Executive Summary: Psychology Department Self-Study for the 2023-2024 7-year Regent Review

The self-study is a descriptive, analytic, and diagnostic assessment of the health of the Psychology Department focusing on how well the department realizes the goals set forth in the mission statements of the department, college, and university; as well as recommendations for how the goals can be more effectively accomplished.

The Mission

The mission of the Psychological Science Department at Weber State University is to enhance student knowledge and application of the science of psychology. The department is committed to student-centered teaching and high-impact educational opportunities that foster critical thinking, career readiness, and social responsibility. Faculty promote inclusivity and diversity and apply psychological science to serve and enhance the university and greater community.

The Vision

The Department of Psychological Science at Weber State University aspires to be a recognized leader in undergraduate education. The department will work to enhance the field of psychology by empowering students to achieve their personal, academic, and career goals and to produce professionals who serve the local and greater communities. We will achieve this goal by continuing to engage in student-centered high impact teaching, mentoring, and scholarship.

The Mission and Vision Statements of the department directly align with the corresponding College of Social and Behavioral Sciences and Weber State University statements by highlighting the focus on student and community success through knowledge, preparation, collaboration, application, and support. The statements emphasize the role of transformative learning experiences in creating a culture of innovation and inclusivity. The ideas and goals conveyed in the department statements highlight the five central program goals embraced by the department and embodied in the departmental curriculum.

The Curriculum

The curriculum and student learning outcomes of the department are taken directly from the recommendations of the American Psychological Association for undergraduate psychology departments (APA, 2023). These learning outcomes focus on students' overall psychological literacy. Goal 1: *Content Knowledge and Application*: Students demonstrate comprehension of the major concepts, theoretical perspectives, historical trends, and empirical or evidence-based findings to discuss how psychological principles apply to behavior and mental processes. Goal 2: *Scientific Inquiry and Critical Thinking:* Students will develop scientific reasoning and investigation skills, including developing proficiencies in research methods and statistics. Goal 3: *Values in Psychological Science*: Students will share key beliefs, attitudes, and values adopted by scientific psychologists including ethical and social responsibility. Goal 4: *Communication*: Students will demonstrate the skills necessary to build and maintain effective communication in processing and expressing information. Goal 5: *Personal and Professional Development:*

Students will demonstrate the skills associated with workplace readiness whether that involves graduate school or a job following graduation.

The curriculum of the department has undergone minimal revision since the last program review. However, the changes implemented were partially in response to issues directly raised in previous program reviews. Specifically, the increase in cultural data to emphasize a better scientific understanding of diversity.

Student Learning Outcomes and Assessment

The department has a clearly defined assessment strategy addressing student learning outcomes at the course and programmatic level. Examination of student learning outcomes show that by all reasonable metrics students are internalizing the program goals of the department. Students demonstrate psychological literacy by utilizing scientific principles and methodologies to understand human behavior and cognitions. Additionally, students recognize and apply psychological concepts to problem solving both interpersonally and in addressing larger issues facing the community.

Academic Advising

The department has been incredibly proactive in addressing academic and career advising to students. The inclusion of mandatory advising for upper-divisions students and a devoted departmental advisor ensures that most students are receiving more consistent advising. The benefits of this approach are demonstrated through the efficiency of students completing the program.

The Faculty

The department has added six new faculty since the previous program review. The new faculty (Tim Black, Aminda O'Hare, Sarah Herrmann, Kathryn Sperry, Xin Zhao, Vanessa Watts) join an already talented department. The department demands excellence in instruction from its faculty, as evidenced by students' overall positive evaluation of faculty, the level of faculty/student research productivity, and faculty service to the university, community, and profession.

Program Support

The department support staff currently consists of one full-time Administrative Specialist and two work-study students. These resources are similar to those in other departments in the university.

Community Relationships

Although the shutdown associated with the COVID pandemic significantly hindered the department's community engagement, we have made great strides in recovering to pre-pandemic levels. During the past seven years, faculty in the Psychology Department have been involved in

a number of community organizations and activities. This focus on utilizing psychology to better assist in the community is expected to only expand as the department continues to increase its focus on application.

Review Team

The review team includes Dr. Ron Meyers (Professor and Chair, Department of Zoology, Weber State University), Dr. Aaron Richmond (Professor, Department of Psychology, Metropolitan State University of Denver), and Dr. Garrett Strosser (Department Chair and Associate Professor, Psychology, Southern Utah University).