

When it Comes to Department Name, ‘Psychology’ Is #1

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The continuing commentary on the article on psychology departments’ changing their names in the September 2011 *Observer* led me to wonder about the current distribution of departmental monikers. I therefore mined the data of the APS membership rosters — specifically, the contact affiliations volunteered by members (kindly provided by APS).

For present purposes, I eliminated names with *N*s of 1 (though some were close to names of larger *N*), names indicating professional-training and clinical departments, schools named after people, obviously non-psychology departments (e.g., philosophy, political science), medical school departments with names that did not mention behavior (e.g., neurology, kinesiology), and names in foreign languages. In aggregating similar names, I ignored prefixes like “Center,” “Institute,” “Dept.,” etc. Further aggregations are indicated in the names themselves.

I notice a few trends. And the results are (drumroll, please)...

- (1) Psychology wins by a long shot.
- (2) Given a change, it’s popular to add science(s), brain, mind, or behavior to the department’s name.
- (3) Some subfields of psychology, like educational psych, tend to spawn specialized departments.
- (4) Of the remaining subfields, the cognitive, social, neuroscience, and developmental aspects of psychology seem to have generated a variety of names, which, in the aggregate, lead to a respectable *N* for the subfield as a whole.
- (5) Some departments have tilted decidedly in the direction of specialization within psychology, to the point of multi-feature names.

As for my own Department of Psychology at Carnegie Mellon, to be fully descriptive, we might call it:

Department of the Science of Human Mind as Embedded in Brain and Body and as Revealed by Behavior, Along With Its Change Through Developmental Process and Learning, and Its Implications for Application to Health, Education, and Welfare.

Or, simply put, SHMEBBRBCDPLIAHEW.

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DEPARTMENT NAME	Number of APS Members
Psychology	5,603
Psychological Science(s)	154
Psychological/Psychology and Brain Sciences	79
Education and Psychology, or Psychology and Education	59
Behavioral Science(s)	57
Education	52
Psychology and Neuroscience*	47
Social Psychology/Social and X Psychology	45
Name includes <i>Organizational</i>	43
Human Development	37
Psychiatry and Behavior/Psychology	33
Cognitive Science(s)	28
Experimental Psychology	25
Name includes <i>Communication/Communicative</i>	24
Cognitive Neuroscience	21
Human Development and Family Science/Studies	21
Psychology and Social Behavior	20
Psychology and Counseling	19
Social and Behavioral Sciences	17
Brain and Cognitive Sciences/Cognition	15
Child Development	14
Psychology and Sociology	12
(Psychology and) Special Education	12
Developmental Psychology	11
Linguistics	11
Behavioral and Social Sciences	10
Brain and Mind/Mind and Brain (Sciences)	10
Applied Psychology	9
Cognitive, Linguistic, and Psychological Sciences	9
Psychology and Human Development	9
Cognitive Psychology	8
Psychology and Education	8
Behavioral and Brain Sciences	7
Clinical and Social Sciences in Psychology	7
Cognitive and Learning Sciences	7
Neuropsychology	7
Psychology and Philosophy	7
Psychology, Neuroscience (and Behavior)	7

*Includes 2 Neuroscience and Psychology