

**DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY**

**RADFORD UNIVERSITY**

**2013 STRATEGIC PLAN**

**(Approved 5/10/13)**

## PREAMBLE

This strategic plan articulates the 5-year aspirations of Radford University's Department of Psychology. The plan emphasizes the value that the Department places on undergraduate and graduate education, scholarship, and partnerships, each of which is a major way through which the department supports the college, university, and community. Building on existing strengths in these areas, we are optimistic about future achievements. These goals can only come to fruition with appropriate support from the college and university, however, so the plan also highlights the resources needed to achieve our goals.

### 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 a broad exposure to the field of psychology, and the tools and experiences necessary to be successful in graduate programs and in the workplace. The Psychology Department contributes to the College by promoting undergraduate student learning and professional achievement, and we will work to ensure that students taking psychology courses are provided with an education that reflects ongoing developments within the field.

#### 2. FIVE-YEAR ASPIRATIONS

##### Goal 1. *Maintain and Enhance the quality of teaching at the undergraduate level*

- 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 continued development of 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.
- Increase incentives for faculty to explore and implement new approaches and ways of delivering psychological knowledge and training to students.

##### Goal 2. *Maintain and Enhance the quality of learning at the undergraduate level*

- 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 Core Curriculum as Departmental resources allow.
- Identify ways that the graduate and undergraduate programs can mutually inform and enrich the experience of students at each level of the program.

## II. GRADUATE EDUCATION

### 1. DEPARTMENTAL PHILOSOPHY AND APPROACH

Educating and training students beyond the undergraduate degree is one of the central missions of the Psychology Department. Through a variety of graduate programs, offering several different degrees, the Department offers students opportunities to learn skills that will enable them to obtain work in their chosen fields. The Psychology Department contributes to the College by offering advanced training that provides students with the skills and knowledge needed to pursue professional employment as psychologists in a variety of settings.

### 2. FIVE-YEAR ASPIRATIONS

#### Goal 1. *Recruit and retain qualified graduate students*

- Review and set targets for a minimal number of applicants to each graduate program each year, and develop recruiting plans to attract at least this number of qualified applicants to each program
- Enroll and retain qualified students in sufficient numbers in each graduate program to allow for meaningful interaction, support, and socialization.
- Develop, implement, and monitor plans to increase the diversity of students in each graduate program.

#### Goal 2. *Provide high quality education and training in the department and in the community*

- Provide students with experiences that challenge them to learn information, think critically about the material, and to independently apply the knowledge and training in their areas of study, as measured by successful completion of 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 training sites as 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 with other departments and community groups as appropriate to enhance graduate student engagement and learning.
- Increase incentives for faculty to attend professional meetings to enhance their own learning, allowing for continued development of 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 ways that the graduate and undergraduate programs can mutually inform and enrich the experience of students at each level of the program.

Goal 3. Continue to *have at least one of our graduate programs ranked among the best nationally by a respected source using appropriate methodology*

- When data are 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.

### III. SCHOLARSHIP

#### 1. DEPARTMENTAL PHILOSOPHY AND APPROACH

Intellectual vitality is central to the 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. The Psychology Department contributes to the College by having faculty and students who conduct, present, and publish scholarly work to advance knowledge in our field.

#### 2. FIVE-YEAR ASPIRATIONS

Goal 1. *Maintain and Enhance the scholarship of faculty*

- Evaluate whether current incentives, including workload assignments, are sufficient to promote scholarship, and suggest ways that scholarship could be promoted more effectively. Identify and evaluate ways in which impediments to scholarship can be circumvented.
- 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.
- Use scholarship in appropriate ways to support community engagement and dialog.

Goal 2. *Maintain and Enhance the scholarship of undergraduate and graduate students*

- Finds ways to provide travel stipends for graduate 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 effectiveness of our undergraduate research courses (PSYC 301, 302, and 400-level labs) and that of our graduate courses (PSYC 600-series) in training students to conduct and analyze research. Recommend changes as necessary.

#### **IV. LOCAL, REGIONAL, AND INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS**

##### **1. DEPARTMENTAL PHILOSOPHY AND APPROACH**

Educating and training students for learning, service, and research in the local, regional, or international communities is a priority for the Psychology Department, as is providing the larger community with the benefits of this training. The Psychology Department contributes to the College by providing faculty and students opportunities to learn and work in a variety of local, regional, and international community-based partnerships, which benefits both our students and the communities in which we are embedded.

##### **2. FIVE-YEAR ASPIRATIONS**

Goal 1. *Ensure that our partnerships and community outreach programs are distinctive, effective, and known*

- 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*

- Increase the number of opportunities offered through our Psychology courses throughout the year 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.

## **V. Resource Requirements**

The resources needed by the Department to meet our goals are sufficient high quality faculty, students, technological support, support staff, and facilities. The extent to which these resources are available will have a direct impact on our ability to achieve our Departmental goals over the next five years.

### Faculty

- It is critical that each faculty member has adequate time necessary to provide a quality education to both undergraduate and graduate students. While teaching load is certainly a vital aspect of reaching this goal faculty also need adequate time and resources to a) remain current in the content of their discipline, b) engage in scholarly work and grant writing in their discipline, c) supervise student research and activities (e.g., independent study, practica, theses, dissertations), d) keep abreast of technological advances that may aid their teaching, and e) attend conferences to enhance their professional development as teachers and researchers.
- 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 professional leave, and to revise ongoing courses and develop new courses.

### Students

- Undergraduates need funding beyond what is currently available for conducting research and traveling to conferences.
- Graduate students need funding beyond what is currently available for conducting research and traveling to conferences.
- There must be sufficient funding to allow graduate students to receive assistantships and fellowships that are competitive with other peer institutions.

### Facilities/Technological Support/Support Staff

- Resources such as space and equipment must be available to support lab courses.
- It also must be recognized that our 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).
- Professional, dedicated, technological support must be available within the college to support faculty and students' technology needs. All too often, these needs fall to faculty to meet, taking valuable time away from what should be higher priority activities.

- 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, computers, assessment material).