

## Undergraduate Steering Committee February 28 2008

### Welcome to the Undergraduate Steering Committee official meeting minutes!

The Department of Psychological and Brain Sciences Undergraduate Steering Committee is made up of two representatives from each class (Sophomore, Junior, Senior), the Directors of Undergraduate Studies (Drs. Halberda & Drigotas), special advisor (Dr. Piferi), the chair of the department (Dr. Holland) and our departmental administrators (Hope Stein). Several times each year the committee meets to discuss issues relevant to the undergraduate program in Psychological and Brain Sciences. Here we report the minutes from these meetings for all students to read. Please contact one of your undergraduate representatives via email to share your thoughts or concerns about any of these, or any other topics. The USC is here for you and we want to hear your thoughts!

### The Undergraduate Steering Committee, 2008

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### Meeting of February 28, 2008

**Present at the meeting:** Every undergraduate representative and Drs. Halberda, Drigotas & Holland attended this meeting.

**Dr. Holland**, chair of the department, welcomed the committee and voiced how important the committee is to maintaining good communication between the faculty and the undergraduates.

**The Agenda** for this meeting is below:

- I. Coursework
  - a. Are there any courses that you feel should be offered that are not currently offered?
  - b. Would there be a desire to cross-list courses with other departments (ie: Anthropology or Sociology)
- II. Registration
  - a. How is online registration going? Beneficial? Problems?
  - b. Registering for upper-level classes
    - i. Still maintain an expectable level of difficulty to uphold credibility?
    - ii. Other issues
- III. Psi Chi
  - a. What is the knowledge of undergraduate students of this honors society?
  - b. What is your impression of the society?
  - c. Suggestions for improvements
- IV. Questions/Concerns

#### Announcements

New Psi Chi website

Continuing the Undergraduate Newsletter

Continuing the G. Stanley Hall Distinguished Lecture next year

**The Committee** was very interested in discussing issue Ia on the Agenda and we managed to fill the entire hour talking about course issues. Some highlights from this discussion included:

### **Forensic Psychology**

**Karen G.** suggested the possibility of adding 1 upper-level course in criminology or forensic psychology.

**Dr. Drigotas** noted the undergraduate and graduate programs in Criminal Justice at the University of Maryland to serve as a good example of what undergraduates with these interests should focus on and noted that most work in forensic psychology can be found, not in psychology departments, but rather in Criminal Justice departments. Examples include the University of Maryland (<http://www.ccis.umd.edu/>) and SUNY Albany (<http://www.albany.edu/scj/>).

**Karen G.** noted that an undergraduate program at the Florida Institute of Technology lists a curriculum of courses leading to a forensic psychology degree ([http://cpla.fit.edu/undergraduate/forensic\\_curriculum.php](http://cpla.fit.edu/undergraduate/forensic_curriculum.php)) and that many of these course are already offered within our Psychology major.

**Dr. Halberda** noted that the structure of course offerings throughout our major aim to have a broad base of content that everyone should know (the intro courses), then areas of specific content in middle-sized lecture courses (the 200 level) and final a smaller upper-level seminar for specific content areas (the 300 level). In this vein, adding an upper-level in forensic psychology would make sense.

### **Dr. Stark has left**

**Jared S.** noted that Dr. Stark has left the department for The University of California and asked who would be teaching Cognitive Neuroscience of Memory.

**Dr. Halberda** mentioned that these courses will likely continue with either current faculty (e.g. Drs. Shelton, Courtney, Gallagher) or new faculty hires teaching them.

### **Lab Courses**

**Jared S.** suggested that additional lab courses more focused on specific topics would be interesting.

**Salman M. & Umesh V.** agreed.

**Jared S.** suggested that teachers of LAPD (our required lab course in the major), who are graduate students, might each offer a slightly different version of the course with each section advertised as focusing more on e.g., memory research, developmental research etc.

**Dr. Halberda** noted that another course, Foundations of Mind, is designed to give undergraduates further experience in running experiments and covers a number of content areas.

**Umesh V.** noted that a major problem for LAPD is that the different sections are not standardized within a year such that one section might be given an open-book exam while another is given a closed-book exam on similar material and that the slides are not identical across the sections with students only having access to slides from their section.

**Kyle R., Karen G. & Dorothy K.** each asked questions about what LAPD involves.

**Umesh V., Salman M., & Jared S.** discussed the plusses and minuses of making the sections of LAPD more distinct from one another and decided in the end that it would be much more important for them to be standardized and similar. Specific suggestions included that the test and quizzes across sections be the same and that all students enrolled in the class be given access to the slides from every section of the class so that they could gain multiple perspectives on the same material.

### **Careers In Psychology**

**Salman M.** noted that a course that exposed students to the different career paths across psychology would be a nice addition to the curriculum.

**Every student representative** agreed that such a course would indeed be beneficial. Much discussion and debate ensued with everyone contributing. The committee agreed that the best placement of such a course would be a 1-credit hour, S/U course that many students would take during their Spring semester as freshman (though the course would be open to all). This course would involve a different speaker each week giving a one-hour presentation on their work. Speakers should include many current faculty members, adjunct professors, professors from the hospital campus, and professional psychologists working in the field with an effort to obtain as diverse a representation as possible.

### **Summer Courses**

**Karen G.** asked about the possibility of summer course offerings.

**Kyle R.** noted that the second summer session might be more apt to attract undergraduates because it would allow a break before having to start classes again.

**Many Members** agreed with this suggestion and discussed the benefits of such courses (e.g. lower stress environment compared to the standard Hopkins semester).

**Dr. Drigotas** noted the challenges of finding faculty who are able to teach during the summer months and the challenge of registering enough students.

**Undergraduate Representatives** noted that a 100 or 200 level course would be the most beneficial for students wanting to make progress on their major requirements and would be more likely to get enough students to register.

### **Conclusions and Action**

**Dr. Halberda** noted that a 1-credit hour course in "Careers in Psychology" seemed like a very good idea and has unanimous support among the representatives. Such a course should be possible and the faculty will begin discussing it.

**Dr. Halberda** noted that some of the recommended changes to LAPD should also be possible in the coming year such as allowing all students to access slides.

**Dr. Halberda** will also begin looking for a professor who could teach an upper-level course in criminology.

**Dr. Halberda** encouraged the undergraduate representatives to obtain as much feedback from their fellow students as possible. The Committee will meet again towards the end of April 2008.