

Chapter 7

The Explosive Growth of Psychology, 1960-1981: An Overview

The largest single and concerted leap in the growth of psychology at Rutgers took place in the 1960's and the 1970's. Psychology became one of the leading majors (as well as a way of satisfying certain distribution requirements of other majors), justifying in turn sizeable increments in the size of the psychology department in each of the colleges during the 1960's and 1970's. By 1981, when the several college departments in each of the major academic disciplines were unified into single disciplinary departments, the combined faculty for psychology from the four college departments was over 50 full-time members. In two decades, Rutgers psychology was transformed from a collection of several modest-sized college departments to a major department with a national standing.

Worth emphasizing as a boost to the growth of psychology was the increasing popularity of psychology among American college students. For students during the turbulent 60's psychology seemed a way both to understand themselves and to join a helping profession whose services were much in demand from a psychologically-minded American public.

As for the graduate program, the aspirations of the Rutgers psychologists to revive the program, often frustrated in the 1950's by lack of sufficient funding, became more realistic as the 1960's heralded a new era for Rutgers University. Coincident with the increased funding for the university by the state, and its benefits for psychology, was the dramatic increase in federal funding for psychological research and graduate training. These federal grants combined with funding from the state of New Jersey for two new psychology buildings — one on the Douglass Campus and the other on the Busch Campus — made it possible to establish or significantly enlarge research and graduate training facilities. Additional facilities became available in the 1970's with the establishment of Livingston College and the generous support the college provided for its psychology department.

Each of the next four chapters describes how psychology expanded at each of the four undergraduate colleges during the two decades. A fifth chapter describes the revival of the graduate program during this period.

The chapters devoted to each department describe the curriculum and undergraduate major of the given department. With college autonomy still in place during this period of growth, each college was able to retain and strengthen its own distinctive emphasis in its undergraduate offerings. The different emphases among the college psychology departments were already somewhat discernible in differences between the curriculum of the men's college — experimental psychology — and the women's college — developmental psychology — in previous decades. Nevertheless, as the college psychology departments grew, each college was also able to offer its undergraduates the full range of psychological topics. Also described is how the four colleges differed in self-image and in their perceived role in undergraduate and graduate training, and how these differences shaped the psychology curriculum at each college. (Also, by 1969 undergraduates coming to Rutgers had not only the option of choosing a single gender residential college — Douglass College or Rutgers College — but with Livingston College the option of enrolling in a co-educational residential college. Rutgers College also became co-educational in 1973.)

Douglass College. (Chapter 8) The emphasis on child development in the undergraduate curriculum — an emphasis established in the founding of the department by Sidney Cook in the 1920's — was enlarged in the 1960's and 1970's to include life span development as well developmental disabilities in childhood. This rich new assortment of courses in developmental psychology, augmented by a well-rounded undergraduate curriculum on other topics were made possible by the hiring of several new faculty in the department who were able to obtain federal and state support for the construction of a new building for psychology in 1964. Within this new facility, the department established its own nursery school to provide hands-on experience for students in the several courses on child development. A second major facility for the study and treatment of developmental disabilities, the Developmental Disability Center, was also established in the 1970's. With these facilities and with a research-oriented faculty, the historic emphasis at Douglass College on undergraduate, rather than graduate education also changed in the psychology department. The psychology faculty was able to offer graduate training in developmental psychology with excellent facilities for empirical research. The college itself supported this participation in the graduate program, limited somewhat by its own resources.

College of Arts and Sciences (renamed Rutgers College in 1967). (Chapter 9) The psychology department sought to revive and

strengthen the graduate program of the department. This was in line with its history as the locus of the first graduate program in psychology at Rutgers, although it departed from the clinical program established by Henry Starr in 1928. Instead, the departmental leadership recruited a research-oriented faculty of experimental, comparative, and physiological psychologists, and these areas became the primary (though not exclusive) areas of research and teaching at the graduate level. Like Douglass, the department also offered undergraduate courses on topics other than its primary focus, resulting in a well rounded curriculum. The faculty was able to attract federal funding for their research and laboratories and to impress the university administration for the need to provide a new building with modern research facilities. The Busch Psychology Building was completed in 1974, and became the home for the Rutgers College psychology faculty. The building also housed the Psychological Clinic (moved from Douglass), the newly founded Graduate School of Applied and Professional Psychology, and the offices of a New Brunswick-wide psychology chair (an administrative position that evolved under the Federated Plan described in Chapter 6).

Livingston College. (Chapter 10) The college opened its doors in 1969 and with it established a psychology department consistent with the college's focus on the social sciences. The psychology department embraced the mission of the college with strengths both in the traditional topics of social psychology and personality and in social and urban problems. The college dean was generous in providing good research space for the faculty, and strengths in the graduate program in personality and social psychology grew apace. Livingston College also defined itself as an "experimental" college and encouraged innovation in teaching methods and course offerings. For the psychology faculty Livingston was an exciting and novel experience, particularly during the early years. A generous supply of faculty lines in several areas of psychology also meant that the undergraduate curriculum, like that of the older colleges, was well rounded in course offerings.

University College. (Chapter 11) The psychology department here also grew albeit at a more modest scale than that of the other three colleges. It benefited from a couple of senior appointments in social and industrial psychology during the 1950's and then continued to make new appointments in social psychology, and to some extent in clinical psychology. The undergraduate curriculum was a combination of traditional courses and courses tailored to the adult evening school, i.e., applications of psychology in business, industry and government.

By the late 1970's the course offerings reflected new strengths and interests of the faculty, some rather novel for an undergraduate curriculum but well suited to an evening college for older adults, e.g., child rearing, death and dying, marriage and the family.

Graduate Program. (Chapter 12) The faculty for the graduate program was gleaned from the several college departments as well as from other units at Rutgers that housed psychologists, namely, Graduate School of Education, Psychological Clinic, Graduate School of Applied and Professional Psychology, and Center of Alcohol Studies. A research-oriented faculty recruited by the college psychology departments in the 1960's successfully pursued federal funds for research, for research facilities, and for graduate training grants. However, the spirit of cooperation in the 1950's among the psychologists from the colleges (including the one at Newark), from the Graduate School of Education, and from the Psychological Clinic soon dissolved into strains among the component units. The main problem accompanying the explosive growth of psychology was the contrasting demands of college autonomy and university-wide disciplinary needs for resources for a graduate program. The university's Federated Plan, actually an evolution of plans over more than a decade (described in Chapter 6), created a bumpy road for the emergence of a cohesive program as the psychology faculty attempted to conform to successive changes in the plan. The faculty was faced with the need to support the ever more centralized structure required for a cohesive graduate program while also remaining loyal to their respective college departments. It was often an exhilarating, and as often a painful experience for members of a college's psychology faculty, as psychology sought to develop both a graduate program in several specialties and to strengthen and modernize a college's undergraduate curriculum — and undoubtedly for faculty members of other disciplines and for university administrators as well. In spite of these difficulties, a strong graduate program emerged in the two decades. In 1960 there were two graduate specialties, Experimental Psychology and Clinical Psychology, both incompletely staffed and with a need for strong senior leadership. The need for senior faculty and a core faculty in the specialty areas was soon met and by 1962-63 the Graduate Faculty enunciated four graduate specialties, Clinical, Comparative-Physiological, Experimental, and Social-Industrial. By the end of the 1970's five specialty areas had evolved inline with the mainstream developments in American psychology: Biopsychology/Behavioral Neuroscience, Clinical, Cognitive, Developmental, Personality/Social. This chapter describes the growth — and growing pains — of the graduate program in psychology and

the evolution of a university-wide Department of Psychology under the Federated College Plan which gradually gave more authority to an overall chair who would oversee both the graduate and undergraduate curricula of the department.