Dear New Major,

Welcome to the Neuroscience Major! You are in good company – Neuroscience is among the top 5 most popular majors at Duke, and our international society, the Society for Neuroscience (sfn.org), represents nearly 38,000 professional members worldwide. Neuroscience is a dynamic field focused on understanding how the nervous system works, the relationship of brain to behavior, and the neural mechanisms of health and disease that have broad implications for society at large. Neuroscientists are employed at a variety of professional settings, including academic and medical research institutions, pharmaceutical companies and other private industries, government jobs, non-profit and philanthropic organizations, and entrepreneurial start-up ventures, among many others. Duke’s undergraduate neuroscience program embraces the interdisciplinary nature of the field by offering courses taught by a diverse faculty affiliated with a broad spectrum of academic disciplines, and there are several pathways through the major to accommodate a variety of student interests.

So, you may wonder, what’s next?

1. **Visit our website:** [www.dibs.duke.edu](http://www.dibs.duke.edu). Here you will find information about the major, the faculty, research opportunities, invited speakers, social events, and much more. The site is updated regularly and is your first stop for information about everything neuroscience-related at Duke.

2. **Choose an advisor.** Our administrative assistant, Tyler Lee ([tyler.lee@duke.edu](mailto:tyler.lee@duke.edu)) will email you about this issue within a week of your major declaration, and she will let you know which of our Neuroscience Teaching Faculty are accepting new advisees. We recommend that you consider choosing an available advisor who aligns best with your own interests (cognitive neuroscience, neuroengineering, pharmacology, etc.), so please peruse our website to identify faculty that might be a good fit for your interests. Please note that you must meet with your major advisor prior to class registration each semester in order to enroll in classes (with the exception of Study Abroad programs). Typically, advisors will email all their advisees a few weeks prior to registration with a spreadsheet of available meeting times. We emphasize that your major advisor is much more than a course gatekeeper. We encourage you to consult with your major advisor periodically throughout your time at Duke to gain valuable insights into the profession of neuroscience, advice on graduate and professional schools, tips for how to engage in research, and other academic and career issues.

3. **Plan your curriculum in consultation with your major advisor and Duke Institute for Brain Sciences (DIBS) staff.** Start with *Neurosci 101/102* as the gateway to the major. Then, we strongly recommend that students focus on fulfilling the other Neuroscience core courses, statistics, the methods/lab course, and natural science/computer science co-requisites. Upper-level seminars and lectures often have limited (if any) seats open to sophomores, and these classes require that students already have a good grasp on the methods/statistics/foundational basis of the field. Our curriculum embraces a variety of pedagogical styles, including traditional lectures, lectures + small-group recitation sections, labs, team-
based learning formats, seminars, and independent study/research practicum opportunities. We ask students to be flexible in their course planning, as courses may not be offered as expected due to faculty availability, and some courses may conflict with other course times.

4. **Join neuroscience-related organizations on campus.** These include: the Neuroscience Majors’ Union (https://sites.duke.edu/neurosciencemajorsunion/); the journal of undergraduate neuroscience, Neurogenesis (https://issuu.com/neurogenesis); SYNAPSE, a networking and community outreach organization (https://sites.duke.edu/dukesynapse/); and NeuroCare, an organization to raise awareness about neurological and psychiatric disorders (https://dukegroups.com/organization/neurocare/about).

5. **Come to the DIBS Cube!** We have a lounge space in the glass cube next to the Blue Express cafeteria in the LSRC Building that is open during regular weekday business hours. This space also houses the DIBS staff who are there to support your experience of the neuroscience major. Our staff and often times one or more faculty members will be available for open office hours on the lower level (just behind the stairs) on Tuesdays from 2-3 pm and Wednesdays from 10-11 am. At least come by and introduce yourself; our staff are eager to help!

6. **E-mail us at:** dukeneuromajor@duke.edu. This account is monitored regularly, and you will hear back from the most appropriate faculty or staff person who can help you with what you need.

We hope you become as engaged with and excited about neuroscience as we are! We look forward to interacting with you on your academic journey at Duke and beyond!

Sincerely,

Leonard E. White, PhD
Associate Professor
Department of Orthopaedic Surgery
Duke University School of Medicine
Co-Director of Undergraduate Studies in Neuroscience
Co-Director of Bass Connections in Brain and Society
Associate Director for Education, Duke Institute for Brain Sciences

Kevin S. LaBar, PhD
Professor
Department of Psychology and Neuroscience
Trinity College of Arts and Sciences
Co-Director of Undergraduate Studies in Neuroscience