Psychology Department Name Change Request:
Department of Psychological Sciences
October 30, 2016

During the past three decades, the Psychology Department at William & Mary has been a highly research-active academic unit that values the integration of research with teaching in and outside the formal classroom environment. Our scientific productivity has reached an all-time high in recent years. For instance, direct costs from extramural research funding has risen from $1.75 million during 2000-2004, to $2.5 million during 2005-2010, to $3.6 million from 2011-2015. The primary sources of funding come for the National Science Foundation (NSF) and the National Institutes of Health (NIH). Our faculty publishes research reports in top scientific journals in psychology and neuroscience. From 2005-2015, we published 306 empirical articles, 60 book chapters, and 13 books. Because of these changes in our department's goals and priorities, we strongly believe that the name "Department of Psychological Sciences" better aligns with our identity.

In what follows, we outline the rationale for such a change.

1. Reflects What We Do

The new name will promote the perception of Psychology as a science in which we endeavor to integrate behavioral and brain research. A name change from Psychology to Psychological Sciences better reflects our work in the department and can help to dispel myths and misconceptions about the field of Psychology. For example, many students entering the university—and, indeed, even some current faculty—believe that "Psychology" means "psychotherapy." However, our discipline, and the research within it here at William & Mary, reaches beyond the scope of psychotherapy in every sense. Methodologically, we employ varied protocols, procedures, apparatuses and statistics. Behaviorally, we examine varied participant populations including both animal and human group in typical and atypical groups. Theoretically, we concern ourselves with models that consider varied perspectives such as biophysical, cognitive, and social domains.

The new name is in line with what our discipline has adopted to describe its own science. In fact, in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (PNAS), the title of the relevant section for psychological research is, "Psychological and Cognitive Sciences". The inclusion of the term "Sciences" clarifies a focus on empirically-based research as opposed to therapy. Another title in PNAS, Medical Sciences, similarly helps to distinguish between medically-focused research and the practice of medicine. As a field, Psychology increasingly acknowledges the role of biological processes in its interaction with environment to produce specific behaviors. The trend in the field is to understand behavior through conjoint examination of social and biological factors that produce behavior. Many faculty and students in the Psychology department are conducting this type of integrative cross-discipline research by incorporating methods from both social and natural science perspectives. For example, our two newest hires (both clinical psychological scientists) have strong records of training, publication, and federal grants to examine how environmental pathogens act in concert with biological vulnerabilities to heighten risk for psychopathology.

This name change is important for clarifying our departmental approach to Psychology to prospective students, parents and funders, among other groups. In fact, empirical evidence suggests that undergraduate students who take a greater number of psychology courses develop a more positive impression of psychology as a science (Bartels et al., 2009). We have included a letter from the Director of the Neuroscience Program (Appendix A) indicating support of this name change and that the proposed change will not cause confusion with that program.

2. Our Undergraduate and Graduate Curricula are Rooted in Scientific Research Methods
The department integrates empirical research *as a standard of rule into all of our classes*. To be clear, every course we offer is based *entirely* on scientific research findings, many of which our own faculty have generated. The pedagogy in our research labs—considered a less visible form of teaching—is also explicitly scientific. About 200 of our 400 majors participate in faculty-sponsored research. All majors take Elementary Statistics, Experimental Methods, and an upper level capstone research experience in a particular field of Psychology (e.g., Research in Developmental, Research in Physiological, Experimental Social). All of our Honors and Masters theses are required to be empirical projects that use quantitative methods. Similarly, our graduate program includes required courses in Research Methods and Statistics. Below is a list of courses that include either a laboratory in which students conduct research and/or perform statistical analyses or that have an emphasis on developing quantitative skills.

- PSYC 301 - Elementary Statistics
- PSYC 302 - Experimental Methods
- PSYC 410 - Research in Developmental Psychology
- PSYC 411 - Cognition and Thinking
- PSYC 412 - Research in Personality
- PSYC 413 - Research in Physiological Psychology
- PSYC 414 - Research Methods in Social Psychology
- PSYC 415 - Research in Animal Cognition
- PSYC 417 - Research in Sensation & Perception
- PSYC 418 - Research in Abnormal Psychology
- PSYC 422 - Behavior Modification
- PSYC 470 – Psychometrics
- PSYC 631 - Advanced Statistics I
- PSYC 631L - Advanced Statistics I Laboratory
- PSYC 632 - Research Methods
- PSYC 633 - Advanced Statistics II
- PSYC 633L - Advanced Statistics II Laboratory.
- PSYC 671 - Statistical Modeling
- PSYC 672 - Computer Applications in Psychological Science

3. **Helps to Dispel Myths**
The name change will help to dispel myths about the academic discipline of psychology. As is outlined in the first pages of any Psychology textbook, psychological scientists rely on the scientific method to formulate theories, empirically test hypotheses, and ultimately advance knowledge. Our researchers: (a) conduct experiments in which biological, social, and psychological conditions are manipulated and the effects of the manipulation are observed and

quantitatively assessed, and (b) perform observational studies in which correlations among phenomena of interest are monitored cross-sectionally or over time. These mainstays of psychological science are shared with other natural and social scientific disciplines, such as biology, chemistry, and economics. Thus, the name change will clarify that we emphasize the scientific method rather than undirected inquiry.

Another popular misconception is that science necessitates specialized and/or high tech equipment. Although some of our faculty do use such equipment (e.g., electroencephalogram [EEG], eye-tracking equipment, psychophysiological measurement, immune-histochemical evaluation of brain tissue), others conduct their research using more low-tech methods that are appropriate for the specific hypotheses being tested (see Appendix B for a list of faculty research interests). Consider, for instance, the wealth of knowledge that behavioral and social psychologists have generated regarding intergroup relations (e.g., interactions between people of different racial/ethnic groups) and voting behavior (e.g., what arguments are most influential to whom). These lines of inquiry have inspired major social and legal changes in our country, and they have relied predominantly on self-report data (e.g., questionnaire responses) and behavioral observation.

4. Proposed Name Change is an Emerging Trend in the Field.
There is an emerging trend at top-tier departments to change the department name to (some variation of) Psychological Sciences to communicate to the broader community the scientific nature of our discipline. We want William and Mary to be at the forefront of the change and join some of our peer institutions, such as Vanderbilt University, Brown University, and the University of Connecticut, that have already made the switch. The name change is associated with being an active research department. Consistent with this change, the Association for Psychological Science publishes a widely-circulated, high-impact journal named *Psychological Science* and many of the top clinical psychology programs that are research active are granting doctoral degrees in Clinical Science.

Why now?
The timing of the name change is synchronized with the opening of the third phase of the Integrated Science Center (ISC). About eight years ago, the College chose to include Psychology in the ISC complex, implicitly endorsing Psychology as a science. With the opening of the Integrated Science Complex Phase 3, our name change will reflect the truly integrative nature of this building where faculty in many science departments will physically share space, interact, and collaborate across disciplines – a hallmark in the history of Psychology and in modern Psychological Sciences departments.

In sum, the name "Department of Psychological Sciences" more directly indicates how the field of Psychology is evolving and succinctly broadcasts the goals and approach of our department. This name change will communicate our approach to current and prospective students, parents, potential donors, alumni, administration, funding agencies, and the community. As we continue our upward trajectory of securing more external funding and publishing in high impact journals, the name Psychological Sciences will connote our and the College's commitment to cutting edge quality research and productivity.

Appendix A: Support Letter from the Director of the Neuroscience Program

Program in Neuroscience
P.O. Box 8795
Williamsburg, Virginia 23187
757-221-3882

Sept. 28, 2016

Dear Members of the E.P.C.:

I am writing as Director of the Neuroscience Program to fully support the requested name change of the Psychology Department to the "Department of Psychological Sciences". This name change is consistent with changes in similar departments across the nation in top universities (e.g. Johns Hopkins, the oldest psychological research department which now has the department name "Psychological and Brain Sciences"), and in universities within our peer group (e.g., Dartmouth, University of Delaware). This name change is logical and smart given the current scope of research in this discipline and will mean that William & Mary is staying current with the field. The new name does not pose a conflict to the Neuroscience Program, which is by design, an interdisciplinary program combining the biological and psychological aspects of the nervous system. This name change will more clearly reflect the research conducted within the department and likely strengthen the program's appeal to students and external funding agencies.

Sincerely,

Robin Looft-Wilson

Robin Looft-Wilson
Associate Professor of Kinesiology & Health Sciences, and Director of Neuroscience
The College of William & Mary
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Appendix B: Faculty Research Interests

Chris Ball

- Cognitive psychology
- Memory processes
- Relationship between memory and psychopathology

Robert Barnet

- Animal learning and cognition
- Neural basis of learning and memory

Josh Burk

- Behavioral and cognitive neuroscience
- Neural mechanisms underlying attention and impulsivity

Chris Conway

- origins, temporal course, and classification of psychopathology
- emotional disorders

Danielle Dallaire

- children's social and emotional development in the context of risk
- children cope with the multifaceted risk of parental incarceration

Cheryl Dickter

- social cognitive approach to examine how individuals perceive members of different social groups
- how attention is allocated to members of different social groups during categorization and how this might affect later stereotype activation

Catherine Forestell

- mechanisms involved in the development and maintenance of food preferences
- eating habits from infancy to adulthood

Matt Hilimire

- psychophysical and neuroimaging (event-related brain potentials) techniques
- neural mechanisms of visual attention and mechanisms of localized attentional interference
- emotion perception and emotion regulation

Pamela Hunt

- development psychobiology
- neural basis of memory
- alcohol and memory

Paul Kieffaber

- psychophysiology of attention & cognitive control
- neural basis of cognitive deficits in severe psychopathology

Lee Kirkpatrick

- evolutionary psychology
- psychology of religion
- attachment and close relationships

Harvey Langholtz

- applied decision theory
- behavioral aspects of international diplomacy

John Nezlek

- social and personality psychology with a cross-cultural emphasis
- naturally occurring social interaction
- within-person variability
- multilevel modeling
- interval and event contingent data collection methods

Michael Nichols

- family therapy
- couples dynamics
- gender

Constance Pilkington

- social psychology
- romantic relationship dynamics
- the self

Elizabeth Raposa

- how early life stressors influence trajectories of development
- biological (e.g., inflammation, HPA axis functioning) and social (e.g., peer selection, social stress reactivity) processes that are implicated in risk for physical and mental health problems

Joanna Schug

- cultural and biological foundations of human cooperation
- socio-ecological approaches to cultural variation in human behavior
- facial expressions of emotion

Jennifer Stevens

- cognitive neuroscience of representation, perception, and execution of action
- motor recovery in patient populations

Todd Thrash

- Inspiration and creativity
- approach-avoidance
- implicit-explicit motives
- "the chills"

Peter Vishton

- cognitive, perceptual, and motor development
- interaction of vision and action systems
- Visual Perception
- Computational Vision and Motor Control
- Human-Computer Interface

Janice Zeman

- Parent and peer socialization of emotion in children and adolescents
- Links between emotion regulation and depression/anxiety in children and adolescents
- Emotional competencies as buffers to adverse outcomes in at-risk children