

**Program Review Memorandum of Understanding  
Psychology Department  
October, 2012**

1. Executive summary of the changes required for program improvement

Mission Statement:

The PLNU Department of Psychology endeavors to create students who are psychologically knowledgeable, emotionally intelligent, and morally engaged. We desire to provide a perspective on psychology informed by the Christian faith and a vision of Christian living informed by psychology. Our graduates will be equipped for lives of character devoted to serving the common good of humanity and the Christian community.

The process of going through Program Review gave the department the occasion to sharpen and focus our mission statement (listed above). Our ongoing commitment is to continue our core mission of building students who are Psychologically Knowledgeable, Emotionally Intelligent, and Morally Engaged. We appreciate the external program review committee who noted:

“The psychology program serves as a ‘prophetic voice’ within Christian psychology; its faculty assert psychology as a true liberal art, in that it helps students live better lives and increases their awareness of morality embedded both in culture and the Christian faith.”

In light of this, our specific objectives in the next five to seven years include bolstering the new Character, Morality, and Culture concentration so that incoming majors might consider it from the outset, and that all students regardless of concentration are exposed to its core themes and courses. Another specific objective is to increase our support for students who do not seek graduate training after graduation. Our mission of equipping students “for lives of character devoted to serving the common good of humanity and the Christian community” goes far beyond just the counseling office. We hope to support our psychology majors who want to change the world through business, education, law, ministry, or community development.

2. Commendations for those involved in the program review process

The Program Review Committee commends the Psychology Department for their re-alignment of departmental learning outcomes with the university mission and looks forward to seeing how their program will enhance and build upon PLNU’s efforts make mission fulfillment a central outcome of our students’ experience.

The Program Review Committee commends the Psychology Department for their quality emphasis on scholarship both for faculty and for students. It is clear that scholarly pursuits have been embedded in the departmental culture and we especially commend the department for their involvement and mentoring of their students in this capacity.

While the external review team report identified several areas for commendation, the Program Review Committee especially wanted to highlight as especially significant, one of those in this document and add our commendation to that of the external review team. In the words of the external team report,

*The psychology program has an extensive history of investing the personal, spiritual, and psychological development of students; this holistic approach to student development is historically ahead of its time and reflects a commitment to Christian higher education. The committee found this to be a clear strength of the program. Faculty avail themselves to their students for relationship building and modeling to students how to live as a Christian in the scientific arena.*

3. An action plan is made up of specific steps to improve the program along learning outcomes or elements of the program (e.g., faculty, curriculum, resources, etc.). The following recommendations emerged from the Psychology Program Review.

- a. Learning Outcomes: Changes in DLOs, CLOs, multi-level assessment plan and rubrics.
  - i. Now that Program Review is over, evaluation of DLOs are taking place. For example, a change to the DLO “Display an increase in growth and development for the purpose of serving others” has been revised to “Display an increase in personal growth and development for the purpose of serving others.” The DLO “Describe key components necessary for competitive graduate school applications” has been revised to “Understand careers in psychology” to better address the needs of students who do not plan to attend graduate school.  
**Time frame for completion: Summer, 2013**
  - ii. The external review committee encouraged that DLOs be reflected in each course’s syllabi to highlight how the DLO was being addressed. This was originally done, but since the DLO’s have been modified all syllabi will need to be revised as well.  
**Time frame for completion: Summer, 2013**
  - iii. The committee encouraged an item analysis of the current comprehensive exam. The department will put together a sub-committee to oversee the item analysis process as well as relevant modifications.  
**Time frame for completion: Summer, 2014**
  - iv. Review of the current Multi-Level Assessment Plan is taking place. For example, previously a single pre-post assessment comparing freshmen and seniors on the departmental comprehensive exam was previously conducted in 2008. The department is moving to an annual pre-post methodology. Initially, this will consist of our freshmen and seniors (cross-sectional data) and in three years this will allow us to conduct pre-post testing against individual student scores (longitudinal data). The department considers this a key and higher level of assessment to ensure student learning.  
**Time frame for completion: Summer, 2014**
  - v. Evaluation of the Multi-Level Assessment Plan is also taking place where signature assignments, along with respective rubrics, are being created to enhance the process.  
**Time frame for creation and evaluation: Summer, 2014**
  - vi. The Department Assistant’s job description has been modified to include assistance in coordinating assessment activities since these duties have significantly grown.

**Time frame for completion: COMPLETE**

b. Curriculum and pedagogy: Changes in majors, minors, courses, etc.

- i. The committee encouraged more focus on students who plan to immediately enter the workforce in lieu of pursuing graduate school. A modification to the DLO's has been done in response to this concern. Additionally, a sub-committee will be created to evaluate how to better meet the needs of these students.

**Time frame for evaluation and completion: May, 2015**

- ii. The review of our curriculum associated with program review led to an APC submission to create a psychology major capstone that will apply to all concentrations. The submission was approved by APC in Spring 2012 and is being taught in Fall 2012 as Psychology 420, *Pursuing Goodness: The Science of Moral Change*.

**Time frame for completion: COMPLETE**

- iii. The revision of our course requirements led to several changes including making PSY 321 Abnormal Psychology required of all majors, while making PSY350 Clinical and Research Assessment required only of our TCP Concentration. These changes better conforms to the practice of our competitors and requirements of graduate schools.

**Time frame for completion: COMPLETE**

- iv. We responded to the GE Committee's request to alter the structure of Psychology 101. The Psychology Department and GE Committee jointly proposed, and APC approved, that Psychology 101 Convocation would become a one unit FYE 100 Core Values Convocation led by the GE committee. Psychology 101 would continue to direct a three unit course composed of sections and small groups that would keep the focus on personal development and transition to college that currently exists.

**Time frame for completion: COMPLETE**

- v. We also made some small changes to our minor requirements to provide more course options for other majors.

**Time frame for completion: COMPLETE**

c. Interdisciplinary collaboration with other departments and or schools

- i. In Fall 2012, the School of Business asked for our agreement that they would cancel the Industrial Organizational Psychology major, and the Psychology Department concurred. This proposal will go before APC in 2013.

**Time frame for completion: Anticipated, Fall 2013**

- ii. With twelve service courses to other departments, the Psychology Department is highly collaborative and will continue those relationships.

**Time frame for completion: Ongoing**

d. Faculty: Identification of faculty needs or changes

- i. The PR report encourages the filling of the open seventh Psychology faculty position. In fall 2012 the Cabinet approved this position and a search is ongoing. The external review committee encouraged hiring someone with a primary focus on research instead of clinical psychology to balance the professional interests of the faculty.

**Time frame for completion: Ongoing**

e. Students: changes in student support services

- i. The PR notes the feedback by students that they have been deeply impacted by the faculty of the Psychology Department. We seek to continue that impact in the addition of our capstone, continued involvement with our student honor's society (PSI CHI), and the addition of our new departmental assistant (see below).

**Time frame for completion: Ongoing**

- f. Resources: Proposal for different or new resources
- i. In the Spring of 2012 the Psychology Department and Sociology Department requested splitting our jointly appointed Departmental Assistant. The Psychology Department was granted a full time departmental assistant in May 2012 and that hire has continued to improve our delivery of services to students and assessment activities. Having a full time person has already demonstrated an increase in student traffic and activity now that someone is always available to assist them.

**Time frame for completion: COMPLETE**

- ii. Aside from filling our open position, no further faculty staffing is requested at this point.

**Time frame for completion: N/A**

4. Provost Statement

a. Responding to the University mission

The Psychology department reviewed and revised its mission statement in light of the PLNU Mission and Vision in order to demonstrate a strong alignment between the two. The new mission statement is as follows:

The PLNU Department of Psychology endeavors to create students who are psychologically knowledgeable, emotionally intelligent, and morally engaged. We desire to provide a perspective on psychology informed by the Christian faith and a vision of Christian living informed by psychology. Our graduates will be equipped for lives of character devoted to serving the common good of humanity and the Christian community.

b. Program viability and sustainability

The Psychology Department is the 5<sup>th</sup> largest department and their major is on the rise again (153 students in 2011) after a five-year downward trend from a high of 194 students in 2002 to a low of 128 students in 2007. Given this rebounding trend along with the fact that the department carries a large GE and service load for other departments, the program is on solid footing and is likely to stay strong in its enrollment numbers. The Delaware data comparison for Psychology shows that their cost per student credit hour number is between the 63<sup>rd</sup> and 75<sup>th</sup> percentile of our Carnegie classification, which is within the range that we would expect and lower than the value for schools in the comparison group similar to ours.

c. Cost cutting requirements

The Psychology department is currently made up of 7 FT faculty who teach roughly 70% of their courses. This falls within the range of FT/PT faculty that seems financially responsible and strategically flexible in order to absorb any particular cyclical enrollment variations without affecting FT faculty jobs.

d. Efficiencies in course offerings needed

The Psychology department is currently reviewing their historical course offering patterns and will identify what, if any, changes might be warranted based on that analysis.

e. Discussion about resource allocation

There are no current recommendations for resource allocation in the Psychology Department. If any recommendations occur out of the PLNU Self-Study Prioritization process, we will discuss them in that context rather than in this Program Review.

g. Expected program improvements

The Psychology department has done a great job preparing students for graduate school and this has been a point of emphasis in their department for some time. This program review identified that many of the departmental majors do not go on to pursue graduate studies. The Psychology Department has committed to intentionally serving these students and their post graduation aspirations in addition to those going on to graduate school. The administration commends the department for recognizing the importance of this and looks forward to seeing the evidence in support of this move that will come from their assessment efforts.

As noted in the external review, the departmental assessment plan contained largely internal instruments and measures. The recommendation was that this could be improved through the identification and use of some key external instruments or measures. The administration agrees with this recommendation and looks forward to seeing how this is addressed in subsequent annual reports.

5. Resourcing and Institutional support plan

a. Any budget implications

There are no extra budget implications.

b. Capital improvements including facility, equipment and furniture

There are no extra facilities needed currently. We request ongoing funds for replacing worn furniture as needed. We request new carpet in Culbertson upstairs to replace the currently worn carpet and match the new carpet downstairs.

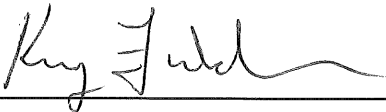
c. Additional faculty and staff resources

There are no additional faculty or staff resources requested beyond current staffing.

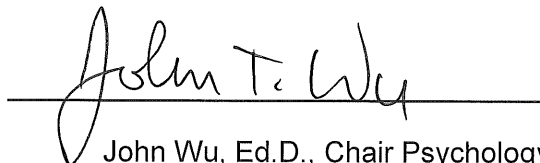
6. Signature page

The Provost and the Psychology Department mutually agree to pursue these recommendations for the Psychology Department. The Provost will provide material and administrative support for the actions taken as the result of the recommendations provided that the Psychology Department makes satisfactory annual progress on the initiatives. The Psychology Department will carry out these actions and submit an annual report of progress.

Signed:



Kerry Fulcher, Ph.D., Provost



John Wu, Ed.D., Chair Psychology