

Support for Faculty and Building New Networks of Teachers

In August 2001, the Council of Representatives approved the establishment of the APA [Committee on Psychology Teachers at Community Colleges](#) (PT@CC). As described in the Association Rule, the committee's mission is to: (a) represent community college psychology teachers; (b) promote, within the 2-year college community, the highest professional standards for teaching of psychology as a scientific discipline with applications to a wide range of human concerns; (c) cultivate a professional identity with the discipline of psychology among psychology teachers at 2-year colleges; (d) develop leadership qualities among psychology teachers at 2-year colleges and increase their participation and representation in professional psychology activities and organizations; (e) establish and maintain communication with all groups involved in the teaching of psychology and with the greater psychological community; and (f) encourage psychological research on teaching and learning at 2-year colleges for the purpose of giving students the best possible educational opportunities.

In 2002, PT@CC met for the first time and agreed that establishing a membership category for two-year college teachers, developing teaching resources, and enhancing communications among community college psychology teachers would be among its top priorities.

The PT@CC Committee advocated for the creation of a new APA membership category for Community College Teacher Affiliates. In 2002, APA's Council of Representatives approved a Bylaw amendment to create the new affiliate membership category. Through support from the APA Education Directorate and leadership from the PT@CC Committee, a network of community college teacher affiliates was created and developed into a national membership group in APA called the Psychology Teachers at Community Colleges (PT@CC). PT@CC is the "home" within the national disciplinary association for community college instructors. PT@CC has given educators a voice on the national level to advance issues of particular importance to the teaching and learning of psychology at community colleges. Over the years, PT@CC has continued to grow and includes more than 1,500 members. Through its elected Executive Committee, PT@CC has taken a leadership role in the development of programs, activities, and teaching resources geared specifically to meet the needs of community college faculty.

With community college student enrollment at an all-time high, this is important because of the large number of undergraduates who are studying psychology at community colleges. PT@CC works to advance quality in the teaching of psychology and to promote academic achievement and student readiness for transfer to 4-year colleges and universities and into the workforce.

Resources to enhance the teaching of psychological science

One of the most exciting and innovative opportunities for the APA began in 2005 when the National Science Foundation (NSF) approved funding to create the APA [Online Psychology Laboratory](#) (OPL). OPL was the first funded entry in psychology in the National Science Digital Library (NSDL). OPL provides a coherent set of reliable, stable, quality controlled laboratory experiments and resources for use in the teaching of psychology and related disciplines. The site now includes 27 studies. Each of these studies constitutes a fully functional experiment for student participation, explanatory materials for instruction, data download capabilities for real time data analysis, and graphing downloads to illustrate effects of scientific phenomena. The resources section of OPL includes 62 interactive demonstrations. Each of the demonstrations provides an interactive illustration of

a psychological principle or phenomenon. Teachers can use the demonstrations during class and students can visit the site to repeat the demonstration if they wish to study the material. Each demonstration is annotated so that educators can easily find resources for teaching. The site will continue to serve as a resource for students and faculty in high schools, 2- and 4-year colleges and universities.

New activity to engage community college instructors in professional associations

I would seek funding to design a tool kit for establishing research laboratories to teach psychology courses at community colleges. Having a tool kit to develop research laboratories would facilitate hands-on experiences for undergraduate students and would promote psychological science as a career pathway. It would also afford students an opportunity to learn scientific reasoning and critical thinking skills prior to transferring to baccalaureate degree granting institutions. With more than 1 million students enrolled in an introductory psychology course annually, research laboratories will have an enormous impact on how students view psychological science. Students will have an opportunity to not only propose research questions, but also to collect data to answer research questions. Moreover, because laboratory exercises are designed to be engaging and informative, non-majors may begin to think about pursuing a degree in a STEM discipline.

PT@CC members recognize the value of undergraduate research and the need to infuse this high impact educational practice into their teaching. The APA PT@CC Committee is working on a guide for establishing research laboratories at community colleges. If this grant proposal were funded, PT@CC members would have the tools that they need to create a laboratory for lower division courses in psychology.

This grant would be used to disseminate information to faculty about setting up a research laboratory at a community college. For example, APA can host a webinar about strategies to promote undergraduate research including how to set up a research laboratory. In addition, staff could present information about the proposed tool kit for establishing a research laboratory at national meetings and regional teaching conferences. Our newsletter, the [*Psychology Teacher Network*](#), and our website would provide additional ways to share this information with psychology instructors.