

ACADEMIC COUNCIL REPORT

ACTION REQUESTED:

- Recommendation
Decision
Discussion/Direction
Information

DATE: 27 February 2024

FROM: Undergraduate Studies Committee

SUBJECT: Major Program Modification – BA and BSc in Psychology – Cognitive and Brain Sciences specialization

COMMITTEE MANDATE:

In accordance with the Undergraduate Studies Committee (USC) Terms of Reference, USC has the responsibility “to examine proposals for new undergraduate degree programs and major changes to existing programs and to recommend their approval, as appropriate, to the Academic Council”.

MOTION FOR CONSIDERATION:

That pursuant to the recommendation of the Undergraduate Studies Committee, Academic Council hereby approves the Major Program Modification to the BA and BSc Psychology program to add a new specialization in Cognitive and Brain Sciences.

BACKGROUND/CONTEXT & RATIONALE:

The Faculty is proposing to:

- Add a specialization in Cognitive and Brain Sciences to the BA and BSc in Psychology program.
- Create two new courses:
 - PSYC 3510U – Research Methods in Neuroscience
 - PSYC 3520U – Introduction to Cognitive Neuroscience

The Psychology BA and BSc have been in effect since Fall 2020. The programs have grown to include a minor and now three specializations.

Student feedback on the two existing specializations have been positive. We are building local expertise in cognitive and brain sciences that we can leverage. These are tech-forward disciplines that will align with university goals and attract a different type of student than other psychology streams.

Students who complete a specialization in *Cognitive and Brain Sciences* will receive targeted education pertaining to neural mechanisms and the cognitive processes that these mechanisms engender. Topics may include neural communication, neural function and dysfunction, neural systems, research methods in neuroscience, thinking, reasoning, attention and decision making.

RESOURCES REQUIRED:

No additional human or physical resources required.

TRANSITION PLAN:

New specialization and courses will be available to students beginning Fall 2024.

CONSULTATION AND APPROVAL:

- ✓ FSSH Curriculum Committee: 5 December 2023
- ✓ Faculty Council: 19 December 2023
- ✓ Undergraduate Studies Committee (Recommendation): 16 January 2024
- Academic Council (Approval): 27 February 2024

Additional consultation occurred with Academic Advising, program faculty, and informal discussions with students.

NEXT STEPS:

Pending the approval of Academic Council, this change will be included in the 2024-2025 Academic Calendar.

SUPPORTING REFERENCE MATERIALS:

- [Major Program Modification Proposal](#)
- [PSYC 3510U – New Course Proposal](#)
- [PSYC 3520U – New Course Proposal](#)