Memorandum of Agreement -- June 1999

Department of Psychology

As a result of the first cycle of DePaul University's Academic Program Review Process (Cycle I), the participants in the process enter into the following agreements. The participants understand that this document will be available to be made public once the signatures are in place: for the unit, the chair of the unit's review committee and the department chair/program director; for the college/school, the dean; for the Academic Program Review Committee, the unit subcommittee members; for the university, the Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs.

Acknowledgements

The Academic Program Review Committee and subcommittee members wish to thank the members of the Psychology review committee for their investment of time in the self-study process that has culminated in productive results. As the department noted in its self-study plan, it had recently been through departmental review for LAS college and an external review of the Clinical Psychology Ph.D. program by the American Psychological Association. For the university review, the department addressed four major issues: 1) the relationship between the undergraduate and the graduate programs; 2) the quality of the department's preparation of undergraduate majors for the workplace or admission to graduate school; 3) the degree to which advising and mentoring procedures address the needs of the students, and 4) the exploration of new strategies to assess student learning. These issues were refined and focused in subsequent discussions with APRC subcommittee and the dean and led to an agreement on the next steps on each issue, as outlined below.

Common Issues and University-level Commitments

During Cycle I, the unit program review self-studies raised several issues generally in common that have important university-wide implications. In subsequent conversations about these major issues, the units, the deans, the Academic Program Review Committee members, and the Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs all have recognized the need for university-level coordination to support units in the following areas: a) advising activities; b) recruitment and marketing efforts; c) structures that facilitate cross-departmental and cross-college collaboration; d) improvement of the university-level data collection and reporting efforts on academic programs; e) assessment efforts and research on students; and f) efforts to maintain connections with alumni. To follow up on these common issues and determine the appropriate courses of action needed to address them at the university and unit level, the Academic Program Review Committee and the Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs agree to do the following:

1. The Academic Program Review Committee agrees to prepare a summary report on Cycle I to the Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs which discusses these and other issues that have important connections to other university-wide initiatives, especially to the Strategic Plan. That report will be made public, along with the Memoranda of Agreement.

2. The Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs agrees to direct the appropriate university-level offices to work with the units and their deans on how to effectively address these issues.

3. The Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs will require a progress report in June of 2000 from the appropriate offices that will be shared with the Academic Program Review Committee.

4. The Academic Program Review Committee will invite representatives from the appropriate offices to an Academic Program Review Committee meeting in the fall quarter of 1999-2000 academic year to follow-up on these issues and discuss possible courses of action.
In addition to these university-level commitments, the following are issues and actions agreed upon at the unit level.

Issues and actions agreed upon

Role of graduate students and faculty in the undergraduate program

1. The Department of Psychology agreed with the recommendation to gather information on the current role of tenure and non-tenure track faculty in undergraduate education and use the information to guide changes that will enhance the role of full-time faculty vs. graduate students in the program. Any mentoring role that graduate students might perform for undergraduate students would be more important for those undergraduates who plan to go to graduate school.

2. The Department of Psychology had a recent retreat that included some discussion of the undergraduate program, and will host another retreat. The Department will continue discussion with the entire faculty in designing and implementing initiatives related to the quality of undergraduate education, to insure collective departmental responsibility.

3. Department of Psychology agreed to institute an advising process in conjunction with a tracking system for undergraduate students. This process and system would include the following:
   - Submit to the dean a plan for the duties and responsibilities of a new Director of Undergraduate Studies, a half-time staff support person, and a student worker regarding course advising and mentoring for the undergraduate program. These roles would complement but not replace the roles and responsibilities of faculty in advising and mentoring.
   - Full-time tenure and tenure-track faculty will be responsible for providing career guidance for students and long-term mentoring. The Department’s consultation with others, e.g. School of Education, will assist this process.

4. The Department of Psychology and the dean agree to make a joint commitment to improve advising in the department. Once the department has plans in place (as described in #3), the dean will provide the following: a) a half-time staff person for undergraduates’ course advisement and tracking during and after their tenure at DePaul, b) a student worker to support the tracking of students, and c) a course reduction for a faculty member who would assume the position of Director of Undergraduate Studies. The Director will coordinate this work along with other programmatic responsibilities. Again, these positions will complement and not replace the primary role of full-time faculty in the mentoring and overall guidance of undergraduates throughout their education at DePaul.

5. The Department of Psychology agrees to develop a booklet/handbook for undergraduate and graduate students that outlines the goals, expectations, the structure and process for advising and mentoring. The handbook will explicate the role of full-time faculty in mentoring undergraduate students, the facilitative role of graduate students in undergraduate education (teaching and consultation), and the role of staff in student registration and other more administrative advising. The handbook will grow out of faculty discussion and be coordinated with the work of the Director of Undergraduate Studies.

Assessment of student learning in the undergraduate program

6. The Department of Psychology agreed to implement a system for tracking students during and after their matriculation at DePaul. This work would be under the aegis of the new part-time staff member (see above) who will be hired to coordinate and maintain continuity of service to students, and provide ongoing information to the faculty for program development. The new Director of the Undergraduate Studies will provide guidance for the entire process, including the identification of data from university sources that will support this work.
7. The Department of Psychology agreed to continue to develop assessment measures of student learning, by utilizing possible resources from Title III activities and by gathering and expanding information from current assessment activities in which faculty are engaged in their courses. The new Director of the Undergraduate Studies will provide some guidance for this process. This will be explored further at a subsequent departmental retreat.

Department's requests for additional resources

8. The Department of Psychology agreed to examine current and alternative use of resources within the department.

9. The dean agreed to provide resources for: a) half-time staff person for student course advisement, b) student worker, and c) course reduction for faculty member assuming new position of Director of Undergraduate Studies, commensurate with chairs of each of four graduate programs: PhD programs in Clinical, Experimental, and Industrial/Organizational Psychology, and the MA program in Naperville. The dean will provide these resources after the department has taken steps toward initiating a department-level plan, as described above.

10. The Department of Psychology and the dean will continue to discuss the way in which faculty positions and enrollments are counted in the College database to reach a common understanding about how resource allocations are made for the department. Both the department and the dean agreed that it is important to achieve a common database so that the counting issue won't be problematic. The June 2000 follow-up report will describe progress on this matter.

Issues and actions on which there is agreement to do further work and continue conversations

1. The dean will consider plans to fill a position currently occupied by a full-time non-tenure track faculty member with a tenure track faculty member to support the increase in student enrollment and provide continuity in the educational experiences of undergraduate students.

2. Title III grant can offer assistance on matters of advising and assessment

   • The Advising Project can help the department, college and university think about ways to invest and distribute resources to improve advising.
   • There is an opportunity for the new staff advisor to take advantage of training, materials, resources available under the grant to become knowledgeable about assessment matters.

3. OIPR assistance with student tracking -- possible collaboration

   • The department would like assistance in tracking concentrations within the department, so the faculty can analyze student course-taking patterns as part of a curricular review.

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A hard copy of this document was signed by:

Chair of the Unit Review Committee: Vicki Magley

Chair of the Department: Ralph Erber

APRC Subcommittee members: Jean-Claude (Bruno) Teboul and Enora Brown
Dean of the College: Michael Mezey

Executive V.P. for Academic Affairs: Richard Meister

*The hard copy with signatures is on file in the Office of the Associate V.P. for Academic Affairs and is available upon request.*