

**Departmental Review Report  
Department of Psychology  
Weber State University  
March 20, 2017**

A range of appropriate upper-division electives  
Required capstone experiences

These curricular requirements, in addition to being consistent with the APA guidelines, are similar to those found in competent contemporary programs around the country. We suggested that the faculty make efforts to integrate current cultural understanding and evidence into the various classes in the curriculum; discussion with the faculty suggests that this is not a major deficit, and the faculty are sensitive to it. This aim is also consistent with the APA (2013) guidelines.

It is clear that the faculty use student-learning outcomes in a way that allows the curriculum to always be a work in progress; in other words, there is an ongoing reciprocal connection between curriculum and outcomes, with student learning serving as feedback for curricular revision. For example, when it became clear that students taking the Learning & Conditioning course were not making the connection between theory and application, the decision was made to add a Behavior Modification component to the course. The faculty seem both competent and comfortable in working together to achieve such outcomes—Our perception is that everyone is on the same team. And, their efforts to develop a curriculum map in



Overall, advising seems effective and students are effusive in their statements about the help, formal and informal, that they receive from faculty.

#### **D. Faculty**

Our overall impression is that this is a strong, productive faculty with shared, collective values and aims. They are generous with their time on behalf of students and they clearly value the time they spend with students. They are strong mentors, and are clearly valued by the students. There is a sense of community among the faculty—a sense that may be seen in the support and guidance provided adjunct faculty and new faculty. In particular, the faculty evidence gratitude to the Dean for the support (in such avenues as start-up funds and reduced teaching loads) afforded new faculty hires.

Among the faculty there is a feeling of camaraderie and collegiality and it is clear that some faculty have truly sacrificed their own research goals in order to provide meaningful research experiences for students. The 1:1 “face time” between faculty and students truly seems exceptional and the faculty have been progressive in their efforts to combine their research with student supervision and teaching—thus maximizing the effectiveness of limited resources and time. From the point of view of students, this is a department, in a university with an essentially open-enrollment admissions policy, that produces “value-added” student outcomes. One salient example of such outcomes is the large number of faculty-supervised and co-authored conference presentations and publications produced by students. These represent valuable h

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The faculty give the departmental administrative specialist high marks for competence and helpfulness and they are pleased to have the help of teaching assistants and supplemental instructors. More of the latter, they say, would be a relatively inexpensive way to help them a bit with the workload. The faculty are very happy with the investment the department made in the Qualtrix system to manage the departmental research pool and, at the moment, are in a way victim of their own success; the number of students and faculty conducting research has produced a need

## **F. Concluding Thoughts and Recommendations**

This is a productive department with a well-conceived curriculum. The faculty seem to realize that undergraduate teaching is what they do distinctively well and they are committed to it. Consistent with the Weber State University value of access and opportunity for all, we do not sense that non-teaching research interests or other professional pursuits are more important than students. At the same time, the faculty need more support for their own research and travel and will of course benefit in time from the planned new facilities. In some ways the faculty invest more than should be reasonably expected (witness their continued exceptional effort in activities that ostensibly earn release time, even though few have real opportunity to actually use the release). The students whom we met were enthusiastic about their experiences in the department and have a high regard for the faculty.

We see this as a strong department that will be enhanced if the faculty can be provided additional support and administrative encouragement. It was a pleasure to see the sense of community and shared purpose evidenced in the interaction and enthusiasm of the department members. We hope they will continue to develop efficient ways to maintain and improve their high level of student involvement in all aspects of the undergraduate experience. In review, we provide the following recommendations (in no particular order):

Continue to integrate current cultural understanding and evidence into the various classes in the curriculum; perhaps with more dedicated efforts to elevate visibility of this important topic.

Continue with the highly successful approach of dedicated advising in conjunction with abundant and diffuse student-faculty research programs, but work toward additional, formal means of ensuring needed advising occurs for all students, such as required meetings at critical junctures during progress toward graduation.

Continue with development of the advising handbook with more focused integration of graduation maps that highlight important milestones, such as when foundational English and Math courses should be completed and when advising meetings should occur.

Continue to carefully protect and conserve the notable faculty work ethic with increased sensitivity for providing meaningful rewards and recognition whenever possible and promoting such efforts in collaboration with the higher-level administrations when feasible.

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