

Final Assessment Report

Name of Program

Psychology, Huron University College

Degrees Offered

Bachelor of Arts

External Consultants

Dr. Kim Fenwick - St Thomas University
Dr. Colleen MacQuarrie - University of Prince Edward Island

Internal Reviewers

Dr. John Mitchell - Brescia University College

Date of Site Visit

January 25, 2016

Evaluation

Good Quality

Approved by SUPR-U

April 13, 2016

Approved by SCAPA

April 27, 2016

Executive Summary

The site visit occurred on January 25 – 26, 2016. The consultants met with the Principal, Dean of Arts and Social Science (FASS), Department Chair and all fulltime faculty, Psychology students, FASS Administrative Assistant, Assistant Dean - Student Services, the Academic Advisors, Student Mobility Coordinator, Writing Services Coordinator, Director of Library and Learning Services, Research and Learning Support Officer, Student Internal Reviewer, and Internal Reviewer.

The consultants brought attention to the focus of the program on research and writing and identified this as an important strength of the program. Learning outcomes, with the integration of content instruction and problem-solving and critical thinking projects, are appropriate and achieved. The consultants recommended the development of several initiatives to support better communication with students concerning program progression and graduate school application procedures. The program structure and curriculum were considered appropriate although the consultants recommended development of a 2nd year methods and statistics course. They also considered the issue of two introductory Psychology courses, one that integrates a lab component and is intended for students who will pursue a Psychology module, and one intended for non-psychology students.

The consultants commented on the limited resources of the Department; limited faculty resources and limited laboratory space. They did, however, also comment on the quality of instruction including that offered by the sessional instructors, all of whom have PhDs and have taught for 5 or more years at Huron.

The reviewers complimented the program for achieving quality outcomes and recognize this as a strong program, concluding with the statement that "Clearly the benchmarks for a quality undergraduate education are being realized within the Psychology programme at Huron University College..." (p. 10).

Significant Strengths of Program

The external consultants' report noted a set of significant strengths of the program. A particular strength, and hallmark of the curriculum, is the focus on research and writing skills, including exposure to experimental psychology practices in the first year experience. Furthermore, "At each year of instruction, courses integrate content instruction with problem-solving and critical thinking projects" (p. 2).

The external consultants also recognized the quality of the faculty as a significant strength, including the fact that all instruction, including that done by sessional instructors, is done by faculty holding PhDs and who have extensive teaching experience.

Recent programmatic enhancements that provide experiential learning opportunities and a connection with the community were also noted.

Suggestions for improvement & Enhancement

The consultants recommended that the Department reconsider offering Psychology 1100E, the first year Psychology course that integrates a significant lab component and is intended for students who plan to pursue a Psychology degree module at Huron. The Department, however, considers this course as important for establishing the research orientation of the Psychology program at Huron and in differentiating Huron's Psychology program from that at the constituent university and the other affiliated university colleges.

They also suggested that the Department continue and expand experiential learning opportunities, such as the partnership with the YMCA.

There was support for the Department to continue to broaden the range of courses offered, as well as the recommendation (noted under Recommendations) for a new 2nd year methods and statistics course.

The consultants suggested increased support for the Chair together with fewer committee duties for the Chair. Changes in this area, however, depend in part on negotiations with the Huron Faculty Association.

The consultants also recommended less reliance on sessional faculty and additional lab space for Psychology faculty and students. Since neither are outside of what is commonly found and are not required for program sustainability this is included here so that it is noted, rather than include as a recommendation required for program sustainability. Expansion of lab space and student space is part of the considerations included in discussion at Huron about a new Learning Commons and an expected capital campaign.

Recommendations required for Program sustainability:

Recommendation	Responsibility	Resources	Timeline
Explore enhanced communications with students (e.g. assigning each Psychology student a faculty mentor).	Department		2016-17
Develop a 2000-level methods and statistics course, in consultation with Psychology Departments on other Western campuses.	Department, EPC	Faculty	2016-17