MEMORIAL UNIVERSITY — **Sir Wilfred Grenfell College**

Division of Social Science

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March 11, 2010

Dear Vice-Principal Iams,

The Psychology Program faculty and staff thank the Review Panel for their work on the Psychology Academic Program Review. The panel has done an excellent job highlighting the "strength and efficiency of the psychology programs offered at Sir Wilfred Grenfell College." The panel has likewise made explicit "the need for increased resources to continue to operate the undergraduate program at a high level of success."

We are grateful for the support of the panel of all six of the recommendations presented in the Self Study, subject to caveats and explanations which they presented. We have considered these and the other ten recommendations and offer a response:

<u>Recommendation One</u>: *That the Psychology program unit advocates and promotes a more assertive and public approach to addressing its resource, teaching and research needs.*

Response: We have interpreted 'public' to mean within the Grenfell setting and accept this recommendation. We note for the sake of information that we have repeatedly asked administration for more resources and take advantage of opportunities presented to us. For example, we made application to the $1000/division for recruitment and retention activities and have organized a Psychology Scavenger Hunt for All First Year Students. In addition, we work with the Psychology Society to promote Psychology Month, Mental Illness Awareness Month and other awareness campaigns. We promote our program outcomes on our website and on posters.

<u>Recommendation Two</u>: *The Review Panel supports, as a high priority, additional research space to accommodate the faculty/staff and student research needs of the program, subject to its justification.*

Response: We appreciate the Review Panel recognizing the shortage of research space for psychology. We feel that senior administration has not historically and currently addressed the research needs of the Psychology Program. Our current space existed in 1980 and has not expanded with the addition of our four degree programs, increases in the number of students, or with the expectations of increased research productivity from faculty. In fact, our space has decreased when the College took over one of our original rooms in AS 341 to store the compute hub. We recognize the space limitations and we are working with other programs to try to maximize space for teaching and research needs. For example, the Psychology program is working with Business and Social/Cultural Studies to present a proposal for some research space that could be used for interviews/focus groups and teaching (through the use of a one-way mirror) should space become available in the new addition to the Arts and Sciences, the long-term facility or within the the Arts and Science Building as a result of the new addition.

Recommendation Three: *A dedicated budget should be provided to support student attendance and the presentation of student research at local and national conferences.*

Response: We accept this recommendation and note for the sake of information that a new award, the Alan and Patricia Wright Psychology Conference Travel Award, has recently been established and the first one will be awarded this term (Winter 2010). However, this new award will only partly satisfy the recommendation and additional funding is still needed. The competitive nature of acceptance into psychology graduate programs requires that students have research experience, including the dissemination of research results. Not providing these opportunities puts our students at a disadvantage. Given our strong honours program, supporting student travel to conference complements the research being done by our honours students.

Recommendation Four: *The current budget for the psychology program unit should be enhanced to accommodate the upgrading of outdated or obsolete equipment and the purchase of new equipment, which can be justified for use in teaching and research.*

Response: We accept this recommendation and note for the sake of information that a letter outlining our needs for new equipment (our 'wish list') is submitted to the Head each fall as a result of a request to all programs for such. However, to date, no funding has been received. To reflect the expertise of new faculty members and changes within the discipline of psychology, equipment is needed to enhance teaching and research. New faculty have been attempting to secure external and internal funding but have been unsuccessful to date. Without existing infrastructure, it is extremely difficult to be competitive in research applications. Indeed, one of our top first-year psychology students is considering pursuing a psychology degree elsewhere only because we cannot provide the hands-on experience that he is seeking in neuropsychology; we have the expertise, but lack the EEG equipment that would retain that student, and others like him.

Recommendation Five: *Two computers with sufficient memory and software to enable students, as well as faculty and staff, to compile, collate, store and analyze research data should either be assigned and upgraded from existing Computing and Communications equipment or purchased separately.*

Response: This equipment is needed for students to work on data in a private room (as data is confidential). Students who are working as research assistants, or who are conducting research for their honour thesis, need computers with these capabilities in particular.

Recommendation Six: *Additional faculty/staff positions, with full justification and rationalization, should be given a high priority, especially if additional undergraduate laboratory courses or a graduate program is to be incorporated into the psychology unit offerings.*

Response: Since the inception of SWGC in 1975 as a two-year "feeder" institution to prepare students for transfer to the St. John's campus, Psychology has been staffed by 6 full-time faculty members. We have progressed from teaching the first 2 years only to a Department now offering four degree programs. However, there has been no concomitant increase in faculty.

In terms of human resources, the Psychology Program has 6 full-time faculty members and 1 laboratory instructor. The 2005 SWGC Factbook listed a total of 93 permanent and contractual faculty (and 225 staff) for that year. Thus, in 2005, the Department had slightly over 6% of the

faculty at SWGC and taught approximately 10% of the course enrollments and 20% of the <u>declared</u> majors. Yet, Psychology was allocated only 8% of net expenditures for academic programs in that year. The Psychology Program has graduated more students than any other unit at the College during the years 2000 – 2007 (see Appendix A).

Our psychology graduates are accepted into a variety of graduate programs (including graduate programs in psychology, sociology, and public health) and professional programs (including fast-track education and nursing, social work, occupational therapy and physiotherapy). This also demonstrates that our program is quite successful. We need money or we, eventually, will not be able to sustain this level of education for students.

Our laboratory instructor staff member is currently marking 53 labs per week, in addition to term lab reports and research proposals. This number will increase as Tourism students will now be taking Psychology statistics courses. She is consistently a second reader on honours theses. (see letter requesting faculty). Recommendation 6 of the self study requested that the position of Instructional Assistant in Psychology be re-established to assist with program needs including tutoring of students, providing academic advice to students, and providing other support to teaching faculty.

Our students have thrived despite funding that has provided us with fewer faculty, and less equipment and space than is needed. We feel we can provide more and better opportunities for students with increased resources.

We would like also to clarify a statement of fact in the report:

1. The Sexual Behaviour course is offered yearly (and sometimes twice in a year if taught in intersession), not every second year.

<u>Recommendation Seven</u>: *The committee supports recommendations 1 through 3 of the Self Study recommendations, all of which are related to the needs of psychological research in the program unit.*

Response: We are pleased that the Review Panel also recognizes our need for an additional faculty member, space and equipment as we have requested these additional resources on multiple occasions, including in recent months.

<u>Recommendations Eight through Thirteen</u>, and <u>Fifteen</u> all have to do with the program curriculum. Therefore, we will address them as a group.

Recommendation Eight: *Maintaining a balance of course additions and deletions should be a goal of the program unit. As new courses are added to reflect changing faculty expertise and student interest, other courses, especially those offered less frequently or with declining enrollments, should be archived.*

We would like also to clarify a statement of fact in the report:

1. The new courses do count toward the psychology major.

<u>Recommendation Nine</u>: *Given the reasons for introducing new courses listed in (a), we recommend that these courses count toward the degree major.*

<u>Recommendation Ten</u>: *Given that 3000-level courses provide the only flexibility in the programs, it is recommended that schedules of these course offerings be communicated to students in a two-year window, so that they can plan a future timetable of course selection.*

<u>Recommendation Eleven:</u> *Review the pre-requisites for 3000-level courses to ensure that they accurately reflect the needed prior knowledge of each course. One goal of this review should be to identify courses that would be appropriate for non-majors, and redesign the pre-requisites for those courses to increase their accessibility.*

<u>Recommendation Twelve:</u> *Over the long-term the committee suggests that the faculty develop a process to re-examine and potentially revise their core area offerings.*

<u>Recommendation Thirteen:</u> *That the Psychology program faculty, in consultation with other academic program units consider the possibility of streamlining the delivery of the three statistics and research method courses.*

<u>Recommendation Fifteen:</u> *The committee suggests that the faculty examine whether access to some 3000-level courses could be granted with fewer statistical pre-requisites.*

We would like also to clarify a statement of fact in the report:

1. Minors do not require all three statistics courses. They only require the first one (2925).

Response: The recommendations made by the panel regarding curriculum mirror recent conversations the department has been engaged in for some time. Specifically, our curriculum discussions have focused on a number of topics both directly and peripherally related to the panel's recommendations. These topics, although the list is not exhaustive, include:

- The general structure of the program

- The content of the Research Methods and Design Courses (2925, 2950, 3950)

- The requirements for a minor in Psychology

    o Is a research methods requirement necessary?

    o Other possible formats

- The numbering of courses

- The prerequisites for 3xxx majors courses

    o Should the prerequisites be changed generally or only for specific courses? For specific students?

    o Should courses at the 3rd year level that seemingly do not require the existing prerequisites even be taught as majors courses at the third year level?

- The development of new courses

    o Should new specialized courses be developed to reflect current faculty interests?

OR Should the new information be taught in the existing course structure?

The evolution of student wants, departmental composition and the field of psychology in general necessitates change and in recognition of this we have been working towards dealing with these issues.

Although there are different opinions within the department about the recommendations and the points listed, it is the belief of the department that there are no quick fixes for these issues and nor should there be. It is the belief of the majority of the department that the modifications suggested by the panel have the potential to seriously impact the functioning of the program both negatively and positively. To insure that the latter result is achieved, we continue to discuss these issues.

Recommendation Fourteen: *That psychology program faculty consider implementing a system to augment their current means of providing relevant program and career information to students in each year of the program.*

Response: We accept this recommendation and have started to implement this. For example, we have developed a brochure which does this. This brochure will be distributed to all psychology students as soon as it is printed.

Recommendation Sixteen: *Psychology should investigate the offering of a research-oriented applied experimental psychology graduate program that would complement student and faculty/staff needs. The analysis should include a potential offering of suitable graduate courses, space requirements for teaching, research, and equipment storage, additional faculty and staff appointments, graduate student funding, and any other resources deemed necessary to the Psychology unit to support such a program.*

Response: If Recommendations 1 through 7 were addressed by Senior Administration (that is, we were provided with more resources—space, equipment, and faculty members), we could begin to conceptualize a graduate program. The Self Study contained two possible models proposed by faculty members.

In conclusion we thank the review committee for its careful work and look forward to working with administration to address our critical needs and to further strengthen the Psychology Program.

Sincerely

Sonya Corbin Dwyer
Chair, Psychology

c: Kim Myrick

Appendix A
Number of Graduates by Discipline (2000 – 2007)[1]

Degree Type	Discipline	Number of Graduates (2000 – 2007)	Number of Full-Time and Part-time Faculty (2009)
B.A. Honours	**Psychology**	**69**	
B.A. General	**Psychology**	**110**	
	English	113	8 full-time faculty, 4 part-time faculty
	Environmental Studies	71	10 full-time faculty who are affiliated with a number of Programs
	Social/Cultural Studies	27	
B.Sc. Honours	Environmental Science: Biology	15	
	Environmental Science: Chemistry	13	
	Psychology	**6**	
B.Sc. General	Environmental Science: Biology	102	
	Environmental Science: Chemistry	29	
	Psychology	**8**	
Bachelor of Fine Arts	Theatre	138	4 full time faculty, 6 staff
	Visual Arts	131	7 full-time faculty, 4 visiting professors, 3

[1] Data on graduates provided by the Registrar's Office, SWGC. Note that the period is 2000-2007 so the total number graduated is different from Table 7 (1999-2009). Number of full-time faculty taken from Departmental Web Sites (2009).

			staff
	Psychology Total Degrees	**193**	**6 full-time faculty, 1 staff**
	Environmental Science: Biology Total Degrees	117	6 full-time faculty, 7 staff
	Environmental Science: Chemistry Total Degrees	42	5 full-time faculty, 7 staff

**Action Plan in Response to
the Recommendations of the Review Panel
Psychology Program
Sir Wilfred Grenfell College, Memorial University of Newfoundland
February 24, 2010**

Recommendation 1: *That the Psychology program unit advocates and promotes a more assertive and public approach to addressing its resource, teaching and research needs.*

> **Comment:** The Unit unanimously agrees.
> **Action:** We think it is time for the senior administration to acknowledge that the Psychology Program has the highest enrollment at SWGC and our resources should reflect this. We will request a meeting with senior administration to discuss this neglect.
> **Responsibility:** Program Unit; Head of Division; Senior Administration

Recommendation 2: *The Review Panel supports, as a high priority, additional research space to accommodate the faculty/staff and student research needs of the program, subject to its justification.*

> **Comment:** The Unit unanimously agrees.
> **Action:** We formally request additional space, either in the new addition or in rooms vacated by others moving into the new addition (examples of space that would meet the program's needs are AS 350 (for an animal lab), AS 360 and AS 307 (for an interview room with a one-way mirror and a computer lab for the Social Science Division for research and teaching purposes), Folklore Archive and Resource Centre (which is sound-proof and would be ideal), and AS 370B (for a Social Psychology/Development Psychology lab)). We need space, and we are flexible in terms of where the space is.
> **Responsibility:** Program Unit; Head of Division; Senior Administration

Recommendation 3: *A dedicated budget should be provided to support student attendance and the presentation of student research at local and national conferences.*

> **Comment:** The Unit unanimously agrees.
> **Action:** The Unit formally requests $5000 for student travel for conference participation.
> **Responsibility:** Head of Division; Senior Administration

Recommendation 4: *The current budget for the psychology program unit should be enhanced to accommodate the upgrading of outdated or obsolete equipment and the purchase of new equipment, which can be justified for use in teaching and research.*

> **Comment:** The Unit unanimously agrees.
> **Action:** The Unit formally requests $75,000 for new equipment. This is a one-time expense. It is important to note that relative to the number of students we teach in and graduate from the Psychology Program, we have consistently had disproportionate levels of (low) funding.
> **Responsibility:** Head of Division; Senior Administration

Recommendation 5: *Two computers with sufficient memory and software to enable students, as well as faculty and staff, to compile, collate, store and analyze research data should either be assigned and upgraded from existing Computing and Communications equipment or purchased separately.*

> **Comment:** The Unit unanimously agrees. Computing and Communications took two computers from the Psychology research rooms and they were not replaced.

> **Action:** We formally requests two computers as described in the recommendation.
> **Responsibility:** Head of Division; Senior Administration

Recommendation 6: *Additional faculty/staff positions, with full justification and rationalization, should be given a high priority, especially if additional undergraduate laboratory courses or a graduate program is to be incorporated into the psychology unit offerings.*

> **Comment:** The Unit unanimously agrees.
> **Action: The Department should be increased to seven full-time faculty members by September 2010.** This would allow the Department to supervise a greater number of Honours students than we can currently handle. The addition of a faculty member could also help with sabbatical replacements, with per-course replacements which are contractually required by teaching relief for first-year faculty, and with the projected decrease in teaching load for SWGC faculty. Additional faculty will also be useful for replacing Psychology faculty who take administrative positions (which will occur if past trends continue).

> In the fall of 2009, we requested one tenure-track position and one three-year contract position, using information from the Self Study to justify our requests (both positions were denied).
> **Responsibility:** Program Unit; Head of Division; Senior Administration

Recommendation 7: *The committee supports recommendations 1 through 3 of the Self Study recommendations, all of which are related to the needs of psychological research in the program unit.*

> **Comment:** The Unit unanimously agrees.
> **Action:** We will continue to request more resources.
> **Responsibility:** Program Unit; Head of Division; Senior Administration

Recommendations 8 through 13, and 15 all have to do with the program curriculum. Therefore, we will address them as a group.

Recommendation 8: *Maintaining a balance of course additions and deletions should be a goal of the program unit. As new courses are added to reflect changing faculty expertise and student interest, other courses, especially those offered less frequently or with declining enrollments, should be archived.*

Recommendation 9: *Given the reasons for introducing new courses listed in (a), we recommend that these courses count toward the degree major.*

Recommendation 10: *Given that 3000-level courses provide the only flexibility in the programs, it is recommended that schedules of these course offerings be communicated to students in a two-year window, so that they can plan a future timetable of course selection.*

Recommendation 11: *Review the pre-requisites for 3000-level courses to ensure that they accurately reflect the needed prior knowledge of each course. One goal of this review should be to identify courses that would be appropriate for non-majors, and redesign the pre-requisites for those courses to increase their accessibility.*

Recommendation 12: *Over the long-term the committee suggests that the faculty develop a process to re-examine and potentially revise their core area offerings.*

Recommendation 13: *That the Psychology program faculty, in consultation with other academic program units consider the possibility of streamlining the delivery of the three statistics and research method courses.*

Recommendation 15: *The committee suggests that the faculty examine whether access to some 3000-level courses could be granted with fewer statistical pre-requisites.*

> **Comment:** The Unit unanimously agrees to continue to explore curriculum issues.
> **Action:** We plan to have focused meetings after the winter semester to explore these recommendations and revisit the program requirements. We want to examine the program as a whole rather than look at the courses one by one.
> **Responsibility:** Program Unit

Recommendation 14: *That psychology program faculty consider implementing a system to augment their current means of providing relevant program and career information to students in each year of the program.*

> **Comment:** The Unit unanimously agrees.
> **Action:** We will continue to strengthen the approach we take to disseminating information about applying for graduate programs. For example, we have developed a brochure which does this. This brochure will be printed soon and be distributed to all psychology students. As well, students are getting involved by making a presentation in 3950 about their experiences. For the past two years, one faculty member has given a presentation on applying to graduate programs. This presentation was open to all SWGC students. Perhaps the Associate Principle (Research) can provide information on funding opportunities for graduate studies for students.
> **Responsibility:** Program Unit; Associate Principle (Research)

Recommendation 16: *Psychology should investigate the offering of a research-oriented applied experimental psychology graduate program that would complement student and faculty/staff needs. The analysis should include a potential offering of suitable graduate courses, space requirements for teaching, research, and equipment storage, additional faculty and staff appointments, graduate student funding, and any other resources deemed necessary to the Psychology unit to support such a program.*

> **Comment:** Given adequate resources, we are interested in considering a graduate program.
> **Action:** We will continue to request more resources. Then we will explore types of graduate programs that would fit with our small campus setting.

Responsibility: Program Unit