

# Psychobiology in the Sun Belt Conference

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### *Letter from the Editors:*

This special issue of the *Electronic Journal of Integrative Biosciences* features articles on behavioral and neuroscience research by scientists working at Sun Belt Conference universities, or who received some of their scientific training at those universities. We chose this theme because, just as the Conference's athletic programs have become increasingly recognized for their competitiveness against the major athletic conferences, Conference schools have also emerged as significant contributors to scientific knowledge. As faculty members at Sun Belt member institutions, we thought it important to highlight some of this important scientific research activity.

Included in this issue is a behavioral research study by Thornberry, Risner, and Haggbloom (Western Kentucky University) that provides evidence for functional color vision in the zebra fish, an increasingly important vertebrate model for both behavioral and neuroscience research. The report by Broadaway, Eubank, and Pearce (Arkansas State University) establishes for the first time that voluntary oral consumption of nicotine by rats produces a detectable blood serum level of nicotine. Allen and Schwartz (Florida International University) present evidence of a Gorilla passing the mirror self-recognition test, a standard indicator of self-knowledge.

Hahn (Western Kentucky University), describes a new multi-response free association task as a method for creating associates for a target word. This new approach offers some advantages over, and avoids some problems that occur with, the use of a single-response method. The study by Warnick (a graduate of Arkansas State University now at Arkansas Tech University) and Liddell shows that levels of a stress hormone are attenuated by a negative mood induction writing task, a result with implications for the mechanism mediating the effects of expressive written therapy. A follow up short report by Williams, Laffoon, and Warnick describes a relationship between positive emotion in a writing task and a salivary biomarker. Finally, Dickson (Arkansas State University) provides an insightful review of a new book on brain plasticity.

We thank all of the contributors for choosing the *Electronic Journal of Integrative Biosciences* as a forum for presenting their behavioral and neuroscience research, and the anonymous reviewers for their timely and thoughtful considerations of each manuscript. **Psychobiology in the Sun Belt Conference** proudly displays and promotes an assortment of scientific contributions being made by Sun Belt Conference universities.

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