

## Department of Psychology's Response to APR Report

We are very pleased with the level of care, effort, and detail that the external site reviewers engaged in the creation of the APR report that was submitted for consideration on May 1, 2017. We are appreciative of the many laudatory comments, and the overall conclusions suggesting the high quality and national stature of the department. Below, by bulleted points, we offer the responses of the Department of Psychology and the Dean of Natural Sciences in CLAS to the report and the most salient suggestions outlined by the external site reviewers. This is not meant to be exhaustive in relation to site visitor comments and suggestions, but rather to highlight those that seem most critical to the department's well being across the next seven years.

- **Faculty Hiring.** Of course, every APR report addresses the need for new hiring, and this report is thankfully no different. In particular, the external reviewers accurately captured the substantial challenge our department faces with the imminent retirement of critical senior faculty members. In particular, **the report stresses the hiring of new faculty with emphases in cognitive science, neuroscience, and addiction research, possibly addressing developmental perspectives where that is sensible. Multiple needs will emerge across sub-specialties as well as strategic initiatives, and these were likewise noted by the reviewers.** The department for several years has had a behavioral genetics position in the hiring plan, and we will continue to advocate for this position. We agree with the suggested emphases in neuroscience, and biological bases of behavior in general, and will request the new Chair consider **expansion of the hiring plan to include greater attention to cognitive science, and further expertise in addiction research and evolutionary/cultural approaches to social behavior** (see next point). Certainly, there is room for new strategic initiatives in the Department, and the transition in leadership in the Department is a good opportunity for such considerations.
- In contrast to reviews of other specialty areas in the Department, the APR report only briefly mentions the Social Psychology area. We would contend that the discussion of the Social Psychology area did not do justice to its overall contribution and reputation. This area is highly distinctive and internationally recognized in evolutionary and cultural psychology, with emphases in interpersonal and intergroup relationships processes. Similar to other areas in the department, the Social area will also face challenges with upcoming retirements and critical senior faculty moving into more leadership roles within the University, including our new Chair. **Areas for strategic growth in Social Psychology include new faculty who use biological measures (genetics, hormones, social neuroscience) in their research, which would enhance the area's competitiveness for external funding. New hires with expertise in "big data" would position us to take advantage of the growing availability of large-scale social psychology data sets collected via the internet, including through social media. And new faculty who connect further the program's expertise in evolutionary/cultural psychology to health-focused interdisciplinary initiatives across campus (e.g., Center for Evolution and Medicine, Biodesign) would strengthen the Program, Department, and University in important ways.**

- As the Department faces an important leadership change, the site visitors encouraged the idea that the APR report be shared with the new Chair, with an emphasis on recommendations to **review departmental decision-making, mentoring of junior/associate-level faculty, and graduate student grievances processes.** We agree, and believe that sharing this document with the new Chair goes without saying. What emphasizes the new Chair may draw will likely be determined by that Chair, but all recommendations for change will be apparent. The entire faculty has also seen this report, and it will remain available to them.
- The department agrees with the site reviewers' suggestion that **a plan for development and training of younger faculty into leadership and service roles within our department is critical as we face future retirements.** There is a strong core group of associate professors and mid-career professors in the Department with outstanding potential, and plans should be identified to cultivate the next generation of leadership in the department. There are multiple transitions upcoming that will require new leadership, and it is not too early to begin to develop the pool of talent.
- The issue of engagement with broader University and CLAS initiatives was considered in the report. Although the Department feels that it is highly engaged with multiple interest groups, and has established a wealth of collaborative relationships, it seems clear that there remain certain areas in which more could be done, and that is clearly the view of the Dean. **In accordance with site visitor recommendations, the department will emphasize to the new Chair the importance of working closely with the Dean of Natural Sciences to create new and innovative opportunities for our department to collaborate with Biodesign and Sustainability initiatives, and other cross-college collaborations as seem appropriate for the strengths of this Department.**
- The site reviewers have astutely and accurately captured a constant tension in our teaching responsibilities: ensuring tenure track faculty are contributing to the undergraduate teaching mission while simultaneously maintaining the requirements of our graduate curriculum. The reviewers made three suggestions in this regard: 1) hire more teaching level faculty to teach undergraduate courses (particularly neuroscience); 2) have tenure track faculty offer advanced undergraduate courses and more laboratory-based training courses; and 3) consider reducing the requirements of the graduate curriculum. Faculty workload distribution is an issue the department has actively been addressing for the past several years and will continue to do so in the future. **We agree with site visitor recommendations about increasing the number of upper division courses taught by tenure track faculty. Both the undergraduate and graduate studies committees have been meeting over the past year to create strategies that will lead to solutions with respect to undergraduate and graduate curricula, which we hope will allow the department to better serve all of our students.** The different graduate program areas have also been discussing ways to reduce the size and complexity of the graduate curriculum. For example, all six programs require a research methods course and each taught an area-specific course to meet that requirement. Recently, however, all the program areas combined their research methods courses into a single graduate course in which the responsibility for instruction would be rotated and

shared across the areas. This should help reduce the burden of coverage in the graduate curriculum, and open opportunities for faculty to offer other needed courses.

- Support for graduate assistantships was identified as an issue for the department. This was challenged both in the number of positions available and with regard to whether the amounts of the stipends was competitive for the quality of the graduate program we have and the competition we face for the best students. We agree with external site reviewers that increased support for graduate assistantships is important to the future of our highly rated graduate programs, and for our ability to deliver outstanding instruction in our large and complex undergraduate curriculum. Not only would it allow us to develop more state-of-the-art lab-based and technologically sophisticated undergraduate courses, but would also add to the instructional training for our graduate students while simultaneously supporting their efforts at scholarly development. **We believe that our graduate program is under-funded with respect to graduate assistantship support, especially with respect to our peers at other institutions. This constrains our undergraduate curriculum in terms of the number and type of courses we can offer, and limits our ability to recruit as many top graduate students as we might.**
- One of the major challenges for the Department of Psychology is the proliferation of Psychology programs across campuses at ASU, and the variability in quality that ensues. **The Department and the Dean agree with the site reviewers' assessment that having multiple psychology degree programs at multiple campuses each staffed with its own faculty and varying curricular demands is confusing, and problematic for servicing the needs of students.** Further, there are branding issues, and we are concerned that our program is too often tarnished by problems that arise on other campuses but are nevertheless brought to our doorstep. We urge the University officers to consider ways to address these inter-campus program issues.
- The site visit report suggests that the **College and the Department work together to help the REACH Institute overcome institutional obstacles to further community collaboration.** To this end, multiple efforts have already begun, additional funding has been provided, and University Research level infrastructure supports have been facilitated. The department will also emphasize to the new Chair the need to explore ways that the department and REACH institute can be better integrated, and continue to collaborate on ways to assist the REACH Institute to overcome institutional barriers that hinder community collaborations and outreach.
- Although the APR Report indicates that we have developed a “national model of forward thinking curriculum” for our undergraduate program, **we agree with the site reviewers that undergraduate students need assistance during their first and second years to explore the diverse career options in psychology.** Our undergraduate studies curriculum has been addressing this issue over the past several years and will continue to do so. Recent changes we have made include developing a 200-level course on undergraduate careers in psychology and we bring in psychologists from the community to present on the type of setting and work they do. In addition, our advising team now attends the freshman student orientations and meets with students and their parents who

may be interested in psychology, and we usually have faculty attend these luncheons as well. The new Chair is already committing new leadership and financial resources to address issues of student retention and career development.

Again, the issues we have addressed above are not an exhaustive list of the issues raised, but represent what we feel are among the critical issues with which we need to contend across the next seven years, and as we face this transitional period of leadership in the department. We are gratified that the report is indicative of our strengths and stature in the national landscape of Departments of Psychology. Although there are clearly avenues for improvement and growth, the opportunities for the Department of Psychology at ASU to rise in its ranking and performance are clear. We are a Department of which ASU can be rightfully proud.