



A message from the Chair

Welcome to the inaugural edition of the UNLV Department of Psychology newsletter! Our department is growing fast, and one of my goals is to keep everyone informed about our ongoing tradition of excellence in research and teaching as well as clinical work and service to the community and the field of psychology. We now have over 1400 undergraduate majors, over 300 psychology minors, over 100 neuroscience minors, and 75 graduate students across our clinical and experimental doctoral programs!

Research

Our faculty members conduct cutting-edge research in clinical, cognitive, and developmental psychology as well as neuroscience and quantitative methods. Our research is enhanced by great diversity in our undergraduate student population and in our community in Las Vegas. We have added several new faculty members recently, including **Drs. Rochelle** and **Dustin Hines**, neuroscience researchers who specialize in understanding neurodevelopmental processes under normal and pathological conditions that include autism spectrum disorders, schizophrenia, developmental epilepsies, depression, traumatic brain injury, stroke, and Alzheimer's disease.

We have had a highly productive year with respect to research and funding. **Dr. Jeff Kinney**, a neuroscience



researcher in the Department of Psychology at UNLV, will participate in the cellular molecular aspect of research conducted as a partnership with the Cleveland Clinic Lou Ruvo Center for Brain Health. The partnership was awarded an \$11.1 million federal grant to advance the understanding of Alzheimer's and Parkinson's diseases. The grant is aimed at increasing knowledge of dementia-related and age-associated degenerative disorders. The money will create a Center of Biomedical Research Excellence, or COBRE, part

of a program that promotes the study of medicine, molecular biology and public health.

Dr. Joel Snyder received a grant amount of \$457,519 from the Department of Defense Equipment/Instrumentation Program for Historically Black Colleges and Universities and Minority-Serving Institutions. This project will provide funding for non-invasive brain stimulation equipment that will greatly enhance the opportunity to conduct cognitive neuroscience research at UNLV.

Dr. Snyder also received a grant of \$1,028,398 from the Office of Naval Research to understand the mechanisms underlying effects of the physical characteristics of immediate prior sounds and our interpretations of those prior sounds.

Our research involving faculty and graduate students has also been prominently displayed in prestigious journals and higher education publications. For example, **Shane Westfall** and **Dr. Murray Millar** teamed up to examine instructor attractiveness and student learning. Compared with student participants shown a less-attractive photo, student participants shown a relatively good-looking instructor not only gave that person a better evaluation but performed significantly better on a multiple-choice test. The duo was featured recently in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*.

Teaching

We recently revised our undergraduate curriculum and our faculty, faculty-in-residence, and graduate students teach a variety of courses at the introductory, foundational, and upper division levels, including at the Honor's College. Many of our faculty-in-residence are involved in teaching our College of Liberal Arts seminars as well. We have also designed many new courses that include Multicultural Psychology and Healthcare Provider Skills. In addition, we have a new neuroscience minor that features courses in biology as well as several new courses in our department: Neurobiology of Learning and Memory, Cognitive Neuroscience, and Cellular and Molecular Approaches to Behavior.

Clinical work

Our faculty and students engage in considerable clinical work. Part of this involves practicum work in our clinical psychology doctoral program at the UNLV PRACTICE, a community mental health clinic. Our practicum sites involve numerous placements across Clark County that focus on neuropsychology, clinical child psychology, university-based counseling, forensic settings, and gerontology, among other areas. We provide assessment and intervention services at reduced cost for various conditions such as depression and anxiety as well as childhood behavior disorders. Marital and family and group therapy formats are available as well.

Service

Our faculty members also contribute to considerable service at community and professional levels. The department has connections with many organizations that include private schools, Clark County agencies, and mental health, medical, and neuroscience centers. Our faculty and students are also engaged in many professional organizations and journal editorial boards. For example, Dr. Snyder has been named as an Action Editor for the prestigious American Psychological Association publication *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Human Perception and Performance*. Our faculty are well-known nationally and internationally within the field of psychology.

Overall

Our department is a vibrant entity with a rich tradition of excellence in research and teaching as well as service to the university, the community, and the field of psychology. We are dedicated to education and professional training and endeavor to stay in touch with our current and past students. You can find us on Twitter and Facebook at unlvpsychology.

Come join us!

