To: James Ermatinger, Dean, CLAS

From: CLAS Curriculum Committee,  
David Bertaina, Chair

Re: Psychology BA Program Review

Date: December 16, 2011

Thank you for preparing a thorough program review for the Psychology Department’s Undergraduate program. The curriculum committee has reviewed and discussed the program review, and the chair of the curriculum committee corresponded with Marcel Yoder regarding some revisions. After subsequent review of the revisions, our commendations and recommendations are as follows.

In terms of structure, the committee noted the well-defined and concise course requirements, the clear explanation of the concentrations and degree requirements, the ample use of tables and graphs, and the well-organized narrative that follows campus guidelines.

In terms of the curriculum, the committee notes the successful addition of an Industrial/Organizational psychology specialty and curricular revisions based on faculty availability. The assessment data shows attention to implementing the information into the curriculum. The committee commends the Psychology Department for their well-articulated professional learning goals and outcomes that were defined by the American Psychological Association's guidelines, as well as the fact that they are integrated into course syllabi. The department has clear goals and objectives for the degree that feed directly into measurable instructional objectives. Appendix B includes good examples of degree goals being "mapped" into course assignments. In thinking about the department in relation to others, the review made clear comparisons between UIS and other COPLAC schools. One question the committee had was on the assessment of goals in the capstone course by adding more specific information about how the department pays attention to Goals 3, 7, and 8.

In terms of students, the committee would like to see more specific data on job placement rather than the generic data on graduates in Psychology programs nationwide, although the committee commends the department for its student satisfaction survey, its successful efforts to diversify its pool of students, and their recruitment efforts through faculty calling potential students, students calling potential students, and planning to initiate a one-day camp for high school students about the field of psychology. The department newsletter “PsychoPath” is also an effective tool for recruitment and maintaining a connection between faculty members and students. The retention efforts of the department (such as emailing students to remind them to register for classes) is commendable although there have been some minor fluctuations in the data. Finally, the committee believes that the 2.5 GPA minimum shows the academic rigor of the degree,
although the committee would like to see supporting data that might indicate the effectiveness of the policy.

In terms of faculty, it is clear that are active scholars and several have received grants. The committee commends the department’s high teaching evaluations scores. The committee also noted the high turnover rate due to the personnel process. Despite the high turnover in faculty since the time of the last review the standards and results as measured by the assessment categories do not seem to have suffered and appear consistently high.

The committee feels that the department has addressed the concerns that arose from the previous program review regarding 1) the use of too many adjuncts; and 2) the curricular bloat of having too many concentrations. The change in curriculum since the time of the last review shows the department has made its degree more flexible to enable it to meet the needs of more students.

In this review, the committee noted that the Psychology department included a brief description of their minor in Appendix A as part of the revision process. However, the committee would have liked to have seen the minor presented with more detailed data following the guidelines prescribed by the university.

In terms of the recommendations made by the Psychology Department, the Curriculum committee had the following responses. For the first recommendation, the committee agrees that an additional faculty line is called for when the opportunity arises. For the second recommendation, the committee suggests that implementing a teaching-based NIA would be a college-wide process involving the Dean, departments and programs, and other committees and not something necessarily unique to Psychology.

c. Jim Ermatinger
   Karen Moranski
   Harshavardhan Bapat