

USU's Psychology Department Celebrates 50 Years of Building Connections and Making a Difference

11/07/2025



Professors Melanie Domenech Rodríguez, Melissa Tehee, Carolyn Barcus, Renee Galliher, and Susan Crowley celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Psychology Combined Doctoral Program.

People from across the country came together on October 25 to celebrate their shared history and decades of friendship honoring the 50-year anniversary of USU's prestigious and nationally recognized Combined Psychology Doctoral Program.

The Combined Doctoral Program, housed within the Psychology Department of the Emma Eccles College of Education and Human Services at Utah State University, first earned accreditation from the American Psychological Association (APA) in 1975. For 50 years, the program has focused on both clinical and research training, combining clinical and counseling psychology to prepare students as skilled, compassionate practitioners and scholars. Through coursework, guided research, and supervised clinical experience, students learn to integrate science and practice to support human well-being. Since its accreditation, the Combined Doctoral Program has graduated nearly 300 students who continue this legacy of inquiry, service, and care.

Director of Clinical Training for the Combined Doctoral Program Renee Galliher, Ph.D., shared, "Our program is comprehensive and truly unique. Our alumni work in diverse settings across the U.S. and other countries.

Our graduates contribute to the field of psychology in university research, community mental health, private practice, medical centers, the military, and a myriad other types of positions. The impact is incredible, life-changing, and generational. The bonds we create are real, and the difference our alumni make is amazing."

The USU Psychology Department celebrated the 50th anniversary of its Combined Doctoral Program with several events throughout the year, culminating in the 50th celebration in October, which brought together more than 60 attendees, including alumni, students, faculty, and community members.

"The 50th anniversary event was both nostalgic and inspiring," said 2009 program alumna Jenna Glover, Ph.D., chief clinical director of Headspace, a world-renowned digital platform for mental wellness. "It was an incredible experience to reconnect with mentors who shaped my early development, colleagues who challenged and supported me, and former students who are now thriving in their own careers. The energy in the room reminded me how special the USU community is and how lasting these connections remain years after our time in the program."

Glover presented at the 50th event sharing advancements in artificial intelligence and its role in mental health care, "The Combined Program shaped not just my skills, but my values. It taught me to think critically, use evidence-based approaches, and care deeply about inclusion and equity. Many of the most meaningful opportunities in my career came through the incredible network of people connected to the program," Glover said.

Over the years, the Combined Doctoral Program has been home to more than 30 faculty members, many of whom have been recognized for their outstanding research and contributions to the fields of psychology and mental health.

Two beloved and emeriti professors from the Combined Doctoral Program, Carolyn Barcus, Ed.D., and Susan Crowley, Ph.D., were honored by the Psychology Department during the 50th celebration event for their lasting contributions to the program and the profound impact they have had on students' careers and lives. One graduate, Jill Ferrell, Ph.D., fondly referred to them as her "home away from home."

"Both Carolyn and Sue were deeply aware of how my rural background and culture affected my lack of confidence in an intimidating doctoral program, but also how it gave me a perspective that others may not have," said Ferrell, who works as a staff psychologist and program coordinator at

the Counseling and Prevention Services (CAPS) program at USU. "They were able to provide extra scaffolding for me personally and professionally to help me succeed and to second guess the rules about what a professional can look like and sound like. They were my 'ground to stand on' until I learned to trust my own feet."

Barcus has been recognized nationally for her work with Native American communities and served as the director of the American Indian Support Project (AISP) for over three decades. Crowley served as the previous and longest-running director of clinical training of the Combined Doctoral Program, shepherding the program through three rounds of accreditation through the APA.

"Carolyn and Sue are two of the most remarkable people I have ever had the privilege of working with in my career," Galliher said. "Their dedication, passion, and integrity inspire me. I'm grateful for their commitment to our program and for their impact on my own personal and professional development. Together, they've touched the lives of hundreds of students and colleagues over the years, so their legacy shapes many generations of psychologists."

Throughout the years, many other faculty members of the Combined Doctoral Program have been honored, including Michael Twohig, Ph.D., 2025 recipient of the D. Wynne Thorne Career Research Award; Melanie Domenech Rodríguez, Ph.D., 2022 recipient of the D. Wynne Thorne Career Research Award and recipient of the Graduate Student Mentor Award in 2020; and JoAnn Tschanz, Ph.D., 2017 recipient of the D. Wynne Thorne Career Research Award. Both recognitions are awarded through USU.

"Our next 50 years will be defined by the same curiosity, compassion, and commitment that built this program," said Department Head Scott Bates, Ph.D. "We're not just training psychologists—we're cultivating people who improve lives, strengthen communities, and push our field forward in ways we can't yet imagine."

Visit the Combined Doctoral Program [website](#) to learn more about the event or watch the video below.