As requested for my tenured faculty review, below I outline my professional activities over the past five years since my last review in 2013, along with my goals for the next five years. Each section has an overall statement, a description of past work, and my future plans in the areas of research, teaching, and service.

First, an overview of some general issues in my professional development. After my last graduate student, Dominika Mazur, finished her degree in 2013-14, my goal was to take a step back and revamp my research program. For over a decade, research on stereotype threat became the core of that program, which was successful at first, but pulled me away from what I see as my central interests. Thus, I planned to reprioritize my work in the area of persuasion and stigma via incorporation of undergraduate students, and then recruitment of graduate students after a few years. However, I failed in that goal as teaching became a larger component in my workload. In addition, I faced some choices and opportunities to take on additional administrative roles on campus. This led me to ponder what I wanted to do for my professional activities and how I could best contribute to the department, college, and university. I came to believe I could make greater contributions through my teaching and service work than in my research endeavors. As a result, I discussed with a few colleagues about shifting my work away from research (e.g., giving up lab space) and not serving as a primary advisor at the graduate or undergraduate level.

After these conversations with my colleagues, and discussions with Lisa Aspinwall in her Chair capacity, I applied for and was able to participate in the Associate Professor Faculty Development workshop during the Fall Semester 2016 and Spring Semester 2017 as a way to think through these issues. The goal of the workshop is to assist faculty back onto the path towards full promotion. As a result, I am taking the steps to re-establish my research program. The original plan in 2013 was to start working with undergraduates to refocus my research program. This year, I am co-advising a UROP student with Jacqueline Chen. An outcome of teaching a stand-alone Intergroup Relations Honors course last Fall Semester was having students interested in having me serve as their mentor for their theses. There are three of them who will begin working with me on projects starting Summer Semester 2018. All of four of these projects incorporate attitudes and persuasion, stigma, or both. In addition, I am serving as a mentor for a new graduate student in the Department of Education, Culture, and Society through the African American Doctoral Scholarship Initiative. While this work is more on professional development issues, her advisor is someone that is a potential research collaborator for me (William Smith). Thus, I feel more confident that I am getting back on the right track in my research (including upcoming attendance at regional/national conferences and reaching out to potential collaborators in the department and across campus, both tips suggested in the workshop).

A second issue is my campus appointment. When I was hired, it was as a Diversity Scholar in conjunction with the Ethnic Studies Program. As a result, I had teaching and service obligations in Ethnic Studies. However, with the recent change in the program to be part of the School for Cultural and Social Transformation, my status as a member has been called into question. It appears that I am still obligated to teach a course, but the other requirements are in flux. As of
now, I am not considered an “adjunct” but that may change once the School and program establishes the criteria for such affiliations.
Research:

My research program investigates the motivational processes that underlie behavior and how the incorporation of underrepresented groups and diversity issues may affect those processes and resultant outcomes in a variety of behavioral situations. I focus on these issues in achievement performance and persuasive situations, with a particular eye toward attempting to understand how the inclusion of underrepresented groups/diversity allows us to paint a more detailed picture of the psychological processes in these areas.

Stereotype Threat

One line of research has focused on how characteristics of a social context can motivate people’s performance and identity. In my lab, we have explored the effects of “stereotype threat” (i.e., knowledge of a negative group stigma in a particular domain, which can harm performance in the domain; e.g., Steele & Aronson, 1995). The research questions have centered on the impact of and impact on one’s identity (with the domain, with the group, or both) under circumstances in which a person is exposed to domain-related stereotypes. In addition, related questions regarding what factors trigger the effect, who is vulnerable to the effect, and how our understanding of these issues may help to combat the impact of stereotypes in these situations are explored.

My early work on this line explored the role of domain identification, as it was not standardized in the research on stereotype threat. Based on our measure, we were able to make more specific predictions of performance on a task than those made based simply on stigmatization in that we found typical gender differences on a math task (men outperforming women) only for those highly identified with mathematics (Smith & White, 2001). Furthermore, we found that our measure could predict career choices when tailored for specific domains (Smith, White & Morgan, 2005). This work supported the notion that identification with the domain is an important factor in stereotype threat (e.g., Crocker, Major & Steele, 1998).

In addition, we explored how the stereotype becomes salient to the person as a trigger for the threat effect. While past research pitted an explicitly activated (e.g., people are told or reminded of it directly) or an implicitly activated (e.g., no direct reminder because that stereotype is so ubiquitous that simply being in the situation is enough to activate it) against a non-activated or nullified (e.g., led to believe the stereotype is not relevant in the situation) condition, no investigation compared all three conditions. We believed that potential differences between implicitly and explicitly activated stereotypes could shed light on the pervasiveness of stereotype threat. We found that the stigmatized group (females in Study 1; White males in Study 2) performed similarly worse with either type of activation compared to when the stereotype was nullified (Smith & White, 2002). Therefore, it appears that anyone for whom a potential stigma exists may fall prey to the threat, and that negative performance effects may occur when the threat is explicitly conveyed or implicit in the situation.

Another approach in this area are questions related to who is vulnerable and what we can do to combat stereotype threat. One factor investigated is how people construe the content of the stereotype. For example, is the general stereotype enough to create the effects (e.g., men
outperform women in math) or does the stereotype need to carry a specific component that leads to the diminished performance (e.g., men outperform women due to ability versus due to effort)? We believed that while both ability and effort threats purport men are better, the reasons “why” have implications for how women may construe their performance. In the ability case, poor performance may be viewed as “fixed” and unchangeable, while in the effort case, poor performance may be overcome (cf., Good, Aronson, & Inzlicht, 2003). Our research supported this theory in that women given an effort-based threat put forth more effort and performed better on the test than those given the typical ability-based threat or no threat manipulations (Thoman, White, Yamawaki, & Koishi, 2008).

In conjunction with content salience, we proposed that what is salient in a person’s identity affects the response to a stereotyped situation. While stigmatized members who are highly identified with the domain are the people most likely to fall prey to threat effects, some research seems to suggest that people highly identified may fight against the stereotype (cf., Kray, Thompson, & Galinsky, 2001). The work on identity focuses on explicit identity, but people also hold implicit identities and attitudes. If discrepancies exist between the two, this may allow a person to be vulnerable to possible evaluation by a stereotype. That is, if one is highly identified with the domain on both levels, then she or he may dismiss the stereotype as a valid evaluative factor. One the other hand, if a discrepancy occurs, the person may explicitly dismiss the threat, but implicitly fear the stereotype may be valid and/or could be used in this case. Our initial test of this idea was promising in that women with greater discrepancies performed worse than women with lower discrepancies (Thoman, White, & Amburgey, 2009 unpublished manuscript). However, our subsequent investigations over a three-year span ended in mixed results (explicit identity effects outweighed implicit identity or discrepancy effects, e.g., Peterson, Fraughton, & White, 2011 poster presentation).

With Dominika Mazur, we continued to explore how identity issues may help to combat stereotype threat. While self-affirmation can be a successful coping strategy for stereotype threat (e.g., Martens, Johns, Greenberg, & Schimel, 2006), group affirmation (i.e., focusing on positive aspects of one’s group) may on the surface appear to be a positive tactic. However, we found that for high domain identified women, they performed worse when exposed to group-affirmation instructions than self-affirmation instructions (Mazur & White, 2012 invited talk). Having them focus on the group, even in a positive way, appears to have triggered the negative stigma for women who care about the domain.

For her dissertation, we investigated identify bifurcation (Pronin, Steele, & Ross, 2004) as a coping strategy to combat stereotype threat. The concept is group members who do not identifying with group characteristics viewed as being negative or stigmatizing for the group in a particular domain while maintaining a global identification with the stigmatized group and characteristics viewed as not related to the stereotype. Bifurcation has been linked with people pursuing careers in stereotyped domains or under stereotype threat. However, performance and coping have not been tested in those investigations. We were able to replicate the bifurcation among women highly identified with math (Study 1: they did not endorse stereotypically feminine characteristics deemed incompatible with being successful in quantitative domains) and Study 2 demonstrated that those under threat engaged in bifurcation when given the chance to do so, but it did not buffer against negative outcomes for performance or working memory.
My future goal for this line of research is to de-emphasize it in my program (it was my primary research for over a decade, but the payoff for the time and energy into this research has been very low). There are questions connected with it that I want continue (e.g., one senior thesis proposal is to look at threat as a trigger or prime for stereotype activations about ingroups and outgroups in general). Instead of having it be a core part of training students, the pursuit will be more collaborative with colleagues in and out of the department.

**Stigmatized effects in persuasive situations**

Another line of research, which I plan to make more central to my program, investigates how factors viewed as peripheral to message content affect attitude change and behavior, along with perceptions of the source of the communication. I have been particularly interested in the motivational mechanisms that may help to explain effects of “peripheral” factors such as ethnicity and stigmatization in the process of persuasion.

Due to the change in what is acceptable by society regarding intergroup relations over the past 50 years, a shift has resulted in more subtle forms of prejudice and discrimination that may not always be in the perpetrator’s awareness (e.g., Gaertner & Dovidio, 1986). In the context of these subtle effects, and guided by the dual pathway models of persuasion (e.g., Chaiken, Liberman, & Eagly, 1989; Petty & Cacioppo, 1986), I investigated if ethnicity of the person presenting the message (source) works as a “like/dislike” heuristic (e.g., more persuaded by likable than dislikable sources, Chaiken, 1980) or if the shift in prejudice would lead to ethnicity serving a different function, such as motivating people to process the information. I found that for White participants, exposure to certain ethnic sources (i.e., Black or Hispanic compared to White, Asian American or American Indian) instigated message processing did not serve as a simple heuristic (White & Harkins, 1994). In my follow-up work, I found that this occurred for another non-ethnic stigmatized group (i.e., homosexuals) as the message source (Petty, Fleming, & White, 1999), and it occurred when messages were presented about these groups, as well (Fleming, Petty, & White, 2005).

I have argued that the motivation for processing is related to the shift in how people respond to stigmatized groups in contemporary times (White & Harkins, 1994). That is, majority group members’ views in the United States toward some minority groups have changed from mostly negative feelings to attitudes that may now consist of positive regard (due to the strong pressure to endorse egalitarian values) and negative feelings (due to the cultural and historical atmosphere of discrimination) toward the groups (e.g., Gaertner & Dovidio, 1986). Therefore, they may be very concerned about appearing non-egalitarian to themselves or others, without some justification. The concern may have led them to be motivated to process messages presented by these sources in order to be fair and give the source his or her due. In my work with Petty and Fleming, we found that people who score as “low” on explicit prejudice measures are the ones who engaged in message processing. We proposed that low prejudiced people might play a “watchdog” role, in that they want to try to control their own possible undesired negative reactions toward the group. In addition, given that people may know or think that other people are prejudiced toward the group, they may be watching out for the potential negative bias those others may display in interactions with the group. Therefore, people’s concerns over how they
may appear to themselves and/or to others in interactions with members of stigmatized groups (wanting to meet either external, societal standards or their own internal standards) is the motivation to scrutinize the message content.

An irony of the watchdog hypothesis is that the more careful consideration given by observers because of concern about potential bias may also create a negative outcome for the stigmatized person relative to a non-stigmatized person. That is, processing the message reveals both good and bad arguments in the message. If the message consists of specious arguments, then people will reject the message. However, if one is not processing the message (which is more likely to be the case for non-stigmatized sources), then flawed arguments can “slide by” and the message will be accepted. Therefore, stigmatized sources in some respect may be held to a higher standard than non-stigmatized sources in situations where a communication would not normally receive the same level of perusal.

An implication of this work is that perceived audience characteristics may influence the concern over egalitarian treatment (by themselves or others), thus the motivation to elaborate. As part of revamping my research, I will investigate this idea in a series of studies. In collaboration with Jacqueline Chen (co-advising a UROP student), we are combining stereotype threat and the watchdog hypothesis. That is, priming people with an intergroup context may perceive it as a potential threat, thus trigger watchdog (e.g., Whites primed with interethnic stories of potential discrimination against another group may engage in processing due to the “Whites are prejudice” stereotype). Another line of experiments will test whether people engage in message processing when led to believe a stigmatized group member would view their responses compared to when it is a non-stigmatized group member (e.g., they may feel more accountable for paying attention in the former than latter case, thus engage in processing). Finally, perceived peer audience bias (for, against, none) effects will be explored in conjunction with participants’ attitudes toward the groups (e.g., if prejudiced against the group but think peers are biased in favor of the group, the person may engage in processing to watch out for positive bias).

Preemptive disclosure (stealing thunder)

One last line of research, which is to be part of the central core for my program, is the investigation and expansion of the work on stealing thunder (e.g., McElhaney, 1987). This concept refers to revealing negative information about oneself before others do as a tactic to reduce the negative impact the information has on judgments in trial or political situations. Williams, Bourgeois and Croyle (1993) showed that one way stealing thunder works is by increasing the positive attributions made about the person who steals thunder, in particular, the person’s credibility and honesty. Those positive attributions, in turn, diminish the negative feelings one should have based solely on the negative information. Therefore, stealing thunder appears to work as a peripheral cue. Based on that assumption, I proposed that a possible limitation on its effectiveness would be situations that instigate processing of the presented information because scrutiny hinders reliance on peripheral cues. In a series of studies (Prince & White, 2002; White & Williams, 1998; White, Williams, & Joe, 2000; all conference presentations), we found support that factors instigating message processing (e.g., ethnicity of the source, individual need for cognition) hindered the positive effects of stealing thunder. When message processing likelihood was low, we replicated past stealing thunder findings.
This is another line of research that I plan to reboot and expand as part of my future goals. One step is to place the possible mechanisms for how stealing thunder works in a dual pathway to persuasion framework (e.g., Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). As previously stated, an increase in the positive attributions of the person stealing thunder appears to work as a peripheral cue/heuristic that can be undermined by increasing message elaboration. Another possible mechanism is what I call spin control and it can take place in two ways. First, the person stealing thunder may frame the negative information in her or his best light by attempting to explain why it is there or to downplay its relevance. The second way is the audience may change the meaning of the information as an attempt to understand why the person revealed it (e.g., it must not be that bad because people do not confess negative things about themselves). I would argue that spin control would work under processing situations and not peripheral situations because the “spin” would serve as a persuasive argument. For example, while stealing thunder was unsuccessful for a stigmatized group member in my previous research due to increased scrutiny of the message, if the person puts a cogent spin while stealing thunder, then stealing thunder may more effective for her or him than no spin and/or for a non-stigmatized member who attempts to spin the information (due to less processing of the information in the latter situation).

Another expansion is to broaden the general concept of stealing thunder beyond the “negative” aspect. That is, “stealing thunder” may apply to any situation in which a person wants to preemptively use or disclose potential information for his or her own gain. While most research has focused on negative information, this could apply to positive, as well (e.g., announcing your friend’s pregnancy before she can do so; telling your family of your surprise wedding before your brother tells about his promotion). These positive situations may accomplish the same general goal as negative ones: to boost yourself and gain an advantage over someone else.

I propose that preemptive disclosure can be an effective strategy to diminish the impact of the other party’s information. A preliminary finding from a pilot survey on this expansion suggests that when the disclosure (negative or positive information) is viewed as done to harm the other party, the person who engages in the tactic is viewed in more negative terms. However, the strategy still works in favor of the discloser (e.g., the other party’s positive information is viewed less positively). Thus, I plan to continue exploring the concept of preemptive disclosure regarding how the information is viewed and how it impacts impressions/attributions made about the person disclosing and the other party involved.
Teaching:

The saying, “Give a person a fish and she or he eats for the day; teach a person to fish and she or he eats for a lifetime” sums up my overall approach to teaching and supervising. My goal is to get students to step beyond memorizing items and into the use and application of the material. In addition, I attempt to give, or at least direct to, the resources to engage in such endeavors (what good is it to teach people to fish if they do not know or have access to a pole, line, hook, etc.). It is my belief that this goal may establish two crucial elements for students to grow in their development. First, the fulfillment of the goal allows students to evaluate theories and research related to the topic. Second, it provides the “tools” and skills that would allow students to go out and evaluate, explore, etc., these new ideas and beliefs concerning the material, which may encourage students to take these skills and apply them to other courses and aspects of life.

I strive toward this goal in all my teaching, no matter the size or format of the class (e.g., lecture, seminar) or the material (e.g., introduction to a topic, specialized issue within a field). To reach the goal, I first attempt to display enthusiasm for the course material through discussions of how the topic plays a role in my life. In addition, I attempt to show the students how their lives are affected by the topic. In doing so, it brings the subject matter alive for them. As some of my research has shown, by increasing the personal relevance of the topic for people, you can increase how much material people retain and elaborate. One way that I have found to accomplish this is to discuss classic theories and their contemporary counterparts, present pop culture and current issues as examples of the theories, and then challenge the students to think of future directions for these areas. This allows students to see where we have been and why, how we got where we are now, and to speculate where we should go in the field. In addition, I view it as very important to incorporate diversity issues in all of my courses. Therefore, course materials and discussions include topics and viewpoints dealing with underrepresented group perspectives, not as extra or “tacked on” information, but as material crucial for a full understanding of the course.

Since my last review, I have revamped the Psy 2010 course, in conjunction with the online initiative (led by Carol Sansone’s lab), to create a more “research and theory informed” online section for the course. My classes were used to gather measures of motivation and interests, connections with peer students and instructors, effectiveness of course and instructors, etc., as baseline and as we implemented renovations to the course (e.g., having students do introduction videos, add small groups online, have peer review assignments) for both online and campus sections. The major addition was to create standalone videos for the online section instead of just recordings of the campus lectures. The videos are in segments and have professional editing, which was done through Teaching and Learning Technologies, who helped in the new design of the website for the course. The videos were done by recording me in a studio alone.

The new online course is easier to package and for others to use. However, the videos need to be updated (even being very generic, key information has changed) and there are discussions of retooling how Psy 2010 is taught, in general. I plan to be part of those renovations.

I revised my Intergroup Relations course so that the ES numbering matches the Psy numbering (both 4450). I created a new standalone Honors course for this topic (Psy 4455) that incorporates
a semester long research proposal project (students write the paper in sections and have small peer groups to do reviews of the materials and ideas). In the first offering of the course, I found it challenging and rewarding to see students want to integrate these topics into their Honors thesis projects (or at least consider them).

Another new course was teaching the graduate seminar on attitudes and persuasion. While I had co-taught the class once about 10 years ago, I had not led it myself. In the course, I used two newer techniques for me. First, in having students write a response paper, I allowed them to pick the reading (out of the assigned ones) to focus on by critiquing the reading and connecting it to their research/interests and to something outside of academia. We then would discuss those answers, along with the other readings. It was rare that all the readings were not picked among the students. Second, I had the students evaluate each other as part of the discussion grade. They sent me their comments and scores for each person. It created an environment in which all were engaged because they were accountable not just to me, but to each other. It gave them a sense of how to evaluate such tasks and helped them to see what makes relevant and progressive discussion points.

For the future, I would like to develop an Honors section or course connected to Psy 2440 (attitudes and persuasion) in the same vein as the Honors Intergroup Relations course that could be offered every few years (currently, I reach Psy 2440 every two years in the Fall Semester to coincide with the Presidential and “Midterm” election cycles). In addition, if needed by the department, I would go back into the Psy 3010 rotation.

Finally, depending on the outcome of Ethnic Studies, I may be asked to revise the ES 2020 (Social and Psychological Aspects of the African American Experience) course again. It was on the books when I arrived here and has only been taught a few times (last was 2009 by me). The revamping would be to bring it up to a 4000-level course with the possibility of cross-listing in Psychology.

**Graduate Student Training**

In graduate training, I attempt to help facilitate the student’s development as an independent and critical thinker. I try to provide structure and guidance, as in an apprenticeship model, to help in acquisition of the basic research and theoretical skills needed for professional growth. At the same time, I encourage students to develop and pursue the concepts and research directions that are interesting to them, even if outside my own interests. Under both systems, I try to have students think about and question the research topic at the conceptual “big picture” level.

Since my last review, I had one student finish (Dominika Mazur), and I have served on a number of committees in and out of the department. As I stated in my last review, while I feel that I have been able to train students and assist them in completing the program over the years, I believe that I have not fostered a cohesive research lab since returning from my sabbatical (2002-03) that I would want or need for my program and training. I selected primary students that shared my general research interests but with my shifting priorities, we did not connect as well. Thus, I stopped taking students over the past five years with the goal of getting things re-established in
the lab before working with graduate students. However, due to my lack of progress on that front, I have not been as engaged in primary student supervision.

My plan is over the next year to work more with undergraduates to reinvigorate my lab work. This will allow me to build a foundation again to select graduate students (in a secondary and eventually primary advisor role) over the following few years. In addition, I plan to include potential research collaborations in and out of the department (e.g., Jacqueline Chen, William Smith) as a way to re-establish my lab and my supervision of graduate students.
Service:

Over the years, I have viewed service not as a “necessary evil”, but as a crucial component to the vitality of any organization. In my role when hired as a “diversity scholar”, service has been a major contribution that I felt needed to be done. While I have done a lot of service, I do turn down more offers and requests than I accept to do.

Since my last review, my administrative and committee roles for the department have been as chair of the Diversity Committee (2011-2015). I co-chaired the Social Psychology Job Search with Jon Butner (2015-2016). I was a member of the Undergraduate Committee (2015-2016). I served as the Academic Senate Representative, also serving as a member of the Senate Executive Committee (2016-2017). Currently, I am a member of the IRB (since 2008) and serve as a Vice-Chair (since 2016).

For the college and university, I served on the Ethnic Studies Program Director Search Committee (2011-2013). I was a member of the RPT Committee for Ethnic Studies (2014-2015), I was a member of the College of Social and Behavioral Science—Classroom Building Committee (2014-2016). I was a member of the Assistant Vice President for Office of Equity and Diversity Search Committee (2015-2016). Currently, I am a member of the History of Education Search Committee for the Department of Education, Culture, and Society (2017-2018), and I serve as a mentor and consultant for the African American Doctoral Student Initiative (AADSI) (since 2017).

I have given talks and interviews in the larger community on issues related to social psychology (e.g., KSL5 discussion of bystander effect; ABC4 discussion of Election 2016; Psi Chi Movie Night Fall 2016; newspaper, newsletter, and podcast interviews on diversity and prejudice events).

Looking over this list, I have served on three or more administrative committees (department and university combined) almost each year since my last review. This does not include student committees or other short-term ad hoc informal committees. As previously stated, while I view this work as a contribution and important, this commitment I made to service (and to a high teaching load) negatively impacted my goal to revamp my research program. These endeavors, while stimulating intellectually, have not assisted my progression in research.

My goals for service are to limit my roles further in an effort to focus more on research. I plan to continue my work with IRB as I see it as a connection with research. In addition, I will continue as a mentor and consultant for AADSI as that work brings potential collaborations, plus serves my role as a diversity scholar. It was due to my work with our SROP-Psychology training that I was asked to be part of that new program. Currently, two of our graduate students in Psychology are participants.

One additional goal for my service is to assist our department and college to explore developing another training program similar to SROP-Psychology (summer or year-long) with the focus on underrepresented populations (to go along with our current post-doctoral program). I know of
discussions to create an outreach program to high school students, which could be expanded to incorporate local college students at Utah or elsewhere (e.g., SLCC, Westminster), as well.