

December 9, 2025 Psychology Advisory Board Meeting

The mission of the Advisory Board is to support and advocate on behalf of the Department of Psychology and to support the Department's achievement of its goals through Engagement, Leadership, and Philanthropy.

Meeting Location: Zoom

In Attendance:

Board Members: Amanda Balkhi (President), Martha Zlokovich (Secretary/President Elect), Dianne Allen (Philanthropy Committee Chair), Peter Dodzik (Leadership Committee Chair), Chris Pitisci (Engagement Committee Chair), Kristy Johnson, Matt Michaels, Eric Rudich, Meredith Wikstrom, Angie Winn

UF Representatives: Julia Graber (Department Chair), Jason Jasper (Advancement), Willie DeLeon (Department Vice Chair), Kaylee August (Advancement, new Assistant Director of Operations and Engagement)

Future Meetings: March 27, 2026 in-person and via Zoom for those unable to travel

Engagement

- **Engagement Committee Updates**

Chris – the committee wrote a couple of letters related to alumni mentorship, internships, beyond 120, Dr. Stokes, and alumni videos.

The committee has been somewhat stuck on how to proceed (see Board discussion, below).

- **Department Updates About Engagement**

Julie mentioned that the Department's fall newsletter came out; it compiled fall meeting info that is available on the website; highlights work department and grad students have been doing.

- **Advancement Updates About Engagement**

Amanda: We need to clarify attainable, actionable goals ahead of spring meeting and Giving Day

Hall of Fame – selected 7 awardees and the committee is working on getting their info and developing the design for web and hallway versions.

- **Board Discussion About Engagement**

With regard to the committee feeling stuck, Amanda suggested biting off smaller pieces, setting goals, setting up accountability. Dr. Stokes can help us find alumni who may be interested in setting up experiential learning experiences with their companies.

The committee should touch base with Dr. Kerr (Department's Experiential Learning Coordinator) to ensure that the "wish list" of contacts they share with Dr. Stokes's team matches Departmental needs. Once this has been

done, they can reach out to the industry coordinator of Beyond120, Christina Mattern (with Julia cc'd) to share the types of alumni and events that we desire. The committee thinks that psychology graduates with businesses or philanthropy experience may be a good starting place

Martha asked which are the highest priorities? Julia shared that Dr. Kerr has been working on planning experiential group on "field trips" to go to a locale and tour, talk about work that is done there.

The Board briefly brainstormed on feasible places to go that are not too far from Gainesville.

Atlanta is popular with Beyond 120.

Martha – what about recent retirees in the area? Beyond 120 folks have access to find them. Julie mentioned that one of the retirement places in Gainesville has lots of academics; has an institute for lifelong learning; students may present at Oak Hammock.

Struggle is, there is no shortness of great ideas, but the issue is follow through, in carrying out the ideas. Kristy – we need to be mindful of what internships students are interested in and will sign up for.

If any road blocks, feel free to reach out to the rest of the Board and Advancement via the list serve, to remove or clarify barriers.

Alumni Video project – Dianne – she offered to do videos and zero have scheduled anything. She contacted a few of her friends who said they will do them when back from overseas. Julia and Advancement confirmed she can put the opportunity out on her personal social media to solicit those who want to participate and are graduates of the Psychology Department. Amanda had sent a cold outreach list – but Dianne has been travelling and she hasn't reached out yet. She wasn't sure if Chris was going to do that.

Chris – engagement committee has several poised activities – they were initially doing videos, but that should be on list of goals and assigning people to follow up so momentum is not lost. Board can help committee work on the initiatives. Can we use beyond 120 message – video opportunity needs to be included.

Amanda will resend list – who can help with cold outreach via LinkedIn messages? Dianne volunteered to help email people.

Leadership

- **Leadership Committee Updates**

Pete reported that the committee had a few projects ongoing

Last week he received from Advancement 11 names submitted by board members. Can he start vetting or does it need to go through someone else first? Jason shared documents with the committee; he said there is a process and recommended Pete reach out to Advancement directly with any plans to contact these potential board members.

Ongoing speaker – getting speakers in. Student reps gave info to him. Two topics so far are:

Professional development (internship, fellowship, launch career in another area, prepare materials). Pete reached out to a UF grad in Journalism who started a company. His wife is a UF grad in clinical psych who is a professor at UT Austin. The committee is working on a zoom presentation with him if ok with everyone.

Second, similar to Eric's talk he gave. Eric said it was helpful that Brian Cahill (who teaches legal psych and is faculty advisor for mock trial group) shepherded talk, promoted it, but important to have a faculty member promoting the talk.

Several topics of interest to students, but can't guarantee how well any particular one would be attended. David Cox, ABPP ED, who can give leads to people in specific areas, people who are unique in and out of field to give broader idea of what's possible with the degree. Then just ask students if they are interested.

- **Departmental Updates About Leadership**

At the PAB fall meeting, we talked about faculty searches, maintaining faculty numbers; social psych has been industrious – candidates were on campus in November and she is working on an offer for the position right now, to Fernanda Andrade. There were 95 applicants.

Other searches include Behavioral and Cognitive Neuroscience, which had 120 applicants. They are on a slightly later timeline with candidates on campus in January so will know more about that position by time of the meeting

A counseling area faculty member who has been strongly connected in clinical practice is moving out of state, leaving mid-year.

Her departure is significant as she is the only licensed core faculty member within the Counseling track. To address this, the Department immediately notified APA, began looking at additional hiring options for licensed faculty, examined the potential to leverage existing partnerships with licensed providers at the University, and potentially using licensed faculty who are outside the Counseling track.

In consultation with the Counseling and Wellness Center (CWC), Natasha Maynard-Pemba, Licensed Psychologist and CWC Training Director, was identified as a strategic resource for the Department. As a current adjunct within the Department who supervises a number of students during their CWC experiences, she is uniquely equipped to assist the Department during this time of transition.

Julia appreciates the support of the college in helping to address this issue given the need for an unexpected faculty hire outside of the Interim Dean's immediate hiring plans.

Board of Trustees is apparently interested in interim president becoming permanent. Maybe after that we can start addressing other interims across campus.

UF is still attractive because of colleagues, competitive salary offers.

It has been a mixed market, so hard to know about hiring at other universities, but did see more ads out there.

A number of people who seemed very interested in UF had family connections or collaborators in Florida. People who know folks in Florida, know what they are getting into, so no surprises. People are looking for a good position.

The Board reflected on the sentiment that with national changes over the last three years, the state of Florida is no longer seen as a location that many potential hires view as politically riskier than other parts of the country.

The state university system Board of Governors did enact a rule in fall that syllabi for every class will be posted 45 days before class starts – a sense that the purpose is to review them. Then the syllabi are to be archived for 5 years.

We think they will address the Governor's concerns about the number of H1B visas in state university system and UF has largest number – we recruit broadly to get the best. Disheartening that might be discouraged. Psychology has international H1B visa faculty going through the permanent resident process, but for some programs it will be much harder to recruit. Some of these faculty even trained at UF.

- **Board Discussion about Leadership**

Pete asked, how should he reach out to faculty? Julia said Ron Chandler is a good connection for undergraduate-related questions and which faculty members may be helpful with particular topics, e.g., students not planning on attending psychology graduate school. Would Dr. Devine be a useful point of contact because he manages graduate program? Not really. Could send a survey to grad students – Pete will send proposed survey to Julie.

Angie asked, do we want future board members to have a UF degree? Previous definitions from Advancement are that PAB members can be an alum, parent of an alum/student, or friend/supporter (e.g., industry contact).

Philanthropy

- **Philanthropy Committee Updates**

Brief because Giving Day is the primary goal. Working on impact statements from people who received funds to answer question of what happened with donors' funds in a meaningful, heartfelt, current way.

Also talked about “why I give statements” from our Board. Reusing last year's, encouraging those who didn't make one to do so. Why are we volunteering for this board? Statement or video. Here is the link of board testimonials from last year, if any of us want to update or add one: [Giving Day Testimonials](#)

- **Advancement Updates about Philanthropy**

Challenge of \$15K; as of now only about \$2,500-\$3,400 so please contact Jason if that fell off your radar. It will go to general fund. A number of pledges might be specific to a program a Board member wants to support.

In 2024 the dollars raised (minus Board challenge) were \$6,097; 2025 it was \$16,314. We had a goal of 150 gifts last year, and received 168 (142 in 2024).

If you know any businesses that might add to that challenge let them know.

- **Board Discussion about Philanthropy**

Amanda – most board members were here for giving day last year – what worked, what didn't (website crashed and wasn't updating promptly). Kristy saw giving day in her network, not necessarily from department.

Sharing an existing announcement from the department, with a personal announcement added, has impact because a lot of people aren't aware of giving day (in her network anyway). Matt – LinkedIn algorithms prioritize comments to an original post over sharing a post with no comment. Does UF post on the other platforms? Yes. LinkedIn largest community but also posted to FB and Instagram.

Dianne was very vocal last year – started early February making comments about her reasons for giving, where her heart is for UF, mentioned on her podcast, made comments and reposted every comment she saw, also made a few of her own videos. Her LinkedIn started well before so on Giving Day her algorithm was already boosted in that direction.

Eric requested maybe send us pings two weeks to Giving Day, 1 week, etc. so we can get ready.

[Giving Day Potential Captions](#): Giving Day ambassador media kit didn't come to us until about a week before. Julie – got two grad student impact statements back, she can send to Dianne if on target for what she wants. CLAS is reviewing materials to be sure compliant with accessibility rules (deadline end of April so won't apply this giving day). Diane – just learned that anytime someone uses a Canva template LinkedIn actively blocks post. You can use Canva just don't use one of their templates.

Martha requested the current Board % participation and total amount pledged. Amanda reminded us that 100% can mean \$1 each, from all board members. Amanda asked Jason to contact each person personally who hasn't committed yet. Julie – challenging because last year there was a corporate sponsor in the challenge gift. Amanda – if the total is much lower than last year, do we not want to have a challenge gift, or to frame it as "to start Giving Day the Board has donated \$xx? But we need to determine gifts this month so Advancement can craft messages.

Also clarified, for sake of new Board members, that the amount pledged for a match is our donation for Giving Day – there is not the expectation of another gift on Giving Day.

- **Advancement Structural Updates**

Advancement welcomed Kaylee August, new Assistant Director of Operations and Engagement

Board Governance

- **Leadership Changes Within the Board**

Amanda reminded us that she will be officially handing the torch over to Martha and becoming Past President at the close of the Spring meeting, Martha will then be President.

Julie appoints the next President-Elect, so let her know if you are interested.

- **Future Meeting Agenda Discussion**

The Spring in-person meeting (or Zoom for those not able to travel) will be held March 27. We have a room booked in the Reitz for Thursday and Friday, March 26 (event) and 27 (meeting).

March 26, prior to the Board meeting – as of right now we structure fall social events with department (e.g., grad student experience). For the Spring meeting university prefers we focus on activity to build board cohesion or understanding.

For the Spring 2026 meeting, the Board discussed bowling, playing pool, taking a facilities tour, visiting the bat house, a board experience to trial Dr. Odegaard's AI informed visual scanning technology, climbing the Bell Tower, or hiking into the Millhopper (for early arrivers). To facilitate conversation, the Board prefers casual locations (e.g. The Swamp Restaurant), a picnic at the lake, or the Bartram Carr Woods Pavillion. Martha will look into options.

Board expressed interest in lunch or other meeting with faculty, perhaps those working on AI research. Willie has a meeting with a company that analyzes video of problem behaviors in order to do the same analysis as a behavior analysis professional would take hours to complete. Nicole Gravina was looking at developing an AI tool to train students, develop skills.

- **Current Full Board Member List by Term:**

Fall 2022 – December 31, 2025 Term: Meredith Wikstrom

Spring 2023 – June 30, 2026 Term: Janette Berne, Peter Dodzik

Fall 2023 – December 2026 Term: Dianne Allen, Kristy Johnson

Fall 2024 – December 30, 2027 Term: Stephen Alli, Amanda Balkhi*, Matt Michaels, Patricia Thomas Shutt*#

Spring 2025 – December 31, 2028 Term: Eric Rudich, Antonio E. Puente*, Chris Pitisci*, Angie Winn, Martha Zlokovich*

* Denotes members serving second term

+ Denotes members serving third term

Board approved leave of absence September 2024

- **Current Committee Assignments:**

Engagement - Chris Pitisci (Chair), Stephen Alli, Kristy Johnson, Matt Michaels, Martha Zlokovich

Leadership - Peter Dodzik (Chair), Janette Berne, Eric Rudich, Angie Winn, Antonio Puente

Philanthropy - Dianne Allen (Chair), Amanda Balkhi, Meredith Wikstrom