

## PSYCHOLOGY MISSION STATEMENT

Through excellence in training in the science of psychology, the mission of the Department of Psychology at Weber State University is to facilitate students' career aspirations and academic goals in the context of an undergraduate, Liberal Arts University, and a department which values teaching and research.

Psychology first appeared in the curriculum of Weber Academy (which later became Weber State University) in 1892, with its role to enhance the skills of prospective schoolteachers<sup>1</sup>. Psychology became an autonomous department in the 1950s and quickly grew in size and popularity, constituting 4% of the total SCHs for the entire institution. Today, the Psychology Department remains an important part of the academic life of Weber State University and the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences.

The mission of the Psychology Department is consistent with the department's long tradition of valuing excellence in teaching. The mission statement was last reviewed and approved by the department in the spring of 2008. The statement centrally specifies undergraduates generally (not specifically majors) as those served by the Department and excellence in training students as the goal of the program. The word "training" was meant to convey an approach to our mission, which goes beyond mere classroom teaching to include student engagement in research, supervised Practicum, and related activities. In this sense, the department faculty members expect that students acquire not only discipline-specific content knowledge (i.e., definitions, theories, research findings), but also discipline-appropriate ways of thinking (i.e., the scientific attitudes and skills to analyze, interpret, and understand human behavior). Training in discipline-related content and ways of thinking are strongly believed to be effective in promoting students' career aspirations and academic goals, whether or not they continue in the discipline.

Additionally, the department recognizes its role within the university in providing training in the Liberal Arts tradition. This adds another level of responsibility to prepare students to live in the 21<sup>st</sup> century as responsible, ethical, and engaged citizens who can synthesize and integrate information and make informed decisions. The final feature of the mission statement addresses the influences of the departmental focus on teaching and research. This context emphasizes a consensus among the faculty of the value of teaching and research in the training of students. All faculty members are committed to the importance of student experiences inside and outside the classroom, including research, for them to effectively internalize the values and skills of an education in the discipline in the liberal arts tradition and to be well prepared for any career path, whether that is a job, professional school, or graduate school.

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<sup>1</sup> May, M. J. (1988). From Mormon academy to four-year state college: Psychology at Weber State College. *Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences*, 24, 25-32.