

University of Florida Department of Psychology Advisory Board 2023 Annual Activity Report

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.

Introduction

Within the Board, 2023 was a year of growth and refinement. As the Board welcomed new members and established new committees and processes, it maintained its focus on engagement, leadership, and philanthropy. As we look ahead to 2024, the Board hopes to continue its mission with an ever-growing group of passionate alumni who represent the broad community of the Department of Psychology.

Engagement: *Help the department to strengthen its relationships with students and alumni as well as professional communities through communications, events, advice, and guidance.*

The Board recognizes that ongoing engagement with faculty and students is necessary to understand the changing needs of the psychology Department. In the Spring, the Board participated in a speed mentoring mixer with twenty-five highly engaged students from the Beyond120 program and Psychology advising staff in the Spring. As a result of this meeting, the Board worked closely with Advising to share additional information about MentorConnect, as many students were unaware of its purpose and availability. The Board also met with Angela Van Arsdale, MA, BCBA (Doctoral Student), Mimi Copeland, RBT (Undergraduate Student) and Dr. Iser DeLeon (Area Head and Incoming Associate Chair). Current student challenges within the department, such as summer funding opportunities for graduate students and limited on campus clinical spaces, were discussed.

The Board also met with Dr. Brian Odegaard, Dr. Peter Kvam, and Dr. Andreas Keil, three members of the faculty who are actively engaged in work with Artificial Intelligence (AI). Following this meeting, the Board encouraged Advancement to facilitate Intellectual Property training for the faculty members interested in this area of research. The Board also met with current and retired faculty during a fall faculty mixer. Following this meeting, the Board shared insights learned from the faculty and encouraged continued development of the Department's newsletter to highlight the accomplishments of faculty and students.

The Board also continued its efforts to engage in Department Alumni events. In Spring, a Board representative (Chris Pitisci) attended an in-person alumni event in Tampa, Florida and encouraged other Board members to similarly network with alumni where possible. The Board continued its efforts to identify local alumni via a series of alumni outreach lists provided by Advancement. Advancement will use any identified contacts from the list to inform future outreach efforts, including a planned email to welcome alumni to engage with the Department.

In 2023, the Board continued to recruit alumni to participate in its Alumni Video Stories project. Two new board members (Meredith Wikstrom and Peter Dodzik) and four additional alumni (Dr. Cammy Crollic, Zarabeth Golden Quinn, Albert Perera, and Dr. Stephen Alli) created alumni video stories that are now available on the [Department's](#)

[Youtube Channel](#). These videos have been shared at UF Psychology Club/Psi Chi meetings and have each received unique views on Youtube. The Board intends to continue to recruit alumni to share their stories.

In Fall 2023, the Board also consolidated its existing Alumni Outreach Workgroup and Alumni Video Stories Workgroup into a newly formed Engagement Committee. The Engagement Committee is chaired by Patricia Shutt. Additional members include Frederick L. Coolidge, Chris Pitisci and Kristy Johnson. Following a strategic planning session, the Engagement Committee selected three near term goals. These include working closely with Psi Chi and Psychology Club to engage students in Mentor Connect, building an engagement pipeline for graduating seniors to stay involved in the Department, and reaching out to alumni in various fields to recruit mentors, potential internship sites, and alumni videos.

The Engagement Committee met with Dr. Ron Chandler, a representative from Psychology Advising, to learn more about the process of senior graduation, Psi Chi, and Psychology Club. In 2024, the Engagement Committee plans to work closely with Psychology Administration to engage with graduating seniors and alumni.

Leadership: *Provide advice, guidance and assistance to the Department Chair in setting the vision for the department and making progress towards that vision.*

During 2023, the Board actively supported the Department's efforts in hiring and faculty retention by sharing available positions to their personal networks and writing letters of continued support to the faculty during times of stress. The Department was very successful in hiring, including adding a full-time academic advisor in Spring 2023, and five faculty members who started in Fall 2024. At year end, the Department was actively recruiting and interviewing for three additional faculty positions.

The Department also celebrated a number of successes in 2023, including numerous faculty research awards, ranking of the online psychology program as fourth in the nation, and an increase in graduate student stipends. The Board encouraged the Department to systematically share these accomplishments across its social media platforms and within the Department Newsletter.

In Fall 2023, the Board formalized the creation of a Leadership Committee chaired by Martha Zlokovich. Additional committee members include Janette Berne and Peter Dodzik. The committee chose three near term goals including: diversification of the board across Academia, Nonprofit Administration, Industry, and Private Practice, encouraging the growth of the Board to 15 engaged members by April 2024, and establishing Board Bylaws that outline ideal leadership lengths, renewal procedures, and succession planning. A long-term goal of the Leadership Committee is to recruit about 10 people to participate in committee activities. Although some committee members could be non-advisory board members, the committee felt first priority was to address board membership diversity and size, and establish board bylaws.

The Leadership Committee presented a draft set of bylaws to the Board which were reviewed at length asynchronously. Included in the bylaws were sections addressing the committee's goal of determining ideal leadership lengths, term renewals, and a succession plan for officers. These bylaws were then submitted to the Advancement office for review.

The Board anticipates approving the bylaws in 2024. The Leadership Committee also completed an audit of the current Board member's experiences, credentials, and biographies on the Psychology webpage and presented recommendations to the Board. In 2024, the Leadership Committee will continue to work with Lauren Guidi-Mackey (Advancement) on improvements to the public-facing member biographies and will begin exploring options for a Board reflection and effectiveness survey.

In addition, the Leadership Committee reviewed several board self-assessments and created a draft Board Self-Assessment Questionnaire focused on both personal board member engagement and board functioning as a whole. Their goal is to present the self-assessment questionnaire to the Board by mid-February in order to administer it and compile results data in time for the March 2024, in-person Board meeting.

Philanthropy: *Financially support the department with an annual gift and provide advice, guidance, and assistance to the department in the areas of fundraising and alumni engagement.*

The Board participated in the fifth annual Gator Giving Day on February 16, 2023. The Board promoted that event heavily within their personal networks, assisted in drafting Departmental website materials, and drafted an email to be distributed to alumni on Giving Day. Despite these efforts, the Board fell below its stated goal of 100 donors (52 donors) and raised \$3,446 in unplanned contributions. The Board shared its concerns regarding the limits of technology on Giving Day. The Board also signed thank you notes for everyone who contributed on Giving Day and encouraged the Department to share the resources Giving Day supports. 2023 Giving Day proceeds were used to fund a speed mentoring event for undergraduate students and awards and refreshments at the Department's Undergraduate Research Forum.

The Board began preparations for the 2024 Stand Up and Holler Gator Nation Giving Day to be held on February 15, 2024. Advancement shared with the Board improvements to the Giving Day platform and shared methods of increasing donors - including a matching gift or unlocking challenge. The Board will attempt to create an unlocking challenge for the 2024 Giving Day event. Advancement recommended that in January each Board member register as a Giving Day Ambassador to receive access to promotional materials.

The Board discussed other potential avenues for philanthropy within the department. These included smaller, targeted funds visible on the Department website, improved communication on the giving page around the benefits of giving, and the recruitment of local alumni for targeted in-kind donations for graduate student office equipment. Other resources recommended by advancement included short "Why I give" videos on the website and monthly recurring donations.

In Fall 2023, the Board finalized the establishment of a Philanthropy Committee chaired by Meredith Wikstrom. Other members include Amanda Balkhi and Dianne Allen. The Philanthropy Committee established three near term goals: to understand the current fundraising strategy of the department, having a clear focus for Giving Day, and creating pathways to enroll alumni in at least one philanthropy objective (Giving Now, Giving Day, or Giving in Kind/Service).

Following a fact finding meeting with Advancement, the Committee developed an alumni survey to be delivered electronically via Advancement's Psychology Alumni listserv. This survey assessed alumni preferences for communication, giving history, and information about their relationship to the Department. The survey was well received with 429 responses from the 12,000 email addresses, a 3.6% response rate. The Committee plans to review the results and develop recommendations for next steps in early 2024.

Additionally, the Committee met with Advancement and Dr. Graber to discuss ideas for the Departmental newsletter and website Giving page based on resources collected from other academic units within the University. The Committee plans to continue to liaison with the Department and Lauren Guidi-Mackey (Advancement) as the Department's website templates for the Giving Page evolve.

Board Governance:

Led by Meredith Wikstrom, the Board engaged in strategic planning sessions during the Spring semester. Through this process, the Board created three distinct committees, Leadership, Engagement, and Philanthropy, and created a list of near and long term goals. Following a recommendation from the Leadership committee, the Board drafted a set of bylaws to guide Board procedure and submitted these to the Advancement office for consideration and feedback with the expectation of ratifying the bylaws in Spring 2024.

The Board agreed to refining Board leadership positions to better suit the needs of the growing Board. These included adapting a three year executive leadership pipeline, with the Board electing a President-Elect annually. Following their term as President-Elect, the member will transition to the role of Board President, with the following year being served as Past-President. In alignment with this system, Antonio E. Puente was named as current President (formerly Chair) and Amanda Balkhi was named as President-Elect (formerly Secretary) with the first election scheduled for the Spring 2024 Board meeting. Additionally, the Board created Committee Chair positions for the Leadership, Engagement, and Philanthropy committees. Martha Zlokovich was selected as the Leadership Committee Chair. Meredith Wikstrom was selected as the Philanthropy Committee Chair. Patricia Shutt was chosen as the Engagement Committee Chair.

The Board also began to explore methods for periodic Board reflection and effectiveness assessment. The Board anticipates trialing methods for Board feedback in Spring 2024 with a goal of implementation moving forward.

Membership and Recruitment:

The Board periodically reviewed its goals for membership and recruitment. The Board maintains its membership target of 15-20 alumni on the Board at a time with a goal of staggering recruitment to ensure steady growth and attrition over time. The Board is committed to recruiting members with a broad range of experiences to reflect the many potential pathways of a student within the Department of Psychology. In concert with Advancement, the Board created and maintains a list of underrepresented areas within Board Member experience, with the goal of actively recruiting potential members in these areas. The Board also restated its commitment to being flexible and nonexclusionary in its participation. In service of this, the Board Will continue to offer a remote attendance option for in-person meetings.

In line with the Board’s goal of sustainable growth and attrition over time, the Board worked in concert with Advancement to create a formalized recruitment pipeline for potential members which is outlined below. The Board has committed to continued recruitment with a goal of welcoming new members each term.

Stage 1: Recommendation from Board or Advancement

Stage 2: Vetting From Advancement Including Sharing Board Mission and Responsibilities

Stage 3: Intro to Department Chair

Stage 4: Intro to Board Member

Stage 5: Board Meeting Attendance

Stage 6: Vote and Discussion by Board about Potential Member

Stage 7: Follow Up Email Invitation to Join the Board by Department Chair and Board Member Representative

The board received the resignation of Stephen Kraus due to personal and professional obligations in January 2023. The Board successfully recruited four new Board members. In the Spring 2023 term, the Board welcomed [Janette Berne](#), a professional counselor and 1984 University of Florida Marketing Alumnus. The Board also welcomed [Peter Dodzik](#), a pediatric neuropsychologist and 1994 Psychology Alumnus. In the Fall 2023 term, the Board welcomed [Kristy Johnson](#), a lawyer and Health Education (1994) and Judis Doctorate (1998) Alumnus. The Board also welcomed [Dianne Allen](#), an Intuitive Mentor and Creative Coach and Psychology Alumnus.

Board Membership Rolls:

Term	Members
Spring 2021 - June 30, 2024	Amanda Balkhi, Patricia Thomas Shutt, Frederick L. Coolidge
Spring 2021 - December 31, 2024	Antonio E. Puente, Martha Zlokovich, Chris Pitisci
Fall 2022 - December 31, 2025	Meredith Wikstrom
Spring 2023 - June 30, 2026	Janette Berne, Peter Dodzik
Fall 2023 - December 31, 2026	Kristy Johnson, Dianne Allen