

March 8, 2024 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: Antonio E. Puente (President), Amanda Balkhi (Secretary/President Elect), Martha Zlokovich (Leadership Committee Chair), Peter Dodzik, Janette Berne, Meredith Wikstrom (Philanthropy Committee Chair; Zoom), Patricia Shutt (Engagement Committee Chair; Zoom), Chris Pitisci, Fredrick L. Coolidge (Zoom), Kristy Johnson, Dianne Allen (Zoom)

UF Representatives: Julia Graber (Department Chair), Lacie Klann (Advancement), Willie DeLeon (Department Vice Chair), Lauren Guidi-Mackey (Advancement), Steve Evans (Advancement)

Future Meetings: May 22, 2024 via Zoom, Fall 2024 in Person

Engagement:

- Engagement Committee Member Chris Pitisci shared the current goals held by the committee. 1) Connect with Psi Chi and Psychology Club to create Social Media Posts (IT) for their respective instagrams and list serves to engage students in Mentor Connect, 2) Reach out to alumni to recruit more mentors in various fields, get videos, and begin the process of developing relationships for internships in diverse fields, and 3) Draft email engagement with seniors to build connection and opportunity to enroll in post graduate follow up.

The Engagement Committee has reached out to both Psi Chi and Psychology Club for collaboration on social media posts and hopes to build this partnership in the coming months. The Engagement Committee also shared that it continues to maintain a draft of an alumni engagement letter previously drafted by Chris Pitisci and Antonio E. Puente. The Engagement Committee will share this draft with the Leadership Committee to ensure a coordinated interaction with Alumni facilitated by Advancement in response to the Alumni Survey. Finally, members of the Engagement Committee are actively working on letters to draft to graduating seniors. This letter will be shared with Julia Graber prior to sending to students.

- Julia Graber provided an update regarding the Mentor Connect platform. In conversations with Beyond120 leadership, Dr. Graber became aware of a potential plan to switch from [Mentor Connect](#) to the University's [Gator Network](#) Platform.

While doing so would reduce cost and provide a more cohesive experience across the University, the Board shared concerns about the Gator Network Platform. These included: limited CLAS/Beyond120 branding, a cluttered user interface with frequent tagging that was felt to be unhelpful, cumbersome meeting scheduling, and a general feeling that the Gator Network Platform was less focused on mentorship than the existing Mentor Connect portal. However, Board Member's shared that the limited number of Mentor Connect meeting requests in recent semesters was concerning. Dr. Graber will share this feedback with the Beyond120 team. Additionally, Martha Zlokovich, Chris Pitisci, and Amanda Balkhi will join and attempt to engage in student mentorship to fully evaluate Gator Network.

- The Board discussed at length the perceived impact of legislation on the University and a desire to stay informed. The Board reiterated their commitment to excellence in the Gator Nation and discussed ideas for continued student engagement, as well as, faculty recruitment and retention. Antonio Puente and Amanda Balkhi will draft a letter to faculty emphasizing the Board's continued appreciation for their efforts while Martha Zlokovich will draft a resource for students sharing funding, mentorship, and scholarship resources from Psi Chi, the American Psychological Association (APA), and APA divisions.

Additionally, the Board brainstormed specific ideas for 2024 initiatives including: a Wall of Fame, a Graduate or Undergraduate student Welcome letter, enhanced availability of speakers for student organizations, continued efforts to expand the Alumni video project, support for Department communication efforts, and ongoing communication and resources for students. The Board will refer these items to the Leadership, Engagement, and Philanthropy Committees to discuss and will revisit these topics at the next meeting.

Leadership:

- Dr. Julia Graber provided a departmental update. Since the last meeting, the Department has successfully filled the assistant professor position within Counseling Psychology with Yuki Shigemoto, an experienced clinician and researcher with expertise in trauma and quantitative methods. One additional associate professor position in the Counseling Psychology area is pending negotiation with an expected tenure upon hire offering. The Department has also successfully filled its faculty position in Computational Modeling/Quantitative Psychology with Nicolas Cole, a Social Psychologist with experience in AI. Given the strength of the applicant pool for this position, the Department sought approval for an additional hire which is currently pending applicant negotiation. Regarding trends in hiring, Dr. Graber shared that while the overall hiring process is much longer than in previous years, the Department has seen substantial support from University Administration.

With planned retirements and unexpected departures, the Department will lose three faculty members at the end of this academic year and gain four new faculty members, for a total of 44 faculty. Thirty-three of these faculty are on the tenure track. In addition to the Department's established content areas (Social,

Developmental, Counseling, Behavioral and Cognitive Neuroscience, Behavior Analysis), the addition of faculty with such strong backgrounds in quantitative psychology speaks to an area of growing excellence within the Department. Nine of the 33 tenure-track faculty will now have an emphasis in Data Science/AI.

Across the Department, graduate students are also seeing growth. Of the current 103 graduate students, 18 will graduate by August 2024. These students are generally highly active in research and teaching activities. Across the graduate students within the Department, 54 graduate travel awards were granted in Fall 2023 and Spring 2024, reflecting the Department's emphasis on research dissemination. Current graduate student recruitment is in progress, with the Department waiting for 8-10 additional student decisions. The Department is optimistic that it will have a successful strategic funds application in order to further recruit these additional applicants.

Dr. Graber also shared some information regarding the teaching training that graduate students within the Department receive. Given the Department's emphasis on effective teaching, each graduate student completes a Department created Graduate Instructor Training. This online training model is unique to the department and outlines best practices, dispute resolution, and other necessary skills for instructional excellence. The Department intends to add a module regarding integrating AI into teaching for Fall 2024 to ensure that Psychology Graduate Instructors are implementing best practices. Additionally, select graduate students within the Department are enrolled in the PSY2012 Coordinated Training Program. In this program, graduate students each teach a section of the Introduction to Psychology Coursework and meet weekly with a faculty coordinator to collaboratively solve problems, plan lessons, and individualize each section.

Undergraduates within the Department of Psychology continue to be engaged in research, teaching, and experiential learning. While a number of students engage in these experiences without course credit, in the Spring 191 were engaged in research for credit, 174 in teaching for credit, 19 in internships for credit, and 11 in an honors thesis for credit. Since Fall 2023, 29 undergraduate students have participated in either the senior thesis program or the CLAS scholars or University Scholars program. Current faculty supervisors include Dr. Odegard, Dr. Westgate, Dr. Rodriguez, Dr. Knackstedt, Dr. Schwendt, Dr. Devine, Dr. Dallery, Dr. DeLeon, and Dr. Gravina.

Undergraduate students are also engaged in collaboration across the university. Harmony Gibaldi, a student who previously interacted with the Board during a listening section, was named an AI Scholar at UF for her work examining models of undergraduate student health. Harmony is an active member of the student method health initiative led by Dr. Graber (Department of Psychology) and Dr. Lynne (Department of Family, Youth, and Community Sciences). Psychology students also recently collaborated with students across the university to plan Hope Walks Here, a suicide prevention walk planned for March 23, 2024 on campus. Overall, undergraduate students are active and engaged on campus and invested in creating a lasting impact in scholarship, research, and community outreach.

Dr. Graber also provided an update on legislative changes within the state of Florida and University efforts to comply with new laws. These changes resulted in

the closure of the University DEI office and the elimination of appointments under the heading of DEI. The University has stated its continued commitment to its [core values](#) while complying with state standards. While communication from the University is ongoing, there is general concern within the Department and Board regarding the potential impact on students, faculty, staff, instruction, and national research funding.

Additionally, the University is complying with ongoing legislations related to seven "Countries of Concern". These include new employment restrictions for individuals from these seven countries. While the anticipated impact on faculty recruitment is expected to be minimal, the full scope of impact on the Department's ability to recruit and retain highly skilled international graduate students from these countries is not yet understood, as graduate students in Psychology have assistantships and are considered employees. Members of the Board were encouraged to join the [Gator Advocacy Network](#) to stay abreast of ongoing legislation changes.

- The Board discussed at length the Department's need to continue to communicate the ongoing successes within the Department across social media, the Department newsletter, and the Department's website. Potential items of interest included APPIC match results for the Counseling area, resharing Yatori features from the Department, and ongoing events within the Department.

The Board recommended general website improvements including reducing banner scroll speed on the home page and adding navigational dots within the home page slider item. Additionally, the Board recommended updating the Psi Chi/Phi Beta Kappa descriptions within the Psychology Advising webpages, potentially funding a graduate student summer position to bulk draft evergreen social media posts, and revising the Social Media logo to better match current UF Brand Standards. Finally the Board reviewed the description pages of individual areas and recommended general improvement, updates, and consistency in information presented. The Board recommended that Dr. Graber consider the goal of the Department's social media presence and recruit the Board in whatever way may be helpful to pursue that mission including resharing posts within their personal networks.

- The Leadership Committee Chair Dr. Martha Zlokovich shared the current goals of the committee: 1) The Board has increased representation of Psychology Graduates across fields and has 15 engaged Board Members 2) The Board has a clear and approved set of official Bylaws, 3) The Board's details, training, and interests are clearly reflected on the Board Webpage, and 4) the Board has a method of ongoing self-assessment.

The Leadership Committee shared updates to the [Board's page](#) on the Psychology Department Website which included a more uniform system of displaying degrees, highlighting alumni videos, and presenting Board roles using a University supplied template. The Committee also shared its efforts towards Board Member recruitment by reviewing alumni lists. The Committee will integrate these lists with existing lists and receive more alumni lists from geographic areas of interest (West Coast, North East, Jacksonville, Orlando). Following review of these lists, the Leadership

Committee will coordinate with Advancement for dissemination of information about opportunities within the Department. The Leadership Committee will also review an existing contact letter maintained by the Engagement Committee for potential additions or edits.

The Leadership Committee also shared a proposed Board self-assessment measure. This measure was reviewed and trialed within the Board meeting and unanimously approved for immediate use. The Committee will report on results in a future communication or meeting.

Updates on the Bylaws drafted and presented to Advancement for review by the Leadership Committee are discussed at length within the "Board Governance" section below.

- In pursuit of its aim to maintain an active connection with Department faculty, the Board hosted a working lunch with three pre-tenure faculty within the Counseling area - Dr. Roberto Abreu, Dr. Taewon Kim, and Dr. Anne Zhou.

Philanthropy:

- The Philanthropy Committee indicated that it had successfully completed two of its goals: Understanding Advancement's fundraising strategy and Understanding existing high value donor stewardship. The Committee shared its three current goals are: 1) Determine the Board's annual focus for Giving Day (Annual, recurrent goal); 2) Create a path to enroll alumni in donating; and 3) Understand existing Department funding vehicles and collection status.

Philanthropy Committee Chair Meredith Wikstrom shared the results of the Alumni survey. The survey was seen as effective, with 492 survey respondents, and spoke to alumni desires to have more frequent updates through social media and a quarterly newsletter. Alumni requested Department and Research updates be shared along with events and alumni updates. Many alumni in the survey had not donated, with reasons including financial ability and a lack of connection to existing programs. The Committee plans to use these updates to recommend website improvements including highlighting donation impact on the website and providing a mechanism to allow alumni to update their contact information with the department.

Philanthropy committee also shared recent edits made to the Department's website to improve Department communication and alumni stewardship including a visible form to submit news items and further information on the Alumni page regarding how to get involved.

- Lacie Klann led the board in a discussion of Giving Day. The 2024 "Stand Up and Holler" Gator Nation Giving Day was February 15, 2024. The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences was successful during Giving Day, ranking first in overall dollars raised, second in gifts made, and third in number of donors. This year, the Department of Psychology saw historic levels of engagement during Giving Day. With the Board's first ever matching gift of \$12,750, a pledge fulfillment gift of \$500,000, and other alumni donations, the total raised was \$518,847 from a total of 142 donors. This reflects a \$15,401 increase in funds raised and an increase of 90 donors engaged. Lacie Klann shared that the Board had 100% participation in

funding Giving Day and shared the ThankView messages that would be sent out in the coming days.

Dr. Graber shared plans for the money donated, including the pledge fulfillment for graduate student funding, a program to fund experiential learning opportunities, and support for ABA student training. Unrestricted funds raised are expected to be used for student organization funding, the Undergraduate Research Forum, tools for lab classes, and potentially additional seating and emergency funding within the Department.

- Lacie Klann provided a brief update on the Office of Advancement. Advancement anticipates two new hires in the coming months, including a New Assistant Director of Annual Giving and Engagement that will help with Department and College level messaging around Giving. The CLAS advancement office serves over 122,000 alumni across 21 Departments, 35 Centers, Programs, and Institutes, and now supports nine advisory boards.

Lacie Klann outlined some common ways to give, including via cash donations, securities, real estate, estate plans, IRAs, Life Insurance, and other vehicles. Donations to specific funds within the College or Department are generally classified as either Endowed or Spendable Funds. Endowed Funds allows alumni to make a gift of \$50,000 or more, which is then invested and the Department is allotted 4% of the total fund's value to be spent year after year in perpetuity. This gift endures long past the initial donation and is intended to have a long term impact. Psychology currently has 16 Endowed Funds. Spendable funds, which are short term funds of \$2,000 or more intended for immediate impact, are directly awarded to the College or Department for use in high need areas. Psychology currently has 10 of these short term spendable funds.

Board Governance:

- The Board's bylaws, initially drafted by the Leadership Committee prior to full Board review and revision, were previously submitted to Advancement for review. The Board reviewed and accepted the changes made. The Board then discussed terms for executive committee appointments. After discussion, the Board unanimously agreed to extend terms of the President-Elect, President, and Past-President positions to two years each. Following this, the Board unanimously voted to pass the bylaws. Following final review, the Bylaws will be posted on the Board's page of the Website.
- Following the procedure outlined in the Board's Bylaws, nominations for the President-Elect position were solicited electronically prior to the Board meeting. These nominations were presented to Julia Graber for consideration. At the Board meeting, Julia Graber appointed Martha Zlokovich to the President-Elect Position. In response to Martha's appointment, the Leadership Committee is recommended to select a new Chairperson at its next meeting.

The Executive Committee following the Board Meeting will be: President-Elect: Martha Zlokovich, President: Amanda Balkhi, Past-President Antonio Puente. Each member will serve in their position until the conclusion of the Spring 2026 Board meeting, at which point a new President-Elect shall be appointed, Martha Zlokovich will become President, and Amanda Balkhi will become Past-President.

- The Board proposed the following future meeting agenda:
 - Summer 2024 - Zoom Meeting - The board will review progress within Engagement, Leadership, and Philanthropy Committees and discuss ideas to continue to support Inclusion at the Departmental level.
 - Fall 2024 - In Person Meeting - The Board will review committee progress and receive a Departmental update. A Board ThankView for Grateful Gator Day and potentially Giving Day will be filmed. Specific follow up items will be reviewed.

The Board will take a self assessment measure and discuss the feedback provided within it. The Board will also discuss ways to broaden the Department's relationship and collaboration with other Psychology Departments within the University (e.g. Clinical Psychology), potentially with an in-person mixer. The Board will participate in a working lunch with selected faculty.

Immediately prior to the Board Meeting, the Board suggests an event that allows the Board to interact with current students of the Department. The Board also requests the opportunity to interact with other CLAS or UF Advisory Boards if possible.

- Spring 2026 - In Person Meeting - The Board will review committee progress and receive a Departmental update. Following Board nominations prior to the meeting, the Department Chair will appointment a President-Elect.
- Current Full Board Member List by Term:
 - Spring 2021 - June 30, 2024 Term: Amanda Balkhi, Patricia Thomas Shutt, Frederick L. Coolidge
 - Spring 2021 - Dec 31 2024 Term: Antonio E. Puente, Martha Zlokovich, Chris Pitisci
 - Fall 2022 - December 31, 2025 Term: Meredith Wikstrom
 - Spring 2023 - June 30, 2026 Term: Janette Berne, Peter Dodzik
 - Fall 2023 - December 2026 Term- Kristy Johnson, Dianne Allen
- Current Committee Assignments:
 - Engagement - Patricia Shutt (Chair), Fredrick L. Coolidge, Chris Pitisci, Kristy Johnson, Antonio Puente

- Leadership - Martha Zlokovich (Chair), Janette Berne, Peter Dodzik
- Philanthropy - Meredith Wikstrom (Chair), Amanda Balkhi, Dianne Allen