



Academic Senate
Professor Kenneth Barish
Division Chair

February 13, 2026

Elizabeth Watkins
Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor

Darryle Williams
Dean, College of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences

Tuppett Yates
Chair, Department of Psychology

Re: Proposed Department Name Change: *from* the Department of Psychology to the Department of Psychological and Brain Sciences

Dear Colleagues,

The Academic Senate Executive Council discussed the subject proposed name change along with comments received from the Committees on Academic Personnel, Educational Policy, Planning and Budget, as well as those from the Graduate Council and the faculty executive committee of the College of Natural and Agricultural Sciences. CAP, CPB, CEP, and GC are in support of the proposed name change.

I call your attention to comments from colleagues on the CNAS FEC:

The consensus of the committee is that the proposed alteration to the Department of Psychology's name is not supported.

The committee feels that changing the name to include "Brain Sciences" is misleading to the incoming population of students and by claiming this title, the Department of Psychology is implying that all study of the brain falls within their purview, which is simply not true given that many of the faculty teaching Neuroscience courses, and who are actively researching topics in this field, are housed within CNAS, specifically within the department of Molecular, Cell, and Systems Biology, formerly Cell Biology and Neuroscience.

Concerns were also raised that there are two Neuroscience majors on campus, one within CHASS and one within CNAS, and that by making this change, students who enroll in the CHASS program, expecting to do research with faculty, housed within CNAS, may be limited in their ability to do so, given that students in CNAS are given priority with these opportunities in order to align with the strategic goals of the college, in improving the undergraduate student success and experience.

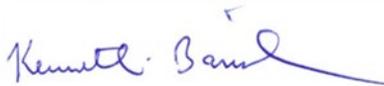
The committee feels that the proposed change is an attempt to undermine the growth that CNAS is making in these particular fields of study and would harm the experience of the incoming students who may not understand the differences between our programs and would harm their overall time to complete their degrees in a field of their choosing.

Executive Council discussed these concerns as well as highlighted an appreciation for the potential for a new path for interdisciplinary research and education as a result of a potential name change.

I write to you now to convey that the Executive Council strongly recommends that the proposal be discussed with appropriate CNAS faculty. I have copied CNAS FEC Chair Harry Tom who mentioned a willingness to facilitate such discussions.

Should an updated proposal be produced for consideration, please send it to my attention with a courtesy copy to Senate Director Cherysa Cortez (cherysac@ucr.edu) with "New Business" in the subject line.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kenneth Barish". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a small mark above the 'i' in "Barish".

Ken Barish, Chair
Academic Senate

Enclosures

Cc: CNAS FEC Chair Tom
CNAS FEC Liaison Grawe
CHASS FEC Acting Chair Aguirre
CHASS FEC Liaison Brewer
Executive Analyst Corpuz
Executive Analyst Espinoza
Senate Director Cortez

January 26th, 2026

TO: Kenneth N. Barish, Chair, Academic Senate, UCR Division

FROM: Harry Tom, Chair, Faculty Executive Committee, College of Natural and Agricultural Sciences

SUBJECT: [Campus Review] Department Name Change: Department of Psychology to the Department of Psychological and Brain Sciences

Prof. Barish,

The CNAS Faculty Executive Committee has reviewed the proposed change to the Department of Psychology's name at the January 20th meeting and has comments to provide to the Senate.

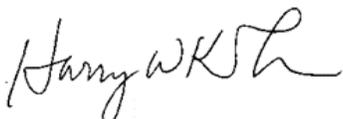
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The committee feels that the proposed change is an attempt to undermine the growth that CNAS is making in these particular fields of study and would harm the experience of the incoming students who may not understand the differences between our programs and would harm their overall time to complete their degrees in a field of their choosing.

Sincerely,



Harry Tom, Ph.D
Chair, Faculty Executive Committee, College of Natural and Agricultural Sciences



Academic Senate

COMMITTEE ON ACADEMIC PERSONNEL

December 8, 2025

To: Kenneth Barish, Chair
Riverside Division Academic Senate

From: Shaun Bowler, Chair 
Committee on Academic Personnel

Re: [Campus Review] Department Name Change: *Department of Psychology to the Department of Psychological and Brain Sciences*

At our meeting on December 8, 2025, the Committee on Academic Personnel (CAP) reviewed and discussed the proposal to change the name of the Department of Psychology to the Department of Psychological and Brain Sciences. CAP approves the proposal and has no comments.



Academic Senate

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATIONAL POLICY

December 9, 2025

To: Ken Barish, Chair
Riverside Division

From: Annie Ditta, Chair
Committee on Educational Policy

Re: Proposal to Rename Department of Psychology to Department of Psychological and Brain Sciences

The Committee on Educational Policy (CEP) reviewed and voted to support the proposal to rename the Department of Psychology to the Department of Psychological and Brain Sciences at their December 5, 2025 meeting.



Academic Senate

GRADUATE COUNCIL

December 11, 2025

To: Kenneth Barish, Chair
Riverside Division

From: Viji Santhakumar, Chair
Graduate Council

RE: [Campus Review] (Department Name Change) Department of Psychology to the Department of Psychological and Brain Sciences

Graduate Council reviewed and discussed the proposed department name change from the Department of Psychology to the Department of Psychological and Brain Sciences at their December 11, 2025 meeting. The Council approved of the department's proposed name change.

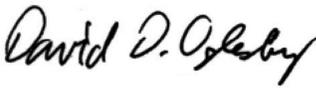


PLANNING AND BUDGET

December 9, 2025

To: Kenneth Barish, Chair
Riverside Division

From: David Oglesby, Chair
Committee on Planning and Budget



Re: [Campus Review] Department Name Change: *Department of Psychology to the Department of Psychological and Brain Sciences*

At our meeting on December 9, 2025, the Committee on Planning and Budget (CPB) reviewed the proposal to change the name of the Department of Psychology to the Department of Psychological and Brain Sciences. CPB did not see any budget-related red flags and has no objections to the proposed department name change.



Office of the Dean
900 University Avenue
3413 HMNS Building
Riverside, CA 92521

March 20, 2025

Elizabeth Watkins, PhD
Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor
provost@ucr.edu

Dear Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor Watkins:

Please accept this letter in support of and recommendation to approve the Department of Psychology's request to be renamed the **Department of Psychological and Brain Sciences**. The attached proposal presents a clear and compelling rationale for the name change, arguing that the new name shall better reflect the continued prominence of brain sciences in the discipline. The proposal follows re-naming efforts across the country including four UC campuses (i.e., Merced, Santa Barbara, San Diego, and Irvine).

A **Department of Psychological and Brain Sciences** communicates a broader range of research and training and a more inclusive intellectual environment for all faculty, students, and staff. It's my expectation that the renaming will attract additional undergraduate majors and graduate students to the program.

While all important change requires time and resources, I do not know of any significant negative consequences of the proposed change. I support the proposal without reservation.

Respectfully,

DocuSigned by:

DF5B1DF553974F3...
Daryle Williams, Professor and Dean
College of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences

Enc. (2)
Letter from the Department of Psychology
Letter from the CHASS Executive Committee



Tuppett M. Yates, PhD
Professor and Chair
Department of Psychology
900 University Avenue
Riverside, CA 92521-042
Tuppett@ucr.edu

TO: Dean Daryle Williams, CHASS

FROM: Tuppett M. Yates, Psychology Department Chair

DATE: January 21, 2025

RE: Request to Change Department Name to Psychological and Brain Sciences

Dear Dean Williams:

In fall 2025, the faculty of the Department of Psychology met to discuss a proposed name change to the Department of Psychological and Brain Sciences. We have been considering this name change for some time in recognition of the continued prominence of brain sciences in our discipline and in light of the shifting tide toward more expansive and accurate naming across top psychology departments across the country. Psychology is a science that examines both brain and behavior. Thus, these terms should and are gaining prominence in Department re-naming efforts across the country. As a few examples, former Departments of Psychology at Dartmouth, Duke University, Indiana University, Johns Hopkins University, Texas A&M University, University of Colorado at Boulder, University of Iowa, and Washington University in St. Louis have been re-named Departments of Psychological and Brain Sciences or Departments of Psychology and Neuroscience.

Within the UC system, UC Merced was established as a department of Psychological Sciences in 2005, and UC Santa Barbara changed their department name to Psychological and Brain Sciences in 2010. Rather than changing their name to capture the breadth and interdisciplinarity of psychological science, UC San Diego established a separate department of Cognitive Science in 1986, which includes members from their original Psychology department, as well as other departments on campus (e.g., linguistics, computer science, neuroscience). UC Irvine similarly has separate Cognitive Science and Psychological Science departments, the latter of which reflects a name change from Psychology and Social Behavior in 2018 to “better reflect the broad range of research and training specializations within the department” and “create a more inclusive intellectual home for current and future faculty, students and alumni” ([UCI Website](#))

The faculty discussed the potential implications of this name change at length. Anticipated advantages center on offering a more accurate description of the research and training in our department, which encompasses multiple areas of specialization across behavioral neuroscience, cognitive neuroscience, developmental psychology, and social-personality psychology. Importantly, we expect the broader umbrella afforded by this new name will attract more undergraduate majors, including those who seek training in the sciences and therefore pursue neuroscience, biology, or computer science degrees, rather than psychology. Faculty also noted the new name will enhance marketability for STEM pathways to funding and career advancement for faculty and students alike.

The faculty also considered potential areas of concern, including the possibility that the new name may deter students interested in clinical psychology. However, this concern was offset by evidence that a degree in psychological and brain sciences is likely to be perceived as more rigorous and competitive for clinical fields, as well as the fact that we do not currently offer a major in clinical psychology, yet a preponderance of our students nevertheless apply and articulate clinical aspirations. A minority of faculty expressed concern that the new name may overemphasize the plurality of our science, yet most faculty felt a more expansive

name accurately represents both the department's aforementioned areas of specialization, as well as the reality that there are many subfields of study within psychology. Finally, we considered practical concerns about the longer length of the new name, but noted that course catalog offerings can easily remain PSYC and that PBS is an easy acronym that is already used at other schools.

In sum, after extensive consideration and discussion, the faculty voted with overwhelming enthusiasm to approve the requested name change from the Department of Psychology to the Department of Psychological and Brain Sciences by a vote of 25 yes, 2 no, 0 abstain, 6 not available (33 eligible). The two negative votes were motivated by aforementioned concerns about conveying a plurality of our science and the length of the name. However, on balance, the faculty expressed confidence that this re-branding will increase the appeal and impact of both our undergraduate and graduate training opportunities. For your convenience, I am attaching the campus procedure for name change for an academic department, which Cherysa Cortez kindly provided to me.

Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns.

Thank you for considering this request.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tuppett M. Yates". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

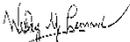
Tuppett M. Yates, PhD



College of Humanities, Arts, and
Social Sciences
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

February 14, 2025

TO: Daryle Williams, Dean
College of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences

FROM: Wesley Leonard, Chair 
CHASS Executive Committee

RE: Request to Change Department Name to Psychological and Brain Sciences

The CHASS Executive Committee reviewed the Request to Change Department Name to Psychological and Brain Sciences. The committee agreed that the name change reflects the zeitgeist of the field and better characterizes department research and teaching. It positions the department more appropriately within the field, which would aid in undergraduate student, graduate student, and faculty recruitment. The committee supports the proposal.

Certificate Of Completion

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Signatures: 1

Envelope Originator:

Certificate Pages: 1

Initials: 0

Summer Espinoza

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summer.espinoza@ucr.edu

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summer.espinoza@ucr.edu

Signer Events

Daryle Williams

daryle.williams@ucr.edu

Dean, CHASS

University of California, Riverside

Security Level: Email, Account Authentication
(None)

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