Neuroscience, Behavior and Health (NBH) Initiative

The Neuroscience, Behavior, and Health (NBH) Initiative marshals existing strengths at UVM in neuroscience, psychology, rehabilitation sciences, education, and medicine to investigate personal behavior as a major risk factor for disease and disability. NBH will promote transdisciplinary research collaborations that seek a deeper understanding of the fundamental processes underlying these behaviors with the goal of designing effective strategies and policies for promoting health. In addition, we will promote cross-disciplinary education and training in order to enrich the undergraduate and graduate student experience. By doing so, we will raise the visibility of the education, research, and training programs at UVM. Over the past 2 yrs, our goals and progress have been:

1. **Goal: Raise UVM and public awareness of NBH**
   - **NBH Research Forum**
     - 2/7/12 in Grand Maple Ballroom at Davis Center: 140 attendees, including 23 high school students, 36 undergraduates, and 29 grad students
     - 2/19/13 in Grand Maple Ballroom at Davis Center: 184 attendees: 151 from UVM (46 faculty, 42 grad/med students, 18 staff, 10 postdocs, 35 undergrads); 4 from local businesses; 13 from other colleges (Dartmouth, Middlebury, HEC Montreal, McGill, Gettysburg, Concord Community College); 4 high school students
   - **Macmillan Symposium** (3/26/12 at Davis Center): *The Brainy Side of Exercise: Benefits to Neurons, Mind and Behavior*: 403 participants: 114 UVM faculty & staff, 83 grad students, 86 undergrads, and 116 from community
   - **Macmillan Lecture** (9/24/12 at Davis Auditorium): Art Kramer, PhD, Beckman Institute, University of Illinois “A tale of two training strategies: Boosting cognition and brain function”. Professor Kramer also met with deans and center directors to discuss how to promote and support transdisciplinary research collaborations

2. **Goal: facilitate collaborations in research**
   - **Research Focus Groups**: discussions about research interests and goals in small groups with faculty members across colleges; *Addictive Behaviors*: 10 faculty members representing CAS, COM, CESS and 7 departments; *Stress, Trauma, Anxiety, Mood Disorders, & Pain (STAMP)*: 11 members representing CAS, COM, CESS, CNHS and 7 departments; *Developmental Interventions*: 12 members representing CAS, COM, CESS, CNHS and 10 departments
   - **Microgrants**: NBH awarded 4 microgrants last year- a total of $26,577 to cross college collaborations in order to bridge projects to create transdisciplinary collaborations
   - **Spiere driven hire**: successfully recruited human population geneticist Dawei Li, PhD from Yale University
   - **Grant writing support**: IN FY 2012 provided $10K in assistance by Jeralyn Haraldsen, grant writer, to Dr. S. Higgins for resubmitting a 5 yr, $11.5 million application to NIH for a Center of Biomedical Research Excellence in “Behavior and Health”; score improved from an unfundable 62 to a 28; this grant will be funded provided US congress does not push everyone off the fiscal cliff. FY 2013 provided $5000 to Dr Higgins for FDA application; also $2500 to Hudziak/Althof and $2500 to Leibowitz/Stickle for collaborative grants.

CURRENT PLANS:
- Provide 2 microgrants of $8,000 to support trans-college, transdisciplinary collaborations
- Work with Gary Stein, VCC Director to identify projects in the area of “Human Populations in Cancer”
- Vermont Brain Bee 2/9/13 in COM; 35 HS students from 7 high schools in VT; 17 undergrad and 6 grad volunteers to assist in activities and in Brain Bee; interview for this was on WCAX :30 on 2/1/13
- Identify nominees for Marsh Scholar at Large
- Enhance transdisciplinary education for undergrads and grads
- Acquire “Center” status: must identify financial support and create organizational model; goal of center would be to facilitate planning and submission of transdisciplinary research grants and to continue fostering communication
and interactions across colleges for research and education