Date: February 3, 2015
To: Faculty Senate
From: Academic Programs Working Group

Group members: Steve Cherry, Doug Downs, Bill Brown, Kirsten Ostergaard, Robin Gerlach, and Randy Babbitt (chair).

Re: Level II proposal for a Ph.D. in Psychological Science

The proposed Ph.D. program in Psychological Science will train students as productive research professionals and prepare them for research and teaching careers in academia, government, industry, education and non-profit sectors.

History: This proposal was presented to the University Graduate Council (UGC) on April 7, 2014 and November 5, 2014. In the course of the review by APWG in spring 2014 the UGC curriculum committee in fall of 2014, the proposal was revised twice to address reviewers recommendations. The UGC unanimously approved the proposal on December 3, 2014. The proposal was again revised to address UGC’s recommendations (See attached recommendation of UGC) to produce the current version (dated 12/8/14). The revised proposal was submitted to the APWG 12/8/14 and posted on the Faculty Senate web site for senators to review on 1/28/15. No comments were received via website. The APWG met with Keith Hutchison on 2/3/15 to discuss the proposal. APWG then drafted this review.

The strengths of the proposal identified by APWG and UGC during our substantial reviews of the proposal are summarized here.

1. The new Ph.D. builds on the current strong and successful M.S. program, converting the current M.S. program into a PhD. program. The coursework curriculum for the incoming PhD students is already in place, utilizing the rigorous current M.S. coursework, which is modelled after the first two years of a research-based Ph.D. program.

2. The faculty of the Department of Psychology strongly supports the program. The proposal includes letters of supports from several departments across the campus.

3. The level of research and research funding conducted by Psychology faculty is strong enough to support successful Ph.D. level research and to financially support Ph.D. students. Nine out of the ten Psychology faculty have recently mentored M.S. students. The Psychology department has had 13 active grants since 2009, totaling $16M. The faculty members are active in proposal writing, with 12 external grant proposals submitted in the past 12 months.

4. The proposed program is consistent with MSU’s Strategic Plan’s high priority goal of maintaining MSU’s status as a Carnegie Very High Research Activity University. Of the 108 universities with this Carnegie classification, 105 offer a Ph.D. in Psychological Science.
5. There is low overlap with existing programs in the MUS and demand is expected to be high. The expected enrollment, based on 10 tenure-track faculty members, is 16-22 students, based on current GTA funding levels (11 GTAs) and anticipated GRA support. The APWG considers the expected PhD graduate student to tenure track faculty member ratio to be a workable number. While no additional GTA support or other resources are needed to implement the program at this level, the APWG feels additional support from VPR or Provost could help kick-start the program.

6. The implementation and content of the program outlined in the proposal were judged to be thorough and consistent with a high quality Ph.D. program.

Concerns about the proposal raised by the UGC and APWG and how these concerns were addressed in the current version of the proposal are summarized here:

1. **CONCERN:** It was suggested that the proposal incorporate the utilization of resources and courses outside of the Department of Psychology to strengthen the curriculum.
   
   **REMEDY:** In order to take advantage of the interdisciplinary resources available on campus, students in the Psychological Science Ph.D. will be encouraged to take additional courses including courses from EDLD, BIOB, EIND, LAC, and STAT, which would be counted toward the Ph.D. in Psychological Sciences with the approval of the student’s mentoring committee. A list of specific courses in these areas is listed in the proposal. In addition, faculty from collaborating departments will be encouraged to serve as mentoring committee members.

2. **CONCERN:** It was recommended that the proposal further clarify the status of the M.S. Program and M.S. Degree after the Ph.D. program is implemented and whether students may still apply to and be accepted into a terminal M.S. degree program in Psychology.

   **REMEDY:** Clarifying language was added to the proposal stating that Psychology would only be concentrating on accepting PhD candidates into their graduate program. Accepted PhD candidate students would be required to complete a Master’s thesis and earn a M.S. degree enroute to their PhD. The M.S. degree will still be available. Students who earn a M.S. degree but are not successful in the PhD program would leave MSU with a M.S degree.

The APWG assessed all the concerns raised about the proposed program and judged them to have been adequately addressed and thus alleviated. The APWG recommends Faculty Senate approval.