UCC Program Review Committee summary of review

Program – Department of Psychology

This program includes the following degrees, minors, and certificates:

- B.A. Psychology
- B.A. Psychology Prephysical Therapy
- Psychology minor
- M.S. Clinical Psychology
- M.S. Industrial Organizational Psychology
- M.S. Experimental Psychology
- Ph.D. Clinical Psychology
- Ph.D. Industrial Organizational Psychology
- Ph.D. Experimental Psychology

Recommendation

This program is found to be viable, see report for commendations, concerns, and recommendations.

Date of last review – AY 2008

Date of this review – February 2015

This review has been sent to program chair, he forwarded a comment, which is attached, from the Experimental Psychology faculty.

This review has been sent to program college dean. He raised a matter of accuracy, which has been corrected but not entirely to his satisfaction, and he has no further comment.

This review has been sent to graduate council. They have no concerns with this review.
Department of Psychology 7 Year Review
February 5-6, 2015

External Team Members: David Berry, Department of Psychology, University of Kentucky (Graduate program); Hajime Otani, Department of Psychology, Central Michigan University (Undergraduate program)

Internal Team Members: Bill Reader, Journalism, Athens Campus; Brian Hoyt, Management, Lancaster Campus; John Cotton, Mechanical Engineering, Athens Campus

I. Executive Summary
The Department of Psychology was reviewed on February 5th and 6th of 2014. The department offers two B.A. degrees as well as both clinically and experimentally oriented Ph.D. degrees. The department focuses its research focus into three areas: health psychology; social judgment and behavioral decision-making; and intervention design and outcome evaluation. Its research productivity and impact is impressive. Educationally, undergraduate teaching is effective and deliberate, utilizing support of Group II faculty. Overall, the review committee found the department to be very strong.

Commendations
1. Department leadership is very strong. Our study found members of the department community (graduate students, junior and senior faculty, and Groups I, II and IV) placed heavy emphasis on the accessibility and willingness of the department chair, Bruce Carlson to address concerns. The assistant chair for undergraduate studies, Susan Tice-Alicke has led strong efforts in both curriculum and the creation of an advising center to supplement faculty advising.
2. The statistics courses (PSY 2110/1110) provide quality education for both psychology majors and as a service course, while at the same time providing structured education of Ph.D. students for how to teach. The leadership of Craig McCarthy is viewed as key in this area.
3. The collaboration of research across labs, both at the faculty and graduate student levels, is an indicator of a strong program.
4. The clinical side of the Ph.D. program was very impressive.
5. The Psychology Training Clinic was seen to serve a vital role in not only training of students, but also for providing vital support to the campus and surrounding community.
6. The department’s high level of research funding, publication, and reputation is outstanding. An additional factor that stood out is the high number of grant submissions.
7. The facilities provided to faculty and graduate students were reported as adequate to continue with the department’s mission.

Concerns
1. The completion rate along the experimental track was less than 50%. While the department was aware of this, the acceptance of this fact, our committee found troubling.
2. The level of support for graduate student travel to both research meetings and clinical duties seemed low considering these are expected of students. This, when placed in the context of lower graduate stipends compared to benchmarked psychology programs reported in the self-study, is of concern.
3. The amount of Group I faculty members for a program of this size is low. This has led to delayed teaching of some graduate classes. The undergraduate program has compensated using exceptional Group II faculty for both teaching and administration. However, with different leadership and personnel, we are concerned about the sustainability.

**Recommendations**

1. The low completion rate of the experimental program should be examined in more detail. Reticence of some students to discuss the issue may make external reviewers and/or anonymous feedback advisable.
2. Solutions must be found to protect the Psychology Training Clinic in an RCM environment.
II. Program Review

1. General Program Summary:

The department offers two B.A. degrees (Psychology and Psychology Pre-Physical Therapy) and both clinical and experimental Ph.D.s. In recent years, the program enrolls 600-700 majors and roughly 70 graduate students. With service teaching included, the department delivered over 23,000 undergraduate student credit hours last year. Research activities are exceptionally strong focusing on three areas: health psychology; social judgment and behavioral decision-making; and intervention design and outcome evaluation.

2. Faculty Profile:

The department currently has 21 Group I, 5 Group II, and 1 instructional Group IV faculty. Group I faculty are split evenly across assistant, associate, and full professors. Searches are ongoing for two additional Group I faculty. This is a decrease from 25 faculty at the last review seven years ago, which has been largely compensated for by Group II faculty. Group I faculty are exceptionally productive in research and service to their disciplines.

3. Programmatic Practices:

A well-defined workload plan assigns faculty 30 credit hour equivalents per year. Firm measures of research and service productivity are communicated, and granted credit in course equivalents, allowing faculty to contribute differently in their most effective manner.

Junior faculties claim that expectations of promotion and tenure are clear and consistent. Standards are reported to be high, but that resources are excellent. Access to graduate students is supportive. Mentorship is provided and reported as effective.

Online and regional education were not well addressed in the self-study, and should be better addressed in future reviews.

4. Curriculum:

Undergraduate Program: The Psychology undergraduate program consists of two majors (Psychology major and psychology pre-physical therapy major) and one minor. Both majors require 35 credit hours; however, Psychology pre-physical therapy major requires additional courses that are needed for admissions to the Physical Therapy program. The minor requires 21 credit hours. The undergraduate curriculum is guided by the goals that were identified by the university strategic plan (Vision Ohio, 2006) as well as the learning objectives that were recommended by the Task Force of Undergraduate Psychology Major Competencies that was organized by the American Psychological Association (APA, 2002 – 2013). Based on these goals and objectives, psychology majors are required to take eight common courses (PSY101 General Psychology, PSY2110 Statistics, PSY2120 Research methods, PSY2210 Psychophysiology, PSY2310 Cognitive Psychology, PSY2410 Child and Adolescent Psychology,
PSY2510 Social Psychology, and PSY2710 Abnormal Psychology) plus thee elective courses at 3000 level. Of these, five courses (Psychophysiology, Cognitive, Child/Adolescent, Social, and Abnormal) form the core of the curriculum whereas Statistics and Research Students provide research foundation. For elective courses, there are a variety of courses that students can choose; however, to help student select the right courses for their career and graduate school goals (e.g., Clinical Psychology), the program created 18 different tracks, each with recommended courses. Because the curriculum is based on the APA recommended learning objectives, it represents the best practice of psychology undergraduate education. Further, having common courses all majors must take ensures common learning outcomes while elective courses providing flexibility to the curriculum.

The program noted that the goals and objects cannot be met by courses alone, and therefore, the program emphasizes educational experiences in and outside of the classroom. Based on the self-study document as well as interviews with Group I faculty, students have ample opportunities to gain additional experience outside of the classroom. To promote experience in research and services, the program allows students to earn course credits by participating in faculty labs (PSY3940) as well as working at agencies that provide psychological services (PSY3910). To make these experiences as educational as possible, the program has a contract that students as well as their supervisors must sign, which specifies expectations by the both sides. The program also has an honor’s program, which includes a thesis requirement, very much like a thesis requirement in a master’s program. According to the self-study document, each year about 100 students sign up for PSY3940 research experience. The number is much smaller for PSY3910 service experience. For various reasons, the number of students enrolling in the honor’s program has been very small (one or two students each year). Undergraduate students who present at a conference can receive funding. Further, graduate students who provide research supervision to undergraduate students and make conference presentations with these students receive additional funding for travel. Students also have the opportunity for presenting research at the university’s Student Research & Creative Activity Expo.

Graduate program: The Psychology Department hosts 2 Ph.D. programs, one in Clinical and another in Experimental. The clinical program has a curriculum that is largely mandated by the Committee on Accreditation within the American Psychological Association and is closely monitored by that organization. Thus, the coursework and other required experiences for this program are comparable to those of other doctoral-granting institutions. The curriculum for the Experimental Doctoral Training Program is, by necessity, somewhat different for each of the 4 areas. However, the curriculum was viewed as comparable to those of other Experimental Psychology programs.

Each program admits approximately 8 new graduate students each year, which appears to be an appropriate number for the faculty. The quality of the graduate students appeared to be quite good for both programs. One notable difference however was the Ph.D. completion rate, which was described in the self-study as 45% for the Experimental Program and 77% in the Clinical Program. There did not appear to be any systematic effort by the former program to address the high attrition rates. There was a modest level of diversity in the Experimental Program students, and somewhat more in the Clinical Program.

Other points:
- Research supervision unevenly distributed across faculty.
Survey of alumni suggested high satisfaction with training.

Same survey indicates dissatisfaction with mentoring by experimental program faculty. In contrast, most clinical graduates who completed the survey were satisfied with their advising.

Experimental probably needs more faculty to offer graduate courses at regular intervals.

Reconsideration of the role and form of the comprehensive examination should be considered. Although it does not necessarily rise to the level of academic hazing, it does not appear to further graduate student development in its present format.

Teaching certificate for graduate students is seen as important and useful initiative.

Self-Study documents that stipends are not competitive with benchmark programs.

Self-Study indicates that the majority of doctoral graduates obtained employment consistent with their training.

5. Teaching:

Undergraduate Program: The undergraduate program has resources and distribution of faculty that is more than sufficient to support Psychology majors. The department utilizes Group I tenured faculty, Group I tenure track faculty, Group II, and Graduate students (TA, GA, and Group III part time instructors) to deliver high quality courses for Psychology majors and as a service to other departments on campus. Pedagogical practices are intentional (planned and executed) effective as measured by formal assessment tools such as student evaluations, faculty in class observations, faculty collaboration on standardized learning modules or full courses. There is evidence of strong linkage between program and course learning objectives, class structure and delivery, and learning outcome assessment. There is strong continuity between the department self-study (department perspective on undergraduate teaching effectiveness), review team interviews, and program structure. The department provides high quality curriculum and delivery to attract and engage Psychology majors. In addition, the department provides exceptional support for non-majors to be successful in home departments. The department’s efforts and expertise provide students with opportunities to be very successful in the future academic pursuits (graduate school) or employment after completion of the undergraduate program.

One particular teaching highlight that the Psychology Department uses to deliver core content to majors and students outside the department is centered in the cluster of statistical analysis courses (PSY 1110 Elementary Statistics, PSY 2110 Statistics for the Behavioral, and PSY 3250 Research Methods). This cluster of statistics classes is a fundamental skill set that all Psychology majors must develop competencies for success in the applied positions in the field at graduation or in graduate school. The cluster of statistical classes is delivered to a high number of students in small and large sections and taught by a group of faculty and graduate instructors. Central to the success of this cluster is the use of a “Master Teacher” model. Important components of this model include course design based on desired student learning outcomes, standardizing of content and delivery, assessment, and faculty or instructor training/mentoring collaboration. Course design focuses on learning outcomes for psychology majors and non-majors in data gathering, data analysis, interpretation of data, use of analysis software (SPSS), and application opportunities/experience using team and individual project work. Course design is aligned with APA guidelines. The course is standardized across all sections including syllabus, exams, and approved database of problems for assignments. The consistency of the delivery of each section is established and maintained using a central teaching coordinator (full time GII) who collaborates with GI
faculty and meets individually or in groups with graduate students teaching sections. Mentoring activities address course management, class management, and classroom platform skills improvements. In addition to the faculty based collaboration and course structure the statistics cluster provides a Peer Tutoring Lab with undergraduates who have completed the statistics and research methods sequence to help students in PSY 1110 and PSY 2110. The Peer Tutoring Lab provides assistance on homework, project work, and SPSS applications.

- The number of sections delivered each semester include one mega section (400-500 students), 2 large section (75-100 students), and 13-15 “regular sections” with 30-35 students.
- Faculty rank teaching the course as part of team include tenured, tenure track, Group II dedicated instructional, Advanced Graduate Students as part time instructors, Graduate students as instructors in training, and Teaching Assistants as facilitators.

The upper division courses are delivered by Group I primarily. Student course evaluations and department level teaching evaluations depict a high level of quality in delivery and in meeting learning outcomes.

Teaching effectiveness is evaluated by annual committees that review student course evaluations, course materials, and classroom observations. Non-tenured Group I tenure track faculty are also evaluated by the department P&T committee. Faculty individually can use resources outside of the department (i.e. Center for Teaching Excellence and Arts and Sciences teaching workshops). Teaching Assistants, Graduate Assistants, and advanced graduate students as Part Time instructors receive teaching training with completion of teaching seminar, mentoring, and weekly discussions and class planning with mentor.

Establishing a balance for developing research competencies and career based competencies is addressed with course content and research project work in the required PSY 2110 statistics course and the PSY 1110 Optimizing the Psychology major (freshmen learning community course).

Graduate program: The department's commitment to teaching excellence at the undergraduate level is paralleled at the graduate level. Students in both the clinical and experimental divisions seemed to have high regard for the quality of instruction, which reinforces the relatively high teaching scores department-wide mentioned in the self-study. The impressive number of teaching awards conferred upon faculty further reinforces the excellence of graduate-level courses, as well as the strength of the graduate curricula.

Probationary faculty and graduate-student instructors receive very good mentorship with regard to teaching quality. Of particular note is the department's emphasis on preparing graduate students for careers in teaching as well as research. Senior faculty lead by example by excelling in teaching at both the undergraduate and graduate levels.

Beyond the classroom, the graduate-teaching mission of the department is a bit bifurcated. Advising evaluations, evidence of collaboration with faculty and peers, and degree-completion rates are factors to consider. Although the clinical program seems to be functioning at a high level (we would say "excellent" and "impressive"), the experimental division appears to have had some challenges during the review period. The survey of graduates since 2007 showed very high levels of satisfaction among clinical graduates, but quite low levels of satisfaction within the experimental division, with 58% satisfied with
mentoring and just 42% satisfied with advising. Correlated with the relatively low completion rate in the
experimental program (just 40% in the most recent years, per the self-study), the low satisfaction rates
provide cause for concern. The experimental faculty are clearly aware of and expressed some concern
about those rates, but seemed too quick and too inconsistent in trying to rationalize the self-study findings
and accept them as normalized. This review committee recognizes there are some mitigating factors in
play, but also recommend that the department undertake a more rigorous and formalized investigation
into the issues, and take a more deliberate, structured approach toward addressing those concerns before
the next review period.

Beyond the issues of advising/mentoring and completion rates, the experimental division does seem to
have a very good success rate in preparing graduate students for careers in collegiate teaching and/or
research.

6. Research (if applicable):

The clinical area faculty are exceptionally productive researchers. In terms of both quantity per faculty
member as well as quality of outlets. Another area where the clinical faculty excel is in grant submissions.
The self-study documents the high and consistent level of grant submissions by these faculty. Finally, a
significant percentage of these grant proposals are funded, resulting in the highest level of external
support in the College. Another notable characteristic of the research programs of clinical faculty is the
high level of coauthorships with graduate students on publications and conference presentations. In many
cases, data collection projects are integrated with clinical activities in the community, a commendable
example of town-gown integration.

The faculty in the Experimental area also show impressively high research productivity. In term of
publications, during this review period, they published 149 journal articles, 5 books, and 44 book
chapters, averaging 2.6 publication per faculty a year. These publications are of high quality. In terms of
grant activities, they submitted 46 grant applications and of these, 5 were funded (Note: Table 17, p. 25 of
the Department summary shows three). The amount of external funding was $326,889 (based on Table
17 on p. 25).

Other points:
- Research foci areas have succeeded in facilitating collaborations between experimental and
  clinical faculty, a relatively rare occurrence in benchmark programs.
- New faculty hires have impressive credentials and potential.
- Flexible work-load policy well-operationalized and allows research-intensive faculty to trade off
  teaching loads.
- More funds to support graduate student research projects as well as travel to present at scientific
  conferences would be extremely helpful to their productivity.
- Faculty service as journal editors and associate editors is impressive.
- Research facilities are modern and excellent.

7. Students:
Undergraduate program: Unfortunately, no undergraduate students appeared at the scheduled time, so the following information lacked student input. The undergraduate program in Psychology demonstrates organizational structure (objectives, plans, execution, and assessment) to deliver high quality curriculum/content to prepare undergraduate students with academic and practical background to pursue discipline-related careers or graduate work following graduation.

Student advising is approached using a collaborative approach between full time Group I tenured and tenure track faculty, Group II full time teaching faculty, and a dedicated Advising Center staffed for academic and career advising services. This approach provides maximum coverage for student advising and optimizes advisor expertise in scheduling, career, and academic planning and issues.

- Major advising is conducted with Group I tenure track and tenured faculty (approximately 35-40 advisees per faculty member), Group II assignment of advisees (new in 2014/15 and averaging 10 per GII faculty member), and the Advising Center (approximately 500 walk in visits per year and 1000 advising question contacts (e-mail).
- Advising effectiveness is measured by # of major participants in advising support, advising survey, and indirect measures related to retention and post undergraduate placement (employment or graduate school).
- The Advising Center has prepared 18 advising tracks for align course work and specific careers in psychology and related fields
- The Advising Center schedules (or aligns with university events) advising events including; Career Paths for Psychology Majors workshop, DARS fest (how to read and use the OU transcript), and a Fieldwork and Research Fair
- The Advising Center provides career advice including assistance in applying to graduate school and preparation for careers after undergraduate completion. Workshops include interview preparation, application preparation, graduate school fair, portfolio documentation preparation.
- Probationary students are required to meet directly with Advising Center staff who assess academic difficulties, identify university resources (i.e. writing lab), develop a improvement plan, and assist in course scheduling as related to new plan.
- Student Learning objectives were identified with 10 outcome areas and aggregated in knowledge growth (Knowledge Base of Psychology; Values in Psychology; Sociocultural and International Awareness), comprehension development (Information and Technological Literacy; Communication Skills; Personal Development; and Career Planning and Development), Application skills (Research Methods in Psychology and Application of Psychology), and Analysis skills (Critical Thinking Skills in Psychology).
- Student learning assessment is based on course evaluation data, graduating senior surveys, one year post graduation survey, and thorough course examination and course improvement as related to stated department learning objectives (noted above). Department objectives are aligned with American Psychological Association guidelines and then directly linked to course learning objectives and specific course/assignment assessment tools (assignments, exams, projects, analysis outputs, etc.)
- Psychology major profile characteristics – There are no significant concerns with the demographics and most characteristics that are being tracked are relatively consistent.
  - ACT scores for incoming freshmen 23.9 composite as compared to 24 for the university average and class rank was at the 69.9 percentile (68.5 for university).
The number of majors is just under 700 over the course of this self-study period. Cohort size changes as % lost is at the highest between first and second year with the % reduced in each successive year reflecting larger #'s of students leaving the major than coming in between first and second year and stronger retention from 2nd to 3rd and 3rd to 4th.

Majors are approximately 70% female with almost 20% of majors defined as non-white. The largest increase in diversity by race is 4.6% to 7.4% for black students.

Retention rates for first year majors are 75% as compared to 77% for all other Arts and Sciences majors.

Average time to degree average 4.2-4.3 years as compared to 4.2-4.4 for all other Arts and Sciences majors.

Approximately 50% of undergraduates continue on to graduate school within the first post undergraduate completion.

Of those majors entering the workplace after graduation 63% are employed within 8 months.

Graduate program: The department clearly is able to attract graduate students with high levels of aptitude. It makes considerable efforts to increase the diversity of its graduate student body, but clearly faces the same hurdles as all other departments at Ohio University owing to its rural location and limitations of the local culture. That said, the most recently assessed cohorts have racial/ethnic diversity of just above 15%, and women make up a strong majority of the graduate student body.

Students in the department benefit from strong teaching, adequate to excellent advising and mentorship, excellent research and clinical facilities, and a collegial, collaborative culture that is facilitated by departmental leaders, the faculty and staff, and students who are approaching graduation.

A concern among students and faculty relate to financial support for graduate students, as base stipends are relatively low compared to similar programs, travel support is not reflective of modern costs of attending conferences and/or commuting to training placements beyond Athens County, and administratively tedious (and time consuming) application procedures for relatively small grants from elsewhere at the university. The department, in collaboration with the college administration and the graduate college, may need to find ways to increase base stipends, increase travel allowances, and streamline application procedures for additional funds.

8. Alumni Profile:

Undergraduate program: Graduates of the Psychology Department are able to move into discipline – related careers or pursue further academic work at the graduate level

- The % of Psychology majors graduating in 4 years is approximately 45%, within 5 years approximately 55%, and within 6 years is approximately 60%.
- Based on the university’s Career and Further Education Study 63% of Psychology majors will have first job within 8 months of graduation
- Of those graduates employed only 53% were completely satisfied with the nature of that employment (latest 2010).
Senior exit surveys report 81%-97% overall satisfaction with the educational experience in the Psychology Department

Senior exit surveys report between 62%-83% very good or excellent quality of instruction

Graduate program: According to the self-study, the 11 Experimental Graduates who responded to the alumni survey included 45% in tenure-track academic positions, and 45% apparently in business settings.

The 47 clinical alumni appeared to have 13% in post doctoral training 21% in academic positions, 47% apparently in clinical service delivery, and the remainder in other settings.

9. Adequacy of Resources:

The department's facilities are good to excellent. Faculty, staff, and graduate students all have offices within the same building and in reasonably close proximity to teaching, conference, and research facilities. Faculty and students alike seemed very satisfied with the facilities provided to the department.

Of particular note is the department's professional training and practice clinic. This obviously is necessary to support a clinical Ph.D. program, but at Ohio University, the department's clinic provides a high level of service to the entire campus community and the broader community of Athens and adjoining counties. Members of this review committee were taken aback, therefore, that the dean seemed to suggest that the clinic model may be "obsolete" and that the clinic's future is not certain ("It's not viable," he commented). Our meeting with the dean was relatively brief, so we were not able to press the matter to get a clearer idea as to the dean's long-term designs for the clinic. (Since the draft of this report, the dean has claimed the above comments were misunderstood, and addressed general psychological clinical training, and not the clinic at OU. The committee welcomes specific clarification of his views in his response.) The clinic is very clearly an essential component of the department's excellent graduate program.

10. Commendations:

1. Department leadership is very strong. Our study found members of the department community (graduate students, junior and senior faculty, and Groups I, II and IV) placed heavy emphasis on the accessibility and willingness of the department chair, Bruce Carlson to address concerns. The assistant chair for undergraduate studies, Susan Tice-Alicke has led strong efforts in both curriculum and the creation of an advising center to supplement faculty advising.

2. The statistics courses (PSY 2110/1110) provide quality education for both psychology majors and as a service course, while at the same time providing structured education of Ph.D. students for how to teach. The leadership of Craig McCarthy is viewed as key in this area.

3. The collaboration of research across labs, both at the faculty and graduate student levels, is an indicator of a strong program.

4. The clinical side of the Ph.D. program was very impressive.

5. The Psychology Training Clinic was seen to serve a vital role in not only training of students, but also for providing vital support to the campus and surrounding community.

6. The department’s high level of research funding, publication, and reputation is outstanding. An additional factor that stood out is the high number of grant submissions.
7. The facilities provided to faculty and graduate students were reported as adequate to continue with the department’s mission.

11. Concerns:

1. The completion rate along the experimental track was less than 50%. While the department was aware of this, the acceptance of this our committee found troubling.
2. The level of support for graduate student travel to both research meetings and clinical duties seemed low considering these are expected of students. This, when placed in the context of lower graduate stipends compared to benchmarked psychology programs reported in the self-study, is of concern.
3. The amount of Group I faculty members for a program of this size is low. This has led to delayed teaching of some graduate classes. The undergraduate program has compensated using exceptional Group II faculty for both teaching and administration. However, with different leadership and personnel, we are concerned about the sustainability.

12. Recommendations:

1. The low completion rate of the experimental program should be examined in more detail. Reticence of some students to discuss the issue may make external reviewers and/or anonymous feedback advisable.
2. Solutions must be found to protect the Psychology Training Clinic in an RCM environment.
III. External Review Report

External Review of Graduate Program In Psychology at the Ohio University

External Reviewer: David Berry, Ph.D., University of Kentucky

OVERVIEW
The Department of Psychology at Ohio University offers doctoral training in two areas: Clinical and Experimental Psychology. Facilities are impressive. Thanks to a well-articulated flexible workload model, talented teachers have higher instructional efforts, whereas vigorous researchers devote more effort to conducting and disseminating research as well as mentoring graduate students. In both programs, faculty accomplishments are generally impressive, in terms of research productivity, service to the University, profession and community and, particularly in the case of the clinical program, sizeable extramural grant funding. The graduate curriculum in both areas is well-thought out, and prepares graduates for a variety of careers. Both programs attract strong graduate students, although the completion rate for experimental students is substantially lower than that for clinical students.

GOALS AND CURRICULUM
The clinical program seeks to train graduates to function as “scientist-practitioners” in the classic Boulder Model. To this end, the curriculum is heavily constrained by requirements of the Committee on Accreditation of the American Psychological Association. Consistent with the program’s model, it appears that clinical graduates serve in a wide variety of settings, including academic, medical centers, and mental health delivery organizations. One issue the clinical program may need to address is the mean time to completion of degree, which in the self-study was stated to be 7 years, almost one year longer than the mean from the previous review (6.1 years).

The experimental program faces a more challenging task in terms of curriculum as it must address training in 4 clusters: Cognitive, Social, Health and Industrial/Organizational Psychology (I/O). However, there is a core of foundation classes shared across all areas prior to developing more specialized research expertise within the student’s chosen area. Although there is a low completion rate for Experimental students (45%), and they also take an average of 7 years to degree, a substantial proportion of those graduating obtain tenure-track positions in academics.

FACULTY
As previously noted, the faculty in both training areas are quite impressive and largely have active research programs. This is a noteworthy achievement given the reported problems with finding employment for spouses in a small town environment and occasional difficulties with adjusting to such an environment. Faculty were particularly pleased with departmental leadership and satisfied with their graduate student bodies. As noted in the self-study, Psychology Group I faculty lines are significantly less than in past periods, despite an increase in undergraduate teaching responsibilities. Nevertheless, the department was successful in recruiting several promising young faculty over the last few years. It should also be noted that if the number of faculty within each Experimental area falls below 3, it will be challenging to provide instruction and research mentoring to their graduate students.
STUDENTS
In recent years, both programs have attracted substantial numbers of applicants, with favorable selection ratios and reasonable acceptance rates. Although clinical programs typically have a significant edge over experimental programs in GRE and GPA credentials, this difference has been closing for the programs at Ohio University. Overall, both graduate programs have strong student bodies.

Separate group meetings were held with experimental (N=16) and clinical (N=30) graduate students. In general, both groups were satisfied with their training experiences. However, in the experimental group, low stipends, lack of affordable health and dental insurance, meager support for travel to research conferences and limits on working outside their assistantships were concerns. One student commented “finances are on my mind all the time.” Several students complained that the Comprehensive Examinations were, in practice, a significant roadblock to timely completion of their training. Some suggested substituting a “Psychological Bulletin” level review paper for the exams, or exempting those with a high cumulative GPA from this requirement.

Clinical students shared concerns with low stipends, limited support for conference presentations, the expenses of having to travel to placements outside of Athens, and the perceived barrier to timely completion of the Comprehensive Examinations. Clinical students were extremely positive about the Training Clinic, which provides strong clinical training as well as the opportunity to contribute to the well-being of overflow clients from the Counseling Center and offers specialty psychological assessments (ADHD, LD) which would otherwise be entirely unavailable in the Athens community. The Training Clinic also provides important resources from the standpoint of the earlier noted APA accreditation process. Clinical students were extremely positive about their research and academic mentoring in the program.

GRADUATES
As noted earlier, there is a discrepancy between the programs in doctoral completion rates, with 45% completing the experimental program over the previous 7 years and 77% completing the clinical program. The experimental program places a higher percentage of its graduates in academic settings whereas the clinical program places more graduates in practice organizations, as would be expected. One anomaly in the report on survey of graduates was low satisfaction with advising/mentoring in the experimental program. Overall, job placements for graduates of both programs are very good.

SUMMARY
Both doctoral training programs in the Department of Psychology at Ohio University have excellent faculty, up to date curriculums, strong graduate students and respectable job placements for graduates.

SUGGESTIONS FOR STRENGTHENING GRADUATE PROGRAMS
1. Increasing Group I faculty lines, particularly in Experimental areas with few faculty.
2. Increasing graduate stipends, travel support, and offer affordable health and dental insurance.
3. Consider remodeling the Comprehensive Examinations so that they produce products that enhance the students’ careers and function less as the barrier to timely completion that current students perceive them to be.
4. Develop strategies to decrease time to completion of the degree, which at a mean of 7 years is higher than at benchmark institutions.

5. Determine the underlying causes of the low completion rate in the Experimental program and devise strategies to increase it.
Overview of the Program

The Department of Psychology at the Ohio University is a department in a large state university with extensive research focus. In fact, the Ohio University is one of five universities in Ohio that are rated as “research-extensive” by the Carnegie foundation. The Department consists of two nationally competitive graduate programs (Experimental and Clinical Psychology) and a large undergraduate program. The Department is located in the Porter Hall, which underwent several renovations in the past with the most recent one in 2007 to add a wing section. According to the self-study document, the building provides adequate space for both teaching and research, including space for two computer labs, a clinic with treatment rooms, rooms for the Advising Center, and offices for faculty and graduate students, in addition to classrooms and faculty labs.

Faculty are divided into several categories: tenure/tenure track faculty (Group I), full time teaching faculty with multi-year contracts (Group II), part-time faculty (Group III), and visiting instructional faculty (Group IV). During the 2013-2014 school year, the number of Group I faculty was 21, and the number of Group II faculty was five. The number of Group I faculty has declined over the years: During the 1998-1999 year, there were 28 Group I faculty, and during the last review cycle, there were 25 Group I faculty. However, in 2014, a new faculty member was hired in Group I, and searches are currently underway to fill two other positions in this group. The workload of Group I faculty includes teaching as well as research whereas the workload of Group II faculty is entirely devoted to teaching. Group I faculty shows a high level of research productivity. During this review period, the number of publications per faculty averaged over three a year, and the amount of external funding reached 2.8 million dollars in 2013-2014, the highest ever. Further, Group I faculty have been professionally active with every faculty member filling critical roles in their professions. The teaching load of Group I faculty is variable with adjustment being made based on other activities (e.g., supervising theses and dissertations) that are considered teaching equivalent. However, almost all faculty members in this group are assigned a 2-1 or 2-2 teaching load, which is divided into teaching graduate and undergraduate courses. Group II/IV faculty are assigned a 4-4 teaching load, and their teaching is done exclusively at the undergraduate level. Group III faculty are contracted by courses. In addition, graduate students teach some undergraduate courses as a part of their assistantship or in case that they are out of assistantship, as a part time faculty. According to the self-study document, the share of undergraduate students taught by full time faculty (Group I, II, and IV) has declined in recent years, from 93% in the fall semester of 2006 to 61% in the fall semester of 2012. During the same period, the share of undergraduate students taught by graduate students increased from 17% to 39% (see p. 21 of the Undergraduate self-study document). The Department has been committed to staff courses with full time faculty as much as possible. In fact, from the fall of 2006 to the fall of 2013, the share of undergraduate students taught by Group I faculty declined by 18% but the decline was compensated by an increase (12%) in the share of undergraduate student taught by Group II faculty (also full time). However, using graduate students to cover undergraduate courses is unavoidable due to the popularity of psychology among undergraduate students. To maintain high quality of teaching, the Department conducts regular reviews of all instructors. Group I
The undergraduate program consists of two types of major (psychology major and psychology pre-physical therapy major) as well as minor, with the both majors requiring 35 credit hours and the minor requiring 21 credit hours. Additional classes are required for the pre-physical therapy major. Note that the number of required credit hours changed when the University transitioned from a quarter system to a semester system in the 2012-2013 school year. The adoption of a semester system resulted in redesigning of the curriculum. In the new curriculum, all majors are required to take eight common courses (PSY101 General Psychology, PSY2110 Statistics, PSY2120 Research methods, PSY2210 Psychophysiology, PSY2310 Cognitive Psychology, PSY2410 Child and Adolescent Psychology, PSY2510 Social Psychology, and PSY2710 Abnormal Psychology) plus thee elective courses at 3000 level. Courses are offered in a variety of topics, which cover almost the entire field of psychology. Further, diversity issues are emphasized in many of these courses. There is no, what is commonly referred to as, capstone course; however, there are a number of courses at the 3000 level in which students have the opportunities to synthesize what they learned in lower level classes. Further, students are required to take a Tier III course during their senior year to fulfill a College requirement. These Tier III courses are designed to promote integration of knowledge students acquired during the first three years of college education. The Department offers four Tier III courses (T34800 The Human Response, PSY4210 Clinical Psychology, PSY4720 Human Stress, PSY4810 Evolutionary Psychology). In addition, although there are no formal concentrations, for advising purpose, the program created 18 different tracks with recommended courses that enable students to focus on a particular area of psychology in preparation for careers and graduate school. Advising is done by faculty as well as by the staff (faculty and graduate student advisors) at the Advising Center, which was created to improve advising because advising was identified as one of the weaknesses by the last program review in 2008. Students are assigned to faculty advisors based on an algorithm that was created to distribute students evenly among faculty advisors. Additional advising can be sought at the Advising Center by making an appointment with the Center advisors, visiting the Center advisors during the walk-in hours, or sending emails to the Center advisors. Further, the director and faculty advisors at the Advising Center conduct special advising sessions for students on academic probation. The Advising Center also hosts a number of workshops throughout the year, which are designed to disseminate information about careers and graduate school.

The curriculum is based on the goals established by the university strategic plan (Vision Ohio, 2006) coupled with the learning objectives recommended by the Task Force of Undergraduate Psychology Major Competencies sponsored by the American Psychological Association (APA, 2002-2013). The goals guides the program in terms of how it provides high quality education to students whereas the learning objectives are learning outcomes students are expected to achieve after completing the curriculum. The self-study document notes that courses alone do not accomplish these goals and
objectives, and therefore, the program emphasizes high quality educational experience both in and outside of the classroom. Outside of the classroom, the program provides a number of opportunities for students to develop additional skills that are helpful in competing for jobs as well as for graduate school. In particular, students can earn course credit by working in faculty labs (PSY3940 Research in psychology) or agencies that provide psychological services (PSY3910 Field work in psychology). Approximately 100 students sign up for research experience each year. The number for service experience is smaller. Because the demand for research experience cannot be accommodated by Group I faculty alone, the program allows graduate students to be the supervisors of students taking PSY3940 credits. To make this experience as educational as possible, the program created a contract with a set of rules that needs to be signed by the student and the supervisor. A similar contract is also used for service experience. Students can also enroll in the psychology honor’s program, which includes a requirement to complete an honor’s thesis, which is very much like a master’s thesis, with a formal defense at the end. However, the number of students in the honor’s program has been very small, only one or two students a year in recent years. To promote research activities, the Department provides funding for student travel as well as for honor’s projects. Student travel supports are provided for undergraduate students presenting at conferences. Further, to encourage graduate students to work with undergraduate students, extra travel supports are provided for graduate students who are presenting at conferences with undergraduate co-authors. The University also has a student research and creative exhibition event to encourage student involvement in research and creative activities. Although it was not mentioned in the self-study document, a study abroad program in psychology is available for students who are interested in gaining experience living and studying in a foreign country.

The number of majors has fluctuated somewhat over the years; however, during this review period, the number has been over 600 each year, reaching over 700 in 2011-2012 but declining to a lower 600 in 2013-2014. The number of pre-physical therapy majors is much smaller, and the number has declined over the years from about 100 during late 1990’s and early 2000’s to about 30 a year in recent years. The quality of students has been stable over the years: Among the first year students, the mean ACT scores as well as the mean high school class rank has shown a slight increase in recent years but the mean SAT scores stayed about the same. The quality of students majoring in psychology reflects the quality of students at the University level; that is, the students the program attracts are not lower quality students. In an effort to recruit top ranked psychology applicants, the Department has been offering scholarships; however, this effort has not been successful. In terms of demography, about 70% of the majors are women and about 20% are minority students. The retention rate from freshman to sophomore is about 75%. The graduation rate has fluctuated somewhat over the years but the rate is similar to that of the College, and the average time to complete the degree has been stable at about 4 years and a few months. The program also serves students who are non-majors, which accounts for over 70% of student credit hours generated. The most of these non-majors are from the College of Arts and Sciences and the College of Health Sciences and Professions.

In the past, the program used commercially available norm-based tests (ETS Major Test and ACT COMP test) to conduct learning outcome assessments. However, the program moved away from these tests because it was difficult to test a representative sample of psychology majors. The program is currently constructing a new way of assessing student learning outcomes, which is based on the philosophy that assessment is more effective when it is incorporated into class activities. To implement
this philosophy, the program is considering competency based assessments. Because the program adopted learning objectives recommended by APA, assessments should be conducted to determine whether students are meeting these objectives. The self-study document presents an assessment rubric that was constructed for PSY2110 Statistics. In this rubric, learning objectives are connected to specific class assignments with the criteria that students must meet in order to be judged satisfactory. The program plans to expand this approach to all classes.

Data from alumni surveys are also available for the assessment purpose. The University conducts two surveys targeting alumni who graduated one year ago (One-year survey) and five years ago (Five-year survey). The results of the One-year survey indicated that 63% of psychology alumni found their first employment within eight months after graduating, and that the unemployment rate has been about 10% during past few years. Further, about 50% went to graduate school. The average salary of psychology alumni seems to be somewhat lower than the average salary reported for the College, and only about a half of the respondents reported extremely or very happy with their jobs. The results from the Five-year survey showed that among those who graduated five years ago, the unemployment rate was about 7% to 12%, which is slightly higher than the rate reported in the past (6% to 7% from 2000 to 2004). The higher unemployment rate in recent years is likely to be the result of economic recession that started in 2007. After five years of graduation, about 50% earned a master’s degree or higher, and most worked in business, education, and government sectors. The survey also revealed that a very high percentage of the respondents reported that the program as well as the University helped them acquire job-related skills.

Students are generally satisfied with the program as evidenced by high satisfaction ratings on student evaluation and the Senior Exit Survey. However, some dissatisfaction has been expressed on the Senior Exit Survey, the One-year Alumni Survey, and the Five-year Alumni Survey. On student evaluation, the average ratings have been above 4-point out of a 5-point scale regardless of course levels, indicating that students evaluate all courses highly, even though they tend to prefer full time faculty relative to graduate students. The Senior Exit Survey also has been showing high satisfaction ratings; however, advising, particularly faculty advising, has been an area of concern. In particular, students identified the lack of information regarding jobs and graduate school as an area of weakness. The satisfaction ratings were somewhat lower on the One-year Alumni Survey but students were still generally positive, with only a small percent of students (3%) expressing dissatisfaction. The Five-year Alumni Survey showed similar results with the program quality receiving high satisfaction ratings and advising, particularly advising about jobs, being identified as an area of dissatisfaction. A sizable percent of the respondents (35%) were also dissatisfied with the Office of Career Services, which is supposedly specialized in career guidance. The Department has been well aware of the problems associated with advising, which was identified as a weakness in the last program review in 2008. Since then, the Department created the Advising Center and devoted its resources to improve advising. Further, the program created a course PSY1090 Optimizing Your Psychology Major and has a plan to create a one-credit course entitled Pathway to Graduate School.

Technology support seems adequate for teaching and research, with readily available computers and the Internet in the building and around the campus. The library resources are also adequate, including connections to other major libraries in Ohio.
The Department maintains a website to disseminate information to both internal and external audience. The website is reasonably user-friendly, and there is a section for undergraduate students to obtain information about (1) degree requirements, (2) Psi Chi – International Honor Society in Psychology, (3) Advising Center, (4) Honor’s program, (5) Course listings, and (6) University Resources. Further, to encourage revisits to the site, the website includes announcements about current news and upcoming events as well as a quick survey such as a popularity vote for an area of psychology.

Review Activities

To conduct this review, I read the self-study document with supplementary materials and participated in a review committee to conduct interviews of various individuals representing Group I faculty new and senior faculty, Group II faculty, Group III part time faculty, and the Advising Center staff as well as Dr. Bruce Carlson (Department Head) and Dr. Susan Tice-Alicke (Assistant Chair, Undergraduate Studies). Based on the evidence I gathered, my goal is to write a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis as well as answer the specific questions that were posed to external reviewers.

Strengths

**Strong leadership.** First and foremost, the strong leadership provided by the Department Head, Dr. Bruce Carlson, is the strength of the program. Almost everyone we interviewed indicated that Dr. Carlson’s guidance has been critical for everything the Department has been doing. It was apparent that Dr. Carlson is entrusted by everyone at every level. Further, it was obvious that he is committed to create an excellent undergraduate program in his department and willing to devote resources to this program. Second, the leadership provided by Dr. Susan Tice-Alicke (Assistant Chair, Undergraduate Studies) has been critical for the implementation of strategic plan as well as the operation of the program. Almost everyone we talked to described Dr. Tice-Alicke as a new leader who energized the undergraduate program. To achieve excellence, a program needs a strong leader with visions and dedication, and these two individuals represent such a leader.

**Curriculum.** The program has a strong curriculum: In fact, this is one of the strongest I have seen. As mentioned earlier, the program made a decision to adopt the learning objectives recommended by the Task Force of Psychology Major Competencies sponsored by the American Psychological Association (APA), and as such, their curriculum reflects the current best practices of psychology undergraduate education. I also like the fact that all majors are required to take eight common courses, including psychophysiology. Psychology is becoming more and more biological, and therefore, requiring psychophysiology reflects the current trend. Further, requiring students to take common courses ensures that the curriculum achieves common learning outcomes among all the majors. Having common courses would also lead to reduced advising load because students have no choice but taking these courses and therefore, no advising is needed. The reduced advising load would enable advisors to focus on which courses to take for electives (three courses), which in turn, would lead to discussion about careers and graduate school. The program has the right amount of elective courses to provide flexibility to the curriculum while avoiding variable learning outcomes by having the right amount of common courses. At
Central Michigan University, we allow 18 hours of electives (six courses) to provide maximum flexibility in our curriculum and try to achieve common outcomes by requiring a capstone course. We are currently reconsidering this approach. I think that the program at the Ohio University struck a perfect balance between flexibility and common outcomes.

**Advising Center.** The Advising Center is another strength. It appears that the program has been struggling with advising issues for a number of years. Such difficulty is not uncommon in a large program. At Central Michigan University, we have similar problems with both faculty and students expressing dissatisfaction. In particular, faculty are unhappy because they have too many advisees, and students are unhappy because there are too few faculty who are willing to help. Further, the quality of advising is variable because there is no established protocol that faculty are supposed to follow (other than signing a form for declaring major and minor). Creating an advising center is an excellent solution to these problems, even though faculty involvement is still critical. The program did very well by making this Center supplemental to faculty advising instead of replacing it. By doing so, the Center made improvement in faculty advising by allowing faculty to focus on important issues regarding careers and graduate school, rather than dealing with mundane issues such as how many credit hours are needed for graduation.

I was particularly impressed with the 18 different tracks the Advising Center created to focus student’s interests. These tracks are not just for students who are interested in going to graduate school. The brochure of each track provides a summary description of a target area (e.g., Forensic Psychology) with recommended courses. At Central Michigan University, we are considering adopting this approach. We used to use degree maps to facilitate advising; however, the degree maps were not designed for advising about careers and graduate school. The Advising Center also offers workshops throughout the year to disseminate information about jobs and graduate school. I participated in their Graduate School Fair in 2013 and 2014 representing Central Michigan University. The events were well organized with representatives of various graduate schools around Ohio participating. There were many students, and every one of them seemed to be interested in learning about our programs. The Advising center also makes their advising materials available on the Center’s website. I was also impressed with the fact that the Center has a well-thought-out assessment plan. Overall, the Advising Center is impressive, and the Department should be commended for devoting substantial resources to its operation. I was also impressed by the fact that everyone we interviewed expressed enthusiastic support for this Center and commended the leadership provided by Dr. Tice-Alicke.

We interviewed the Center graduate student advisors who were in charge of providing academic advising as well as advising for careers and graduate school. These staff seemed to be well trained and have clear understanding of the importance of the Center mission. The only recommendation, albeit minor, I have is that the results from the Alumni surveys be made available to these advisors. I am sure that these advisors would be thrilled to learn that most psychology graduates gain employment within 8 months of graduation, and that 50% or more respondents on the Five-year survey indicated that they earned a master’s or higher degree.

Initially, my impression was that there was no coordination between this Center and other offices on campus that were designed to provide specific services (e.g., Career Services). However, it became
apparent during the interviews that the purpose of this Center is not to replace services provided by the other offices but instead, to supplement and inform students the services available on campus. For example, during the interview, Dr. Tice-Alecke pointed out to me that a lecturer who was hired to teach a course on Career Path was from the Career Services.

**High quality teaching by faculty and graduate students.** Another strength of this program is high quality of teaching by all faculty and graduate students. According to the self-study document, student evaluation has been averaging 4-point or higher on a 5-point scale for all classes, including those classes that are taught by graduate students. However, the document also indicated that students tend to prefer full time faculty over graduate students. Based on my initial reading of the document, I had an impression that the quality of teaching by graduate students represented weakness in this program. However, during the interview, it became apparent that my impression was wrong, and that the Department has a number of mechanisms in place to ensure high quality of teaching by graduate students. First, graduate students are not allowed to teach until they complete a seminar in teaching, which is offered to second year students during the spring semester. In this seminar, students learn mechanics of teaching and practice their lecturing skills. Graduate students we interviewed indicated that this seminar was very helpful in preparing them to teach. Second, almost all graduate students begin their teaching by becoming an instructor in PSY2110 Statistics, which is a highly structured class with standard materials for all sections. Further, in this class, graduate student instructors are mentored by a master instructor, Dr. Craig McCarthy, who provides weekly feedback sessions. Third, it appears that there is informal mentoring of graduate student instructors by faculty members, which provide ample support for high quality teaching by these instructors. We interviewed Dr. Tim Vickers at the Center for Teaching and Learning and asked his view about the quality of teaching at the Psychology Department, particularly by graduate students. According to Dr. Vickers, the Psychology Department has the tradition of teaching excellence by faculty, and these faculty members actively mentor graduate students to promote high quality teaching by these students. Dr. Vickers indicated that teaching at the Psychology Department is simply exemplary.

**Alumni Surveys.** I was impressed with the fact that a mechanism is in place at the Ohio University to conduct regular alumni survey. At Central Michigan University, it has been a struggle to gather information about our graduates, particularly graduates from our undergraduate program. Having data about alumni adds strength to the program. I was particularly impressed to find that 50% of the graduates from this program obtained a master’s degree or higher after five years of graduation. Further, on the Five-year survey, 94% of respondents in 2004-2005 indicated that they were satisfied with the relevance of psychology major to their career goals. This finding is contrary to the finding reported by the Wall Street Journal (October 10, 2010) that only 26% of psychology majors surveyed by PayScale.com indicated that they were satisfied or very satisfied with their career paths, which was lowest among other majors surveyed (http://www.wsj.com/articles/SB1000142405274870400119045755385668134340020). It appears that satisfaction is generally very high among the alumni in almost all areas. The only area that seems to show weakness is advising, particularly advising provided by faculty and advising about employment. The program has been appropriately addressing the issues regarding advising, such as devoting resources to the Advising Center. I like the fact that the alumni surveys are enabling the program to make data-driven decisions.
Space. The self-study indicated that renovations to the building created adequate space for the Department. Having adequate space is a strength because limited space would limit the options, such as opening an advising center. I am sensitive to this issue because at Central Michigan University, we are always struggling to find space.

Facility. Everyone we talked to was happy with facility. Shortly before our visit, there was a flood due to a broken pipe; however, we did not hear any particular complaint, indicating to us that this particular incident did not represent a yet-another-problem regarding facility.

Popularity of Psychology Major. A part of the strength of the program can be attributed to the popularity of psychology as a college major, as evidenced by psychology making the top 10 list of Most Popular College Majors in almost every ranking conducted by various organizations (see the ranking by Princeton Review for example, http://www.princetonreview.com/college/top-ten-majors.aspx). In fact, psychology is one of the largest majors on any campus, and the Ohio University is no exception (with over 600 majors). Similarly, at Central Michigan University, we have a large number of psychology majors, about 600 to 700 majors in our on-campus program and about 500 in our online program. Dealing with a large number of students is challenging; however, I have seen other departments on my campus struggling to attract enough students to their programs. Accordingly, the popularity of psychology is a strength. However, the high popularity may not continue indefinitely, despite the fact that psychology has intuitive appeal to students. The biggest issue that we need to deal with as a discipline is the employment issue. It has been shown, and confirmed by the alumni survey reported in the self-study document, that the average salary of psychology graduates is not as high as that of the graduates from other majors, and as students become aware of the reality, it is possible that the appeal of psychology major may begin to fade. Accordingly, it is important that we maintain our relevance. A good news is that this program is not ignoring the issues (e.g., careers and graduate school) that are important to undergraduate students. During the interview, Dr. Carlson (Department Head) mentioned that the Advising Center was created to foster a feeling among undergraduate students that they are connected to the Department. I agree with this approach. At Central Michigan University, I have been reminding my Department that we cannot take it for granted that we always have students regardless of what we do. The Advising Center is clear evidence that at the Ohio University, they are not taking students for granted.

Weaknesses

Small number of Group I (tenure/tenure track) faculty. I agree with the self-study document as well as feedback we received during the interview that it is difficult to sustain the current level productivity with a small number (n = 21) of Group I faculty (tenure/tenure track). In fact, I was amazed to find that during the 2013-2014 school year, this program produced over 23000 SCH, which is about the same as what we produced at Central Michigan University with our on-campus program. The difference is that we did it with 35 tenure/tenure track faculty, even though our Departments includes four graduate programs (Clinical, Experimental, I/O, and School) as opposed to two graduate programs (Clinical and Experimental) at the Ohio University. I also understand that at the Ohio University, Group II faculty (n = 5) are full time with a 4-4 teaching load (which is equivalent to 10 tenure/tenure track faculty at my Department). However, given that at Central Michigan University, we also use several fixed-term faculty,
the high SCH productivity shown by this Ohio program is impressive.

It is important to note that the number of faculty is not just about SCH production. I agree with a comment in the self-study document that a small number of tenure/tenure track faculty has negative impact on everything the program tries to do. Take research experience for example, because Group I faculty is the only group that has research in their job descriptions, the program had to rely heavily on graduate students to provide research supervision for undergraduate students. Although the program did an excellent job of structuring PSY3140 Research Experience to ensure that both undergraduate students and graduate student supervisors would benefit from the experience, it is hardly an ideal arrangement. Similarly, the small number of Group I faculty has had negatively impacted on the psychology honor’s program, which has been generating only one or two students a year, despite the fact that the total number of psychology majors has been over 600 each year. The danger is that with such a small number of tenure/tenure track faculty, the program might be forced to cut back on extra educational experiences for undergraduate students and lose its competitiveness because there are many competitors who can offer psychology courses just like a program like ours can but at lower cost. A good news, according to the self-study document, is that an additional Group I faculty was hired and searches are underway for two more Group I faculty positions. However, even with these new additions, the number will be 24, which is still lower than 28 in 1998-1999. I encourage the administration to reexamine the number of tenure/tenure track faculty in this program by examining the long term strategy of maintaining the competitiveness of this program.

Advising. As mentioned earlier, advising was identified as one of the weaknesses by the last program review in 2008. Since then, the program has made significant improvement, particularly, by adding the Advising Center. However, in the current program review, concerns were still expressed regarding faculty advising as well as advising regarding careers and graduate school. As I mentioned earlier, the difficulty with advising is not unique to this program, and the fact that the program is aware of the issues and putting considerable effort in making improvement is commendable.

Assessment. The program is in the process of implementing a new assessment procedure. I agree with the self-study document that using a commercially available comprehensive test is not the optimal strategy unless we require students to take the test. At Central Michigan University, we have a capstone course (PSY385 Application of Research Methods) in which such a test can be administered. However, we are still reluctant to make it a course requirement. I am also in agreement with the philosophy that assessment should be incorporated into classroom activities. One of the advantages of adopting the learning objectives recommended by the Task Force of Undergraduate Psychology Major Competencies is that what to measure is already defined. The question is how to measure these objectives. According to the self-study document, a plan is underway to develop a rubric in each class connecting each learning objective to a set of class assignments with target criteria for satisfactory achievement. Such a rubric is already in place for PSY2110 Statistics and was presented in the self-study document as an example for other classes. I think this is a good strategy. However, I would also recommend that the program conducts assessment of the curriculum as a whole. Such assessment does not have to be conducted annually; however, knowing the curriculum level outcomes would be valuable for making curriculum level decisions.
Mechanisms for Supporting Graduate Student Instructors. This is not a weakness but I am mentioning it here because the self-study document indicated that student evaluation tends to be lower, albeit slightly, in the classes taught by graduate students relative to the classes taught by full time faculty. The self-study document also indicated that the program is in the process of creating support mechanisms for graduate student instructors. Based on the interview, my conclusion is that the program is doing an excellent job of mentoring students to become a good teacher. The fact that the program is putting an effort to formalize support mechanisms indicates that the program is taking teaching very seriously.

Opportunities

Advising Center. I consider the Advising Center to be the opportunity for the program to promote supportive climate for undergraduate students, which will lead to enhanced appeal of its major. The market for psychology students has become increasingly competitive in recent years because more and more non-traditional alternatives, such as online programs, are joining the market competing for students. In this competitive market, a traditional program, such as ours, must demonstrate added value. Because there are many programs that offer psychology courses, what becomes important is whether the program provides guidance beyond course work. I consider the Advising Center to be an excellent way of providing such guidance, allowing the program to create excellent educational environment for undergraduate students.

Online courses. Although the self-study document did not indicate the number and size of online classes, during the interview, it became apparent that the program offers online classes that have large enrollment. The online classes can be an opportunity for the program. At Central University, we used to offer a large number of online classes without organizing them into a particular curriculum. However, three years ago, we decided to create a completion program, Psychology General Major. Since then, we have been adding about 20 to 30 new majors each month. By creating an online program, our Department gained control over our online operation; that is, we now control course offering, course quality, as well as instructor hiring. With regional campuses, creating an online major may be difficult at the Ohio University. However, I am mentioning it here because at Central Michigan University, the revenue from our online operation is subsidizing our on-campus operation.

Threats

Increased competition. Increased competition is a threat. As I mentioned earlier, the market for psychology students has become increasingly competitive over the years. At Central Michigan University, we are particularly sensitive to this issue because we have experienced a substantial decrease in our enrollment over the past few years, and a projection is that this downward trend will continue in the foreseeable future due to the fact that the number of high graduates is declining in Michigan. We are coping with the situation by expanding our off-campus operation (CMU Global Campus) including our online program. Although the State of Ohio may not be experiencing a similar decline in high school graduates, the competition from non-traditional alternatives is real, and a traditional program like ours needs to be vigilant about maintaining our competitive advantage.
Popularity of Psychology may not continue indefinitely. As I mentioned earlier, the popularity of psychology as a college major adds strength to a program like ours. However, the popularity may not continue indefinitely because psychology seems to be one of the lowest in terms of student satisfaction. I already mentioned an article by the Wall Street Journal, (October 10, 2010) reporting a survey conducted by PsyScale.com showing that only 26% of psychology majors surveyed were satisfied with their career options. As dissatisfaction spreads, it is possible that students will start to move away from psychology, even though currently there is no sign of such a trend. Further, despite the fact that psychology is a STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) discipline, psychology has not received as much attention as other STEM disciplines. In fact, at Central Michigan University, whenever our administrators talk about a new push to promote STEM disciplines, psychology is hardly mentioned. My concern has been that as other STEM disciplines are emphasized, we may lose science minded students from psychology.

The results of the Alumni Survey reported in the self-study document showed that satisfaction is quite high among the graduates of this program. The results also showed that a high percent (50%) of respondents earned a master’s degree or higher. These results are encouraging. However, as a discipline, psychology needs to maintain relevance because the popularity of psychology has led to a large number of psychology majors; yet, graduate school in psychology has not shown similar expansion. Traditionally, our curriculum is designed to prepare students for graduate school; however, this focus may need to be reexamined as the majority of our majors finishing their formal education after earning a bachelor’s degree.

Conclusion

The undergraduate program at the Ohio University is an excellent program with many strengths. Although some weaknesses were identified by the self-study, the program is already taking appropriate steps to deal with these issues. The major issue, which is beyond the program’s control, is the number of Group I (tenure/tenure track faculty). A good news is that the program is adding three new faculty to Group I. My recommendation is for the program to proceed with the current course. In terms of the issue regarding the ideal number of Group I faculty, discussion needs to take place at the College level re-examining this issue in the context of the University Strategic Plan as well as within a newly adopted budget model, RCM.

Questions for External Reviewers

1. Program as a whole:
   a. Is the current number and distribution of faculty sufficient to carry out the broad overall mission of the Department?

   During this review period, the Psychology Department had 21 Group I (tenure/tenure track faculty) and 5 Group II faculty. Although one new Group I faculty was hired and searches are underway for two more Group I faculty, the number is still lower than the number of faculty (n = 28) they had in 1998-1999. Given that the Department has over
600 majors, it would be difficult to sustain current productivity with the small number of Group I faculty. At Central Michigan University, we have 35 tenure/tenure track faculty, plus a few fixed-term faculty (part-time), and our SCH (student credit hour) production is about the same as that of this Department. It is true that we have four graduate programs as opposed to two graduate programs at the Ohio University; however, the size of the undergraduate program is similar between the two departments (600 to 700), and accordingly, I feel that the number of Group I faculty at this Department is too small.

b. Is the level of the Department’s RSCA appropriate for the program given the size of the faculty and the resources available to the Department?

Yes. Group I faculty of this Department has been highly productive. During this review, the number of publications per faculty was over three a year, and the amount of external funding generated in 2013-2014 was 2.8 million dollar, the highest ever in the history of the Department.

c. Is the level of service, outside of teaching, appropriate for the program?

Yes. Group I faculty are professionally active with almost every faculty member filling critical professional roles.

d. Does the Department have an appropriate level of financial resources, staff, physical facilities, library resources, and technology to fulfill its mission?

The Department has adequate resources for teaching and research. We did not discuss financial resources; however, Dr. Bruce Carlson (Department Head) did not indicate that the Department is in dire need for additional financial resources. Other resources, staff, facilities, library resources, and technology, are adequate.

2. Undergraduate program:

a. Is the Department fulfilling its service role, adequately preparing non-major?

Yes. Over 70% of students the program teaches are non-majors. In particular, the program’s role in teaching statistical skills (PSY1110 and PSY2110) to non-majors is extensive and impressive. Further, the program plays a critical role for the online nursing program.

b. Is the program attracting majors likely to succeed in the program?

Yes. The quality of incoming students is similar to that of incoming students to the College and University. Further, the retention rate (75%) from freshman to sophomore reflects the retention rate of the College. The graduation rate (43% to 63%) has been greater than that of the College.
c. **Does the undergraduate curriculum provide majors with an adequate background to pursue discipline-related careers or graduate work following graduation?**

Yes. The program adopted the learning objectives recommended by the Task Force on Undergraduate Psychology Major Competencies sponsored by the American Psychological Association (2002-2013). As such, the curriculum reflects the current best practices of psychology undergraduate education. On the alumni survey, a very high percent of respondents reported that the program helped acquire skills that were useful for their jobs. Further, on the five-year alumni survey, over 50% of respondents reported that they received a master’s or higher degree.

d. **Are the resources and the number of and distribution of faculty sufficient to support the undergraduate program?**

No. The number of Group I faculty seems too small. Other resources seem adequate.

e. **Are pedagogical practices appropriate? Is teaching adequately assessed?**

Yes. The program provides high quality teaching. Teaching by all faculty and graduate students are assessed regularly.

f. **Are students able to move into discipline related careers and/or pursue further academic work?**

Yes. With strong curriculum, the program is in a good position to provide high quality training to students. In fact, the Five-year alumni survey indicated that over 50% of respondents reported that they received a master’s degree or higher.

3. **Graduate program**

N/A

4. **Areas of Concern**

Please see the Weaknesses section of my SWOT analysis.

5. **Recommendation**

Please see the Conclusion section of my SWOT analysis.

6. **Commendations**

Please see the Strengths section of my SWOT analysis.
7. Overall judgment

The program is viable. Please see the Conclusion section of my SWOT analysis.
To Whom It May Concern:

This letter serves as a response from the doctoral level training program in Experimental Psychology at Ohio University to the report of the Department of Psychology 7 Year Review (2007-2013) that was conducted on February 5–6, 2015. To begin, we note that we are pleased that the review committee’s report is quite favorable overall. To illustrate, on page 13 of their report the committee notes that, “Both doctoral training programs in the Department of Psychology at Ohio University have excellent faculty, up to date curriculums, strong graduate students and respectable job placements for graduates,” and on page 7 of their report they indicate that, “The faculty in the Experimental area also show impressively high research productivity.” In all, then, we thank the committee for providing us with such positive feedback.

An area of concern noted by the review committee in their report, however, focuses on the 45% degree completion rate obtained in the Experimental Program since 2007 (considered low in comparison to the 77% degree completion rate obtained in the Clinical Program during the same period of time), as well as the results of the Department of Psychology’s 7-year self-study which found that 58% of graduates reported satisfaction with mentoring and 42% of graduates reported satisfaction with advising. To be clear, we certainly agree with the committee that these numbers could and should be improved. However, the faculty members who comprise the Experimental area specifically object to the language and tone that the review committee uses to characterize faculty members’ reactions to these data. For example, on page 1 of the report, the committee states that, “The completion rate along the experimental track was less than 50%. While the department was aware of this, the acceptance (our emphasis) of this fact, our committee found troubling,” and on page 7 they opine that, “The experimental faculty are clearly aware of and expressed some concern about those rates, but seemed too quick and too inconsistent in trying to rationalize the self-study findings and accept them as normalized (our emphasis).”
The Experimental area objects to the subtext of the committee’s observations regarding these issues because they convey a perception of complacency – that the Experimental area is generally unconcerned with the degree completion rate of our students and whether or not our students are satisfied with the mentoring and advising that they receive in our program. Indeed, we believe that this characterization of faculty members’ attitudes is highly inaccurate. To address these concerns regarding our “acceptance” of degree completion rates and student satisfaction, we focus on: 1) differences in degree completion rates between the previous 7-year report and the present report; and 2) how we specifically plan to address student satisfaction and degree completion rates moving forward.

I. Differences in degree completion rates between the previous 7-year report and the present 7-year report

The degree completion rate in the previous 7-year report period was 28%, whereas the degree completion rate in the present 7-year report period was 45%, an improvement of more than 60% over the earlier rate. Generally speaking, if we were unconcerned about degree completion rates, then we would not have taken steps to improve them. Below we list several specific steps we took as an area to improve degree completion rates over the last 7 years.

a. Recruiting more academically capable students. The graduate students recruited during the most recent 7-year period are objectively stronger than the students who were recruited during the previous 7-year period, a fact that the review committee specifically notes on page 13, to wit, “Although clinical programs typically have a significant edge over experimental programs in GRE and GPA credentials, this difference has been closing for the programs at Ohio University. Overall, both graduate programs have strong student bodies.” Our ability to more selectively recruit students has been enhanced by:

1. Capitalizing on constantly improving tools for webpage creation and design as a means by which to provide general information about the Experimental Program as well as specific information about the research interests of each faculty member who comprises the area. Generally speaking, webpage improvements: a) enhance the likelihood that students who might be less familiar with our program can discover it on a search engine; and b) improve the overall visibility of our program among faculty members, graduate students, and undergraduate students at colleges and universities around the world.
2. Making an explicit effort to recruit and hire new faculty members who appear to have the ability to attract strong graduate students because of the broad or timely appeal of their research programs.
3. Reducing the size of incoming classes from ten students to eight students resulting in a more stringent selection ratio.
4. Extending graduate funding from four years to five years to better reflect the amount of time required to complete the doctoral degree in experimental psychology.
b. Recruiting students who appear to be stronger “fits” for our program. Although it certainly makes good sense to recruit students who present outstanding academic credentials, we have found that success in a research-intensive program such as ours also requires a level of intellectual curiosity and independence that is difficult to quantify. In our view, a critical determinant of our enhanced graduation rate has been a policy change that we implemented during the most recent 7-year review period regarding how we interview prospective graduate students. During the previous 7-year review period, we invited applicants for campus visits after we had already sent them acceptance letters. Conversely, during the present 7-year period we adjusted our interview policy such that we now invite prospective students for campus visits before they are accepted into our program. In other words, interviews are now used as input into determining whether to accept students into the Experimental program. We believe that this has been an important policy change, as it allows us to evaluate whether students appear to be a good fit for a particular would-be faculty advisor, as well as whether they demonstrate a level of interest in research that befits our program more generally. Thus, we assume that the quality of the working relationship between faculty member and student predicts the likelihood that a given student will graduate from the program.

c. Implementing policy changes to our program designed to maximize student success. The Experimental area holds regular meetings during the year to discuss program policies and requirements, and all changes are updated in the Experimental Psychology Program Handbook by the Director of Experimental Training (DET). Changes that were made during the most recent 7-year review period that were designed to enhance student satisfaction and graduation rates include:

1. Allowing students to complete their Master’s theses in 3 years instead of 2 years.
2. Adjusting the norms for thesis and dissertation length away from the traditional model that includes an exhaustive literature review and toward a model where theses and dissertation are expected to be the length of a typical submitted journal manuscript.
3. Reducing the amount of required coursework to insure students have sufficient time for conducting research.

II. Addressing issues regarding levels of student satisfaction and degree completion rates moving forward

Although our degree completion rates did increase between the previous and present 7-year review period, mainly for the reasons that we described, we also acknowledge that the program satisfaction responses that we collected from graduates in our most recent self-study were far from ideal. Although on the one hand these data seem anomalous in light of the quite favorable satisfaction responses we collected during the previous 7-year review period, we on the other hand would stress that we are taking these data very seriously and are actively engaged in both trying to understand the nature of the reported dissatisfaction and designing ways to enhance student satisfaction moving forward. Our plans include taking the following steps to solicit
feedback from experimental graduate students on a regular basis and to strengthen the career-oriented advising and support that students receive:

a. Establishing regular times for the psychology graduate student council and the DET to meet in order to discuss problems and concerns.
b. Employing anonymous surveys that allow students to voice general concerns about the program and/or specific concerns about particular faculty members without having to fear that their comments might be connected to their identity. The surveys will be modeled after those that are currently employed by the Clinical area. An important question that will hopefully be addressed in the graduate council meetings and/or anonymous surveys is the extent to which the sources of reported dissatisfaction are program systemic as opposed to advisor-specific.
c. Encouraging students who appear to be struggling with developing research ideas to consider pursuing academic careers that emphasize teaching. Students will be made aware early on that they can elect to pursue academic careers that are not research-intensive. In the past, it seemed that many students would only pursue small college opportunities after they had “given up” on a research career. In the future, students will be able to make more informed decisions about which path they would like to pursue at an earlier juncture in their graduate careers.
d. Making students aware at an earlier stage that non-academic careers are also viable and desirable. Students should not have to feel like they “failed” if they elect to pursue a non-academic career that puts their methodological and quantitative skills to good use and purpose.

Finally, and anecdotally, we would like to report a shared perception in the Experimental area that the graduate students whom we have recruited over the past two years are even savvier than their predecessors with regard to knowing what we are working on and being able to evaluate the impact that our work is having in our respective sub-disciplines. In short, prospective applicants are showing up for interviews having read several of our papers, and we believe that their ability to do so has been facilitated by the fact that most of the members of our area have uploaded their papers and chapters onto research platforms such as ResearchGate and Academia.edu. The ease with which prospective students can read and evaluate our work should, in our view, allow us to recruit even stronger students because their choices regarding potential academic mentors are more informed than ever. Overall, then, in light of the positive trajectory that our program has demonstrated between the last two review periods, the observation that we are recruiting even savvier students, and the changes that we plan on implementing in the future to address potential sources of dissatisfaction, we see no reason why our degree completion rate would not increase by an additional 25% over the next review period, a number that would considerably lessen the discrepancy that currently exists between the completion rates of the Experimental and Clinical programs.

Sincerely,
Keith D. Markman
Director of Experimental Training