

UNIVERSITY OF LOUISIANA AT LAFAYETTE

STEP Committee

Technology Fee Application

Psychology department Research Lab upgrades

Title

**Dr. Robert Michael, Dr. Brooke
Breux, Dr. Amy Brown, Mr. Allen
Latour**

Name of Submitter
(Faculty or Staff Only)

**Psychology department, College of
Liberal Arts**

Organization

Title: Psychology department Research Lab upgrades Date: 11/13/2023
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Department/College/Org: Psychology department, College of Liberal Arts

ABSTRACT (250 words or less):

The Psychology department seeks to update technology in its Research Laboratories, housed in Girard 324 and Rougeou 318 and 321a. The department uses these spaces to collect crucial research data. Girard 324 is also used for ad-hoc instructional purposes, such as statistical software workshops. Rougeou 318 and 321a are also used as Dr. Michael and Dr. Breaux's lab rooms. The research laboratories benefit: (1) undergraduate students, who learn the value of research as active research participants; (2) graduate students and faculty, who—as researchers—produce new scientific knowledge. The department requires 61 new computers to replace 61 old computers that have reached the end of their useful lifecycle and that UL no longer supports.

Purpose of grant

Research activity is critical to the ongoing success of the Psychology department's faculty, graduate students, and undergraduate students. For faculty, research productivity is a core workload component and a measure of job performance. For graduate students, completion of a research project and concomitant thesis are criteria for successful graduation. For undergraduate students, active participation in research—which is a course requirement in introductory psychology courses—demonstrates first-hand the value of psychological science.

Research conducted in the department relies on data collected via computers in the Research Laboratories (Girard 324, Rougeou 318 and 321a). Functional computers in these spaces are therefore critical to continued research activity. The existing computers in these labs, however, are at the end of their useful lifecycle. Due to hardware limitations, the computers cannot be upgraded to the latest operating system and must be retired, because UL will no longer support them.

To maintain research lab functionality and productivity, we will replace the existing 61 desktop computers with 61 new ones (27 in Girard 324, 20 in Rougeou 321, and 14 in Rougeou 318). The monitors attached to all existing desktops are in good working order and are compatible with new desktops, so in an effort to save money we will not request new monitors.

Impact to student body as a whole

The Psychology department serves approximately 700 undergraduate majors and 40 masters graduate students. A substantial number of these students plan to pursue higher degrees in Psychology and related disciplines. Research experience—both as participants and researchers—benefits students who have these goals in mind and helps the department achieve core aspects of its mission. More specifically: To teach the value of empirical investigation in psychological science and how research can be applied to solve real-world problems.

Put more pragmatically, functional Research Laboratories allow the department's graduate students to conduct their necessary research projects. Due to the broad nature of the discipline, these projects vary in topic, scope, and methodology—but virtually all rely on the collection of data from human participants via computers in controlled lab environments, such as the Girard 324 and Rougeou 318 and 321a Research Laboratories. Without functional computers in these spaces, the department's research activity would grind to a halt, impeding graduate student success and retention.

Functional Research Laboratories are of significant benefit to our undergraduate students, too. Students enrolled in our introductory courses are active participants in research and these experiences—consistent with the department's mission—teach students the breadth and depth of psychological science.

The Research Laboratory in Girard 324 can also be used as an educational environment on an ad-hoc basis. For example, in the Fall of 2022, Dr. Manyu Li ran a series of Social Science Data Analytics workshops. These workshops were free to attend and taught students basic coding and data analysis in social science, using interactive tools and peer learning. Feedback from the workshop was overwhelmingly positive, and the department plans to run more of these workshops in the future.

The Research Laboratories in Rougeou 318 and 321a are also used as meeting rooms for Dr. Michael and Dr. Breaux's Cognitive Psychology research teams, comprising a mix of undergraduate and graduate students.

Projected lifetime of enhancement

The grant is expected to have a lifetime of at least 5 years. After 3 years, the needs of the laboratory space will be reassessed and a strategy will be developed to update the space prior to the end of its

lifecycle. More specifically, the department will continue to seek Board Of Regents Support Fund (BORSF) Enhancement Grants and other applicable funding sources. The department has previously sought BORSF Enhancement Grants, but to date these applications have been unsuccessful (035-ENH-18, 20-0413).

Person(s) responsible for

The College of Liberal Arts Technical Support Staff will be responsible for the implementation, installation, maintenance, operation, and STEP Plan alignment of the contents of this grant. Mr. Latour is listed on the proposal because he is the IT Manager for the College of Liberal Arts and is a certified Microsoft Technology Associate. No training is necessary.

Previous funded STEP projects

“Cognitive PSYC Instructional & Experimental Lab Upgrade” (Fall 2017), total budget of \$19,739, P.I. Dr. Brooke Breaux. This grant was used to update Dr. Breaux and Dr. Michael’s Cognitive Psychology laboratories that were inherited from a retiring professor and that needed equipment upgrades.

Budget Proposal

1.	Equipment	\$61,000 (61x Standard Desktop Dell Optiplex 7000 series @ ~\$1,000 ea.)
2.	Software	\$0
3.	Supplies	\$0
4.	Maintenance	\$0
5.	Personnel	\$0
6.	Other	\$0

TOTAL: **\$61,000**