

Internal Academic Review 2009-2010

Department of Psychology Internal Academic Review Committee Report to Senate

The Internal Academic Review (IAR) of the Department of Psychology is now complete. The Internal Academic Review Committee (IARC) has taken into consideration all of the submissions related to the IAR of the Department of Psychology and respectfully submits the following report. The IARC Report to Senate is intended to supplement the findings of the attached Review Team Report, and to provide a mechanism for the Head of the Department of Psychology and the Associate Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Science to jointly report on the progress in addressing the Review Team recommendations (please see the “Outcomes” section of their report).

Summary of the Internal Academic Review of the Department of Psychology

The Department of Psychology is to be applauded for its outstanding contributions to the University and to the larger national and international academic and clinical communities. Its many accomplishments reflect the strength of the Department’s students, staff and faculty. IARC congratulates the Department for effectively managing the needs of thousands of students taking a multitude of courses while at the same time supporting the Psychology Clinic and almost 30 different research laboratories. These achievements are especially notable given the current financial constraints.

The IARC was pleased to see that such a strong department has taken on the challenge of developing innovative approaches to revamping its first year general course (PSYC 100) to incorporate lectures, on-line instruction and group learning sessions. The Department’s focus on improving pedagogy, engaging students and emphasizing peer instruction is requiring a great deal of work by many members of the Unit but the IARC considers the chances of success to be substantial. Potentially, the results of this pilot project will have a broad impact on the future structure of large, first and second year undergraduate courses in other departments and faculties throughout the University.

The IARC acknowledges the important role that staff plays in supporting the academic mission of the Department. The IARC shares the concerns raised in the Review Team report that a number of workload issues have placed substantial stress on the support staff, which ultimately, are bound to negatively affect the ability of the Department to

maintain its high quality academic and clinical programs. Actively involving the staff in departmental decision-making processes is viewed as critical to reducing the stresses associated with an uncertain future.

In response to a request from the IARC, the Head of the Department provided information about several issues including the impact of fiscal constraints. The IARC shares the Head's concerns that the predicted deficits for the 2013-2014 academic year will prove challenging and financial decisions will have to be made that may have a negative effect on the quality of teaching and research provided by the Department of Psychology.

The IARC recognizes the Department of Psychology as a highly successful and resourceful Unit. The IARC fully supports the Department in its efforts to implement innovative approaches to instructing its undergraduates, maintaining its excellent graduate programs and sustaining its position as a leader in research and clinical psychology.

Outcomes of the Internal Academic Review of the Department of Psychology

*Joint response submitted by the
Dean of Arts & Science and the Head of the Department of Psychology*

We are writing in response to your Report on the Internal Academic Review for the Department of Psychology 2009-2010. We thank you and all the members of the Internal Academic Review Committee (IARC) for their thorough assessment of the activities of the Department of Psychology. The Department especially welcomes the full support expressed by the IARC for the Department's efforts to implement innovative approaches to instructing its undergraduates, maintaining its excellent graduate programs and sustaining its position as a leader in research and clinical psychology.

Re-development of our introductory psychology (PSYC 100) course continues with the aim of rolling out the new format in the fall term of the 2011-2012 academic year. The Department has made improved pedagogy its top priority in this endeavour as we continue to seek ways to increase student engagement especially in first and second year courses. It is our hope that the novel format that we are developing for PSYC 100 will achieve these goals.

The potential negative impact of projected financial constraints on the teaching and research activities of the Department of Psychology continues to be a major concern of both the Faculty of Arts and Science and the Department of Psychology as we go forward. We will continue to work together to assure the best possible learning environment and undergraduate and graduate student experience in the Department of Psychology.