

**DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY**

**RADFORD UNIVERSITY**

**2008 STRATEGIC PLAN**

**(approved 12/5/08)**

## PREAMBLE

This strategic plan articulates the 10-year aspirations of Radford University's Department of Psychology. The plan highlights and demonstrates the value that the Department places on teaching (both undergraduate and graduate), scholarship, and partnerships, each of which is a major category through which the department supports the college, university, and community. Building on existing strengths in each category, we are optimistic about future achievements. Yet these goals will only come to fruition with the requisite support from the college and university. Therefore, the plan also highlights the key resources needed to attain our goals. We look forward to "forging a bold new future" for the department, college, and university.

## I. UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION

### 1. DEPARTMENTAL PHILOSOPHY AND APPROACH

The Psychology Department at Radford University emphasizes the importance of teaching and learning at the undergraduate level. We take great pride in our success at providing students with the tools and experiences necessary to be successful in graduate programs and in the workplace. Therefore, the Psychology Department contributes to the College by promoting undergraduate student learning and professional achievement.

### 2. TEN-YEAR ASPIRATIONS

Goal 1. *Enhance the quality of teaching at the undergraduate level (7-17 Goal 1.2)*

- Evaluate potential teaching needs in the undergraduate curriculum and recruit faculty with the required expertise.
- Increase incentives for faculty to attend professional meetings to enhance their own learning, allowing for increased excellence in their teaching, clinical and research skills.
- Increase incentives for faculty to work as partners with students in the learning process.
- Identify the range of pedagogically sound student-to faculty ratios for each undergraduate course. Implement class sizes within these ratios so as to balance greater student-faculty contact against faculty workload.

Goal 2. *Enhance the quality of learning at the undergraduate level (7-17 Goals 1.1 and 2.1)*

- Implement an ongoing review of our undergraduate program to assure that it successfully provides students with the tools and experiences necessary for (a) acceptance into high quality graduate programs, and (b) obtaining desirable positions in the workplace.

- Increase the number of students participating in non-classroom opportunities (e.g., faculty-student research collaborations, internships, volunteer and service-learning opportunities, and when available, international studies).
- Identify one or more mechanisms to assess a student's knowledge base at the time of graduation.
- Support the forthcoming Core Curriculum as Department resources allow.
- Identify additional ways that graduate and undergraduate programs can mutually inform and enrich one another.

### 3. RESOURCES

The most pressing resources needed to meet the undergraduate education goals are sufficient high quality faculty, students, technological support, support staff, and facilities.

#### Faculty

- It is critical that each faculty member has adequate time necessary to provide quality education. While teaching load is certainly a vital aspect of reaching this goal to allow adequate time for course preparation, faculty also need adequate time and resources to a) remain current in the content of their discipline, b) engage in scholarly work in their discipline, c) keep abreast of recent technological advances that may aid their teaching, and d) attend conferences to enhance their teaching.
- These goals may be met by assuring adequate teaching loads, as well as monies set aside to enable faculty to engage in scholarship, attend professional conferences, pursue faculty professional leave, and to revise ongoing courses and develop new courses.

#### Students

- Undergraduates need funding for conducting research and traveling to conferences.

#### Facilities/Technological Support/Support Staff

- Resources such as space and equipment must be available to support lab courses.
- It also must be recognized that undergraduate programs need sufficient staff support that cannot be met solely by student office workers (e.g. processing graduation applications; assigning advisors; distributing withdrawal forms to appropriate instructors; updating files; maintaining waiting lists for courses; and tracking new majors, transfer students and new first year students).
- Finally, professional, dedicated technological support must be available within the college to support faculty and students' technology needs, which are currently being met by faculty at the department level.

## II. GRADUATE EDUCATION

### 1. DEPARTMENTAL PHILOSOPHY AND APPROACH

Educating and training students beyond the undergraduate degree is one of the central goals of the Psychology Department. Through a variety of graduate programs, offering several different degrees, the Department offers students opportunities to learn advanced skills that will enable them to obtain work in their chosen fields. Therefore, the Psychology Department contributes to the College by having faculty and students associated with graduate education.

### 2. TEN-YEAR ASPIRATIONS

Goal 1. *Recruit and retain qualified graduate students (7-17 Goals 1.1, 2.2, and 4.3)*

- Develop a target number of annual applicants for each graduate program and develop recruiting plans designed to attract at least this number of qualified applicants.
- Enroll and retain qualified students in sufficient numbers in each graduate program to allow for meaningful interaction, support, and socialization.
- Develop a plan to - and then strive to - increase the representation of diverse students in each graduate program.

Goal 2. *Provide high quality education and training in the department and in the community (7-17 Goals 2.2 and 3.2)*

- Challenge students to learn information, critically think about the material, and be able to independently apply the knowledge and training in their areas of study as evidenced by successfully completing capstone experiences (e.g., thesis/dissertation, final practicum/internship, comprehensive examinations).
- Evaluate the quantity and quality of community-based training sites for applied programs and develop additional appropriate sites when necessary to meet changing demands and needs.
- Create training centers through the Department (but not necessarily only located in the Department) that have as primary missions the skill development of students while serving the community.
- Develop multidisciplinary partnerships as appropriate to enhance graduate student engagement and learning.
- Increase incentives for faculty to attend professional meetings to enhance their own learning, allowing for increased excellence in their teaching, clinical and research skills.
- Obtain and/or maintain accreditation for those programs needing such.
- Hire and retain sufficient faculty to balance graduate education responsibilities with other responsibilities (e.g., undergraduate education, scholarship) and to meet accreditation requirements.

- Identify additional ways that graduate and undergraduate programs can mutually inform and enrich one another.

Goal 3. *Have at least one of the graduate programs ranked among the best nationally by a respected source using appropriate methodology (7-17 Goal 2.2)*

- When data are readily available for a given program, monitor the qualifications of enrolled students to determine how well cohorts compare with appropriate benchmark institutions and, if necessary, develop plans that will allow programs to compare better with other schools.

### 3. RESOURCES

The most pressing resources needed to meet the graduate education goals are sufficient high-quality faculty, students, technological support, support staff, and facilities.

#### Faculty

- The number of faculty must be sufficient to allow them time to devote to graduate education responsibilities while also meeting other needs in the department, such as undergraduate education.
- Faculty in the Department then must have enough time to do activities associated with graduate education, including but not limited to their own scholarship and grant writing (which will enhance the reputation of the Department and attract quality students), supervising student research (e.g., theses, dissertations), advising, and supervising of students in the Department and in the community.

#### Students

- There must be sufficient funding to allow students to receive assistantships and fellowships that are competitive with other peer institutions.
- Students also need funding for conducting research and traveling to conferences.

#### Facilities/Technological Support/Support Staff

- Graduate programs need sufficient staff support that cannot be met solely by undergraduate or graduate office workers (e.g., graduate applications, graduate student database management, testing lab, accreditation documentation).
- On-campus and off-campus space, facilities, and opportunities must be available to provide quality training and oversight.
- Supplementary resources for courses and research must be available (e.g., equipment, assessment material).
- Professional, dedicated technological support must be available within the college to support faculty and students' technology needs, which are currently being met by faculty at the department level.

### III. SCHOLARSHIP

#### 1. DEPARTMENTAL PHILOSOPHY AND APPROACH

Intellectual vitality is central to mission of both faculty and students. This vitality can be maintained in different ways, but is clearly exemplified by actively participating in one's professional community. Therefore, the Psychology Department contributes to the College by having faculty and students who conduct, present, and publish scholarship.

#### 2. TEN-YEAR ASPIRATIONS

- Goal 1. *Enhance the scholarship of faculty* (7-17 Goals 1.2, 2.2, 3.2, and 4.2)
- Evaluate whether the current incentives, including workload assignments, are sufficient to promote scholarship.
- Increase the number of peer-reviewed publications (e.g., qualitative or quantitative peer-reviewed research publications, peer-reviewed literature reviews or theoretical articles) and other publications (e.g., invited book chapters, books).
- Provide outlets through which departmental scholarship is recognized.
- Where appropriate, use scholarship as a mechanism for supporting community engagement.

Goal 2. *Enhance the scholarship of undergraduate and graduate students* (7-17 Goals 1.2, 2.1, and 2.2)

- Increase travel stipends for students who present scholarship at regional or national conferences.
- Increase the number of graduate research assistantships. Evaluate the distribution of this resource to maximize the benefit for both faculty and student.
- Provide incentives for faculty who mentor student research, including, but not limited to, independent studies, theses, and dissertations.
- Evaluate the strengths of undergraduate research courses (PSYC 201, 202, and 400-level labs) for training students in research. Recommend changes if necessary.

### 3. RESOURCES

The most pressing resources needed to meet the scholarship goals are sufficient high quality faculty, students, technological support, support staff, and facilities.

#### Faculty

- The most pressing resource needed to promote scholarship is *faculty time*. Conceiving, conducting, analyzing, and writing related to scholarship is a labor-intensive process, much of which cannot be undertaken by graduate or undergraduate research assistants. This is especially true of writing, which requires extended blocks of time.
- Faculty time for scholarship can be generated through course reductions, faculty professional leave (sabbatical), and summer scholarship stipends.

#### Students

- The second most important resource is *funding for students*.
- Within this category, major needs include *graduate research assistantships* and *paid conference travel*.

#### Facilities/Technological Support/Support Staff

- Professional, dedicated technological support must be available within the college to support faculty and students' technology needs, which are currently being met by faculty at the department level.
- In addition, resources such as secure data collection tools, and additional computers and programs to enhance scholarship are needed.

## IV. LOCAL, REGIONAL, AND INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

### 1. DEPARTMENTAL PHILOSOPHY AND APPROACH

Educating and training students to include opportunities for learning, service, and research in the local, regional, or international communities is a priority for the Psychology Department. Through a variety of undergraduate and graduate programs, across scientific and applied courses and programs, the Department offers students opportunities to learn through interactions and collaborations across communities. Therefore, the Psychology Department contributes to the College by having faculty and students associated with local, regional, and international community-based partnerships.

### 2. TEN-YEAR ASPIRATIONS

Goal 1. *Ensure that our partnerships and community outreach programs are distinctive, effective, and known (7-17 Goals 1.1, 2.1, 2.2, and 3.2)*

- Increase the number of local and regional community-based initiatives that expand student learning opportunities through exposure to rural perspectives and appreciation for cultural differences at undergraduate and graduate levels.
- Increase our partnerships across local and regional settings serving as practicum and/or internship placements in delivery of psychological services through our applied graduate programs.
- Increase the number of local and regional collaborations that include a research component documenting our impact on community mental health and well-being while enhancing student learning and faculty scholarship.

Goal 2. *Establish high expectations regarding undergraduate and graduate student learning opportunities in local, regional, and international communities (7-17 Goals 1.1, 2.6, and 3.1)*

- Increase the number of opportunities offered through our Psychology courses (in both the academic year and summer) to reflect our investment in students receiving learning and scholarly opportunities related to community partnerships.
- Increase the number of partnerships across disciplines at RU and other regional campuses as appropriate to enhance student engagement and learning.
- Develop courses to meet the changing needs of students, including collaborative teaching across regional universities and/or abroad where appropriate to do so.

### 3. RESOURCES

The most pressing resources needed to meet goals associated with Local, Regional and International Partnerships are sufficient high-quality faculty, students, technological support, support staff, and facilities.

#### Faculty

- The number of faculty must be sufficient to allow them time to devote to responsibilities that include initiation and maintenance of partnerships, off-campus networking, and supervision of students.

#### Students

- There must be sufficient time and funding to allow students to take advantage of opportunities in local, regional, and international communities.

#### Facilities/Technological Support/Support Staff

- Technology to support an environment for faculty to engage in partnerships in local, regional, and international communities.
- Professional, dedicated, full-time technology support staff to support our effective use of technological interface and psychological service delivery in community-based settings locally, regionally, and internationally.
- Supplemental administrative support staff for faculty must be available.
- Supplementary resources for courses and research must be available (e.g., equipment, materials, database management).