UMBC

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TO: Antonio Moreira, Vice Provost
              Sarah Shin, Associate Provost

FROM: Scott E. Casper, Dean, College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences

RE: Academic Program Review (APR), Department of Psychology

I have carefully reviewed the Self-Study for the Academic Program Review for the Department of Psychology (PSYC) and the report of the External Reviewers. The Self-Study is an outstanding summary and analysis of the programs of a large, complex department, including its significant strengths and several key challenges. The External Reviewers' report, organized in SWOT format (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) identifies a number of the Department's core attributes and challenges and offers several useful suggestions, though it is less specific than one might wish, understandably given PSYC's size and breadth.

Context: To provide some context for the visitors' report, I offer some data on enrollment in the Department. (This is routinely part of the CAHSS Dean's Report for APRs.)

Student numbers: Posted IRADS data for Fall 2018 indicate that the department had 1,188 total majors (primary and additional plans, including at the Universities at Shady Grove), 426 minors, 145 master's students, 73 doctoral students, and 11 students in its upper-level certificate program. The number of majors has increased by roughly 6 percent since Fall 2015 (1,122), with a slight dip in the intervening years (F16=1085, F17=1086). The number of minors has decreased slightly from earlier years (F15=450, F16=470, F17=455). During that time the number of master's students has fluctuated between 120 and 153, and the number of doctoral students has fluctuated between 73 and 87. The largest number of master's students is enrolled in the Industrial-Organizational MPS track at the Universities at Shady Grove, accounting in F17 and F18 for just over 75 percent of PSYC master's students, a marked increase from F15 and F16 in both number and percent. In addition, PSYC has recently assumed responsibility for the programs in Instructional Systems Development, whose F18 enrollments (still counted by IRADS within EDUC) were 44 in the master's, 51 in the post-baccalaureate certificate, and 7 non-degree graduate students.

Student-faculty ratios: In Fall 2018, the student-faculty ratio (SFR) for students in all plans was

58.6 for full-time faculty, as against 24.8 for CAHSS; it was 50.5 for FTE faculty, as against the CAHSS average of 20.6; and it was 77.9 for tenured/tenure-track FTE faculty, as against the CAHSS average of 35.0. The SFR for FTE students was 30.1 for full-time faculty, as against 19.2 for CAHSS; it was 26.0 for FTE faculty, as against 16.0 for CAHSS; and it was 40.1 for tenured/tenure-track FTE faculty, as against 27.1 for CAHSS. Within CAHSS, PSYC has by far the highest plan enrollments per FT faculty, FTE faculty, and T/TT faculty—and those ratios have been high for many years (e.g., ratio of students in all plans to T/TT faculty at or above 70:1 every year going back to F12). Its ratios for FTE students are comparable to or slightly lower than several other CAHSS departments with large General Education enrollments and small faculties. In many respects, the closest comparators for PSYC are similarly large departments such as BIOL (CNMS) and CSEE and IS (COEIT). PSYC's student-faculty ratios for students in its plans have been roughly constant over the past four years, and they are quite similar to those other three departments' for F18 (the figures in CSEE and IS catching up to PSYC's only recently with the boom in COEIT enrollments).

Reviewers' Evaluation:

The Reviewers describe five strengths of the PSYC Department, as follows:

1. Diversity and inclusion, as evidenced in "student and faculty demographic composition, curriculum, in research foci, and increasingly in departmental climate and culture," and including also PSYC faculty's leadership on D&I efforts College- and University-wide. (I will add that PSYC will be working in 2019-20 with Baltimore Racial Justice Action to pursue racial equity training for faculty and graduate students, a program recommended by PSYC's Ethnic and Cultural Diversity Committee, endorsed by the Chair, and funded jointly by the Department, the Dean's Office, and the Provost's Office. I hope that this work will provide models for the College.)

2. A student-focused curriculum, "responsive to identified student development needs, such as the Writing Fellows program."

3. A "comprehensive" faculty mentoring program, with policy, procedures, and guidelines "to help ensure that the process continues through changes in leadership."

4. Alignment with UMBC's strategic plan, especially in the PSYC graduate program foci on "applied and community based initiatives and opportunities." (I will add that PSYC is a leader at UMBC in community-engaged research, scholarship, and undergraduate and graduate education, and many of its faculty members have been recognized internally and nationally for their work in this area.)

5. The "integrative nature of graduate programs," with synergies in the areas of "applied, community engaged research that works with communities to increase knowledge, design interventions, improve outcomes, and better the lives of vulnerable populations."

It is disappointing that the Reviewers offer virtually no discussion of the Department's academic programs themselves (curricula, assessment approaches, or students' views of the programs), other than brief mention of the methods and statistics sequence in response to a specific query from PSYC. Consequently, their report is primarily a high-level set of observations and recommendations, useful in some respects but offering few concrete suggestions for how PSYC should address the concerns raised.

Under weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, the Reviewers' report includes notably the following:

- "A focus on growth without a corresponding emphasis on vision," by which the Reviewers mean that faculty "research and teaching interests are relatively scattered over many different areas and quite thin and isolated within each area," with resulting difficulties in prioritizing among PSYC's multiple programs. The Reviewers recommend "facilitat[ing] an organic and realistic integration of different programs," making visible existing areas of connection across programs such as Human Services Psychology (HSP) and Applied Developmental Psychology (ADP).
- Faculty productivity, specifically related to research: The Reviewers indicate "a need for further analysis and action around barriers for some faculty to grant development, submission, as well as research writing and publication outcomes," and they suggest several mechanisms to address supports and incentives, including for "impactful public scholarship efforts and outcomes."
- Space: Need to invest in "improvements in research space functionality," including both immediate issues (related to safety and privacy) and long-term opportunities to reduce "redundancy and inefficiency" in research space use.
- Opportunities for shared initiatives between main campus and the Universities at Shady Grove, as well as between UMBC and external partners.
- "Faculty composition to achieve academic mission," specifically the relatively low and apparently decreasing percentage of undergraduate courses taught by tenured and tenure-track faculty.
- Staff infrastructure and capacity "surrounding advising, budgets, and workload requirements," notably the need for more professional advising given a currently heavy advising load for faculty (increase by 40% per faculty since FY13).

Many of these observations bear upon one another. For example, the Reviewers' identification as challenges of both "faculty productivity" (meaning research) and "faculty composition to achieve academic mission" (meaning teaching, esp. by tenured and tenure-track faculty) raises larger questions about mission and emphasis, as well as resources. Therefore, I will discuss the areas for action collectively here; my specific recommendations are in *italics*.

Mission, vision, and mentoring: The Reviewers focus on mission and vision in the sense of PSYC's multiple programs and curricular emphases, and I agree that the Department should develop a stronger sense of how its various offerings are interconnected, perhaps around several content foci. This work is already beginning in some areas, for example by working to connect the Industrial-Organizational (I-O) Psychology MPS with Instructional Systems Development, as well as renaming an existing undergraduate certificate to coincide with I-O Psychology. Clearly there is room for additional thinking about potential connections, especially across the major Ph.D. areas. The Self-Study suggests the desirability of revising the Department's mission statement to reflect its emphasis on diversity, inclusion, social justice, and engaged community scholarship (p. 38). *I encourage the PSYC faculty to have a discussion about vision and directions, especially as they link the Department's existing areas of strength. Developing clearer direction may help in recruiting faculty and students, seeding potential collaborative research opportunities, and conveying the particular hallmarks of our PSYC Department within and beyond UMBC.*

Faculty and staff hiring: The enrollment data make clear that PSYC needs additional faculty lines, whether considered in the CAHSS context or in the larger UMBC context. *Ideally, PSYC will add as many as four lines (beyond replacing current and forthcoming retirements and resignations) over the next 4-5 years—and I am prepared to indicate this in the next CAHSS multi-year hiring plan, subject as always to budget opportunities.*

The Department needs to determine how it would seek to fill those lines, if available, and this should be part of the discussion described above about mission and vision. *Specifically, I would request a multi-year hiring plan from PSYC* that explains (a) how requests for lines reflect the collaborative thinking about areas of research and curricular connection among its programs (i.e., not a plan that merely seeks one or two lines each for different areas or programs); (b) how the lines address the Reviewers' concern about the extent of teaching by adjunct faculty in PSYC; (c) the desired balance between tenure-track and lecturer lines.

In anticipation of this significant additional faculty hiring, *I am asking the PSYC senior faculty to meet early in the 2019-20 academic year, perhaps in a retreat setting, to air their views about expectations for junior faculty and come to some common understanding.* Recent challenges have made clear that several senior faculty members disagree strongly about the relative weight to be given to research, teaching, and service, a disagreement that is currently contributing to severe difficulties for some junior faculty members. The department must act soon to ensure that newly hired faculty will receive consistent, collective messages. I will expect a report from the Department on the results of this conversation.

I agree with the Reviewers that the advising load on PSYC faculty has become too large, given the number of undergraduate <u>and</u> graduate students in the Department. *The next academic advising position created in the College, as part of the coordinated CAHSS advising team, should have primary responsibility in PSYC.* In practice, this means that the individual would be hired through a search including PSYC faculty and staff and CAHSS advising team members, would be housed in PSYC with the preponderance of responsibilities there, would be expected to participate in CAHSS advising network endeavors, and would officially report to the College's advising coordinator. Barring budget setbacks, I expect that we will be able to create this position within the next two years; I would hope that the Provost's Office might assist in funding the position, given the importance of PSYC to UMBC's student success goals.

Research productivity: The Reviewers' observations contain a degree of self-contradiction, insofar as they recommend both more teaching of undergraduates by tenure-track faculty and more efforts toward grant and research production. (Adding more tenure-track faculty will not alone address this contradiction.) I wish the Reviewers had provided more specific ideas and examples for possible action, for example regarding "focused supports and incentives for moving from small/seed grant and pilot data stage to larger external grant stage." I do think that "identification of promising collaboratives" is a sensible suggestion, beginning within the Department. In addition, several CAHSS centers and initiatives—such as the Center for Social Science Scholarship (CS3) and the Collaborative for the Interdisciplinary Promotion of Health Equity Research (CIPHER)—are designed specifically to provide opportunities for faculty convening and small grants. The College is working to build capacity for grants assistance (identifying prospective funding sources, offering advice on content, etc.), beyond the existing pre- and post-award support provided by MIPAR across the social sciences and by PSYC's own business manager. I would welcome a plan from the Department about ways to support grant writing and other research endeavors, which could be shared with the Office of the Vice President for Research (OVPR) and Provost's Office for possible

support. (See also my notes on space below, which also bear upon research collaboration and productivity.)

Especially important is the Reviewers' point about examining "whether/how faculty are developing scholarly products of impact beyond traditional peer review outlets," including "impactful public scholarship efforts." Given PSYC's emphasis on and success in community-engaged research, and the UMBC Faculty Senate's recent passage of new *Faculty Handbook* language regarding such research in the promotion and tenure process, *I strongly encourage the Department to review and, as necessary, revise its P&T policies and guidelines to ensure that such work receives appropriate consideration.* (I will be encouraging CAHSS departments to undertake this process, likely beginning with those where this work is already an important part of faculty members' scholarship.)

Space: The Reviewers describe what has long been clear, that research space in PSYC is currently not used most effectively. The current configuration results largely from the design of the Math/Psych building, with numerous separate labs with multiple interior spaces, many of them designed for similar functions. Addressing this challenge—which could be compounded as more faculty are hired—will require a collaborative approach both within the Department and across the University (Department, Dean's Office, Provost's Office, Facilities Management, and potentially Office of the Vice President for Research). *I recommend that PSYC work with Facilities Management to develop a plan for redesigning lab spaces "to support specific functions, as well as potential collaboration/sharing across clusters of faculty," as recommended by the Reviewers.*

More specifically: The College is willing to commit substantial funding to such a project, and I hope that the Department, the Provost's Office, and the University would be willing to do so as well. I expect that this project would take a number of years—first for PSYC faculty to gather information about similar projects at other institutions and think about potential collaborative spaces; next to develop possible ideas and plans with assistance from Facilities Management; then to pursue the design stage; and finally to undertake the project. The first steps could occur over the 2019-20 academic year, with the goal of using an expected vacated space (Rabin lab, possibly starting Spring 2021) as swing space during renovations. (To be clear: it has not been determined that all of that vacated space will ultimately go to PSYC, given other needs in the College.) During this process, it would be sensible not to devote considerable funds to individual renovations, a consideration that might affect the sequence and startup budget of new faculty hiring.

More immediately, PSYC should work with Facilities and Environmental Safety and Health to identify specific space issues regarding safety and privacy, and provide the Dean with its findings and attendant cost estimates. With that information, I will work with the Provost's Office to try to address such pressing concerns.

Academic Programs: The Reviewers have very little to say about PSYC's academic programs, including virtually nothing on assessment or its findings, the program at Shady Grove, or the Psychology Training, Research, and Service Clinic. However, the Self-Study and my own observations suggest several recommendations:

- I-O Psychology and ISD: There is opportunity for growth in two largely self-funded programs, the I-O Psychology MPS and the programs in Instructional Systems Development (the latter not included in this APR), especially because they are now within the same academic department. Moreover, these programs are directly connected to workforce development, a central objective of UMBC and the State of Maryland. I strongly encourage

the Department to pursue the synergies between these programs, ensure their currency, and work with the Division of Professional Studies and the Graduate School to market them most effectively to the broadest possible constituencies (notably because the ISD program can be completed online).

- Opportunities for undergraduate students: PSYC has been innovative in creating writing fellows and peer mentor programs, and in assessing these programs' impacts. I encourage the Department to continue seeking on-campus funding support (Dean's Office, Provost's Office, etc.), and will consider these as we work with OIA to develop fundraising for high-impact student learning experiences. The same holds for PSYC's goal to increase the opportunities for its undergraduates to participate in research experiences, a fundamental UMBC objective.

- Other findings in the Self-Study, not mentioned by the Reviewers, which the Department may wish to include in its Action Plan if it chooses (non-comprehensive list, in addition to those bullet points on pp. 33-35 that might be addressed by Department action):
    - Enhance "supervision and consulting" in HSP Ph.D. program (p.10)
    - Offer professional development opportunities in ABA track to cover topics not covered by curriculum or fieldwork experience settings, as well as required hours of instruction in supervision and management practices (p.11)
    - Introduce new certificate programs in I/O Psychology (p.116)

Conclusion:

Psychology is an essential department at UMBC in many ways. Its interlocking commitments to engaging students and faculty in communities, to social justice, diversity, and inclusion, and to rigorous scholarship and outstanding teaching preparing students for professional careers all resonate with UMBC's mission, vision, and strategic plan. The number of students who major in PSYC—more than 10% of UMBC undergraduates and nearly 9% of UMBC graduate students in Fall 2018—indicates both its appeal and its importance to the University's and College's student success mission. Further, the Department has long been known for path-breaking research in several areas within the discipline, with faculty members earning major grants, receiving national and international awards and recognition, and contributing significantly to the wellbeing of communities from the Baltimore area to other nations.

The Reviewers have identified several key areas needing renewed focus and discussion, as has the Self-Study. Some of these are internal to the Department, where the important discussions and planning must begin. But others require investments of resources from the College (some of which I have indicated above) and the University, particularly to achieve the collaborative potential that will enhance research productivity and the student experience. Indeed, the Department's own planning will be most fruitful with some understanding that its execution will be supported institutionally.