The Portland State Neuroscience Club’s goal is to increase undergraduate access to neuroscience for students of all majors interested in pursuing careers or degrees in the field. PSU is currently working on implementing an official neuroscience minor, which would allow increased access to resources afforded by traditional departments. Our club’s outreach spans from volunteering with K-12 schools to viewing live brain surgeries and establishing professional networks. Through art, policy and even goats, we aim to enhance neuroscience knowledge in the Pacific NW.

NW NOGGIN

NW Noggin is an innovative, dynamic non-profit organization that uses art and science as a mechanism for K-12 and public neuroscience awareness. NW Noggin works to spark excitement for scientific research and art in the community by offering creative and collaborative programs that connect students in various stages of their academic career. By embracing inclusion and equitable acquisition of learning resources, community ethos for brain research reaches diverse communities throughout the region. NW Noggin’s unique art-and-science integration strategy makes science a more tangible and personal subject for all.

OMSI BRAIN DAY

Together the Oregon Museum of Science and Industry (OMSI), and OHSU (Oregon Health and Science University) host an annual Brain Fair with various local non-profits and research groups. PSU Neuroscience club works with NW Noggin by having interactive arts and crafts as well as printed and human brains for education. Neuroscience becomes a lot more tangible when holding an actual brain and asking questions specific to it. Our collection ranges in size from fish and frog brains to mammal brains like monkey and human. Since OMSI does not regularly have brains on display, this access takes many people by surprise. Alongside the brains, we have 3D printed models and crafts like the colorfully famous pipe cleaner neuron station.

MISSION FOR DIVERSE OUTREACH

Oregon’s High school graduation rate is 10% lower than the national. Along with the schools in Metro PDX, we visit schools in rural Oregon and Washington, and visiting communities such as Honolulu, San Diego, and Chicago. Last year our outreach trips included towns as far as 4 hours away, where access to STEM education and neuroscience is limited. All events involve making neurons out of pipe cleaners, seeing a real human brain, and playing games with a portable EEG. The actions of the outreach has sparked the interest of underrepresented students and given them confidence that neuroscience is intangible and accessible. The enthusiasm they displayed shows that they believe in their own ability to study the brain.

NOGGINFEST

Nogginfest is an all-day celebration of art and science featuring speakers, bands, performers and DJs. With live music, art galleries, games and interactive exhibits for all ages, the day draws a great crowd. With an emphasis on making science creatively expressive we successfully bring two diverse intellectual crowds closer and allowed people to relate to thinkers that come from separate backgrounds. We are truly proud to host an event where creative energy excites to much diverse inspiration, and allows for neurography of lazy projects, whether in art or science, with the other.

PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS: PROVIDENCE BRAIN SURGERY AND OHSU

Our students work with professionals in local hospitals such as OHSU and Providence St. Vincent through volunteer work and medical shadowing. Through these connections we have access to specialists and hearing them speak about their field, and viewing live neuro-surgeries. For pre-med undergraduates, this brings the possibility of medical school to life, and includes them in the professional culture they aspire to enter.

MAC LAESEN YOUTH CORRECTIONAL FACILITY PSYAR AND YOUTHLINE

Several times throughout the year we visit facilities that offer assistance to at-risk youth. We understand that many issues in these situations relate to the brain, and hope to educate people on their brain and behavior, while connecting with some-age peers. The Mac Laesen Youth Correctional Facility, PSYAR, a creative mentoring space for homeless youth, and Youthline for suicide prevention have all welcomed our volunteers for a straightforward, honest breakdown of neuroscience and real-world situations not frequently spoken about in the community.

BACK ON HOME CAMPUS

Our students work with professionals in local hospitals such as OHSU and Providence St. Vincent through volunteer work and medical shadowing. Through these connections we have access to specialists and hearing them speak about their field, and viewing live neuro-surgeries. For pre-med undergraduates, this brings the possibility of medical school to life, and includes them in the professional culture they aspire to enter.

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