

Date: Feb 6, 2024

Memo to the Dean of CLAS

Our department is seeking approval to change its name from the Department of Psychology to the **Department of Psychological Sciences**. The title of the major and minor remain the same as Psychology Major and Psychology Minor.

1. The name change on the department is timely and reflects our department's growing emphasis on psychology as a science that falls under the STEM umbrella. According to the report of the American Psychological Association (APA, the largest organization representing psychologists in the United States) 2009 Presidential Task Force on the Future of Psychology as a STEM Discipline:  
"Psychology is a core STEM discipline because of its direct scientific and technological innovations, as well as its indirect contributions to education and learning in science and technology."
2. The Association for Psychological Science (APS) is an international non-profit organization to advance the science of psychology. APS covers a large variety of research topics including but are not limited to aging, attention and distraction, childhood and adolescent mental health, cognitive testing, memory, neurodivergence, neuroscience, stress, all of which are aligned with the psychology faculty's expertise. Hence our name change reflects the advocacy of the science of psychology as in APS. Other major organizations such as APA have also increased emphasis on the scientific foundations of the undergraduate major.
3. The name change also better reflects the interdisciplinary connections that psychology has to other sciences. Our faculty members are scientifically oriented (e.g., including the speciality areas of clinical science, cognitive science, developmental science, psychophysiology, neuroscience) and our coursework for both undergraduate and graduate students is now based largely on the scientific study of psychological principles using empirical methodologies. Additionally, in our department's 2018 self-study, our external reviewers (MaryLouise Kerwin, Rowan University and Judith Ouellette, SUNY Cortland) explicitly stated that we should consider changing our department's name:  
"The PSY program is distinctive in that it focuses on neurological, biological, and cognitive psychology. It has a strong emphasis on psychology as a science and psychology as a STEM discipline. Identifying psychology as a STEM discipline is in concert with the APA guidelines mentioned previously as well as with the National Science Foundation's list of approved STEM subjects. Because of this, the department may want to consider renaming their department: psychological sciences (p. 8)."

4. The name change reflects the variety of programs we offer in our department. Beside the major and minor in Psychology, our department is the home for the program of Child Advocacy Studies (CHA), which offers the major, minor, undergraduate/graduate certificates, and microcredential in CHA, and the home for the Interdisciplinary Trauma Studies program, which offers graduate certificates.
5. With regard to logistical issues, we believe that our department's name change will not cause any undue hardship on the college. For example, our department can continue to use its PSY code for all college-related matters.
6. The Psychology Department used to have a Bachelor of Science degree, but it was quiesced years ago. The history of the Psychology BS degree reflects the nature of our department. Currently the department has some staffing issues, but we would be happy to develop additional staffing in order to resume the BS degree.