Ψ Ψ Ψ Ψ Letter from the Chair, Fall 2007 Ψ Ψ Ψ Ψ

Dear Students, Alumni, and Friends of the Psychology Department:

How do we build a better society? Higher education is one of the most important steps to a better future. But how do we measure this value to society? To state simply that college-educated people take leadership roles in their communities and hold better-paying jobs is to state only part of the added value. For example, it has been shown that an experience of diversity in the classroom produces citizens of the world who are more tolerant or understanding of other cultures and views. These broader perspectives on society are essential for citizens of the 21st century.

The Department of Psychology in 2007 is doing a terrific job of producing informed and intelligent citizens, as well as our key mission of producing new research, as shown in these statistics:

- Largest undergraduate major in the College and University (~1,500)
- More faculty research grants than ever before: ~ half of our faculty have funded projects
- Over 250 undergraduates doing research projects in our faculty laboratories this Fall
- More graduate students (~140) than ever before
- More graduate students with individual or institutional training grants (8) than ever before
- Sustained high number of peer-reviewed publications (~100/year) in top tier journals
- Faculty, graduates and undergraduates present data regularly at national or international scientific conferences

The status of a department is measured nationally in large part by the numbers of publications and grants of the faculty. While our successes have been accumulating, I think that it is an attainable goal for us to move to the next level and join the national top 20 in Psychology Programs within a decade. To do so will require new faculty hires, more faculty grants, and improved infrastructure. With the prospect of sustained cuts in the State budget to UF, we will have to rely increasingly on donations from friends and alumni to help us along this path to the top 20.

Here are just a few examples of some of our new and on-going initiatives that you can be a part of:

- **Our "Historical figures in UF Psychology" project**: Documenting the 77 year history of the Psychology Department at UF
- **Annual undergraduate research forum:** Showcases the research achievements of the next generation of scientists
- **Graduate student travel fund**: Supporting our students disseminate their research at national conferences
- **Seminar in Psychological Science**: New Initiative connecting beginning graduate students with Psychological leaders at UF and beyond
- **Graduate student dissertation fund**: New initiative to support dissertation research
- **Graduate Fellowship Fund**: New initiative to supplement tuition costs for graduate students who have successfully secured research funding.

As you see, we have given our website a new look; additional features and updates, including a newsletter, will be forthcoming. A link on this site can also assist you in making a contribution to help take UF Psychology to the next level. The above projects and many others will be described in more detail on that site, so we hope that you visit us frequently either in person or electronically.

Neil E. Rowland — Chair

Julia A. Graber — Associate Chair