Appendix D: SWOT Qualitative Comments

Strengths

Academic rigor

- Rigorous capstone sequence. The psychology program provides a more rigorous capstone progression than many other comparable psychology programs at other institutions, given the two research courses, two statistics courses, and senior thesis class.
- Intellectual rigor
- Impressive student thesis projects
- Rigorous academic curriculum—with multiple methods and stats classes required, as well as an empirical independent thesis, our students are better prepared for post-baccalaureate work than most.
- Curriculum
- Interesting courses

Individual attention

- Personal attention
- Personal attention to each student
- Individual, one-on-one mentorship between students and faculty—we know each of our students and their skills better than they know themselves. See: grad school workshops, thesis consultation/feedback, etc.
- Individualized attention. Faculty work hard to make sure that students are successful. Students have the opportunity for one-on-one meetings regularly with faculty, especially as they move through their senior capstone projects.
- Small class sizes present opportunities for higher level of engagement for students.

Alumni success

- Post-graduation employment & grad school acceptance; conference acceptance rate
- Happy alumni—many graduates remain connected with the department and clearly indicate that they recognize the value of their WU education.
- Grad school acceptance rate also very good.

Faculty

- Faculty
- Knowledgeable faculty
- Faculty commitment

Other / Misc.

- Our Psych-cess program is a unique, program-driven effort to recruit transfer students from community colleges. It has been quite successful and helps let students at other colleges know about our program.
- Increasing professional presence—both students and faculty are becoming more involved with WPA (being on various boards, etc).
Weaknesses

Lack of Opportunities for Faculty / Student Research
- No budget for student research
- Involve students more in faculty research—this is a symbiotic opportunity for student apprenticeship as well as faculty professional development. If we each are allowed (for example) two student lab assistants, could this count as their internship?
- Lack of opportunities for faculty research. If faculty could engage in more research on campus, students with similar interests could participate. Additionally, this could help attract students to the University.

Research space
- No research space
- Lack of research facility

Course offerings
- Limited courses difficult for transfer students
- Somewhat limited course offerings from a small pool of regular faculty—we are often stuck doing the same core courses and can’t branch out. Can we diversify available adjunct and full-time courses that are taught?
- Heavy reliance on adjunct faculty. Makes it difficult to provide consistent level of rigor, while also offering adequate range of upper level topics courses. Having few full-time faculty limits the number of topics courses they can teach as they typically must conduct core courses.

Branding / Identity
- Lack of student “identity” on campus—people aren’t sure who the psych students are or what they do. Need more of an established presence for activities and research projects (lab space would help!)
- Weak “brand” of WU in general—we are forced to take it upon ourselves to establish working relationships with area high schools and community colleges.
- Lack of recognition on campus
- Admissions not understanding the major when they try to sell it.

Writing skills
- Need to improve student writing
- Need more opportunities to help our students with writing skills. Many students progress to their senior year with below adequate writing skills. More stops need to exist along the way to increase the support these students receive for writing.

Faculty Workload
- Faculty workload
- Narrow options for transitioning roles and dispersal of responsibility among full-time faculty. The current chair is limited in her ability to shift out of that position. As such, she is fairly disconnected from the classroom and the academic & teaching shifting needs of students.
Opportunities

Local academic climate
- Impacted major at most Cal states
- Local psychology programs at nearby state universities are impacted. We need to continue to maximize this opportunity by building relationships with local colleges, community colleges, and high schools.

Career opportunities / development and applied content
- 2nd largest major in US
- Affordable Care Act
- New fields opening up- Neuropsychology, Media psychology
- Increase in number of applied jobs and career paths in psych- and health-related fields—this should be reflected in our course offerings in areas that are more practice-based than theoretical.
- We should emphasize the importance of applied psychology. Many of our students end up in applied fields. They should be made aware of applied research applications through their courses-not just applied clinical work. Additionally, they should have opportunities to learn more about related fields. (Our careers in psychology class is a step in the right direction).
- Focus on career development as psychology is expanding

Course content & Research emphasis
- Adding potential disciplines/courses to the department
- Even more emphasis on research and statistics
- Emphasizing psychology as a science
- Alternative and transdisciplinary research approaches. There is a push toward non-traditional or non-self-report methods of data collection, including biological measures, language analysis, etc. Though we are just getting some of these tools, we need more opportunities to maximize. Additionally, many psychology programs are partnering with engineering or media labs to develop innovate tools to help solve problems. Our positioning within MCD creates a natural opening for this level of collaboration.
- New and innovate forms of data collection are out there—technological devices, apps, etc. Could have our students work more with film, comm, animation, architecture to explore possibilities.

Other / Misc
- The growing momentum of social enterprise and socially responsible business offers unique opportunities for partnerships between psychology, other MCD majors, the School of Business, and Architecture. Creating classes or real-life opportunities to learn about, evaluate, or develop social enterprises would keep us ahead with programs like USC or UCLA.
- Film night—should be expanded in scope and participation by both students and faculty. Once it’s more established we can advertise more efficiently and potentially bring in other departments.
- Grants—we should still retain our plans to locate and apply for grants that are aimed at institutions like ours, for the purposes of facilitating research and/or program development.
- Examining our strong cultural diversity (e.g, Armenian, Saudi, etc)
Threats

Marketing

- Poor marketing by the school for our program. We have very limited visibility on campus—especially to prospective students. Not only do few people know Woodbury exists, most have no idea that we have a psychology program. This is a huge missed opportunity as psychology is the 2nd most common major in the country, with a diverse range of employment opportunities following graduation.
- Not being visible within Woodbury
- Marketing the psych department—the university has done a staggeringly bad job of promoting a hugely popular major and capitalizing on other local programs’ impaction.
- Lack of program being included in or fitting the university promotions (e.g., 4 Pillars)
- BOT [Board of Trustees] and profit-based decisions—logo, website, highly dubious external partnerships, pressure to go online… We may be dodging the worst bullets for now, but treating the university like a corporation jeopardizes everything about our department mission.
- Perceptions from outside sources—i.e., that psychology is all clinical practice; that a bachelor’s degree in psychology has no value; etc.

Funding / Space

- Lack of funding in general. The psychology program has a very small budget compared to other programs in MCD, and the student “footprint” is very small. As such, tuition from our students ultimately subsidizes other programs. Having more funding for space, research, technology, or collaborative opportunities would be beneficial.
- Funding
- Budget and space from university—feels like we’re getting “squeezed” by other programs when we should be a cash cow for the university. Where is our lab so that we can accept donations??
- No dedicated space. While design majors have dedicated spaces for their students, the psychology program has been unable to secure space on campus, despite bringing donated money to the table to furnish / supply this space. To continue the academic research rigor of the program, create better opportunities for current and future students, and increase faculty’s ability to grow professionally through research, more support should be provided by the university to provide this space.

Faculty / Research Support

- Lack of support for faculty research
- Lack of time for research
- Support for adjuncts

Admissions & Recruitment

- Admissions
- Poor admissions/recruitment
- Size- too small
● Not being visible outside of Woodbury

Skills
● We need to ensure that skills that students leave with are useful with a BA in psychology. Though we offer classes on general counseling, addiction treatment, and marriage and family counseling, most of these jobs require master’s degrees. Students should learn skills for intervening with children or what it is like to work in community mental health. Increasing theoretical or conceptual classes will not increase their marketability.

Additional Comments:
In general, I think the psych department is strong and I’m proud to be a part of it. The huge deficit is in lack of research space and funding to support our faculty. I’ve taught at USC, Pomona College, and Cal Poly Pomona, and our student training in research methods, statistics, and thesis projects is very strong comparatively. Having more support would bolster what the faculty and students have been doing and raise the research profile of the university.
Psychology Department Informal SWOT - Faculty Input
Program Review 2015-2016

Respond to the prompts below for the psychology department. Consider curriculum and academic approach, human capital, financial and physical resources, student retention, local and economic climate, and positioning within the university. Bullet points are fine, though elaboration is always helpful. You can add more rows if you get really into it, but this should give me a good picture across our faculty.

Your responses will be incorporated into the 2015-2016 Program Review. Please return by Tuesday, March 29, 2016.

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<th>Strengths</th>
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<td>(List four things that our program does well or offers that are unique…why are we awesome?)</td>
<td>(List four things we need to do to improve or that detract from the value of the program)</td>
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<td>(List four trends that or things happening in our discipline on which we should capitalize)</td>
<td>(List four things that could place our program or strategy at risk)</td>
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Additional comments / other areas of need: