

Chapter 13

Unification of Psychology

(The text for this chapter, with minor differences, was part of the historical synopsis in the souvenir booklet distributed during the Psychology Department's 75th anniversary celebration in 2003. The entire synopsis appears in this book as Appendix C.)

In 1981, Rutgers abandoned the Federated College Plan, so ending the struggle by the university and its academic disciplines to satisfy the incompatible demands for college autonomy and centralized control within the disciplines. The new plan, Unification (or Consolidation), called for the abolition of the disciplinary departments in the four undergraduate colleges. The faculties from these colleges were now members of a single department in their academic discipline. These unified departments were responsible for the undergraduate and graduate curricula in their discipline and for initiating the hiring and promotion of their faculty. The unified departments were organized under the newly established Faculty of Arts and Sciences (FAS) with David Mechanic as its first dean. College deans at Rutgers continued to administer many of their college's functions such as residential student life, extracurricular activities, and an honors program.

This chapter summarizes the impact of Unification on the Psychology Department. Unification marked the transition to a new era for Rutgers psychology, identified in this book as distinct new period (the fifth) in the history of Rutgers psychology. (See Chapter 1 for a description of the five time periods.) In the concluding remarks for this chapter, I have ventured a few prognostications on likely dramatic changes in departmental structure and in American psychology generally that would usher in a sixth period for psychology at Rutgers.

In the spring of 1981, the disciplines were each told by the university to elect a chair that would preside over both the undergraduate and graduate programs of the discipline. Each academic department was also instructed to write a new set of by laws, consistent with the university's guidelines for the unification of a discipline. In psychology, the by laws, approved by faculty vote, provided for a chair, a vice chair for Graduate Studies and a vice chair for Undergraduate Studies. The chair was responsible for the running the department while the vice chairs oversaw the daily operations of

their respective programs. There was also a six-member Executive Committee with rotating membership elected by the faculty at large.

The Psychology Department elected me its first chair with a new governance structure based on the by laws to oversee both the undergraduate and graduate programs. Charlie Flaherty was the department's first vice chair for Graduate Studies and Dan Ogilvie was the first vice chair for Undergraduate Studies.

Charlie Flaherty became chairman after me, and served as chairman for two other periods in the two decades following Unification for a total of 10 years. Others who served as chair during this period (and as of this writing) are Ron Gandelman (1986-1988), Charles Schmidt (1988-1991), Seymour Rosenberg (1994-1995 when I substituted for Flaherty while he was on sabbatical), Terry Wilson (1999-2001), Lou Matzel (2001-2005), Barbara McCrady (2005-2007), Gretchen Chapman (2007-present).



Seymour Rosenberg, elected in 1981 to serve as the first chairman of the unified Psychology Department. (Photo taken in 1996 during a symposium on Self and Identity under the direction of Richard Ashmore.)

The vice chairs who served the department during the same period are as follows. For undergraduate vice chair they are: Dan Ogilvie, Carlton James, Jeanette Haviland, Jean Burton, Len Hamilton, Arlene Walker-Andrews, Dave Wilder, and Arnold Glass. For graduate vice chair they are: Rob Woolfolk, Carlton James, David Brodzinsky,

Richard Lore, George Wagner, Ron Gandelman, Lou Matzel, Lee Jussim, and Gretchen Chapman.



In the two decades following Unification **Charlie Flaherty** served as departmental chairman during three different time periods for a total of 10 years. (Photo taken in the chairman's office in 1996 by Linda King.)

In addition to a new governance structure for each discipline the university sought to unify each of the disciplines geographically on one of the college campuses. Where could the Psychology Department be geographically unified? It was obvious that no single building could accommodate a faculty of over 50 members along with their specialized research facilities. Even forgoing geographic unification, it was not possible to accommodate the entire faculty in the combined space available in the two psychology buildings: Busch Psychology Building and Davison Hall.

The solution, viewed as temporary, was the allocation by the university of most of Tillett Hall on the Livingston Campus to house the psychology faculty from Douglass, Livingston, and University College. Much of Tillett Hall had become available with unification when most of the Livingston college departments housed in Tillett were geographically unified with their respective disciplines on other campuses. The university also remodeled several classrooms in Tillett for use as research laboratories for psychology.

This interim arrangement required that the majority of the psychology faculty be moved in 1981. Most affected was the Douglass faculty. They gave up Davison Hall, a building designed by and for them, and their presence on the Douglass Campus. For members of the Douglass department whose academic life and loyalties were tied to the college with its special mission to educate young women, their loss was the most acute of the faculty displaced by unification. For developmental psychologists in the Douglass faculty, unification also meant geographic separation from the Day Care Center and the DDC, both important to their teaching and research interests. Less affected were the Livingston and University College faculty, both of which had been in adequate quarters but not buildings originally designed to house psychologists. Least affected — actually unaffected — by unification was the Rutgers College faculty since they remained in the Busch Psychology Building.

The faculty in the Busch and Tillett buildings was grouped (more or less) in terms of common interests. Most unified were the behavioral neuroscience faculty at Busch and the social and personality faculty at Tillett. Most, but not all, of the developmental faculty from Douglass moved to Tillett. The clinical faculty was also housed in Tillett but separated from the Clinic and from clinical colleagues in GSAPP — all housed in the Busch building. The cognitive faculty was also split between the two buildings but later consolidated in the Busch building, some with a split appointment between the Psychology Department and the Rutgers Cognitive Science Center, later located in the Busch building when a wing was built for them.

The geographic unification for psychology contemplated by the university was the enlargement of the Busch Psychology Building so that all of the department would be housed there. In the long run then the dislocations of the faculty, particularly that of Douglass, seemed worth it given the eventual unification of psychology in the Busch Building.

The expansion of the Busch building appeared to become a reality when it was given top priority by the university for the bond issue of the mid 1980's. The plan also received the endorsement of the chairs of the other disciplines in FAS. However, when the list of building priorities was published, psychology was not even listed! Instead, expansion of the Busch building was made to accommodate GSAPP (which was already in the building but had been promised more space for several years), the Rutgers Cognitive Science Center, and the Laboratory for Vision Research.



Busch Campus

Livingston Campus



The geographic separation of the Psychology Department following “Unification.” (Photos by Linda King.)

Psychology has remained the only major department split between two locations on two different campuses. For psychology a more apt title for this chapter is **Unification of Psychology: Yes and No.**

The problems engendered by this separation were cogently summarized by Flaherty. First, the two buildings are not equally desirable. The Busch building is a modern structure, designed for psychology, and close to the Library of Science and Medicine, the principal location for psychology books and journals. Coupled with this was the perception among faculty at Tillett Hall that the Busch administrative offices were favored with better equipment and more resources. Second, and more serious, was the growing rift between

the faculties in the two buildings as to which was making the greater contribution to the department. Vestiges of inter-college conflicts were reified by the continuing geographic separation of the faculties formerly from Rutgers College and Douglass College. History did not repeat itself but strong echoes did remain. Moreover, one of the major potential benefits of unification, that of scholarly exchange among faculty from a diverse discipline like psychology, was made more difficult by the two locations, including specialties split between the two buildings. In fact, before unification and within each college there was more diversity of interests than there was now either at Busch or at Livingston.

On the positive side was the success of the governance structure of the unified department. The differences among the colleges in their requirements for the major were resolved by having two types of majors in the unified department, one leading to a BA and the other to a BS. Overall planning for the future of the department was successfully handled by a Long Range Planning Committee that met informally with the department chair, and then by the Executive Committee who, with the department chair, proposed to the faculty which areas needed strengthening. Also laudatory was the complete integrity with which promotions were handled by the entire faculty no matter in which building the given faculty was housed. The governance structure of the Psychology Department today is essentially what it was at the beginning of the academic year in 1981. Although the governance structure turned out to be successful, the ultimate effects on the department of the geographic separation are still not clear.

The separation of the department into two buildings (and two campuses) corresponds to some of the growing fractures in American psychology. Increasingly, members of some sub-disciplines are attracted to organizational affiliations outside the boundaries of the traditional psychology department. Most salient are the two sub-disciplines, biopsychology and cognitive psychology. Some biopsychologists find affiliation with biologists, neuroscientists, and geneticists more productive than that with other specialties within a psychology department — least of all their social psychology colleagues. Cognitive psychologists seek affiliation with computer scientists and linguists. In the case of the latter, Rutgers is already experiencing effects of these changing affiliations with the presence of the Rutgers Cognitive Science Center. An old fracture, that between clinical psychology in the department and in the professional school, has been present at Rutgers since 1974 when GSAPP was established.

Changes in the clinical profession may eventually reshape both of these sources of clinical psychologists.

What is the likely composition of the Psychology Department at the centennial celebration in 2028 of its founding? (The use here of the centennial as a time marker was stimulated by the celebration of the 75th anniversary of the department at which time this chapter was distributed in the anniversary's souvenir booklet.) I would note that the history of psychology at Rutgers has shown that important transitions, marking new periods, have always occurred at intervals of 20 to 40 years. Since the last transition was in 1981, we are due for another one before the centennial celebration.

I am loath to be a prognosticator about the specifics of the composition of the department in 2028. I am not even sure the next transition will have to do with a resolution of the centripetal and centrifugal forces that the Psychology Department at Rutgers is experiencing. We are of course not alone in the push and pull of these forces. One prognosticator (Scott, 1991) who believes that the centrifugal forces will win out argues that "the administrative unit that currently houses an integrated department of psychology will be viewed from the 21st century as having been a necessary phase in the *bildungsroman* of the behavioral sciences." He cites a number of large universities in which this has already occurred. In contrast is my own experience — and those of others — of the continuing strength of the centripetal forces in psychology. My alma mater department at Indiana University, in their newsletter, proudly announced the geographic reunification of the department in their enlargement of the psychology building on the Bloomington Campus, this after 12 years in which some specialties had to be temporarily housed elsewhere on the campus as the department grew over the years. However, they have also adopted a new name for the department that serves to attenuate the centrifugal forces in psychology: Department of Psychological and Brain Sciences. Will "and" titles do it?

If the next transition of psychology at Rutgers does have to do with the resolution of the two forces, continued geographic separation or the ability to unify in one building may be a deciding factor. It could go either way. We will undoubtedly know at the centennial. See you then.

References

Scott, T.R. (1991). The personal views of the future of psychology departments. *American Psychologist*, 46, 975-976.