



A message from the Chair

Welcome to the Fall, 2019 edition of the UNLV Department of Psychology newsletter! We remain busy with our 1600 undergraduate majors, 250+ neuroscience minors, 200+ psychology minors, and 75+ doctoral students. Check out our website and find us on Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram at [unlvpsychology](https://www.unlvpsychology.com). Keep in touch with us!

Undergraduate program

We continue to invest considerable time and resources to improve our student retention, progression, and completion rates. We have expanded the course options for our neuroscience minor (and altered the name of our PSY 303 course to Foundations of Neuroscience) and linked with the College of Liberal Arts on an internship course that will allow our majors the opportunity to



utilize real-world experience for academic credit. We have also been working hard to develop a fully online degree program, and several of our faculty members are currently developing online versions of several of our courses in this regard. In addition, our Psi Chi chapter, Psychology Club, and Outreach Undergraduate Mentoring Program (OUMP) remain among the most active student organizations on campus and assist us with student development. For example, Psi Chi, Psychology Club, and OUMP hosted a Research Lab Matching Event that allowed undergraduate students to learn about and become associated with different psychology labs on campus.

Our efforts seem to be paying off. Our psychology student retention rate, for example, improved from 69.9% in 2014 to 76.2% in 2017 to 77.5% in 2018. Our 6-year graduation rate has improved from 39.4% to 50.0% in the past 5 years. If you know of a psychology student who is struggling to stay at UNLV or graduate, please let us know how we can be of assistance.

We also continued our new tradition of honoring undergraduate students in our department who show exemplary effort and accomplishments in various ways. Honors included the Outstanding Senior Award (Valerie Velasco), Outstanding Junior Award (Manuel de Cespedes and Sarah Flood), Non-Traditional Path Award (Deirdre Gautieri, Matthew Sherrin-Helm, and Tara Trass), and Service Activity Award (Dana Barakat). Other awards included those from Psi Chi and Psychology Club, OUMP, and our Day of Giving recipients. Our undergraduate students remain among the most productive junior researchers on campus!

Faculty

We are thrilled to welcome two additional faculty members since the publication of the previous newsletter.

Dr. Amanda Pasinski is a new Assistant Professor-in-Residence and a cognitive neuroscientist from our UNLV doctoral program. She is interested in the neural correlates of sensation and perception as well as broader cognitive topics like music and language. Dr. Pasinski has taught courses on General Psychology, Sensation and Perception, Physiological Psychology, Abnormal Psychology, Cognitive Psychology, the Psychology of Learning, and the Psychology of Aging. She will be assisting us in the development of our fully online degree program.



Dr. Amanda Pasinski

Dr. Lianne Barnes is also a new Assistant Professor-in-Residence who received her Ph.D. in social psychology from UCLA. Her research interests focus on the social cognitive neural processes underlying empathy. Dr. Barnes has also looked at empathy toward outgroup members, such as members of the LGBTQ community. Dr. Barnes is passionate about undergraduate education and mentorship. At UNLV, her duties include course development, undergraduate teaching, and service to the department. Her major teaching goal is to create dynamic and engaging online courses in psychology and neuroscience. She is particularly interested in service aimed at increasing diversity, inclusion, and equity in higher education.



Dr. Lianne Barnes

Our faculty continue to remain highly visible not just in the media but in many community engagement endeavors as well. You can see our website for all the stories posted throughout the year.



Graduate student awards

Our psychology doctoral students received a substantial number of summer scholarships from the Graduate College this year. In addition, several of our graduate students won prestigious scholarships and fellowships that cover funding for the entire academic year. These included the UNLV Fellowship (Julia Hussey), the UNLV Foundation Fellowship (Nina Paul), and the Trustees Fellowship (Samantha O'Connell). We also instituted a summer teaching program so that all of our graduate students had some form of summer funding if they chose. Our students work tirelessly on their research 12 months a year, and we are thrilled that so many were able to secure financial support during the summer.

And finally...

We want to know how you are doing as well! Please visit our Department website and find the "Calling All Alumni" section on the right side. You can let us know where you are and what you are doing. After all, once a UNLV Department of Psychology member, always a UNLV Department of Psychology member!
