FINAL ASSESSMENT REPORT

PERIODIC PROGRAM REVIEW (PPR)
Bachelor of Arts
In Psychology
Faculty of Arts

In accordance with the Institutional Quality Assurance Process (IQAP), this final assessment report provides a synthesis of the external evaluation and the internal response and assessments of the undergraduate Psychology program. This report identifies the strengths of the program, together with opportunities for program improvements and enhancements, and it sets out and prioritizes the recommendations that have been selected for implementation.

This report also includes an Implementation Plan that identifies who will be responsible for approving the recommendations set out in the final assessment report; who will be responsible for providing any resources entailed by those recommendations; any changes in organization, policy, or governance that will be necessary to meet the recommendations, who will be responsible for leading those recommendations; and timelines for acting on and monitoring the implementation of those recommendations.

SUMMARY OF THE PERIODIC PROGRAM REVIEW OF PSYCHOLOGY PROGRAM

The Department of Psychology has a long-standing record of excellence in service of TMU's mandate and offers advanced education and training for students interested in psychological science. The department offers a wide and dynamic selection of professionally-related and liberal studies courses available to most programs at TMU University, including through the Chang School of Continuing Education. These courses cover both the established areas of the discipline such as developmental psychology, social psychology, cognitive psychology, sensation and perception, mental health, personality theory, gender and sexuality, and specialized and emerging areas of the discipline such as psychology and law, health psychology, community psychology, psychology of sport, drugs and human behaviour, environmental psychology, and stress and adjustment. Courses encompass traditional and contemporary psychological theory, research methodology, recent innovations, and critical thinking.

The Bachelor of Arts full-time program in Psychology explores why we think, feel, and behave the way we do. Drawing on a wide range of theoretical perspectives, major concepts, and research methods, psychology students explore the connection between mental health and brain functioning, memory, and decision-making, and the perception of sights, sounds, and other sensations. The field of psychology also explores issues such as lifespan development, the roles of exercise and diet in a healthy lifestyle, psychological disorders and their treatment, as well as gender, sexuality, culture, diversity and many more.

TMU's Psychology program shares a common one-year foundational "platform" within the Faculty of Arts. This innovative approach exposes students to a wide variety of course offerings and allows students considerable flexibility in terms of program transfer. Other "platform" programs currently

include Criminology, English, Environment and Urban Sustainability, Geographic Analysis, History, Philosophy, Politics and Governance, Language and Intercultural Relations, Sociology, and Undeclared Arts. In all of these programs, the first year offers two courses in a chosen discipline, two common competency courses (Academic Writing and Research and Critical Thinking), and a choice of introductory courses in Humanities, Social Sciences, and non-Arts disciplines. This platform approach allows students to explore a wide range of subjects and, if undecided as to which program best matches their interests and career goals, to explore each program area before making a final choice. Students who wish to change their initial choice of program can apply to move to one of the other programs in second year.

In their first year, students take two Introductory Psychology courses (PSY102 and PSY202). Each course covers approximately 8 different topics across the psychology spectrum, with the first half focused more specifically on the biological and cognitive aspects, and the second half on the social/developmental and abnormal aspects.

The second, third and fourth years of the program allow students to progressively deepen their understanding of psychology, with both required courses, and area-specific (e.g. developmental, social, neurological, and so on) options. Students entering their third year of studies can apply for a university exchange program, completing some of their courses abroad at partner institutions. Students entering
fourth-year with a strong Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) can apply to complete a research-based thesis, working one-on-one with a faculty member in their lab.

This program selects students on the basis of academic achievement/grades only. Additional non-academic requirements are not required for admission consideration.

Each year, the Department of Psychology receives a significant number of applications. For example, in 2006, we received 24.4 applications for every one student we admitted to the program. At its highest, in 2009, the Psychology department received 30.1 applications for every one student we admitted, and since then, we have averaged out at about 22.5 applications per student admitted (as of 2016). Since 2006, the Psychology Department has consistently maintained a much higher applicant-to-acceptance ratio than TMU and the Faculty of Arts (see Figure 1 or Table 1, Appendix I). This high ratio allows the Psychology department to accept only the highest quality students, which contributes to our high entering averages over the past decade. The student demand for the TMU Psychology program is strong and we expect this to continue.

This document comprises the Faculty of Arts (ARTS) Dean's response to the Peer Review Team (PRT) Report and the Program's response, in accordance with the directions of the 2020 Periodic Program Review (PPR) Manual and with Section 8.2 of Senate Policy 126, Periodic Program Review of Graduate and Undergraduate Programs. Due to the timeline for the completion of this cyclical review, the manual (and language) refers back to 2016, 2018, and 2019. The site visit by the external PRT for the Periodic Program Review was carried out between October 3rd and 4th, 2022. The Psychology program submitted a list of potential Peer Review Team (PRT) candidates to the Office of the Dean who then selected Dr. Leanne Stevens, University Teaching Fellow, Department of Psychology and Neuroscience, Dalhousie University, Dr. Naseem Al-Airdoos, Associate Professor, Department of Psychology, University of Guelph and Dr. Nancy Walton, Associate Dean, Yeates School of Graduate Studies, Associate Professor, Daphne Cockwell School of Nursing, TMU.
The PRT Report was received by the Dean's Office on November 1st 2022, and the Department's

response to the PRT Report was received by the Dean's Office on January 12th, 2023.

The PRT Report describes the Psychology BA program as being in a "strong position," noting both the high admission standards of the program and its continued ability to attract large numbers of applicants of the highest academic caliber. The entering average for students has consistently been over 80%, and in most years, it is closer to 90%. Importantly, the program successfully retains these students. At present, the program has approximately 950 full-time undergraduate students.

The Psychology BA program aims to develop students' transferable skills and to provide students with a comprehensive foundation in the various fields of the discipline. In particular, the program emphasizes the application of the science of psychology to real life situations in three central areas: cognition and neuroscience; developmental and social psychology; and clinical and health psychology. Program students report high levels of satisfaction, graduate at a high rate, and are generally successful at transitioning into degree-related careers following graduation.

The PRT Report offered the following 5 conclusive recommendations, and the Program has responded thoughtfully to each to generate their Implementation Plan along with the comments of the Dean's Response. The Dean's Office is in full support of the Department's responses to the PRT recommendations.

The Academic Standards Committee completed its assessment of the Psychology program on April 27th, 2023. The Committee indicated that a thorough, analytical and self-critical program review was conducted. The program provided a detailed plan for future growth and support for development.

The Academic Standards Committee recommends that the program continue, as well as provide a one-year follow-up report, as follows:

1. The mandated One-Year Follow-up Report be submitted by June 30, 2024 to include:
   a. A report to ASC with completed and reviewed Learning Outcomes;
   b. A plan to to engage with a deep and systematic process of curriculum renewal and details of work commenced;
   c. A plan documenting how the program will ensure compliance with the next program review cycle;
   d. A review and update of the submitted Implementation Plan.

Presented to Senate for Approval: **May 30th, 2023**

Start date of next Periodic Program Review: **2025-26**

SUMMARY OF THE REVIEWERS' RECOMMENDATIONS WITH THE PROGRAM'S AND DEAN'S RESPONSES

PRT Recommendation #1

Identify the strategic goals and priorities of the program, as a way to:
- optimize the clear strengths, extensive range of expertise and interests of faculty members who are active in the program;
- guide the process of curriculum renewal, by identifying areas for emphasis and enhancement;
- guide the plan for further development in terms of new course offerings; ● inform the hiring of faculty members and permanent administrative staff in a strategic way.

Response of the Dean of Arts

The Dean's Office is in agreement with the direction provided by the PRT in setting out a clear starting point for curriculum renewal. In addition to aligning the program's strategies and priorities with those set forth in the TMU 2020-2025 Academic Plan and the Faculty of Arts Priorities, the Department will want to consider other documents that make up the University's overall strategic vision, including the International Strategy and the Strategic Research Plan (Strategic Vision 2020-2030 (torontomu.ca). The Dean's Office encourages the Department to centre EDIJ within the process of identifying strategic goals and priorities for the program.

PRT Recommendation #2

Engage in curriculum renewal, with an aim to

a) review learning outcomes to identify areas for enhancement and focus, and simplify/collapse outcomes;

b) find ways to integrate more structure and specialization without detracting from the current flexibility that students appreciate;

c) examine prerequisite structures and scaffolding of courses across years of the program (in particular in years 2 and 3), to create more logical pathways to ensure students have prerequisite knowledge for more advanced courses;

d) continue to engage in work to infuse EDIJ systematically throughout all years of the program (having the opportunity and resources provided to engage with an external consultant to work with faculty members on integrating EDIJ

meaningfully in the curriculum would be a worthwhile investment);

e) identify opportunities to continue to integrate more experiential learning opportunities, in particular for students who do not complete independent research projects or the thesis, and engagement in research across the curriculum;

f) explore more strategic use of TAGAs as a means to potentially integrated more experiential learning opportunities;

g) provide additional training on the identification and transfer of program related skills to domains outside academia;

h) explore the possibility of more blended or fully online options to allow the program to continue to grow, while maintaining the diversity of the course offerings;

i) remove courses from the calendar that are outdated or not regularly offered; j) renumber courses to reflect logical pathways through the program;

k) create a longer-term plan for the development of new courses over time.

The PRT recommends that dedicated resources are explored (e.g., providing faculty members with protected, dedicated time through release from teaching and other service requirements) in order to lead curriculum renewal and move it forward in a timely way. Additional resources that could also be directed towards the ongoing work to continue to integrate EDIJ into the curriculum, as part of renewal, would be beneficial.

The Dean's Response : Many of the points covered in this recommendation are in line with the Department's development plan as articulated in Points 1, 2, 4, and 5 above. With regard to specific suggestions of the PRT Report that have not been addressed above, the Dean's Office notes:
● Suggestion 2b: The Department could explore how other departments in the Faculty of Arts help students informally specialize in areas of interest. For example, some programs group their courses on their website to make it easier for students to find courses that focus on similar topics.
● Suggestion 2c: The Dean's Office appreciates the thoughtful and cautious approach to revisiting the prerequisite structure detailed in the program's response to the PRT Report and encourages the Department to consult with Curriculum Advising when considering the impact of making such changes.
● Suggestion 2d: The Department may want to consider applying to the Centre for Learning and Teaching for funding to pay for the cost of an external consultant to support the integration of EDIJ into the curriculum. The Department is also encouraged to consult with the Dean's Advisor on Indigenous Education and the Dean's Advisor on Blackness and Black Diasporic Education. Furthermore, the Dean's Office offers curriculum development grants in the areas of Indigenous Studies and Black Studies which may be supportive.
● Suggestion 2e: Due to extreme budget cuts, the Dean's Office is unable to consider proposals for additional TA support.
● Suggestion 2g: In addition to the discussion in Development Plan Point 6 above, the Department may want to consider other models of experiential learning such as developing courses that are explicitly experiential. For example, SOC 494: Career Integration, a senior seminar course offered to Sociology students, specifically focuses on helping students think about the connections between their studies and careers (and includes a job shadow experience).
● Suggestion 2h: Discussions with the Chang School regarding more online options for students must take into consideration the digital learning strategy that is currently under development in the Office of the Vice-Provost Academic.
● Suggestion 2j: The Dean's Office recognizes the logistical difficulties that would be entailed in any attempt to renumber program courses. If the Department does decide to attempt to renumber their courses, such work should be done with the assistance of Curriculum Advising.
● Suggestion 2K: The Dean's Office supports the development of a long-term vision for new course development in line with the Department's plans to renew the curriculum. Principles of EDIJ should be part of this long-term vision.
In terms of the PRT suggestion that "dedicated resources are explored (e.g., providing faculty members with protected, dedicated time through release from teaching and other service requirements) in order to lead curriculum renewal and move it forward in a timely way", the Department is reminded that all programs are expected to review and strengthen curricular structures as a matter of standard practice and service obligations. As such, the Dean's Office is not in a position to offer additional course releases for this purpose.

PRT Recommendation #3

Plan a strategic approach to the hiring of new faculty members and administrative staff (including a review of administrative staff roles, in collaboration with HR), in order to:
- ensure areas of specialization and strength continue to be developed, over time;
- ensure that administrative staff are able to focus on the core responsibilities in their roles, that workload is manageable and that their roles are clearly defined and differentiated.

In the response to the PRT recommendations, the Department notes: "The program would also like to note that their ability to hire strategically would be enhanced if an adequate number of LTF faculty members were consistently granted each year, starting in Fall 2023".

The Dean states, as noted above, there is an enrolment growth agreement that addresses new faculty and administrative hires; however, the Department is, in fact, behind on enrolment growth as specified in the agreement. Requests for faculty hires beyond this agreement would need to be supported by strong rationales and would be considered alongside other department requests for hires.

The Dean's Office recognizes the recent attempts on the part of the Department to hire Indigenous and Black scholars and the successful recruitment efforts in the current cycle, and encourages the Department to continue to consider EDIJ while developing a strategic approach to hiring.

The Dean's Office also notes that the Office of the Vice-Provost Faculty Affairs has moved to an earlier time frame for advising on the allocation of Limited Term Faculty (LTFs). In the current academic year, LTF allocations were announced in December, which provides sufficient notice for advance planning.

The Department is reminded that under Article 4.6.A.1 of the Faculty Collective Agreement, there is no annual allocation of LTF appointments. The Collective Agreement specifies the conditions under which LTF may be hired: "Appointments to the Limited Term Faculty may be made to replace faculty members on extended leave, or to serve in a Department where there are specific Department workloads that do not require tenure-stream appointments." In addition, Article 4.6.C.1 of the Faculty Collective Agreement, stipulates that the "combined FTE total of appointments made under A. and B. above will not exceed 31.5% of the approved faculty complement (i.e., the total faculty FTE)." Requests for LTF must meet the criteria set out in the Collective Agreement and therefore cannot be consistently granted each year as their allocation is dependent on leaves in the academic department.

PRT Recommendation #4

Move the program from a B.A. to a B.A. Honours designation.

The Dean's Office supports the Department's plan to move from a B.A. to a B.A. Honours designation, particularly as the degree already functions as a de facto honours degree.

PRT Recommendation #5

Explore an intentional academic advising model, as a way to: ● formalize the academic advising roles that faculty members are already doing, through establishing, for example, formal roles of Faculty Advisors assigned to each year of the program.

Another consideration may be engaging high-impact advising practices (e.g., virtual information sessions that could be recorded and available to students) to build a set of resources for students seeking information and advice.

The Department's Response to the PRT recommendation notes that faculty members would need teaching releases to free up their time to do advising.

Response of the Dean of Arts

The Dean's Office supports measures that improve student advisement and is interested in hearing more about the possibility of recorded virtual information sessions. As advising is part of faculty members' service obligations, the rationale for providing a teaching release to support such a measure is unclear.

Summary

The faculty and administrative staff must be commended for their commitment to delivering a program that has done exceedingly well at attracting and retaining top quality students and faculty, and in building and supporting a research culture.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS AND IMPLEMENTATION PLAN: PSYCHOLOGY April 14, 2023

Recommendation 1: Identify the strategic goals and priorities of the Psychology program
Objectives: 1. optimize the clear strengths, extensive range of expertise and interests of faculty members who are active in the program; 2. guide the process of curriculum renewal, by identifying areas for emphasis and enhancement; 3. guide the plan for further development in terms of new course offerings; **4.** inform the hiring of faculty members and permanent administrative staff in a strategic way.
Implementation: ● As per the Dean's response, the department will ensure alignment with the TMU 2020-2025 Academic Plan and the Faculty of Arts Priorities, the University's International Strategy and the Strategic Research Plan (Strategic Vision 2020-2030 (torontomu.ca).
Timeline: Beginning Fall, 2023, ongoing
Responsibility for Leading Initiative and providing resources and approvals as needed: Program Director, Department, Chair

Recommendation 2: Engage in curriculum renewal
Objectives and Implementation: 1. review learning outcomes to identify areas for enhancement and focus, and simplify/collapse outcomes; 2. find ways to integrate more structure and specialization without detracting from the current flexibility that students appreciate;

3. examine prerequisite structures and scaffolding of courses across years of the program (in particular in years 2 and 3), to create more logical pathways to ensure students have prerequisite knowledge for more advanced courses;
4. continue to engage in work to infuse EDIJ systematically throughout all years of the program (having the opportunity and resources provided to engage with an external consultant to work with faculty members on integrating EDIJ meaningfully in the curriculum would be a worthwhile investment);
5. identify opportunities to continue to integrate more experiential learning opportunities, in particular for students who do not complete independent research projects or the thesis, and engagement in research across the curriculum;
6. explore more strategic use of TAGAs as a means to potentially integrated more experiential learning opportunities;
7. provide additional training on the identification and transfer of program related skills to domains outside academia;
8. explore the possibility of more blended or fully online options to allow the program to continue to grow, while maintaining the diversity of the course offerings;
9. remove courses from the calendar that are outdated or not regularly offered;
10. remove courses from the calendar that are outdated or not regularly offered;
11. renumber courses to reflect logical pathways through the program;
12. create a longer-term plan for the development of new courses over time.

Timeline: This is a lengthy process, with multiple stages, beginning in Fall, 2023 aiming for completion in 2025 or 2026 . Note that reviewers suggested that the person leading this initiative be given course release to facilitate this process.

Responsibility for Leading Initiative, and providing resources and approvals as needed: Program Director with support from UPA, Department and Chair, Psychology's Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Justice (EDIJ) Committee, Dean's office, Curriculum Advising, and PAC (once formed)

Recommendation 3: Plan a strategic approach to the hiring of new faculty members, LTF, and administrative staff (including a review of administrative staff roles, in collaboration with HR),

Objectives:
1. ensure areas of specialization and strength continue to be developed, over time;
2. ensure that administrative staff are able to focus on the core responsibilities in their roles, that workload is manageable and that their roles are clearly defined and differentiated

Implementation:
- The Dean has noted that LTF hiring is dictated by the Faculty Collective agreement, meaning their allocation cannot be guaranteed on a consistent basis.
- While she has further noted that plans to hire new faculty members and new administrative staff are currently on hold, this will still be a priority for the department as it plans its future, particularly given the doubling in size of our undergraduate enrollment.

Timeline: ongoing

Responsibility for Leading Initiative, and providing resources and approvals as needed: Department, Chair, Dean's office, UPO

Recommendation 4: Move the program from a B.A. to a B.A. Honours designation, particularly, as noted by the Response of the Dean of Arts, "the degree already functions as *a de facto* honours degree."

Implementation:
- Approval of draft Honours designation proposal at a Department Council meeting in Winter 2023.
- Proposal sent to Academic Standards committee (ASC), Senate (Winter, 2023).
- Submit calendar changes by Fall, 2023 for 2024-2025 implementation.

Timeline: Winter 2023 and Fall, 2023, designation beginning Fall, 2024.

Responsibility for Leading Initiative, and providing resources and approvals as needed: Program Directors, Department, Dean, ASC, Senate.

Recommendation 5: Explore an intentional academic advising model

Objective:
1. formalize the academic advising roles that faculty members are already doing, through establishing, for example, formal roles of Faculty Advisors assigned to each year of the program.

Implementation:
- Review the virtual resources that TMU already has for undergraduate students (e.g., Beginner's Guide to TMU Enrollment) as templates we can draw on; Explore the creation of virtual information sessions to build a set up resources for students seeking information and advice.
- Determine any budget and/or technological constraints

Timeline: May 2023 – September 2024

Responsibility for Leading Initiative, and providing resources and approvals as needed: Program Director with support from UPAs, Chair, TMU recruitment.

Recommendation #6: Form the Psychology Program Advisory Committee

Objective:
- Have in place an active and engaged Psychology Program Advisory Committee (PAC), to provide expert advice to the program on matters including curriculum, program review, and trends in the discipline, as per TMU policy #158

Timeline: May 2023-May 2024.

Responsibility for Leading Initiative, and providing resources and approvals as needed: Program Chair, Program Director, Dean's Office.

Recommendation #7: Establish the first psychology double-major option

Objective and Implementation:
- Add a double major with Criminology.

Timeline: Have designation in place by Fall, 2025

Responsibility for Leading Initiative, and providing resources and approvals as needed: Program Directors (Psychology and Criminology), Chair, Dean's Office.

Recommendation #8: Establish next PPR plan
Objective and Implementation: 1. Develop an up-to-date set of learning outcomes (last mapped in 2013); 2. Consult with TMU Curriculum Quality Assurance to as needed to ensure timeliness with the process for the next PPR.
Timeline: The Vice-Provost Academic revised the start date of the next Psychology PPR to 2025. Initial planning to begin Fall, 2023.
Responsibility for leading initiative: Program Director, Undergraduate Curriculum Committee, Department, UPA.