



Date: January 16, 2020

To: Jennifer Summit, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

From: Carmen Domingo, Interim Dean  
College of Science & Engineering 

CC: Chris Wright, Chair of the Department of Psychology

RE: Department of Psychology 7<sup>th</sup> Cycle Review Dean's Response

The 7<sup>th</sup> Cycle review process included a very extensive and thorough self-study by the Department of Psychology as well as a comprehensive review by two external experts - Dr. Benjamin Storm from UC Santa Cruz and Dr. Oriel Strickland from Sacramento State University. In reviewing both the self-study as well as the external review report, I was impressed by the strong academic quality of both the undergraduate and graduate programs. In particular, the undergraduate program, which follows the recommendations by the American Psychological Association, received very positive reviews from the external evaluators for both its breadth and depth. Moreover, the strong advising system that provides guidance at important junctures in the curriculum help students complete the major with a very high success rate (the highest in CoSE).

The graduate curriculum is also strong, but for a department of its size (24 faculty), 6 graduate programs may be a challenge to manage in addition to the large undergraduate program. The Master of Arts in Psychology program has concentrations in Developmental; Mind, Brain, Behavior; and Social Psychology – all three concentrations share 50% of their course work. The Master of Science in Psychology program has concentrations in Clinical, School, and Industrial/Organizational Psychology. The graduate enrollments have been stable, which shows continued interest in all six programs. With additional hires, these graduate programs have the potential to increase capacity as they attract more qualified applicants than they can accept. The external reviewers praised these graduate programs and stated that they were “truly impressed by the overall strength and competitiveness of the graduate programs.” Faculty are publishing in top journals and successfully garnering external funding for their work. I am also pleased that the external evaluators praised the effort and importance of including students in these research efforts as this aligns well with the mission of the college and university.

To continue to grow and improve their educational and research environment, the reviewers made several important recommendations, which I highlight below.

- Improve assessment tools such that they capture student learning outcomes rather than rely exclusively on self-reported exit data. This can help to determine whether the students are developing adequate skills. A concern

about the writing ability of students in the program was raised in the report. Reviewing the sequencing of GWAR in the roadmap such that it is offered earlier in the degree program may help with developing stronger writing skills.

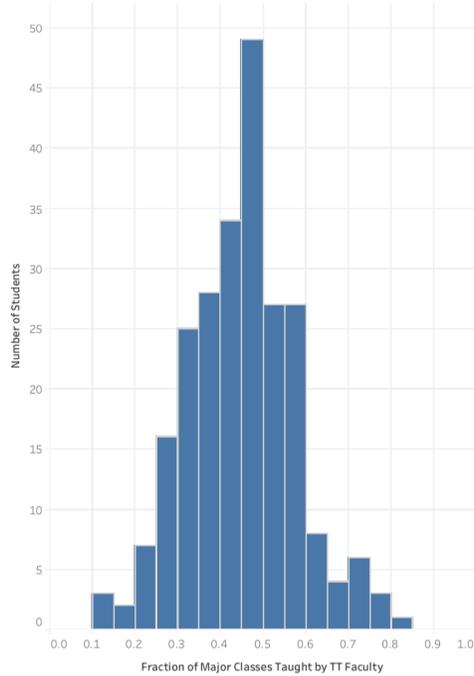
- Increase the opportunities for undergraduate students to engage in capstone/culminating senior experience projects with tenured/tenure-track faculty.
- Increase the number of online and hybrid courses.
- Given the student demand for the psychology major, develop a strategy to increase student numbers while balancing faculty workload.
- Increase faculty hires for the Clinical Psychology program given the large number of faculty retiring. Consider opportunities of working with on-campus mental health services.
- Continue to improve mentorship and support for junior faculty.
- Continue to improve transparency around faculty workload (teaching and service assignments).
- Continue to increase the diversity of faculty such that they better reflect the diversity of the student demographics.
- Work with the dean to establish a department policy for periodic review of lab and office space utilization.
- Provide assistance with access to large classrooms given increase in student demands for certain classes.

The external reviewers also mentioned several times in their report a concern with the number of tenured/tenure track faculty that teach undergraduate courses. Since the external reviewers have limited data (self-study, interviews with a small number of students and a subset of faculty and administrators), we decided to examine whether students in the psychology program encounter fewer tenured/tenure track faculty in comparison to students in other BA programs. We sampled 2,093 students who graduated in SP2019. We analyzed transcripts going back to F2007. On the y-axis is the Number of Students (graduates) and on the x-axis is the Fraction of Major Classes Taught by Tenured/tenure track Faculty. You will notice that the data looks very similar between the BA psychology recipients and all BA degree recipients. The majority of students who graduated in SP19 had half (0.5) of their major classes taught by tenured/tenure track faculty. This data is important to include in this letter as it shows that the Psychology Department is NOT an outlier. In fact, Psychology BA recipients were just as likely to encounter a tenured/tenure track faculty member in their major courses as a student in other BA programs. Thus, the concern raised by the external reviewers about the lack of coverage of the undergraduate curriculum by psychology faculty is not supported by this data. This analysis reveals that the teaching assignments in the Psychology Department are similar to those observed in BA programs across the campus.

## SFSU Bachelor of Arts Degrees: Class of Spring 2019

The figure below compares the fraction of major classes taken with tenure-track faculty instructors by students in two different populations: BA-Psychology students (left) and all BA students (right). The overall sample includes all 2,093 students who graduated from SFSU with a BA in Spring 2019. We analyzed transcripts dating back to Fall 2007, which provided complete academic records for 2,003 out of the 2,093 students (including all 240 students who graduated with a BA in Psychology). The sample of 2,003 students completed a total of 31,403 classes. Instructors having job codes 2360, 2361, 2384 or 2399 were identified as tenure-track faculty.

Psychology BA Degree Recipients



All BA Degree Recipients

