State of the Department: Psychology at the University of Oregon, 2020

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Department Head

Executive Summary: Research and Teaching

- **Research and scholarly activity:** Psychology’s scientific contributions has been very vigorous during the last year. With regard to the most important aspect, namely peer-reviewed journal articles, our department presented 256 publications (i.e., about 7.2 per faculty member) and many of these were in the best, discipline-specific and cross-disciplinary journals. Other indicators, such as grant funding (combined 79 active grants with a total volume of $32 million) and national-level awards to our faculty are consistent with a highly productive department. Aside from a strong emphasis on basic-science research, faculty in our department also often engage in research with direct, societal impact.

- **Teaching:** Psychology continues to be one of the largest and by all metrics, most efficient providers of student credit hours on campus.

- In terms of **graduate education**, as in previous years, Psychology attracts highly talented graduate students and we can afford to be highly selective in our admissions. Consistent with our longer-term plans and the increase in our number of tenure-related faculty, we were able to admit a larger number of students (17 admissions out of 220 applicants) last year than in previous years. Our **clinical graduate program** serves a particularly important function in terms of training research-oriented clinical psychologists and its involvement in the associated **Psychology Clinic**, which provides both training opportunities and serves the community's mental health needs.
Research and Scholarly Activity

Quantity: The current record of research activity is based on 35 TTF faculty. The reporting period spans the time from January 2019 to June 2020. There is little disagreement in our field that quality and quantity of peer-reviewed manuscripts are the most important indicators of scientific productivity. There is probably less agreement about what constitutes a healthy number of publications across different sub-disciplines. For example, a single experiment may take months to complete for a systems neuroscientist or an infant developmental psychologist. Other researchers work with large data sets that, once established can be used for a multitude of research questions. Comparing publication counts across such different types of research activity is not very meaningful. Nevertheless, as long as used as an aggregate measure across the entire department, the number of publications can serve as a rough indicator of overall productivity. With regard to this metric, the last year was very successful for our department. Collectively, we published 258 peer-reviewed papers (2020: 7.2/TTF, 2019: 6.6/TTF, 2018: 7.4/TTF).

Quality: Given the heterogeneity in our discipline (ranging from cell-level neuroscience research to research on psychological effects of institutional practices) it is difficult to compare journal quality/impact across subfields. The relative size of subfields varies dramatically, leaving the journal impact factor as a highly misleading indicator of quality or “publication difficulty”. Nevertheless, most of us can agree on a broad category of journals that publish the best empirical work within psychology’s sub-disciplines, or that publish more general, high-impact reviews or theoretical integrations. Typically, in a given year one would expect only a subset of our faculty to publish in these top journals. Without attempting to present an inclusive or exclusive tally, it can be stated unequivocally that our faculty are very active in this top category of journals. Within the last year, we had multiple publications in top disciplinary journals (e.g., Child Development, Emotion, Journal of Experimental Psychology: Learning, Memory, and Cognition, Journal of Trauma & Dissociation, Sleep, Social and Affective Neuroscience), top interdisciplinary journals (e.g., eLife, Journal of Neuroscience, Nature Communications; Psychological Science, Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences) and general review journals (e.g., American Psychologist, Current Directions in Psychological Science, Perspectives on Psychological Science, Psychological Bulletin). The relatively large number of papers in this last category is particularly encouraging, as these usually come with substantial impact within a wider audience.

Intellectual outreach: Last year, Psychology faculty have been featured in numerous press articles (e.g., New York Times, Chicago Tribune), blogposts, or podcasts. Collectively, our faculty have also produced 12 publications in outlets such as the Conversation or Medium, many of which subsequently received broader press coverage. One of our faculty members maintains both a regular, widely received blog and a podcast (Srivastava). Moreover, our faculty collectively listed around a dozen community events to which they contributed through presentations about their work.

COVID-related research activities: Once the epidemic hit, many of our labs pivoted towards COVID-related research topics. Particularly noteworthy is the “Rapid-Early Childhood” (https://www.uorapidresponse.com/) project spearheaded by Phil Fisher in collaboration with several other psychology faculty. The project tracks a representative sample of families with young children in order to document their specific challenges during the epidemic. This work has already led to one peer-reviewed publication and eight, widely received rapid communications about specific, noteworthy results.

Awards: Collectively, our faculty received six different university-level and 12 different national-level rewards, recognitions, or nominations to important national/international functions. The department is also stepping up its award-related activities. Specifically, we have institutionalized the nomination process by making it an explicit part of the Associate Head’s (Sara Hodges) portfolio. During the last year, she has made 20+ nominations.

Funding: Our faculty’s scholarly success translates also into very high levels of external funding. Psychology faculty had 79 active grants during the preceding year, with a total volume of about $32 million (not counting grants by postdocs or graduate students). Twenty-seven grants were newly acquired since January 2019, seven of these were federal grants. During the reporting period, Psychology faculty submitted a total of 79 grants.

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1 This includes one, research-active, retired faculty member (Posner), and two faculty members associated with the department, but who receive their salary through their own company (Slovic, Tucker).
Societal impact: Our department has a long tradition of producing theoretically groundbreaking, basic research, where societal impact is not on the immediate horizon. However, several of our faculty also produce research that either has direct translational outcomes, or that feeds into consulting or public policy recommendations. I can only present a few examples here:

- Some of Elliot Berkman’s research focuses on developing effective interventions to curtail unhealthy behavior (e.g., smoking, uncontrolled eating).
- Nick Allen explores the use of wearable technology to track individuals’ mental health.
- Melynda Casement explores simple, in-home interventions that can improve adolescents’ sleep quality and thereby indirectly also alleviate depression.
- Phil Fisher’s research leads to widely used interventions to help families with foster children and he is engaged in public policy consulting through the Harvard Center on the Developing Child.
- Jennifer Freyd’s research emphasis on interpersonal and “institutional betrayal” trauma directly feeds into consulting and public/institutional policy development (including on our campus).
- Jeff Measelle’s “global-health” related research is focused on assessing and counteracting the effects of malnourishment on the cognitive development of children in East Asia.
- Robert Mauro’s work results in guidelines for improving cockpit safety.
- Maureen Zalewski develops new treatment for individuals with borderline personality disorder, a service that both directly benefits the Eugene community and that will have larger-scale implications for clinical practice.

Teaching

Undergraduate instruction is overseen by the department’s Undergraduate Education Committee (UEC; Chair: Sanjay Srivastava). Psychology continues to be one of the largest contributors to undergraduate education on campus (see Figure). In the preceding academic year (2019-20), we had one of the highest number of majors in the history of the department (over 1400 majors) and the highest even in total credit hours taught (over 35,000). Importantly, we provide these credit hours with fewer TTF and NTTF faculty than most other departments. For example, in terms of credit hours per academic year FTE, we are with 1046 for TTF and 1851 for NTTF considerably more “efficient” that CAS overall (TTF: 599 and 1041). An important aspect of our teaching contribution is that compared with other Psychology departments across the country, a large part of teaching is covered through tenure-track faculty. For example, we pride ourselves in having the majority of our very large, introductory classes (400+ students) taught by TTF.

For the UEC, the year began with a plan to focus on two initiatives. First was to move 8 courses through the Core Education reapproval process. Psychology teaches 12 courses that fall under this rubric; the plan was to complete 8 during AY2019-2020, and the remaining 4 in the following year. The initiative was to revisit the Foundations sequence (PSY 301, 302, and 303) to assess the outcomes of previous revisions and identify new opportunities for improvement, such as improving information-sharing among PSY 301 instructors and investigating open educational resources for adoption.

Both of these initiatives were suspended in early March when the COVID shutdown caused a massive disruption of teaching at UO. At that point, the focus shifted towards (a) supporting the department during its emergency transition to remote teaching, and (b) minimizing non-essential service so that UEC members could focus on their teaching. The UEC created and facilitated a heavily trafficked department Slack channel for information-sharing and peer support by instructors. Instructors who were teaching
different sections of the same course teamed up to support one another and share ideas and materials. The UEC worked with librarians and representatives from W.W. Norton (which publishes textbooks for several mainstay psychology courses) to get electronic reserve access for students. Three UEC members attended weekly “all hands” meetings held by the Executive Vice Provost and the Teaching Effectiveness Program; these faculty were able to bring information to the department and better offer support for effective remote teaching, and conversely were better positioned to bring feedback back to central administrators. Teaching assignments for AY2020-21 were redone to allow instructors who had put in considerable effort rework courses for remote teaching to repeat their assignments in fall term, saving on preparation time.

All in all, faculty in the Department of Psychology rose to the challenge and showed an exemplary response to teaching during the emergency. The department focused on developing accessible and inclusive solutions to deliver high-quality education to students with a wide range of devices and internet access, study space, and personal circumstances. Department instructors were frequently cited by central administrators for creative and effective solutions, and in a survey of UO students, psychology courses were often praised. Many of the lessons learned are carrying over into AY2020-21, when remote instruction is continuing.

**Graduate Education**

Graduate education is addressed through two department committees, the Graduate Admissions Committee (GAC, chair: Jennifer Pfeiffer) and the Graduate Education Committee (chair: Paul Dassonville).

Psychology attracts highly talented graduate students and we can afford to be highly selective in our admissions. Our current total number of graduate students is 91, compared to 87 from the previous year. We recruited 16 new students in the 2019-2020 cycle, slightly higher than our average of the prior 5 cycles (12-17). The total number of applications we received was 420 in the 2019-2020 cycle (from 438 in the prior cycle), indicating continued strong interest in our program. Notably, we were aiming to recruit 15-17 students, due to university-level pressures to reduce class size.

This year we made several changes, in part due to steps developed by a graduate admissions task force to assess our current practices and discuss potential strategies to optimize our admissions process. First, we dramatically reduced the number of candidates we invited to interview (44, compared to 68 in the prior cycle). This saved the department money and reduced strain on graduate students who host and entertain applicants. Second, we have decided not to accept GRE scores this year due to the pandemic. In the upcoming year, we will reserve time to discuss whether to make permanent changes about the GRE score. Considerations include whether the GRE poses barriers to underrepresented minoritized applicants because of financial costs and bias. Third, we decided to add a requirement of submitting a diversity statement. The prompt is now as follows: "The University of Oregon’s Psychology department strives to be a diverse, equitable, and inclusive community. For more information, please see our Committee for an Inclusive Community website at [https://psychcic.uoregon.edu/](https://psychcic.uoregon.edu/). In this brief statement (limit of 500 words), please tell us how – because of your background, experiences, interests, or plans – you will contribute to the diversity and/or inclusivity of our department and university?" Fourth, we instituted several changes to the interview weekend that involved replacing area presentations with a round robin table discussion that involved organizing faculty into small intellectual communities of interest and having applicants sign up to visit three tables. By all accounts this was highly enjoyable and successful. We also worked to ensure faculty and applicants had more time in face to face interviews. Finally, we plan this year to further discuss how to reduce bias in our admissions process more generally, including considerations of different evaluation and interview processes across areas.

In the past year, issues with graduate student teaching loads and stipend levels were the main focal point of the Graduate Education Committee. The issue of teaching loads was addressed to some extent through an increased use of research GEs as a means to provide a break from teaching during the academic year. As in previous years, we were able to provide one term of research GE support for students in their final year. New last year (and continuing this year), we were also able to provide research GEs to students who volunteered to create a course and serve as instructor of record during the academic year, to provide more time for them to focus on the creation of the course. We were also able to provide research GEs to students who became new parents, or those whose childcare options were
disrupted by the pandemic. Although the issue of stipend levels was more difficult to address, we had made some progress on increasing the FTE for summer teaching assignments, but those changes had to be postponed when the pandemic caused the need to freeze the departmental budget. As soon as the budget situation allows, the issues of stipend levels and summer teaching should be revisited.

In the near term, the largest issue that our graduate students face is the disruption that has been caused by the pandemic, in the form of remote learning and a halt to in-person research. In response, the GEC has already suggested modifications to the First Year Project and the ability to waive the Supporting Area Requirement, and these modifications have been implemented by the department. Going forward, the GEC will be further monitoring the impact of these disruptions, to determine whether additional modifications to our requirements are necessary. In particular, we anticipate that some of our current students will be delayed beyond the end of their sixth year. There will need to be a consideration of lifting the department’s six-year funding limit for those students, with an additional examination of ways to minimize the resulting financial impact.

In the longer term, efforts should be made toward developing a set of faculty best practices for mentoring and graduate teaching within the department. However, given the request of the university to shelve nonessential efforts due to the increased workload associated with the pandemic, it is our recommendation that these issues be put off to the next academic year.

Clinical Graduate Program and Psychology Clinic

The Clinical Graduate Program (Director of Clinical Training: Nick Allen) is composed of seven core tenure-stream individuals, and two non-tenure track clinical professors. The program is highly ranked in national surveys, and was the first clinical psychology program in the state, having been continuously accredited with the American Psychological Association for nearly 70 years. The Oregon Health and Science University in Portland has recently established a new clinical psychology program and there is also one other, for-profit, program at Pacific University based in Hillsboro Oregon.

Undoubtedly the most important development this year was the adaptations that we had to make to the training program in the light of the COVID pandemic. These not only affected didactic teaching, but also clinical training. As a result, our internal training clinic needed to pivot rapidly to providing telehealth services, which involved significant retooling in terms of both video consultation and electronic health records. Drs. Crystal Dehle and Ruth Ellingsen, our Clinic Director and Associate Director, put enormous effort into this process and are to be commended for their rapid achievements here. A second impact was on our students’ training needs in terms of hours available to them at their external clinical practica. Many practica shut down for a period of time, and when they reopened training opportunities were either reduced or significantly changed. A survey was conducted amongst the students to understand the number of type of hours lost, and it was clear that this was a significant problem for the vast majority of students. This is, of course, a national problem affecting students in all programs across the country (and across the globe), so the faculty have kept on top of the latest consensus about adjustments being made to training experiences and letters of recommendation and attestations regarding training standards in the light of the pandemic.

We are facing the impending retirement of two core clinical faculty members, Drs. Gordon Hall and Jennifer Freyd, both of whom have made enormous contributions to the program over many years. As such, hiring new faculty will be a critical issue over the next few years. We are currently ascertaining the best way to move ahead with this in light of the financial restrictions and changed hiring plans at the University, and are hopeful to pursue various recruitment strategies over the next few years. Another major strategic goal is to enhance our capacity to provide the opportunity to receive training relevant to serving diverse populations, especially Spanish speaking clients. Although we have been pursuing this goal for some time, it is very disappointing that despite significant efforts we have not yet been able to recruit an appropriate supervisor to take on this role. However, we will continue our efforts in this regard and hope for more success over the next year.

As noted above, the operations of the UO Psychology Clinic are intertwined with the clinical graduate program. Our clinic Director, Dr. Crystal Dehle was promoted to Clinical professor this year, a fitting recognition for her expertise and leadership in clinical training. Furthermore because Dr. Dehle is on sabbatical this year, Dr. Ruth Ellingsen is acting as the Clinical Director, and overseeing the further digital transformation of the clinic in response to the COVID pandemic. The clinic’s primary mission is to provide...
high-quality training and supervision in evidence-based interventions for students in the clinical psychology doctoral program. In addition, the mission includes efforts to support and facilitate student and faculty research on clinically relevant topics, and to provide high quality, low-cost evidence-based services to the local community. The Clinic is one of a few local options for evidence-based treatments delivered with good fidelity to the original treatment protocols. Advanced doctoral graduate students provide services under the supervision of licensed Clinical Psychologists. An income-based sliding fee scale determines client fees, which range from $10-50 per evaluation or treatment session.

**Diversity/Inclusion**

The primary focus on the CIC (Chair: Holly Arrow) is to foster an inclusive community within our department. Some of our efforts focus on social and other community building events. This past year, we introduced a winter potluck event which was well attended and is hopefully something we can repeat in the future. We also have organized happy hours at the beginning of the academic year to welcome new members to the department. Another major focus for the CIC is our annual climate survey. This year, we administered the climate survey along with a gender harassment and discrimination survey. Unfortunately, the surveys revealed that there was an almost across-the-board increase in dissatisfaction and reports of negative experiences within our department. Of particular concern, there was an increase in the frequency of reports of sexual coercion and/or assault. These reports are extremely concerning and have received considerable attention by the CIC. We have discussed actions internally and with departmental leadership and have also consulted with the Title IX office, the university ombudsperson, and our colleague Jennifer Freyd. We plan to address these issues by (1) increasing awareness of reporting options (we sent an email earlier this year detailing reporting options), and (2) developing training and education targeted at prevention. A final, major focus for the CIC this past year was the topic of systemic racism. We held several townhall type meetings where students and faculty were able to express their thoughts, feelings, and hopes related to these issues. We have recently created a living document that acknowledges several areas in which our department can and must do better in our efforts to promote anti-racism. We will use the coming months to develop concrete steps that can be taken in each of these areas. Critically, the living document will increase transparency, awareness, and accountability.

**New Developments and Challenges**

**COVID-related disruptions:** As for most research institutions across the country, the COVID-related lockdown has led to considerable disruptions of research-related activities. In particular, all face-to-face human subjects research had to stop for about 6 months, and is only very gradually starting up again for some labs. For high-contact research (e.g., physiological measurements) and for research with vulnerable publications (families with children, elderly participants) any prospect of a return to normal remains elusive. These disruptions are on top of the extra challenges of switching almost all teaching activities to an online format. We are aware that these challenges have serious, potential consequences for research careers, in particular for junior faculty and graduate students. Aside from general measures taken by the administration (e.g., adding for all junior faculty the opportunity of an additional, pre-tenure year) the department will need to work closely with individual faculty and students to try to mitigate hardships.

**New Masters Program:** The UO Online Master’s in Psychology (OMP) program is designed to benefit people with bachelor’s degrees working in community-based organizations and public agencies that address social and mental health needs. The program is fully online with asynchronous courses on a part-time schedule distributed over 6 terms (18 months). OMP curriculum emphasizes how research on brain development, program evaluation, and emotional well-being across the lifespan can be put to use in real-world settings. In addition to receiving advanced training in program evaluation and the brain science of development and behavior change, OMP students will complete an experiential capstone research project. Upon completion of the program, students will be able to (a) evaluate current interventions delivered in their home agencies, (b) make informed selections of evidence-based programs to deliver, and (c) have a working knowledge of the basic psychological and neural processes at play in their clients as they participate in behavior change programs. Dedicated program staff are Anne Mannering (Director and Lecturer), Justin Caouette (Career Lecturer), and Victoria Braun (Administrative Support). A small set of CTN-affiliated faculty (Berkman, Fisher, Pfeifer, Skowron, and Zalewski, among others) will serve as
capstone research project advisors. The program is set to launch in Winter 2021 with a target cohort of 15-20 students and the goal to gradually increase enrollment over time.
Peer-reviewed Publications (Jan. 2019-May 2020)


47. Costello, C. K., Srivastava, S., Rejaie, R., & Zalewski, M. (2019). Predicting mental health from followed accounts on Twitter. *Collabra: Psychology. [Note: Accepted as a Stage 1 registered report.]*


developmental link in Microbiome–Gut–Brain axis communication? Developmental Psychobiology,


204. Sherry, L., Mauro, R., & Trippe, J. (2019). Design of a Primary Flight Display (PFD) to Avoid Controlled Flight into Stall. *Journal of Guidance, Control, and Dynamics (AIAA).*


targets, and types of personal exchanges. *Current Opinion in Psychology*, 31, 135–140. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.copsyc.2019.08.005


Book Chapters
(Jan. 2019-May 2020)


**Books**  
(Jan. 2019-May 2020)


**Data Sets**  
(Jan. 2019-May 2020)

Professional Activities  
(Jan. 2019-May 2020)

Invited Talks:


9. **Baldwin, D.** (2019). Eye of the beholder; beholder of the eye. Faculty blitz talk, Department of Psychology, University of Oregon.


14. **Mills, Kathryn** (2019) Honors Neuroscience Toolbox Guest Lecture, Oregon State University, Corvallis, OR

15. **Mills, Kathryn** (2019) Developmental Cognitive Neuroscience Master Course Guest Lecture, Leiden University, Leiden, Netherlands


**Public Outreach [e.g., editorials, public presentations, blogs]:**

1. **Ablow, J.C.,** Studying the "exquisitely sensitive" perinatal period during pandemic (KLCC, June 24, 2020)

2. **Ablow, J.C.,** New study looks at pregnancy during the COVID-19 pandemic (Around the O, May 18, 2020)


5. **Casement, M. D.** (2019). *A journey into psychology research.* Oral presentation for undergraduate student members of Psi Chi, University of Oregon, Eugene, OR.

6. **Casement, M. D.** (2019). *Sleep Science and You.* Oral presentation for high school students in the Summer Academy to Inspire Learning (SAIL), University of Oregon, Eugene, OR.

7. **Casement, M. D.** (2019). *Feasibility and Affective Consequences of At-Home Sleep Extension in Young Women with Depressive Symptoms.* Oral presentation for Psychology Faculty Research Blitz, University of Oregon, Eugene, OR.

8. **Casement, M. D.** (2020). *Sleep Health and You.* Invited presentation for the Asphalt Pavement Association or Oregon, Valley River Inn, Eugene, OR.

9. **Casement, M. D.** (2020). *Sleep Science and You.* Oral presentation for high school students in the Summer Academy to Inspire Learning (SAIL), University of Oregon, Eugene, OR.


22. Srivastava, Sanjay (2020) blog, *The Hardest Science*, started in 2010. All-time views are at 952,000; during the review period, there have been 68,000 views.


Other:

1. Allen, N.B. Elected At-large Member, Governing Council, Society for Research In Child Development (2019-2025)

2. Allen, N.B. Member, Guideline Development Group, Prevention of Adolescent Mental Disorders, World Health Organization.


4. Andrews, J., University College London; Flournoy, J., Harvard University; Ross, G., University of Oregon; Peake, S., University of Oregon; Flanner, J., University of Oregon; Cheng, T., University of


11. Roos, L.E., University of Manitoba; Giuliano, R., University of Manitoba; Beauchamp, K., University of New Mexico School of Medicine; Berkman, E., University of Oregon; Knight, E., The Pennsylvania State University; Fisher, P.A., University of Oregon. (2019, March). Acute Stress Impairs Children's Attention with Vulnerability for Children of Mothers reporting Higher Parenting Stress. Poster presented at the SRCD Biennial Meeting, Baltimore, MD.
Awards  
(Jan. 2019-May 2020)

University Awards:

2019  **Kuhl, Brice**  Fund for Faculty Excellence Awardee, Office of the Provost, University of Oregon.

2020  **Bala, Jagdeep**  Tykeson Award for Teaching Excellence, University of Oregon.

2020  **Glang, Ann**  Outstanding Research Award, University of Oregon.

2020  **Fausey, Caitlin**  Excellence Award for Outstanding Mentorship in Graduate Studies, University of Oregon.

2020  **Fausey, Caitlin**  Faculty Research Mentor Award, Center for Undergraduate Research and Engagement, University of Oregon.

National Awards:

2019  **DuBrow, Sarah**  NARSAD Young Investigator Grant 2020-2022, Brain & Behavior Research Foundation.

2019  **Freyd, Jennifer**  Distinguished Publication Award, Association for Women in Psychology

2019  **Kuhl, Brice**  “Outstanding Reviewer for 2018,” *Journal of Neuroscience*

2019  **Tucker, Don**  Adopted as Fellow, National Academy of Inventors.

2020  **Condon, David**  Awarded a 2020 Commendation from the Society for Improving Psychological Science for contributions to PsyArXiv, an open-access preprint service for psychological science

2020  **DuBrow, Sarah**  Sloan Research Fellowship, The Alfred P. Sloan Foundation.

2020  **DuBrow, Sarah**  Rising Star Award, Association for Psychological Science.

2020  **Mayr, Ulrich**  Appointed to the Board of Behavioral and Cognitive and Sensory Sciences, US National Academy of Sciences.

2020  **Mills, Kathryn**  Rising Star Award, Association for Psychological Science.

2020  **Srivastava, Sanjay**  Adopted as Fellow, Association for Psychological Science.

2020  **Zalewski, Maureen**  Outstanding Early Career Alumni Award, Department of Psychology, Pennsylvania State University (inaugural awardee).