



UNC
COLLEGE OF
ARTS & SCIENCES

THE UNIVERSITY
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at CHAPEL HILL

DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY
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DONALD T. LYSLE, PH.D.
Kenan Professor and Chair

April 8, 2015

Abigail Panter, Ph.D., Senior Associate Dean for Undergraduate Education
Nick Siedentop, Curriculum Director for Undergraduate Curricula
Office of Undergraduate Education
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
214 E. Cameron Avenue CB #3504
Chapel Hill, NC 27599

Dear Dr. Panter and Mr. Siedentop,

On behalf of the faculty in the Department of Psychology, I write to seek approval to change the name of the Department of Psychology to the **Department of Psychology and Neuroscience**.

Over the past decade, the field of Psychology has increasingly become more engaged in the direct study of neural processes underlying behavior. This is reflected in the increasing use of technologies such as neural imaging in both animals and humans, the development of cutting edge techniques including optogenetics to activate specific populations of brain cells in the study of behaving animals, the study of stress reactive biomarkers that result from developmental risk and predict later disorder, the identification of genetic polymorphisms and epigenetic changes that result from stress and psychopathology, and the examination of neural circuitry that is associated uniquely with risk for behavioral disorders and negative health outcomes. This evolution in the field is also reflected in the direction of federal research funding from agencies such as NIH and NSF. Indeed, for behavioral research, it is now largely a requirement that these types of technological innovations be a substantial part of grant applications to be competitive for funding. For example, within its Strategic Plan the National Institute of Mental Health has prioritized the study of neural circuitry, cellular and genetic processes, and physiological systems that may have implications for the onset or cure of mental illness. A similar emphasis on the neuroscience components of psychology is evident in other federal institutes that support funding for behavioral scientists. The growing role that neuroscience plays in the field of Psychology is also reflected in the types of programs that undergraduate and graduate students apply to, as well the changing expertise of the very best new faculty recruits. In line with this emphasis, our Psychology department is launching a new Neuroscience minor to begin in the fall of 2015.

Psychology departments across the country are contemplating how to adapt to this shift in emphasis within the discipline. Our faculty believe that UNC should remain at the forefront of this movement to retain our department's status as a leader within our discipline. A new name for our department will better reflect our teaching and research and help to clarify the expertise we possess during recruitment of faculty and students and when applying for funding.

Duke University, Baylor University, and the University of Colorado-Boulder are several examples of the peer institutions that have incorporated Neuroscience into their department titles. Others such as Boston University have changed from Psychology to Department of Psychological and Brain Sciences. Unfortunately for some universities, this identity crisis has led to a contentious split of the existing Psychology Department into two completely separate departments, something our faculty strongly oppose happening at Carolina. We believe there is far greater merit in having both Psychology and Neuroscience united in one department.

Our decision is the result of a thoughtful and reflective process during which we considered not only our field's trajectory more broadly, but also the standing of our department nationally and our desire to retain its reputation of excellence. During the spring semester, the faculty engaged in intense discussions about how to adapt to this change in our discipline. We have discussed this topic in several faculty meetings and program meetings, and we have conducted surveys to collect ideas and opinions. What became apparent through this process is that our faculty members strongly believe that it is important for the future of the department to include neuroscience not only in our work, but also in the department name. Furthermore, it became clear that more than half of our faculty are already deeply engaged in neuroscience research and receive neuroscience-specific funding. This research includes investigations of structure and function of neurons and astrocytes (Drs. Fitting and Reissner), rodent models of the neurobiology of drug addiction and stress-related disorders using optogenetics and DREADD technology (Drs. Carelli, Lysle, and Thiele), studies of human sensory neurons involved in pain (Dr. Hollins), use of genetic and biomarkers of behavior and behavioral disorders (Drs. Fredrickson, Prinstein and Boettiger) and a growing number of faculty using human neuroimaging technologies to study a variety of behaviors (e.g., Drs. Arnold, Boettiger, Cohen, Daughters, Gates, Giovanello, Gordon, Hopfinger, Lindquist, Penn, Prinstein, and Sheridan).

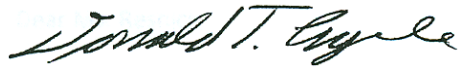
Early in the discussion, a few faculty expressed concern about change, but the overwhelming majority of the faculty, approximately 80%, were strongly in favor of a change from the beginning discussion. The recognition of a need to evolve was especially true among the junior faculty. As conversations continued, there was growing endorsement among all members of the faculty about making a change to our department name.

During our Departmental Faculty Meeting on April 1, 2015, the Psychology faculty agreed that a name change would provide a better branding of the department and more effectively encompass the diversity of our faculty's teaching and research initiatives. We identified two acceptable names that address this issue, "Department of Psychological and Brain Sciences" and "Department of Psychology and Neuroscience." In a faculty vote, the preference was clearly in favor of "Department of Psychology and Neuroscience" with 85% of votes. I personally was also in favor of this name since it retains the rich traditions of Psychology and adds the valuable recognition of neuroscience that reflects the changing emphasis of our faculty and students. The name also represents our collaborative research and dedicated instruction in both psychology and neuroscience. Moving forward, it will unify the department and help us attract the best, brightest, and most innovative faculty and students. Critically, encompassing psychology and neuroscience

into one name will also help us retain our prominent national ranking and underscore the vision for our future growth in the field.

I am confident that “Department of Psychology and Neuroscience” captures a more accurate portrayal of our research and teaching missions, and better reflects our evolving field and our place in it. With the university investment of \$12 million to renovate Howell Hall, our Department will have cutting-edge core laboratories to integrate neuroscience and psychological research. We believe this facility will position us as leaders in our field. In summary, I fully endorse this change in name and I hope the department’s request meets with your approval. I look forward to finalizing this important change.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Donald T. Lysle". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name.

Donald T. Lysle, Ph.D. and Chair
Kenan Distinguished Professor



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Abigail Panter, Ph.D., Senior Associate Dean for Undergraduate Education
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University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
214 E. Cameron Avenue CB #3504
Chapel Hill, NC 27599

Dear Dr. Panter,

I write this letter in support of the Department of Psychology's decision to change its name to "Department of Psychology and Neuroscience."

Neuroscience is one of the fastest growing fields in the natural sciences as the composition of the faculty within the department will attest. The Department of Psychology is well-represented by neuroscience, as over half of its faculty are teach and conduct research related to "neuroscience." This is a national trend, as many institutions have already made similar changes to better represent the teaching and research of its faculty. Therefore, a name change will increase the department's prestige and enable the department to engage in more competitive recruitment of faculty and graduate students.

The Department is currently the lead UNC department in the development of the Neuroscience minor in the College of Arts and Sciences, and has been engaged with neuroscience faculty in the School of Medicine on several related initiatives for well over a decade. This commitment to Psychology and Neuroscience is also illustrated by the university investment of \$12 million to renovate Howell Hall to create cutting edge core laboratories to integrate neuroscience and psychological research. I believe this completely renovated facility will position the department to continue growing in this direction, and to soon become the leaders in neuroscience research.

I support the department's name change proposal in order to better represent the faculty and their graduate students, and to strengthen the department's position for the future. Please feel free to contact me if you and/or your Administrative Board members should have any questions regarding this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kevin M. Guskiewicz". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Kevin Guskiewicz, Ph.D.
Senior Associate Dean, Natural Sciences