**Department/Program Review Summary**

**2020-2021**

**Department:** 0375 **-** Psychology

**Date of Review:** March 18, 2021

**Review Team Members and Titles:**

Kathleen Cleary, Senior Vice President and Interim Provost

Jennifer Kostic, Associate Provost

Jared Cutler, Assistant Provost of Accreditation and Assessment

Eric Kraus, Professor, Mathematics

Ryan Murphy, Chairperson/Professor, Business Information Systems

Debbie Fobbs, Coordinator Sinclair City Connects Advising, City Connects

Dana Johnson, Associate Professor, Sociology

Michael Carter, Senior Advisor, President Office

Patricia Schiml, Research Professor and Senior Lecturer, Department of Psychology Wright State University

**Department Members Present:**

Lisa Mahle-Grisez, Dean, Liberal Arts, Communication & Social Sciences

Mary Wells, Chair, Psychology

Faculty:

Luis Sanchez Alcazar

Kristin Kwasny

Jaclyn Tyler

Roger Carpenter

Anne Soltysiak

Elaine Isbell

Taylor Curtis

Mark Humbert

Brandon Jablonski

**Commendations:**

* This is a department that benefits from strong leadership. During the meeting with the Review Team many faculty in the department remarked on the excellent job the chairperson does in her role as chair, and her exceptional work in the preparation of the self-study. The chairperson has been heavily involved in completion efforts at Sinclair, and with the assistance of faculty has been able to leverage the experience gained in those efforts to make improvements in student learning in the department’s educational offerings.
* The Review Team was deeply impressed with the quality of the self-study. The department approached the self-study in a thoughtful, reflective manner that was also very candid, open, and honest about opportunities for improvement. In fact, the self-study struck a remarkable balance between highlighting the many successes the department has experienced in the years since the last Program Review, and discussing the areas where the department has identified improvements that can be made in the future.
* Of the many highlights of the self-study, one of the most noteworthy is the department’s embrace of Open Educational Resources (OERs). In General Psychology alone the department estimates it has saved students over $1.4 million dollars – and that isn’t the only course in the department where OERs are utilized. The dollar amount likely does not tell the whole story of the positive impact this has had on students, who often face significant financial barriers to attending college, and the department deserves a tremendous amount of credit for investing the time and resources required to develop and maintain OERs in a number of its courses. This department is truly a leader at Sinclair in this area, and serves as an excellent example for other departments to follow.
* Few departments at Sinclair display a comparable commitment to equity. The department wove the discussion of the equity gap throughout the entire document, providing comparisons for minority and non-minority students with almost every data point they shared. Given that this is a department with classes that speak directly to diversity and inclusion this might be expected, but even taking that into consideration the self-study revealed a phenomenal level of concern with the equity gap for minority students. This is clearly something the department thinks about – and takes actions to address - at multiple levels. Often lip service is paid to issues of equity, but the Review Team sensed that this is not the case with this department. It is something faculty in the department have a genuine, powerful concern for, and are actively thinking about. The Review Team noted that the department appears to have a true commitment to equity – certainly for students, but also in terms of pushing to increase diversity among faculty.
* The department has had exceptional course success rates for a number of years, consistently above the division and college average. In the five years since the most recent Program Review, there has been a substantial increase in the number of graduates annually. This appears to be driven by steps the department has taken, including the development of the Applied Psychology degree.
* The department’s work developing internship opportunities for its students is highly commendable, particularly in terms of cultivation of the relationship with the Naval Medical Research Unit at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base and with local non-profit organizations. Few practices are as effective at getting our graduates into jobs quickly as internships, and it appears that the department has substantially increased its efforts in this regard in recent years.
* Sinclair owes a great deal of appreciation to the Psychology Department for their support for General Education outcome rubrics associated with assignments in General Psychology. These rubrics provide General Education assessment data for all programs across the college, and faculty in the department have generously given their time and effort in supporting this work.
* Since the advent of Completion by Design at Sinclair, the Psychology Department has embraced the development of new strategies for increasing student completion, but has been adamant about ensuring this be done without lowering standards. Remarkable work in the department has been done around competency-based assessment, universal design, and empathetic models of teaching. The Review Team was particularly impressed at the way the department has moved away from the “one and done” approach to testing, allowing students to learn from their mistakes and grow their understanding of course content through re-taking quizzes and re-engagement with course material after receiving feedback. This seems to be a far more effective approach to cultivating a sound understanding of course concepts and for stronger retention of course material than the traditional “high stakes” testing approach. This focus on mastery of course material better prepares students for courses where they will need a solid understanding of concepts in the future. The department has also made praiseworthy strides in terms of standardization of material and activities across all sections of the same course.
* The faculty support for these aforementioned efforts is remarkable, and crucial to the success of these initiatives. In supporting these efforts, faculty demonstrate their commitment and concern for helping their students better succeed academically. Faculty “buy-in” is essential to efforts such as these, and faculty in this department have clearly stepped up to make these efforts so successful.
* This is a department that thinks of student support in holistic ways, providing “wrap around” services to students – for example, with its orientation for students entering its programs, its “Next Steps” activity for students who are graduating, and with its active and well-supported student clubs. The department fosters a climate of cultural caring, with one notable example being the way families are involved and invited to orientation. The department’s support of students through faculty advising – particularly for Psi Beta members – provides further evidence of this commitment.
* Since the last Program Review, the department has developed a new Applied Psychology Associate of Applied Science degree, and deserves a great deal of credit for identifying a need in industry and providing a pathway for students to meet that need. It is also to the department’s credit that in developing new articulation agreements it insists on articulation pathways for both its traditional transfer degree and the new applied degree, providing additional options for students graduating in Applied Psychology.
* The department has also earned a great deal of praise through its support for College Credit Plus (CCP) and Advanced Job Training (AJT) programs – the Psychology Department is a leader in both of these areas, which require time and resources on the part of the department, but that provide valuable educational opportunities to students who were not as well served in the past.

**Recommendations for Action:**

* The Psychology Department’s work on competency-based assessment, universal design, and empathetic models of teaching has been superb – and serves as an outstanding example to other departments interested in improving learning for their students. The Review Team strongly recommends that the department share its initiatives in these regard not only to internal audiences, such as through Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) offerings and Faculty Professional Development Day workshops, but also external audiences as the opportunity presents itself. This exemplary approach to learning needs to be adopted by more departments at Sinclair.
* A definite priority for the department should be to continue to pursue work on closing the equity gap. The department is encouraged to leverage the expertise of other departments at the College, such as the work of the Diversity Office, eLearn Diversity Equity Inclusion work, and other similar efforts at the College to help inform strategies to close the equity gap.
* The department has a strong history in the use of the General Education outcome rubrics, to the point where they are now part of the culture of the department. In the self-study, the department discussed development of a similar rubric-based approach to program outcome assessment. The Review Team recommends that the department work to resolve any barriers to this effort and move forward in this direction.
* The department’s outstanding use of OERs in its courses should be continued, and the department should maintain and update its OERs as necessary. Without question, the Psychology Department is an institutional leader in this regard, and the Review Team recommends the department keep up its outstanding work. The department should also continue its efforts regarding collection and analysis of data on the impact of OERs on student success, as well as continuing to track the financial benefits.
* The Review Team recommends that the department continue to explore additional internship and employment opportunities for Applied Psychology program graduates, with a focus on paid internships where possible. Paid internships may help in recruiting a more diverse group of students, in that participating in unpaid internships is challenging for economically disadvantaged students.
* Are there any opportunities to work with Tech Prep with the Applied Psychology degree program courses, such as Behavior Modification?
* The department expressed concerns in the self-study regarding inaccurate information students have received in the past from Academic Advising, particularly regarding the Applied Psychology degree. The department should continue to communicate with Advisors regarding both transfer and career degrees, and increase its outreach to Advising to ensure that information shared with students is accurate.

**Overall Assessment of Department’s Progress and Goals:**

The Review Team was so impressed with the self-study the Psychology Department submitted. The chairperson and faculty really did a great job of looking at where they were compared to the last program review, using data to analyze what had accomplished, determining what efforts need to be continued and perhaps expanded, and identifying efforts that are no longer needed. It is often difficult for an academic department to justifiably pat itself on the back for its successes while still having a critical eye for openly and honestly assessing where improvements can be made - this department did a wonderful job of both, acknowledging things they had done well while at the same time identifying opportunities for improvements.

There appears to be a great deal of respect for the chairperson among faculty in the department, which is not surprising given her engagement with completion efforts at the College, years of experience serving students, and exceptional relationship with academic advising.

Faculty in the Psychology Department work hard to meet student needs from different approaches and perspectives, explicitly prioritizing and emphasizing efforts to close the equity gap. The department appears to be aware of needs that members of other departments sometimes overlook - like food security, for example. And this is not just lip service – it is part of who they are, part of the department’s culture, which is amply visible in its concern for equity, its support for student clubs, its “wrap around services”, and its general student-centric focus. It speaks to the department’s commitment to all of its students that when developing new articulation agreements with university partners, it refuses to develop an articulation agreement for the transfer program without a similar agreement for the Applied Psychology degree. The department’s student-centered approach benefits not only students in its programs, but the students to whom it provides required general education learning, for whom it shows a great deal of concern for maximizing learning. The department knows that the bulk of students who take General Psychology will be students from other departments, but has made a significant investment in improving learning outcomes in this course nonetheless.

This is a department that is implementing many of the aspirational things faculty in other departments hear about and think might be a good idea – this department is actually doing them. Faculty in this department really go above and beyond, and evidence an admirable commitment to students in its courses and programs.

**Institutional or Resource Barriers to the Department’s Ability to**

**Accomplish Its Goals, if any:**

* The department mentioned questions regarding the Curriculum Management Tool – a new and improved version has just been implemented, and Sinclair should develop a strategy for training on the new version of CMT.
* With so much being done by this department, and with many of the faculty so heavily involved in these efforts, steps need to be taken to ensure that the load is evenly spread among faculty in the department, and that no one – including the chairperson - is overextended.
* Many departments at Sinclair need to focus on hiring faculty and staff of color, to ensure that all students have the opportunity to learn from faculty who look like them. This can be accomplished by strategic hiring as positions become available, and should be a priority given Sinclair’s strong commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion.
* This department has done an exceptional job of generating data regarding the equity gap – other departments should be doing the same, disaggregating data by race and other factors, and using this data to inform efforts to close the equity gap at both the departmental and institutional level.
* The misconceptions regarding the of lack of opportunity for those who graduate with Psychology degrees is a barrier to increasing enrollment, and should be addressed at the department, division, and institutional level.
* The need for updating lab space was mentioned in self-study, although it was not discussed in the meeting with the Review Team. The department may need to communicate its needs regarding the lab space to the dean and the Provost’s Office, clearly explaining the nature of the needs and how meeting them will benefit students.
* Are there opportunities to target more adult students, particularly for the Applied Psychology Associate of Applied Science degree? Adult students often need to go into a field where they can complete their program of study and get employment as quickly as possible – are there possibly opportunities for that here?