

# DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY

## STRATEGIC PLAN

Adopted by vote of the faculty on April 4, 2017

### Preamble

Psychology is a science department within the College of Arts and Sciences. Psychology faculty and graduate students are investigating cognitive, emotional, neurobiological, behavioral, and molecular level phenomena with important implications for theory, knowledge creation, and applications to real world problems. We have an internationally prominent faculty whose expertise is broadly representative of the discipline of psychology. The faculty attracts excellent graduate students who develop into junior colleagues. All of this happens within a supportive, collegial, and collaborative environment that offers the very best teaching and training opportunities for our graduate and undergraduate students.

At the undergraduate level, the department offers a single Bachelor of Science degree in psychology that provides a broad background in the discipline. Students can complete their B.S. degree at FSU's main campus or at the Panama City, FL branch campus. At the graduate level, the department offers a doctoral degree in each of its five areas of specialization: clinical, cognitive, social, developmental, and neuroscience (as part of the Interdisciplinary Program in Neuroscience). The department also offers a terminal master's degree in Applied Behavior Analysis.

The Psychology Department is home to award-winning faculty and students whose accomplishments rival those of the nation's top departments. Psychology is a broad discipline, and that breadth is reflected in the research programs of the faculty. Faculty in four of the areas in the department (cognitive, clinical, developmental, and social) have human research programs that address topics such as language development, attention control, self-regulation, prejudice, relationship processes, moral judgment, how expertise develops, cognitive aging, human factors, reading and math development, and the cause and treatment of various forms of psychopathology (drug abuse, suicide, eating disorders, anxiety disorders, ADHD). This research brings individuals of all ages to the FSU campus to participate in studies. Methods used by those faculty include psychophysiology (EEG, heart rate, skin conductance), eye tracking, fMRI, virtual reality (e.g., driving simulators), reaction time, clinical interviewing, hormone assays, computerized assessment and therapy, self-reports, behavioral observation, advanced statistics, and more. Faculty members in neuroscience have research programs focused on the neural underpinnings of behavior. Neuroscience faculty use animal models (e.g., rat, mouse, prairie vole) to address topics such as taste sensation, eating disorders, social behavior (e.g. pair bonding), stress responsiveness, learning and memory, substance abuse, and neuroplasticity during development and adulthood. One of the most exciting new developments within the Psychology department (mirroring a trend at FSU more broadly) is an increase in the interdisciplinary nature of our faculty who are collaborating in research across multiple areas, such as clinical, neuroscience, and cognitive.

## **Mission**

The Department of Psychology at Florida State University strives to provide an environment that fosters collegiality, respect, and a commitment to the collective success of the department. Faculty, staff, and students contribute significantly to the department's fulfillment of its three main goals:

1. Produce cutting edge research in psychological science and behavioral neuroscience to further the understanding of complex behavior, thoughts, and emotions.
2. Provide undergraduate and graduate students with rigorous academic programs that build critical thinking and enhance understanding of complex behavior, thoughts, and emotions.
3. Serve the university, scientific community, and broader society by promoting psychological science and behavioral neuroscience.

## **Core Values**

*Research Excellence:* We are highly productive researchers, as evidenced by the quantity of our high-quality publications and our abundance of grant funding.

*Scientific Inquiry:* Psychology is a highly interdisciplinary field driven by scientific inquiry. We foster the advancement of psychological science as a field of natural science. Psychological processes originate in the brain; thus, although the brain may not always be our primary focus of inquiry, it is central to the study of psychology. Furthermore, psychology is a hub science, and is key to linking together other disciplines. As such, collaborations across areas and other departments are valued. Notably, this interdisciplinary focus allows us to advance and apply theory and to answer "big" questions in psychological science and behavioral neuroscience.

*Teaching Excellence:* Research and teaching must be integrated when training students. Our graduate and undergraduate students complete a program of study that encourages critical thinking and prepares them for their future careers. We value student mentoring, hands-on research experience, and innovation in teaching.

*Diversity & Inclusiveness:* We value diversity, both as a means of advancing science, and as an end unto itself. The department is committed to welcoming individuals with diverse backgrounds, experiences, and viewpoints into our community, and to creating an inclusive environment for all.

*Vibrant Intellectual Community:* We believe that a collegial community is necessary to support the advancement of psychological science and behavioral neuroscience. Respect, support, engagement, and effective communication are key features of our community.

## **Vision**

Recognizing its high level of success in grant funding, degrees awarded, and faculty contributions to science, the Department of Psychology seeks to increase its national and

international visibility. To this end, we aim to increase our interdisciplinary culture, emphasis on high-quality research, and attention to undergraduate, graduate and postdoctoral training.

### **Strategic Goals**

Our vision will be achieved through 5 strategic goals:

1. Amplify our focus on research excellence (quality, funding, and productivity) at all levels (faculty, graduate, and undergraduate).

- Increase emphasis on brain research to capitalize on FSU's recent investments and make additional investments/efforts (e.g., attract donors) to ensure access to cutting edge technologies
- Adequately evaluate and recognize quality in faculty and student research in order to encourage high impact discoveries and theories
- Increase/enhance the staff positions that directly relate to the department's research mission
- Increase the number of postdocs in the department by requesting positions from the College and by rewarding faculty who support them solely on grants

2. Increase production of quality scientists at the graduate level and critical thinkers at the undergraduate level who are well prepared for the workforce.

- Increase quality and rigor of classroom experiences for students by encouraging the use of the same cutting edge, scientific lens that we bring to research
- Increase access to statistics/methodology courses through departmental offerings or partnering with other departments to enhance readiness for jobs requiring quantitative skills
- Create new degrees and offer skills-enhancement advising (e.g., minor in business or computer programming)
- Evaluate graduate students with regard to skills needed for successful entry into the job market (e.g., in annual evaluations) and provide means (e.g., workshops on job talks) to gain those skills
- Develop mechanisms that foster contact between generations/cohorts of graduates

3. Forge innovative ways to communicate successes in the department to the scientific and broader (university, local, and state) communities in order to enhance the department's reputation.

- Increase support and recognition for faculty travel to national and international conferences when there is a high level of visibility for the department (e.g., keynote address; recipient of a major award)
- Enhance use of social media and website to convey accomplishments
- Advertise the department as a resource for expertise and assistance in relevant areas (e.g., clinical services)
- Support efforts to increase the visibility of our graduate programs and our department's name recognition

4. Foster the growth of an interdisciplinary culture that values collaboration to address basic and translational scientific questions.

- Focus the departmental colloquium series on speakers that appeal to multiple areas within the department and across departments/colleges
- Support faculty and students' efforts that bring together researchers from multiple departments/colleges
- Prioritize faculty hiring requests that are interdisciplinary
- Devise a long-term strategy for offering cross-area seminars regularly

5. Incorporate a framework of diversity and inclusiveness into our training programs for both undergraduate and graduate majors, and improve the department's inclusion of students, faculty, and staff from diverse backgrounds.

- Invest in outreach to underrepresented groups to increase their numbers in our graduate program applicants and faculty search pools
- Support efforts to increase success of our undergraduate minorities in their pursuit of graduate training both here at FSU and at other universities
- Recognize and support efforts by instructors to include training on diversity and multicultural understanding in courses
- Maintain or grow the department's international program to expose students to other cultures and demonstrate the relevance of psychology in understanding other cultures
- Value diversity in the hiring process for staff and faculty and in graduate student recruitment