensuring high standards for academic integrity is mission critical – for the sake of the students' own learning and skill development, and for their degree to have value. In the absence of virtual proctoring, and given the challenges associated with generative AI, in-person proctored assessments for intramural and online (OC) courses will likely be essential. Institutionally, it will be imperative, as noted above, to ensure that the technology, and the administrative support, is available to enable widespread use of in-person proctored assessments. Also, The Faculty of Science has developed an academic integrity module, initially directed at graduate students which will be modified for undergraduate use over the Fall'23 term. The intention is for this to become mandatory for all Science registered students, but that would require Senate approval.

Dean of the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies: Challenges and opportunities associated with Generative AI with respect to writing-intensive courses and research in general are significant. As noted, the Provost's Office has established an 'Institutional-Level Committee for Generative AI' that will begin to meet in Fall 2023. I anticipate a similar working group will be established at the Ontario Council on Graduate Studies (OCGS) to address this rapidly emerging issue. This was the number one discussion item listed on our agenda at our recent OCGS retreat in May 2023.

Recommendation #6: The university should review its capacity to support large classroom teaching, both in terms of human resources and in classroom and technology support. There appear to be unresolved growing pains following the pandemic-induced switch to remote teaching and subsequent increased offering of hybrid and other forms of remote teaching. This, along with larger enrolment without increased numbers of instructors poses a risk that the quality of programs and courses will be diminished. This review should include both a review of the physical and technological supports, as well as the human resources required. The workload required for instructors is complicated and impacted by a range of factors including enrolment (number of students in a classroom or lab), dealing with student queries/accommodations etc., handling technology, and ensuring integrity in academic assessments. Laurier and the department may be able to better maintain the high quality of instruction it is known for if there is careful consideration of how the different physical resources and human resources (instructors, TAs, markers, tech support) can be most effectively used together. For example, additional staff coordinator positions to help manage large classrooms may make workload more manageable for faculty instructors.

Unit Response: Although this recommendation is directed to the broader institution, the Psychology department would be happy to contribute to institutional reviews of the resources needed to support large classroom teaching.

Dean of the Faculty of Science and Dean of the Faculty of Human and Social Sciences: We are supportive of an evidence-based review of best practices in the sector for supporting high quality instruction in high enrolment courses.

Recommendation #7: It appears that changes to student advising are already underway, but these changes should be reviewed for effectiveness and efficiency. The current system of dividing advising between first year and upper years does not appear to improve things substantially, and the current workflow of students submitting emails to a psychadvising email account is very inefficient. The department and dean's office should work together to better implement a system where staff can triage student requests, preferably through a non-email workflow such as online forms, then book appointments for students with faculty advisors only for those cases where their expertise is required. In most programs, the bulk of student advising does not require a PhD faculty member's expertise or knowledge and can be handled by staff at the department or faculty level. As part of student support, the university may explore bringing back student peer-to-peer mentoring. This peer-to-peer mentoring was reported to work very well during the pandemic and could potentially be reinstated as part of normal practice.

Unit Response: The Psychology department concurs with the recommendation to work with the Dean's office to implement changes to the academic advising process. Indeed, since the writing of the self-study report, there have been significant changes taking place in the advising process within Psychology and the Faculty of Science. These changes are guided by a model of advising much like that recommended by the reviewers - in which faculty members are asked to handle only those cases where their expertise is required, and the bulk of issues is handled by staff members in the Faculty of Science advising office. Accordingly, the number of course releases provided to the two faculty members responsible for academic advising (known as Department Undergraduate Officers, or DUOs) has been reduced as of July 1, 2023. Notably, a similar advising model is already in place in

Brantford, where the bulk of advising is handled by the Laurier Brantford academic advisors, and the PS Program Coordinator in the Faculty of Human and Social Sciences is called upon to weigh in for the more complex inquiries.

Although the Psychology department fully supports the proposed model of advising in principle, we note that there have been significant challenges in transitioning to this model within the Faculty of Science and we believe there are still problems to be overcome. At this point, there appears to be a discrepancy between the guiding model and the types of work that the DUOs are still being asked to perform. Despite the recent reduction in course releases for DUOs, the list of accountabilities for DUOs appears to be largely the same as in the past. These accountabilities still include many aspects of advising that do not require a PhD faculty member's expertise or knowledge – and in most cases could be handled by a staff advisor familiar with the Psychology curriculum. For example, accountabilities of the DUOs still include responding to registration queries (e.g., override requests), course selection questions, and checks on graduation requirements for all Psychology students except those in Year 1.

Responding to these sorts of queries is very time consuming and, we believe, is not aligned with the stated intentions of the new advising model. However, despite expressing our concerns, we have been informed that the DUOs are still expected to handle these sorts of queries. This approach is seen as inequitable by the current DUOs – whose compensation for advising has been reduced without a commensurate reduction in accountabilities – and will make it difficult to find faculty members in the Psychology Department willing to take on this important role. We recognize that there are always challenges and growing pains in transitioning to new processes, and we remain open to working with the FoS Dean's office over the coming year to improve the implementation of new advising processes, so that the accountabilities and workload of Psychology DUOs are better aligned with the model of advising advocated by the reviewers.

With regard to peer-to-peer mentoring, Laurier created the position of “first year peer academic coach” during the pandemic to assist new students in making the transition to the university environment. During the 2020/21 and 2021/22 academic years, third- and fourth-year students were assigned to support specific high-enrollment 100-level courses across the university, including PS101 and PS102. Of the 7 job duties associated with these coach positions, two were of a more generic nature that could plausibly assist the efforts of advising staff (e.g., “Act as peer mentor for new incoming students in the course/program”, and “Help students with navigating WLU systems, websites, technologies, etc., answer questions and guide students to the appropriate resources”). We would welcome reinstating these student coach positions if the university decided to offer this program again; the student coaches could perhaps even be assigned to key required courses not just at the 1st year level, but also at the 2nd and 3rd year level as well (e.g., PS101/102, PS295/296, PS394/395) so as to assist more junior students in navigating next steps in their academic journey, and perhaps alleviating pressure on advising staff.

Dean of the Faculty of Science and Dean of the Faculty of Human and Social Sciences: We are supportive of an advising model in which staff advisors do the bulk of academic advising, and faculty members are only involved in a limited number of clearly defined situations that requires their very specific disciplinary expertise. With the Faculty of Science, the transition to the centralized model was met with considerable resistance from beyond the Department of Psychology which severely impacted the transition plans. Regardless, the new model was fully implemented over the current Summer '23 term and we are committed to work with all to realize appropriate workloads (for staff and faculty) and efficient service to students.

Recommendation #8: Retirements and departures are very likely in the years ahead. As part of its planning process the department should identify which areas will need renewal in order to maintain graduate and undergraduate programs and/or build in future directions.

Unit Response: We agree with the expressed need to engage in planning for faculty renewal. The picture is complicated somewhat by the fact that faculty members and staff working at the Waterloo and Brantford campuses are part of different academic units (Faculty of Science and Faculty of Human and Social Sciences respectively), and as such answer to different Deans, whereas all personnel involved in Psychology programs at the Milton campus will answer to the Dean of Science.

We intend to initiate this type of planning process very soon (i.e., Fall 2023) at the Waterloo campus, as we are aware of at least two faculty members at Waterloo who are planning to retire at the end of the 2023-24 academic year. We will seek to identify areas to prioritize for faculty hiring to maintain our graduate and undergraduate programs and/or to build in future directions and will consider short term plans as well as longer term strategic directions for Psychology at Laurier and will take into consideration the faculty complement at the Waterloo, Brantford, and Milton campuses. The planning process for the Waterloo campus will begin with discussions of the Department Executive committee in Fall 2023. This committee includes faculty representatives from both the Waterloo and Brantford campuses and each of the graduate program areas, and each of the representatives on the committee will be asked for input from the area they represent. We will also provide opportunity for department-wide discussion during department meetings.

Dean of the Faculty of Science and Dean of the Faculty of Human and Social Sciences: Strategic planning for faculty renewal, aligned to subject areas of high enrolment demand, is warranted given the shift of student interest in Laurier programs. As Psychology represents one of largest programs in terms of student registrations, we are committed to ensuring the appropriate complement of faculty members to support its programs.

Dean of the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies: I support the strategic planning for faculty renewal that is to commence in Fall 2023, and this seems likewise timely given the review of program learning outcomes and course offerings.

Recommendation #9: The Faculty of Science should explore ways to backstop graduate student funding for students whose supervisor did not get a grant renewed. This may increase the willingness of faculty to take on graduate students during funding transitions and might increase the number of PhD students. Given recent inflation in cost of living and rent, the university and department should review its graduate student funding levels in relation to other Ontario programs.

Unit Response: We agree with the reviewers' recommendations regarding graduate student funding and believe these issues are best addressed jointly by the Faculty of Science, where all Master's and doctoral Psychology programs are housed, and the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies. Our understanding is that graduate student funding levels, and requirements for grad student support from research grants, are both issues that are currently being reviewed and discussed by these two faculties, and we are happy to contribute to the planning process where appropriate.

Dean of the Faculty of Science: Indeed, this is a very complex issue as, for example, even within the Department of Psychology, there are different graduate student funding practices at play. Regardless, the Faculty is committed to continue developing a funding model that is fair and equitable to all concerned (both faculty supervisors and students)

Dean of the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies: I agree with the Dean of the Faculty of Science. We do need to re-examine levels of funding that are provided to our graduate students given the increasing disparity between funding levels and cost-of-living. This is true of many graduate programs and across the sector. FGPS is likewise supportive of contributing to the development of appropriate funding models for our graduate students.

Recommendation #10: The department, faculty, and university, should explore ways to reinvigorate the sense of community in the department, including both campuses. This could include in-person social events, working retreats or other activities. This is a challenge that all universities and departments are facing, but it may be especially acute here given concerns about the dean's vision, multiple campuses, and the shift at the undergraduate level to a larger comprehensive university. Bringing people physically together again seems to be a critical way to recharge and reinvigorate faculty, staff, and students. It will be critical that part of this reinvigoration is to bring greater integration and communication between the parts of the department at the Brantford and Waterloo campuses.

Unit Response: We appreciate the reviewers' suggestion to explore ways to reinvigorate the sense of community in the department as well as the suggestion to engage in various in-person events. We will make efforts in the coming years, beginning 2023-2024, to host a variety of events that bring people together physically. Along these lines, we already returned in 2022-23 to in-person department meetings (although those unable to attend in person could join by zoom) that were quite well attended. Notably in Winter 2023 we also returned to an in-person version of our Hunsberger Memorial Lecture, an annual department-wide event that brings together faculty members, grad students and large numbers of undergraduates. Also, as mentioned above (Recommendation 1) as part of our curriculum review process we intend to hold a department-wide retreat that includes personnel from both the Waterloo and Brantford campuses, most likely in Spring 2024. In the years to come we will continue with these sorts of in-person events and activities and, consistent with the reviewers' suggestions, will seek to introduce additional in person gatherings (such as social events, additional working retreats, or other activities) that bring our people at both campuses together to foster a broader sense of community. Similarly, efforts are also being made at each campus to foster greater cohesion and cross-departmental connections among faculty, staff and students within each unit (e.g., monthly pizza lunch at the Brantford Campus, post-departmental meeting get-togethers at the Waterloo campus).

Dean of the Faculty of Science and Dean of the Faculty of Human and Social Sciences: In-person gatherings to support community building are essential, and in our multi-campus Psychology context, that means some events that include all personnel from the Waterloo and Brantford campuses should be held at the Waterloo campus, and some events should be held for all personnel on the Brantford campus. In the future, with a Psychology presence in Milton, it will be important to ensure that all three campuses play host at least once annually to all Psychology personnel.

Dean of the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies: I wholeheartedly agree with the Recommendation, and appreciate the steps that have already been made, or are planned, to follow this advice.

PROGRAM STRENGTHS

Dean of the Faculty of Science: The Psychology programs continue to be highly popular and combined are amongst the largest within the Faculty and University with respect to numbers of majors. This strength reflects the commitment and dedication of the faculty members delivering the programs, and the excellence of new appointees.

Dean of the Faculty of Human and Social Sciences: The Laurier Brantford Psychology program offers a solid suite of undergraduate courses to provide a well-rounded degree in Psychology, with the Forensic Psychology specialization serving as an important differentiator from the Waterloo campus' Psychology program. The addition of the BSc Psychology at Laurier Brantford, and the addition of the UU499 thesis course, are noteworthy recent efforts that will strengthen the program.

Dean of the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies: The MA, MSc and PhD programs are strong and span diverse areas, while offering both research-intensive and professional-leaning opportunities and pathways that are supported by research active faculty. As noted above, the undergraduate thesis course for the BSc Psychology program at the Brantford campus is an excellent development that will also serve as a gateway for graduate studies. Although outside my purview, I will add that the long-established Community Service-Learning opportunities offered at the undergraduate level are a significant strength.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT AND ENHANCEMENT

Dean of the Faculty of Science: Given the high number of both students enrolled and course offerings, the teaching load of the Department is demanding and challenging to manage. The Department needs to use this opportunity to review its course load and consider reducing it, particularly at the graduate level.

Dean of the Faculty of Human and Social Sciences: The Psychology program at Laurier Brantford needs to significantly grow its number of majors and grow the number of course registrations in part via Laurier Brantford "owned" online (OC) courses offered to students at the Waterloo campus and future Milton campus. Addition of a high demand stream / minor / option in Psychology at Laurier Brantford (but with multi-campus availability) may be an essential driver of enrolment growth. Campus-specific marketing of programs, which the institution has now committed to, should additionally help achieve higher enrolments.

Dean of the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies: I will echo the comments of the Dean of the Faculty of Science and encourage the Department to closely examine its graduate course offerings to lessen the workload on both faculty and graduate students, especially for the research-intensive pathways. As mentioned below, with respect to Recommendation #4, I encourage the department to develop an annual progress and activity report for Master's students to help ensure academic progression.

SIGNATURES

Dr. Heidi Northwood

October 2, 2023



APPROVAL DATES

Approved by Program Review Sub-Committee: December 7, 2023

Approved by Senate Academic Planning Committee: January 11, 2024

Submitted to Senate (for information): April 10, 2024

Implementation Report Due Date: April 10, 2026

RECOMMENDATIONS PRIORITIZED FOR IMPLEMENTATION AND ACTION PLAN

The following Implementation Plan was created by the Deans of the Faculties of Human and Social Sciences, Science, and Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies as part of the Decanal Response.

Recommendation to be Implemented	Responsibility for Implementation	Responsibility for Resourcing (if applicable)	Anticipated Completion Date
<p>Recommendation #1: The department (including members of the Waterloo and Brantford campuses) should engage in a full review of its program learning outcomes and course offerings to ensure that the degree level expectations are met efficiently and aligned with the department and university's strategic vision. Organizing this review around department-wide retreats or other similar gatherings may also serve to re-engage department members that feel disconnected and burned out from the pandemic.</p>	Department of Psychology	n/a	End of Summer 2024
<p>Recommendation #2: Psychology should review how students can find supervisors for honours theses and for the graduate programs. Information on this process may already be available but hard to find. Working to demystify the hidden curriculum aspect of finding a research supervisor will further the department and Laurier's EDI goals. The department may want to explore models where students apply to a general applicant pool and then have some form of matching process to be paired with suitable supervisors.</p>	Department of Psychology	n/a	End of Summer 2024
<p>Recommendation #3: There seems less need for a full-scale program-level review and course mapping for the graduate programs, but the current course offerings should be evaluated</p>	Department of Psychology	n/a	End of Summer 2024

to determine if some can be changed to milestones or similar designations.			
<p>Recommendation #4: The department should work to provide transparent and easily accessible information on its undergraduate and graduate programs, including program requirements and processes for advancing through programs. Currently, many students seem to be operating under insider, ad hoc systems for navigating the graduate student program, and graduate handbooks should be produced by the department rather than by the students themselves. Most of this information must exist somewhere but making it transparently accessible to reduce 'hidden curriculum' should be a priority.</p>	Department of Psychology	n/a	End of Summer 2024
<p>Recommendation #5: The University, the Faculties, and the Department should work together to ensure that required resources are directed to maintaining academic integrity across different forms of instruction. This will require combinations of TA support, IT support and physical space appropriate for effective assessment in a variety of methods.</p>	Department of Psychology, Faculty of Science, Laurier	Faculty of Science & Laurier	End of Summer 2024
<p>Recommendation #6: The university should review its capacity to support large classroom teaching, both in terms of human resources and in classroom and technology support. There appear to be unresolved growing pains following the pandemic-induced switch to remote teaching and subsequent increased offering of hybrid and other forms of remote teaching. This, along with larger enrolment without increased numbers of instructors poses a risk that the quality of programs and courses will be diminished. This review should include both a review of</p>	Laurier	Laurier	End of Summer 2024

<p>the physical and technological supports, as well as the human resources required. The workload required for instructors is complicated and impacted by a range of factors including enrolment (number of students in a classroom or lab), dealing with student queries/accommodations etc., handling technology, and ensuring integrity in academic assessments. Laurier and the department may be able to better maintain the high quality of instruction it is known for if there is careful consideration of how the different physical resources and human resources (instructors, TAs, markers, tech support) can be most effectively used together. For example, additional staff coordinator positions to help manage large classrooms may make workload more manageable for faculty instructors.</p>			
<p>Recommendation #7: It appears that changes to student advising are already underway, but these changes should be reviewed for effectiveness and efficiency. The current system of dividing advising between first year and upper years does not appear to improve things substantially, and the current workflow of students submitting emails to a psychadvising email account is very inefficient. The department and dean’s office should work together to better implement a system where staff can triage student requests, preferably through a non-email workflow such as online forms, then book appointments for students with faculty advisors only for those cases where their expertise is required. In most programs, the bulk of student advising does not require a PhD faculty member’s expertise or knowledge and can be handled by staff at the department or faculty level. As part of student support, the university may explore bringing back student peer-to-peer mentoring. This peer-to-peer mentoring</p>	<p>Department of Psychology and Faculty of Science</p>	<p>Faculty of Science, Laurier</p>	<p>End of Summer 2024</p>

<p>was reported to work very well during the pandemic and could potentially be reinstated as part of normal practice.</p>			
<p>Recommendation #8: Retirements and departures are very likely in the years ahead. As part of its planning process the department should identify which areas will need renewal in order to maintain graduate and undergraduate programs and/or build in future directions.</p>	<p>Department of Psychology</p>	<p>n/a</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>Recommendation #9: The Faculty of Science should explore ways to backstop graduate student funding for students whose supervisor did not get a grant renewed. This may increase the willingness of faculty to take on graduate students during funding transitions and might increase the number of PhD students. Given recent inflation in cost of living and rent, the university and department should review its graduate student funding levels in relation to other Ontario programs.</p>	<p>Department of Psychology and Faculty of Science</p>	<p>Department of Psychology</p>	<p>End of Summer 2024</p>
<p>Recommendation #10: The department, faculty, and university, should explore ways to reinvigorate the sense of community in the department, including both campuses. This could include in-person social events, working retreats or other activities. This is a challenge that all universities and departments are facing, but it may be especially acute here given concerns about the dean’s vision, multiple campuses, and the shift at the undergraduate level to a larger comprehensive university. Bringing people physically together again seems to be a critical way to recharge and reinvigorate faculty, staff, and students. It will be critical that part of this reinvigoration is to bring greater integration and</p>	<p>Department of Psychology and Faculty of Science</p>	<p>n/a</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>

communication between the parts of the department at the Brantford and Waterloo campuses.			
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