

# Then and Now: the Evolution of the Psychology Undergraduate Program at Utah State University

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## Introduction

The psychology department at Utah State University was founded in 1929 (USU was founded in 1888). Today, the psychology department consists of forty faculty, approximately eight hundred and five undergraduate students, and two hundred ninety-three graduate students. The history of the USU's psychology department has impacted the current trajectory of activities and goals.

**“The psychology department has an early history of its outreach program, allowing professors to teach on other (remote) campuses and making classes more accessible through online teaching”-Tressa Haderlie, Academic Advisor**

## Methods

Historical data was collected through an analysis of hard copy and online papers and interviews.

Information was gathered from:

- Archival records accessed from the USU library system and books housed in the department.
- Online catalogs accessed from the USU database.
- Program and department information gathered via USU websites.
- Interviews were conducted with administration, faculty, and staff.

The current poster summarizes findings across all the different modalities investigated.

## Past Program

USU has a history of notable faculty and a department supporting underrepresented communities.

- Dr. Arden Frandsen served as a professor for forty-six years. He used real-life examples from Cache County children for his scholarly book.
- Frank Ascione completed influential research and received the Distinguished Scholar Award from the International Association of Human-Animal Interaction Organizations.
- In 1986, the psychology department introduced the American Indian Support Project to support for Native American students and staff in the psychology field. These programs continue today.

## Current Program

The program strives to continue the goals and themes from the past.

- Student opportunities to participate in the Psi Chi organization and chances to take on local, national, and international leadership roles.
- In 2019, one-hundred thirty-eight journal articles were published, with sixty-four of those co-authored with students.
- Students can take part in an R1 research facility in order to learn application techniques directly from an expert.

**“Utah State is a place where an individual student can have an impact”-Scott Bates, Department Head**

Figure 2 - USU Education Building



## Conclusions

The psychology department has changed and is thriving because of the efforts of past and current students, faculty, and staff.

- The department has shifted from a graduate focused department to more focused on undergraduate success.
- The department has introduced programs for the underrepresented and is still growing under the current administration.
- Preparing students for success after graduation through offering seven different graduate specializations.

Figure 1 –USU Psychology Department Timeline

