

Jim J. Blascovich

Professor Emeritus 1995

Jim Blascovich's contributions to psychology and to our department are substantial. His interest in psychology began at Loyola University, Chicago, and continued in graduate school at the University of Nevada, Reno, where he earned his Ph.D. in 1972. Appointments at Marquette University and SUNY Buffalo preceded his move to UCSB in 1995. During 21 years at UCSB he has been an active scholar, trained numerous graduate students and postdocs, was an award-winning undergraduate mentor, and served in leadership roles at the department and campus levels.

Jim's research addresses many topics, two of which in particular established his prominence in the field. First, his biopsychosocial model of challenge and threat provides a framework for studying and validating patterns of cardiovascular responses as markers of motivational states. It generated research worldwide demonstrating the role of challenge and threat in numerous social psychological phenomena. Second, he pioneered the development of and demonstrated the utility of immersive virtual reality technology for understanding social behavior.

Jim's leadership manifested itself in numerous positions he held in professional societies. He was the first Executive Officer and later President of the Society of Personality and Social Psychology, and also was elected president of the Society of Experimental Social Psychology and the Foundation for Personality and Social Psychology. Jim's six-year term as Chair of the Department of Psychology has had a lasting impact. Through his leadership, the Psychology East building was completed, several new faculty positions added, the Sage Center for the Study of the Mind established, and the Brain Imaging Center built.

Jim's pervasive influence on the profession and the department – through his published research, his students, his professional contributions, and his leadership — will continue to be evident long past his transition to Professor Emeritus.