

**Department of Psychology
Program Review
Florida Atlantic University
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Review Team:

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The review team met with members of the psychology faculty, administration and student bodies (undergraduate and graduate) during a two-day visit that took place on March 23-24, 2015. Our charge was three-fold: 1) to address the three areas of concern (“questions”) provided to us in the department’s self-study, 2) to assess issues raised in the self-study that the review team saw as “the most salient for purposes of improvement,” and 3) to provide a list of actionable recommendations that could take the program to the “next level of standing.” In response to this “charge,” the review team provides below a general assessment of the quality of the department followed by the many challenges it faces arranged by general topic. In each case, the review team’s specific recommendations for action (to be taken by the department or in some cases the university administration) are indicated **in bold-faced type**.

GENERAL OVERVIEW

By all the quantitative indices of scholarship and research accomplishments made available to the review team, and supported by the views expressed by the administrative officials with whom we met, the department of psychology excels among its university and college peers. Per capita faculty productivity in terms of extramural grant support appears to be at or near the top of those units within the College of Science (based upon comparison data provided during the site visit), average faculty publication rates are reasonably strong, the quality of undergraduate and graduate instruction (as judged by the admittedly limited number of student survey responses) is very good, and even in light of considerable losses in faculty FTE and the resultant shift in faculty/student ratio, the department’s most recent junior hires hold strong optimistic views about the future and prominence of both the department and university as a whole. Despite these many positive indices, several considerable challenges exist that threaten the continued success of the department and will require urgent attention by both the faculty and administration.

FACULTY FTE

By far the most salient issue facing the department is how to maintain critical mass in its areas of research and graduate training given the attrition in faculty numbers over the past several years. The review team was not provided with annualized comparison data for other units across the college or university and so it is admittedly difficult to know how psychology has fared relative to other programs at FAU – and indeed the past several years have been challenging for universities across the country, virtually all of whom have had to absorb significant cuts in higher education funding from their state legislatures. That being said, the number of tenure-track psychology faculty in 2014 is a staggering 54%

of what it was in 2003 (currently 17.5 faculty lines down from 32.5). Consequently the faculty are deeply and understandably concerned about their ability to maintain their research and instructional programs in light of dwindling resources and the lack of assurance from the administration that the downward trend will be addressed. The review team found the level of frustration and skepticism, particularly among the more senior faculty, to be considerable and potentially counterproductive. How pervasive this “climate” concern is across the university is unknown. On the positive side, some hope and cautious optimism were expressed by several members of the faculty (and administration) surrounding the newly installed President who has publically assured faculty that he plans to take concrete steps to reverse what many see as a downward spiral in the quality of the institution over the past several years. We note that psychology is well positioned to propose hires that build upon its own strengths and are consistent with the new university priorities (“pillars” and “platforms”). However, the department’s current faculty hiring plan is unwieldy, unfocused and unrealistic. While the department’s desire to return in size to 2003 levels is understandable, its non-prioritized request for nine senior hires, 3 junior hires and several additional unspecified hires is unlikely to receive much in the way of administrative support. While the review team acknowledges the very real concerns that faculty at each of the two satellite campuses (Jupiter and Davie) have about future growth and sustainability, a hiring plan that simply proposes augmenting faculty positions at each of its three university locations is not in and of itself a justifiable plan for new faculty hires and is therefore not likely to be evaluated as either viable or realistic.

The review team strongly recommends that the department leadership work with the Provost and College Dean to engage the faculty in the difficult task of coming together to create a more realistic, less grandiose, 5-year hiring plan that identifies pending retirements and offers a prioritized list of replacement and augmentation FTE (including both ladder rank faculty and instructors) that both bridges to the new priorities set out by the university administration and addresses pressing programmatic needs. This plan should begin to build a vision of where the department wants to be at the end of the decade.

In our discussions with faculty considerable concern was expressed regarding the loss of ladder faculty to outside offers. While we recognize that an individual’s decision to leave FAU for other pastures is complex and the merits of issuing a matching or competitive offer will vary from case to case, **the review team nevertheless saw this as a significant issue and recommends that administrative efforts to retain productive faculty be a high priority going forward.**

THE UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAM

Concerns about the decrease in the number of faculty available to teach in the psychology program are exacerbated by the remarkable growth in the number of undergraduate psychology majors (a gain of over 700 students since 2007-08). According to the data provided to the review team during our visit, the *Psychology B.A.* and *Neuroscience & Behavior B.S.* majors constituted 36% of the headcount in the College in 2013-14, while the psychology faculty FTE represented only 16% of the college total. As a result, the student:faculty ratio for psychology has demonstrated a meteoric rise to levels that appear to be (based upon data provided by the department and comments provided in our meetings with administrators) among the highest within the college (approximately 79:1 in 2013). The real and potential consequences of this continuously worsening situation are considerable -- less time for faculty

to engage in research and scholarship; less time to obtain external support; less time to teach and mentor graduate students; less time to productively participate in interdisciplinary research; fewer opportunities for undergraduates to engage in independent research activities (thereby compromising a stated campus goal of *Distinction through Discovery*); and larger class sizes resulting in a pedagogically weaker education and therefore a greater likelihood of student attrition (which negatively impacts an important Board of Governors “metric”).

The review team recommends that both longer-term and short-term actions be taken by the department and the college to address this issue. More specifically:

a) Faculty FTE -- as indicated in item #1 above, the administration should be receptive to a newly created and more realistic department strategic plan for additional faculty to be recruited over the next several years as a means of ensuring that there is a critical mass for maintaining and enhancing the research and graduate training areas of the department while concurrently serving to increase class offerings, lower class sizes and reduce student:faculty ratios – the hires should address pressing programmatic needs, build upon departmental strengths, and where possible bridge to new university hiring priorities

b) Instructors -- despite the reservations expressed in the self-study that hiring instructors “may siphon off resources that might otherwise go toward hiring more tenure track faculty,” the review team saw a significant need for such hires and therefore recommends the hiring of 1-2 additional instructors (whose teaching load would be 2-3 times that of ladder faculty) to help address undergraduate instructional needs and thereby free-up ladder faculty to teach at the graduate level; and

c) Comprehensive review and revision of the undergraduate curriculum -- most importantly, there is considerable need for the faculty to conduct a thorough review of their undergraduate curriculum, particularly in view of the dramatic rise in the number of majors accompanied by the loss of ladder faculty. Related to this issue are several specific recommendations: i) faculty expressed frustration that students in their upper-division classes often did not have the requisite background to digest the course material because they had not as yet taken the appropriate lower-division courses; we therefore recommend that the department consider the sequencing of their courses by front-loading those foundational classes whose content is required for subsequent coursework and not permit a “choose from whatever is offered” approach that is currently in place. This may simply entail the identification and enforcement of appropriate prerequisites for upper-division courses; ii) the self-study data suggest that a large proportion of the seats in many psychology classes are taken by non-majors. To ensure that psychology BA and BS students get the classes they need when they need them (i.e., to improve time-to-degree and potentially reduce attrition) we recommend the institution of priority registration for psychology majors (BA or BS) in upper division courses; iii) the recent launch of a certificate program in “applied mental health services” seems at cross-purposes with the faculty’s stated focus on experimental psychology and an emerging focus on neuroscience. While it is important to help students who are interested in clinical careers, the department should carefully consider whether it wishes to feature this as part of the recruitment of majors and to devote resources that would be required to this kind of program. Currently, two of the three psychology courses included in the certificate program are

taught by an adjunct faculty member, suggesting that the department needs to carefully consider how this certificate would fit into its long-term plan. **iv) remove those courses from the catalog that have not been offered in several years (consider working with the Registrar's office to create a "dormancy" mode where the classes can be removed from the catalog but not expunged from the system so that reinstating them at a later date does not require a new approval process); v) develop a limited number of on-line (distance learning) courses whose enrollments inherently reduce the number of bodies occupying seats in classroom-based courses and increase course availability across campuses; and vi) provide discipline-specific advising to undergraduate students about such matters as preparation for graduate school – something that the undergraduate students with whom we met identified as a pressing need and current college-based advising scheme does not provide (see "Staffing needs" below).**

THE GRADUATE PROGRAM

The review team met with a group 14 graduate students, including equal numbers of Masters and Doctoral level students from the Boca and Davie campuses. (There were no representatives from the Jupiter campus.) The discussion was lively and upbeat, and students appeared to be genuinely satisfied with the quality of the program and the faculty mentorship received. Nevertheless, the students raised a number of issues, some of which the faculty were aware of and others that perhaps have not been considered. The most prominent of these included: the inadequacy of the current financial packages, the need for more flexibility and choice in satisfying the department's quantitative course requirements, the need for more timely individual feedback about student progress (students widely complained that they are only notified of their progress when they fall behind), and a strong consensus on the need for more community-building and professional development opportunities. Davie students were particularly concerned by the fact that all their courses were taught in Boca, even when the instructor and the majority of enrollees were from their own satellite campus. These students also expressed concern that they were treated as outsiders at the Boca site where they have neither office space, nor access to photocopying, printing, or computing facilities. The review committee's assessment of these various issues is incorporated in the bold-faced recommendations that follow.

For their part, the faculty also expressed concerns about the inadequacy of the financial packages offered to students. This issue is seen as the prime reason for the diminishing number of applications the department has received for graduate admission over the past five years (although decreasing faculty numbers is undoubtedly contributing to this negative trend as well). The current \$20,000 annual stipend (offered for each of the first five years) does not cover fees or health insurance leaving the students with a take-home salary that is not comparable to that of other institutions with whom FAU competes for graduate students, and is only marginally adequate to sustain a reasonable lifestyle. Everyone with whom the review team spoke (students, faculty and administrators) recognized the problem, and we encourage the university administration in the strongest terms possible to quickly address the situation. *We cannot overstate the importance of rectifying this issue.* Without a competitive support package, the best students in the applicant pool will go elsewhere, thereby compromising the quality and productivity of the research program and consequently the productivity of the science faculty who rely on graduate student efforts to help advance their research initiatives. *Additionally, excellent faculty will not choose to come to FAU if they are not confident that they will be able to attract excellent graduate students.* It is

our perception that the university seems to be focusing on how best to hire new faculty, and while this is obviously important, **the ability to elevate the program to “the next level” is contingent upon first fixing the graduate student support package.**

The psychology faculty also shared their students’ concerns about their collective ability to cover the three-course graduate level quantitative requirement, particularly in lieu of a pending retirement in this area. The self-study identifies the quantitative training of students as an area of “considerable instability,” a “main source of dissatisfaction,” and in need of “an overhaul” yet provides no information on whether such an overhaul is planned or underway. There is a stated need for a faculty member who can offer coursework and graduate training in the quantitative area but, as stated above, it is unclear what priority this FTE has over the many others listed in the department’s hiring plan. **Once again, the review team encourages the faculty to come together to evaluate and prioritize their programmatic needs in the form of a strategic plan that identifies the order of proposed new faculty hires in the context of the research and instructional mission of the department.**

In addition to the recommendations above (in bold-faced type), the review team suggests that the following actions be taken to address issues that we have identified pertaining to the psychology’s graduate program:

- a) **Creating community** – The review team was surprised to learn that there are no formal requirements or opportunities (outside of the students’ own research laboratories) for graduate students to present and discuss their research findings, or learn about what other researchers are doing outside of their own lab. The review team sees this as a critical aspect of a student’s professional development, facilitating discussions across labs and thereby enhancing the possibilities of inter-laboratory research endeavors, and creating a “community of scholars” within the department. **To accomplish these important goals, it is recommended that: i) a 1-2 credit required weekly “research seminar” (often colloquially referred to as a “brown bag” meeting) be created to provide students with the opportunity (at least once each year per student) to organize and present their research findings. Faculty members would also be encouraged to give presentations in the seminar and students and faculty from all three sites (Boca, Jupiter and Davie) would have a chance to interact with one another thereby creating a more cohesive sense of “department” than that which currently exists. And ii) the department identify a space to create a “Graduate Student Laboratory” to which psychology graduate students from all three sites would have access. Ideally, the room should be equipped with 2-3 internet-connected computers, a printer/copier, work/desk spaces, and places for students to share ideas and discuss classwork, research, or common areas of interest.** The universities of each of the two external reviewers have dedicated spaces for their graduate students as well as a required “brown bag” series. The committee believes that these are invaluable yet low-cost means of enhancing graduate student training, increasing collaboration among students (and faculty) across labs, and fostering an exciting and stimulating environment in which to work and study.
- b) **Graduate Student Recruitment** – The need for university action to enhance the financial support packages of students has already been addressed above. The review

- team offers two additional recommendations that the department itself can implement: **i) work with the college dean or appropriate administrative office to determine how to augment the graduate student financial packages using extramural research funding.** The department self-study states that 44% of faculty have some form of grant support yet only a “handful” of graduate students are supported by these funds, This undoubtedly is in large part a consequence of the considerable need for Teaching Assistantships stemming from the large undergraduate instructional load of the department. However, there should be ways of augmenting the \$20-K package (as there are at both Missouri and Santa Barbara) with supplemental funds as a means of increasing the competitiveness of recruitments offers (e.g., through enhanced stipends or travel funds). **And ii) Update and improve the department website.** The web site of the department is woefully out of date (for example, it still describes “evolutionary psychology” as a graduate training area despite the fact that the area was terminated by the department due to faculty attrition). The first portal of entry for prospective graduate students to the department is the program’s web site, and hence it is imperative to keep it accurate, up-to-date, informative, and aesthetically pleasing. This may require a “webmaster” to be identified among the faculty or staff (see “staffing needs” below) and is an important component for student recruitment.
- c) **Graduate Student Advising** – While the graduate students with whom the review team spoke expressed no dissatisfaction with the interactions or relationship they had with the department’s faculty graduate advisor, the strong majority felt that they often needed more information and in a more timely manner than what is typically provided. The most common complaint was that there was a lack of proactive advice and information about deadlines, requirements, and the like. Students generally felt that while they receive annual reports, there are no clear benchmarks for their progress to degree, and that they do not generally hear from the graduate advisor unless they are lagging behind. The external members of the review team were again surprised to learn that there was no non-faculty staff member devoted to graduate student advising, record keeping, and the monitoring of student progress. Indeed at both Missouri and Santa Barbara a full-time staff person is charged with the responsibility of keeping up to date with all departmental, college and university policies, serving as the liaison between the Graduate College and the department, and working in coordination with departmental faculty to keep graduate students informed and on-track. **The review team recommends that the department seek, and the administration provide for, a staff FTE (Program Assistant) nominally in the area of “student affairs” to address this important issue (see “staffing needs” below for more details). This staff person would be invaluable to undergraduate committee, the graduate director and the chair.**

The review team thought it unusual that the department did not identify specific timed “benchmarks” for assessing a student’s progress to degree. What exactly is expected of each student each year of their program? When exactly is the student expected to complete his/her quantitative and other course requirements, create a dissertation committee, submit a dissertation proposal, complete his/her comprehensive examinations, etc.? Typically this type of information is clearly articulated in a “graduate handbook” (in electronic form and available through a link from the department web-site). However, no

such document appears to exist for psychology. When inquiring about the matter, the review team was informed that students are referred to the course catalog for such information. We have reviewed the course catalog entry for the graduate program and while all the degree requirements are listed for the MA and Ph.D programs, there are no clearly stated benchmarks (as described above) that identify expectations for student progress. A regularly updated Graduate Handbook would also provide specific information about available courses and likely course offerings for the coming year, the title of special topics seminars, and new and relevant information from the faculty, College of Science or Graduate College that would be of interest to the graduate students in the program. **The review team recommends that the department examine its graduate curriculum and clearly define its expectations and deadlines (benchmarks) for student progress and create a “graduate student handbook” that would be maintained by the recommended new “program assistant,” as proposed above and described in more detail below.**

- d) **Graduate Student Placement Data** – The stated goals of the psychology graduate program are “to train students in Experimental Psychology and research methodology” so that graduates of the program are “qualified for professional employment in academic, government and the private sector.” Indeed ‘qualification for employment’ is arguably the most important of the department’s three defined learning outcomes for its graduate students and on that score the self-study simply states “virtually all of our Masters and Doctoral students have met the learning outcomes.” This would lead one to conclude that their students are all successfully gaining employment following graduation. However, later in the self-study the department acknowledges that it “does not have historical records of placement data.” So obviously these two statements are at odds with one another. The self-study does offer an impressive albeit “partial list” of job placements for a sample of its recent graduates. However, this is a highly incomplete and inadequate measure of program success. **The review team recommends that the department put in place a mechanism for carefully tracking the placements of its graduates (yet another task for the proposed “program assistant” position) – not only as a means of more accurately assessing its track record in this regard, but also as a means of keeping in touch with alumni for development purposes down the road.**

STAFFING NEEDS

If FAU is like other public universities across the nation (and we have no reason to believe otherwise), the recent recession and budget cuts have taken a toll on both faculty and staff who are asked to do more with less. Unfortunately, another somewhat universal truth is that when funding levels finally stabilize and eventually increase, staff hires are the last to recover. The department’s self-study reflects this reality in that they have understandably and appropriately expressed a need for additional faculty lines while surprisingly stating that space, staff and facilities are all “sufficient to meet program goals”. The review team disagrees. We observed a chair and a graduate director who are both heavily burdened by responsibilities that do not require their faculty-level expertise. **As referenced in several places above, we recommend that the department seek a full-time “program assistant” in the general area of “student affairs” who would work in consultation with the faculty graduate advisor and the**

undergraduate committee to address a variety of students needs at both the graduate and undergraduate levels. The job description for this individual would include the creation and maintenance of a graduate handbook, assisting the faculty in the development of benchmarks for degree progress and then monitoring and advising students about their individual status in the program vis-à-vis these benchmarks, maintaining the department website, coordinating recruiting initiatives, organizing colloquia, assisting the chair and the graduate director with reports, and informing students about deadlines, rules, regulations and policies. The review team discussed the viability of creating a small group of graduate student “peer advisors” (one graduate student per training area) who would be supervised by the program assistant and available to meet during scheduled hours with undergraduate students to talk about preparation for graduate school. This is something that the more centralized college advising office is ill-equipped to accomplish that could conceivably decrease time to degree and improve retention rates. Additionally, this new staff person would be expected to work closely with the Career Center to ensure that someone on its staff has the necessary background to assist students who want to pursue professional degrees (e.g., PsyD, LMFT) after graduation. The program assistant could be involved in coordinating the faculty and student speakers in the proposed “brown bag” research seminar that the review team has proposed (see above) and could take an active role in invigorating Psi Chi (the psychology honors society) and other undergraduate and graduate psychology “clubs” on campus. Finally we see this person as being responsible, along with faculty mentors, for tracking and maintaining placement data for both the Masters and Doctoral graduates of the program. In talking with the chair of the department, the review team learned that much of his time and energy was devoted to tasks that a skilled program assistant might have been able to do in part or in whole. We see the addition of a program assistant as a way of returning the chair’s role to an emphasis on leadership that contributes to research and instructional excellence. The review team is cognizant of the dire need for more faculty both in the department and across the campus, but we strongly encourage the campus administration to consider a balanced approach that includes the hiring of additional support staff who frankly are the primary ones who keep the institution running smoothly.

LACK OF GENDER DIVERSITY AMONG PSYCHOLOGY FACULTY

The review committee was surprised to learn of the unequal distribution of male and female psychology faculty members. According to the American Psychological Association, nationwide and averaged across all subfields, female students represent approximately 60% of those completing their doctoral degrees. Indeed, the self-study notes that among its undergraduates, 77% were female, and in 2012-13, female students represented 64% of the FAU graduate student body. These numbers reflect similar trends across the nation. So presumably the applicant pools for faculty positions must include a significant number of female candidates (as is indeed the case for positions advertised in psychology at the Missouri and Santa Barbara campuses of the external reviewers). This necessarily leads one to ask why there are so few women represented on the faculty in the department of psychology (women currently represent only 7 of the 23 total faculty and only 4 of the 15 tenured faculty). Have women not been hired or are they disproportionately likely to leave? The women faculty with whom we met did not raise the issue nor did we receive any complaints from the graduate students, and other than providing a table (#28) with these data, the self-study neither acknowledges nor discusses this incongruity. **The review team encourages the department to examine and discuss this disparity and determine how best to ensure that future hires reflect a more balanced approach to gender representation.** We are not suggesting that the department hire solely on the basis of gender nor seek less qualified candidates to address this imbalance, only that well-qualified women ought to be carefully considered in any future

faculty searches.

NON-CONTIGUOUS SPACE (BOCA, DAVIE AND JUPITER)

One of the questions raised by the department in the self-study, concerns the inherent challenges of having a department whose students, staff and faculty are spread across three disparate locations. At present, 14 ladder faculty and 2 instructors are located at Boca, 3 faculty and one instructor at Davie, and 2 faculty and one instructor at the Jupiter site. The self-study suggests that the Jupiter campus is being shaped as a “self-contained Neuroscience facility with separate faculty and student populations.” While this may be the case down the line, the present reality is that the majority of the students in the B.S. Neuroscience & Behavior program and the B.A. psychology program are enrolled in classes at Boca. For the relatively few psychology students currently enrolled at (or likely to be shifted to) the Jupiter site, the department asks how it can best serve them when their classes are primarily being offered in Boca. Conversely, the self-study asks how students enrolled at Boca can reasonably be expected or able to get undergraduate research experience working with faculty whose laboratories are located outside of Boca? While the review team certainly acknowledges the challenges that the current organization poses for the department, it seems highly unlikely that any significant change in this situation is going to occur in the foreseeable future. The administration appears to be investing in neuroscience laboratory and support facilities at Jupiter, which makes it an appropriate location for those current or future psychology faculty members doing animal-based neuroscience research. As for the Davie location, we understand that an attempt to move the psychology faculty to Boca several years ago failed rather dramatically due to last minute changes in the availability of appropriate space on the Boca campus. This incident, which was brought up by several members of the faculty, generated a great deal of anger and distrust of the higher administration that has not entirely waned. It therefore seems highly unlikely that the Davie psychology faculty would be positively predisposed toward a similar transfer plan should one re-emerge. Additionally and crucially, it is our understanding that the University is committed to maintaining the Davie campus and staffing it with ladder faculty. So the bottom line is that the department is going to have to figure out how best to handle this admittedly less than efficient and scattered organization for years to come. While the review team has no magic bullet in answer to the concerns expressed in the self-study about this matter, we do offer the following recommendations:

- a) **Consistent with recommendations offered above, the department should identify and take proactive steps to foster a more unified departmental climate** --- weekly talks from graduate students and faculty about their research with the expectation that all the constituents attend and the location rotate from campus to campus; identification of dedicated shared office/computing/study space for the use by all graduate students (including those from Jupiter and Davie) at the Boca site where currently all graduate classes are offered; the review team also saw the benefit of monthly faculty meetings at which everyone attends in person, not just via teleconferencing, and periodically holding such meetings at the satellite sites.
- b) **The review committee does NOT see as a solution to this problem the simple addition of multiple faculty members to each site as the self-study would suggest. Rather, decisions about future hires should be made on the basis of thoughtfully considered and prioritized research and curricular needs of the program and NOT just the presumed geographic “home” of the hire.**

- c) The self-study asks how students at Boca can be served if several of the faculty and laboratories are located at Davie and Jupiter – especially for those students wanting to obtain hands-on research experience in a laboratory located outside of Boca where the majority of students currently reside. This issue presumes that students and faculty are unwilling to move between university locations -- yet we know that graduate students mentored by Davie faculty currently take all their classes at Boca, and that Dr. Stackman (whose laboratory is located in Jupiter) has taught undergraduate neuroscience classes at Boca. So it is unclear to the review team how willing or unwilling faculty and students are to move between the three campus locations. **We therefore recommend that: i) the department consider undertaking a thorough assessment of the views of faculty and students (the latter by survey in classes so that response data are sufficient for meaningful analysis) about their flexibility in this matter; ii) if it does not already do so, the department should pay special attention to course scheduling, making sure that required classes are not offered back-to-back on different university sites and increasing the frequency of classes held on a once-per-week basis (at both the graduate and undergraduate levels) to facilitate the ability of students and faculty to move across locations; iii) in addition to creating “on-line” distance learning classes (as suggested above) the department could make use of “mixed modality” classes in which lectures are presented on-line or via “skype”-like services with face-to-face meetings with the instructor and/or GTAs to discuss course content held on a less frequent (e.g., biweekly or monthly) basis; and iv) again, if not already in place, the university administration should consider offering daily regularly-scheduled commuter bus transportation to permit the movement of human resources between the Boca and satellite locations.**

CONCLUSIONS

The review team saw a department that is admirable in many respects. The faculty has many outstanding researchers; the graduate program is doing well; the undergraduate program is thriving. The department’s officers are devoted to its well-being, and the department is well-regarded by higher administration. These are all substantial resources on which to build.

The department’s challenges are many, in light of its substantial loss of faculty and with its multiple campuses. Now, more than perhaps at any earlier time, the faculty need to meet regularly and deliberate thoughtfully on how to build a strong departmental identity and chart a path for the future. These deliberations need to involve the entirety of the department: instructional and ladder faculty as well as tenure-track and tenured faculty from all three campuses. The deliberations also need the active participation of the college’s administration, as college constraints must be considered and college commitments must be sought. Finally, of course, the department will need the university’s administration to be involved in the process from its inception: understanding how departmental concerns and aspirations can and will be connected to university-level commitments and plans is essential to the department’s ability to move to “the next level.”