

Arizona Cognitive Science Vision Statement  
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With the formation of the School of Mind, Brain and Behavior, and in the broader University context, Cognitive Science now faces significant challenges. My view is that the program should not continue under its current model; it must change to survive and thrive. Our ability to do this depends on a review of existing commitments and a willingness of participants to accept a new mission.

Seminar series. The most frequently cited contribution of the program is the Friday seminar series. Maintaining the series is essential, as it is the investment that most benefits the entire Cognitive Science community. It costs roughly 5% of the program budget.

Teaching mission. Cognitive Science was established as a research unit. However, the move to RCM means that we would now benefit from developing an undergraduate teaching revenue stream. Strategies:

- Establish a Cognitive Science track in the NSCS major, which will also help to address current limitations of the major.
- Develop an undergraduate minor to serve students across SBS and MBB with courses on topics likely to attract significant enrollments. Target: 9 units (3 courses) to be developed over the next 3 years. Ideas: Evolution of Mind; Education and Cognitive Science; Minds, Brains and Machines; Cognitive Science and the Arts. Intro (3) + Core (6) + 3 existing courses in other units (9) = 18 units for minor.
- Develop service learning opportunities for undergraduates through Cognitive Science.

Clearly, accepting a more consistent teaching role will require a significant change to existing commitments, because much of the program budget is now used to reduce the teaching load of 6-7 faculty members. Although this is a great benefit, it has not been accessible to all program members, and will be increasingly difficult to justify in future.

Assessment. The new campus-wide emphasis on assessment means that Cognitive Science must be able to clearly demonstrate its value and impact. Strategy:

- More systematically collect data about the number of GIDP students, graduate minors, productivity of graduate RAs, value of the seminar series, and grants as a return on program investments, etc.
- Work with news office to publicize accomplishments. Update website.

Hiring. In the current climate, any loss of Cognitive Science faculty members means that the program will lose FTE. Arguing that the resources “belong” to Cognitive Science is not likely to work. Rather, Cognitive Science should bridge MBB and SBS by using returned FTE to make short-term investments (1-2 years) in strategic hires, working with units in SBS to identify priority areas.

To all but the 6-7 faculty who directly benefit from the program, the status quo is indistinguishable from a future in which Dean Ruiz distributes Cognitive Science faculty into appropriate departments, and keeps the seminar going but sweeps Operations, Graduate RA and related funds.