

University of Delaware
Permanent Status Program Review

BS Major in Neuroscience
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The Neuroscience major was granted provisional status in 2009. It has had between 18 and 70 seniors each year, and has graduated approximately 200 students. The major replaced a previous interdepartmental neuroscience degree, in which students graduated with both biology and psychology degrees.

Objectives, Strengths, and Weaknesses

The major appears to meet the original goals for which it was created. This involves providing a dedicated major for students with an interest in neuroscience and preparing students for careers in medicine and neuroscience research. The major supports the first Milestone of the Path to Prominence, and is congruent with the Academic Priorities of the University.

Strengths of the major appear to be its progressive mix of course and subject requirements, designed to meet the needs of future neuroscience researchers and physicians. It attracts many strong students and is clearly a rigorous major. Many graduates have been accepted into medical schools and PhD programs.

The possible weaknesses noted were increasing class sizes in the 600-level Neuroscience courses, and difficulty in providing enough honors courses/sections to meet the needs of the many honors students in the major. These problems could both be remedied with additional faculty, but this may not be feasible at this time.

Impact and Demand

The Neuroscience major should not have any significant impact on any research, service, or instructional programs, other than those in psychology and biology. All affected departments have provided a letter of support. Enrollments in the Neuroscience major have increased steadily, with a current total enrollment of 207 students. Students are advised by behavioral neuroscience faculty, and by an undergraduate director of the neuroscience major. There are no additional student expenses reported. The program has the support of departmental faculty and affiliated faculty. It appears that resources to support and maintain the major are minimally adequate. If enrollments continue to increase, a decision will have to be made about limiting admissions to the major or increasing faculty.

Evaluation

The Neuroscience major supports General Education goals one, two, three, five, six, and seven, particularly in the area of critical thinking and problem solving. The major clearly delineates the knowledge and learning outcomes expected of the graduates. The BS in Neuroscience is assessed regularly, but it appears it would benefit from a more formal evaluation plan for documenting the learning outcomes and job placements of its students.

Conclusion

The Neuroscience major educates students for work in a rapidly growing and important field of science. The evidence provided in the proposal supports granting of permanent status to the major.

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