



1/7/2013

SBS College Curriculum Committee  
226 University Hall  
Columbus, OH 43210

Dear Members of the Curriculum Committee:

As you know, the Neuroscience Major program has asked the Committee to consider a series of changes to the admission structure of the major. We hope that this document, framed in a question/answer format, will serve to explain and justify our proposal, as well as to anticipate any concerns the Committee may have.

**Why are we proposing a change to the major's declaration process?** Over the past semester, a large number of students have expressed interest in declaring the Neuroscience major. As of the writing of this letter, the program has approximately 550 declared majors and minors, with many more declaring every week. Confident in the major's substantial growth, the Program must also ensure its vitality, its quality, and its focus on student success. Insofar as the Neuroscience major is designed to be rigorous, we hope to support this success by encouraging academic excellence among majors particularly at the beginning of the curriculum, when critical foundations must be learned.

**What are the criteria that we are proposing?** We are therefore proposing a change to the Neuroscience Undergraduate Major program which will stipulate the following criteria for admission to the major:

1. Completion of 24 semester hours of college-level course work (this includes transfer credit, EM, and AP);
2. Completion of 12 semester hours of OSU letter-graded course work with a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale; and
3. The completion of two core courses from the major (Neuroscience 3000 and Psychology 3313) earning a minimum grade of "B" or above in each.

Until a student has met these criteria a student's declared major will be pre-neuroscience.

**What rationale did we use in determining the pre-neuroscience criteria?** The primary goal of this proposal is to ensure that students are prepared for the demands of the curriculum and, therefore, experience success in the major. The major was designed to be interdisciplinary and rigorous. There is 6000 and 7000-level coursework in each of the three specializations. Performance in two of the Neuroscience core courses – namely, Psychology 3313 and Neuroscience 3000 – has been identified as predictive of continued success in the program. In the estimation of the faculty, these two courses represent the fundamental knowledge upon which subsequent neuroscience coursework

is based. Additionally, completing at least 24 hours of college level coursework, coupled with a minimum of 12 semester hours of OSU letter-grade earned hours at a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or better, will provide the students with sufficient feedback to assist students in their decision as to whether or not the Neuroscience program fits their long-term goals.

**What options do students have if they do not successfully meet the 3.0 GPA threshold?**

Students that have completed the pre-neuroscience requirements with the exception of the 3.0 GPA have three different options available to them.

1. First, students may try to achieve the required GPA by taking appropriate courses in order to reach the threshold. In order to give students an opportunity to demonstrate growth in their academic abilities, however, those who do not meet the threshold for Psychology 3313 and Neuroscience 3000 initially may retake any or both of these core courses in order to meet the minimum requirements. The program coordinator will utilize only the highest grades posted for these two courses.
2. Secondly, a lack of success in the pre-neuroscience sequence does not preclude a student from obtaining a neuroscience background. Those pre-neuroscience students who cannot meet the GPA threshold can freely pursue the neuroscience minor: Psychology 3313 and Neuroscience 3000 are foundational courses required for the minor as well as the major; students then would only need to take 3 more courses in order to complete the minor requirements.
3. Finally, students can consult with a neuroscience advisor and college advisors to explore other options for a major that best fits their educational and vocational goals.

**How will this change affect the student body** As discussed above, all neuroscience majors and students in the pre-neuroscience sequence will have complete access to advising and programming resources. However, these changes will have different implications for various types of students. Our analysis has identified four distinct groups: (1) already declared majors; (2) new first-year students (NFYS); (3) currently enrolled students; and (4) transfer students. Each of these groups may enter the major according to differing sets of parameters.

*Already Declared Majors:* Students that declare the Neuroscience major before 02/01/13 will be exempt from the pre-neuroscience requirements. In preparation for enacting this policy, the College of Arts and Sciences has pledged to immediately refrain from adding students to the PRE or AOI designation. All students who are currently listed as PRE or AOI have been alerted regarding the upcoming change, and have been instructed to contact a Neuroscience Academic advisor to discuss their transition.

*New First-Year Students (NFYS):* Non-Honors Program first-year students (NFYS) interested in declaring neuroscience as a major may have their major declared as pre-neuroscience until they have met all admission criteria for the major. All first-year students (NFYS) directly admitted to the College of Arts & Sciences Honors Program via the application process may have their declared major as neuroscience via the university's online application. We believe that direct enrollment to



the major is justified given the Honors Program’s highly selective admission process. All NFYS enrolled as pre-neuroscience will have access to all advising and programming resources.

*Currently enrolled students:* Students that are currently enrolled at The Ohio State University in a different degree-granting program will be eligible to declare pre-neuroscience until they have completed the criteria for admission to the neuroscience major.

*Transfer Students:* Students that are transferring to The Ohio State University in a degree-granting program will be eligible to declare the major according to the above terms. Those transfer students who have not yet met the cumulative GPA and course requirements for the major will be designated as pre-neuroscience until they reach or pass the threshold.


In regards to the pre-neuroscience sequence, the program will only utilize grades of B or higher from transferring institutions; that is, in order to successfully transfer Psychology 3313 and/or Neuroscience 3000, students must have earned a “B” or above in the course(s) from their previous institution. In this case, transfer students will also need to meet the remaining criteria before being admitted to the major. If a student’s grades for Psych 3313 or Neuro 3000 are below the B threshold, the student will need to retake the course(s) at The Ohio State University and reach the minimum grade criteria. Furthermore, transferred college credit for Psychology 3313 or Neuroscience 3000 graded below the B level at the previous institution cannot count toward fulfillment of major requirements, and will need to be repeated until the grade of B has been obtained or surpassed.

**How will the program handle appeals?** Any student appeals or petitions regarding the above pre-neuroscience stipulations will be considered by the Neuroscience Undergraduate Studies Committee.

Sincerely,



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