

Neuroscience Symposium: Innovative Technologies and Learning [1]

Submitted by Juan Víctor Concepción Cardona [2] on 10 March 2017 - 5:05pm



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The idea for the *Neuroscience Symposium: Innovation, Technology, and Learning* was conceived in 2014 when doctoral student Juan V. Concepcion Cardona and Dr. Joel Acevedo Nieto met at the Network of Entrepreneurship Innovation in Barceloneta, Puerto Rico. Juan and Joel discussed possibilities for a holding a meeting about the emergence of Neuroscience in Puerto Rico. Both scientists felt that there is a need to better understand and track the development of neuroscience research and practice in Puerto Rico. As an academic discipline, neuroscience is challenging as it is composed of various sub-disciplines like neurobiology, psychology, cognitive sciences, computer sciences, etc. Over the years since that first meeting, these colleagues have developed workshops and have had the opportunity to explore different aspects of neuroscience, while encouraging the participation of students from diverse academic backgrounds—from education to social work.

During the 2015-2016 year, the program for continuing education in Neuroscience was created at the Interamerican University of Puerto Rico, Arecibo Campus. Dr. Joel Acevedo has supervised the training of students that participate in the continuing education program. This program holds

a course consisting of a series of seminars where participants acquire knowledge on diverse areas in neuroscience like, emotion, emotion regulation, neuro-marketing, and education neurosciences. When the students complete the course, they receive a certificate of continuing education in Neuroscience. During the last few years, students from different academic backgrounds have completed the certification, including: psychology, education, health care, counseling, and social work. This is evidence that the academic community is eager to deepen their knowledge of neuroscience. In fact, it has been observed that during the last few years several programs dedicated to neuroscience have been established in different universities in Puerto Rico.

The Ciencia PR and the Yale Ciencia Academy programs played pivotal role in the development of the 2017 Neuroscience Symposium. The Yale Ciencia Academy aims to increase access to scientific knowledge, experiences, and careers for underrepresented minorities in the sciences. The initiatives of Ciencia PR have provided opportunities for collaborations between Latina/o students throughout the continental United States of America, Latin America, and the Caribbean. Juan V. Concepción Cardona participated on the YCA program on 2016. While attending he had the opportunity to meet many other Puertoricans and Latina/os that are completing academic degrees with a scientific focus. Fellows of the YCA 2016 cohort have developed collaborations and maintained a regular communication.

Through this network, Juan V. has had learned of various events where invited to present their work outside of Puerto Rico, and to attend conferences for professional development. In 2016, Juan V. obtained a stipend to participate in the NEURAL conferences at the Birmingham University in Alabama. While at the NEURAL conference, Juan met Emmanuel (Mani) García-Lesy; who has a research background in psychology and neuroscience studies of cognition, emotion, and clinical psychology. Mani had long wanted to collaborate with neuroscientists from Puerto Rico—so the meeting was serendipitous. During the conference, Juan and Mani shared some ideas for a collaborative line of research using specially designed portable electroencephalographic (EEG) equipment. The purpose of the research is to add more creative options to the academic field of psychology and cognition in Puerto Rico. Since that meeting, Juan and Emmanuel have maintained communication, with the goal of being collaborating on shared interests in Puerto Rico.

The Neuroscience Symposium 2017 is made possible by the collaborative efforts of Dr. Joel Acevedo, The Association for Future Psychologists of the UIPR-Arecibo, and Juan V. Concepción. Mani García-Lesy, who is a 2017 Fellow of the Yale Ciencia Academy, will be adding his knowledge and experience at the conferences. The objective of this initiative is to provide more opportunities for students to collaborate and participate in the field of neuroscience—and generate the enthusiasm, knowledge, and passion necessary for neuroscience flourish in Puerto Rico.

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