Dear New and Returning Psychology Majors –

As the new academic year approaches, I wanted to reach out with a few news items. We continue to have transitions with our faculty. First, we welcome two new tenure-track faculty members, Dr. Richard Joseph (Joe) Behun, who is a Counselor Educator (School Counseling) and will be teaching a couple of our Human Adjustment courses this fall in addition to his graduate classes, and Dr. Brett Swords, who joins our Clinical Psychology program and will teach Abnormal Psychology sections this year at the undergraduate level. We also have a new adjunct faculty member, Dr. Jo-Ellen Asbury, who will teach Psychology of Racism. We also welcome back Dr. Amelia Lopez after her year-long sabbatical leave.

Even with the new hires, we continue to be stretched a little thin this year (e.g., our more than 550 students are advised by just 15 regular faculty members with some assistance from a couple of our experienced adjunct faculty), we are excited about the upcoming year and some new things it holds. First, we are again expanding and deepening our new peer mentoring program aimed at the new first-year students in our UNIV 103 seminars. The mentoring joins with other peer support programs and our in-house tutoring as part of our efforts to support student success in our major and at this University. In recognition of the late Dr. Rita Smith Wade-El's unwavering commitment to student support and mentoring, our Student Support/Mentoring Center has been moved to her former office in Luek 119. Second, we continue to work on curricular changes. At the graduate level, we are adding a new Education Specialist (Ed.S.) degree and a re-formatted Masters in School Psychology, pending final approval by PASSHE. Also still in the approval process this fall is a new multidisciplinary studies major in Animal Behavior, a joint program with the Biology Department. Starting in Spring 2020, a new pre-requisite course, PSYC 215 (Intro to Physiological Psych), will be required for those taking either PSYC 314 or PSYC 315, two of our Advanced Labs.

As a reminder, students beginning or re-entering the Psychology major in Fall 2017 or more recently have to meet our new curriculum requirements which include completion of a Capstone experience and fulfilling new academic standards in their required courses (C- or better in PSYC 100, 211, 212, Advanced Lab, and Capstone). Options that satisfy the new three-credit Capstone requirement include Directed Projects or Coop (our internship programs), an Honors thesis, PSYC 454 (History & Systems), and PSYC 455 seminars with rotating topics. An appropriate Independent Study (PSYC 498) may also qualify. These Capstone options must be taken after 75 credits are earned and one's Advanced Lab is completed (or the Advanced Lab can be done concurrently). We feel these changes continue to strengthen our major so that students completing the program will have the best chance of success in the workplace, in life, and in graduate school if that’s where they end up.

Let me end by welcoming you (or welcoming you back). We hope you will take advantage of the opportunities before you, both academic and co-curricular like Psychology Club, and ask for the help and support you need to make the semester ahead and your years at Millersville the best they can be. Please also consider helping your fellow students by becoming a Peer Mentor or a tutor (both are paid positions but are also excellent resume builders)!

On behalf of your Psych Department faculty and staff, Dr. Foster-Clark