

Mikel Olson

901 8th St South, Moorhead, MN, 56562 | 218-299-3253 | molson@cord.edu

Leadership Vision Statement

In these times of profound institutional challenge, effective academic leadership requires clarity, courage, and commitment to a purpose bigger than oneself. I view leadership as a trust: a duty to advocate for the deepest and best foundational values of the academy while stewarding the institution toward long-term health and stability. I aspire to model forthrightness, accountability, and epistemic humility, and cultivate these same qualities across the campus community. This is my aspiration because I believe true institutional strength requires us to transform what is maladaptive, recommit to what is foundational, and civilly debate the difference. We undertake this work to ensure that our mission is renewed and reaffirmed, and to ensure our institution is given forward as a legacy to the next generation of students, educators, and leaders.

Education

PhD	Washington State University, Pullman, WA Experimental Psychology	May 2006
MS	Washington State University, Pullman, WA Psychology	May 2003
BS	University of Northwestern, St. Paul, MN Psychology; Criminal Justice	May 1999

Educational Leadership Experience

Secretary of the Faculty

Concordia College, Moorhead, MN, 2023-2026

Served as the ranking faculty member at Concordia and served on the Faculty Executive Committee. Working with the committee and one on one with the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, I helped oversee and administrate all aspects of faculty governance and helped provide collaborative leadership for campus initiatives including curriculum reform, shared governance, academic freedom, new program development, and policy revision.

Co-Chair: Higher Learning Commission Reaccreditation Team

Concordia College, Moorhead, MN, 2021-2024

Provided collaborative leadership to a group of 16 faculty and staff who gathered data and developed, wrote, and submitted reaccreditation documentation on behalf of the College. Together, we engaged the campus community in the HLC reaccreditation process, and we received successful reaffirmation of accreditation in February of 2024.

Chair, Department of Psychology

Concordia College, Moorhead, MN, 2015-2019; 2023-2026

Provided strategic leadership to one of the school's largest departments. In my time as chair, we have been campus leaders in implementing our new Integrative Learning curriculum. We drafted a departmental vision statement that focuses on providing a student-focused education in a workplace of purpose, accomplishment, and community, and we have also engaged in market analysis and decision-making regarding new educational programs.

Chair, Professional Growth Committee

Concordia College, Moorhead, MN, 2018-2020

Demonstrated leadership in developing plans for the professional well-being of faculty including revising faculty salary distribution policies, revising tenured faculty evaluation procedures, and recommending research grants and sabbatical awards for funding. This committee is also responsible for monitoring the quality and accessibility of curriculum resources.

Chair: Higher Learning Commission Year-4 Assurance Task Force

Concordia College, Moorhead, MN, 2017-18

Provided collaborative leadership to a group of 5 faculty and staff as we successfully collected documentation and wrote the HLC Year-4, mid-cycle assurance argument.

Relevant Training in Higher Educational Leadership

Council of Independent Colleges Faculty Leadership Academy Summer 2026

Selected through a competitive national process for participation in a program designed to enhance executive academic leadership. Engaged in high-level training focused on institutional change management, strategic visioning, and inclusive leadership models.

Certificate in Value Chain Management October 2023

Earned a certificate in Value Chain Management. This six-course certificate comprised courses in accounting, budgeting, operations management, and marketing.

Concordia Leadership Development Academy 2019 – 2020

Participated in a year-long mentorship program designed to help participants better understand higher education, develop their leadership capacities and skills, and apply their skills to potential leadership opportunities.

CIC Workshop for Department and Division Chairs 2023, 2018, 2015

Participated in workshops designed to strengthen leadership at the department level. Received training on budget management, employment law, and leading for change.

Professional Experience

Concordia College, Moorhead MN

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------|
| • Professor of Psychology | 2019-present |
| • Associate Professor of Psychology | 2013-2019 |
| • Assistant Professor of Psychology | 2006-2013 |

Courses Frequently Taught:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| • Behavioral Neuroscience | • Drugs and Behavior |
| • Human Neuropsychology | • Stress and the Human Experience |
| • Research Methods in Psychology | • Introductory Psychology |

Honors and Awards

Summer Study Grants 9 awards, most recently 2024

Stipend and Supply Funding for Student/Faculty Scientific Research Team

Editor's Choice Award 2012

Outstanding Neuroscience Pedagogy Article of the Year
Journal of Undergraduate Neuroscience Education

Publications

Journal Publications

Olson, M. L., Badenoch, B*, Benson, A. *, Blatti, M. *, Buching, C. *, & Glewwe, N.* (2023). Cholinergic receptor blockade impairs spatial memory retrieval and minimizes retrieval-induced alterations in matrix metalloproteinase-9. *Behavioral Brain Research*, Jun 25: 448 doi: 10.1016/j.bbr.2023.114460.

Olson, M. L., Ingebretson, A. I.* , Harmelink, K. A.* (2015). Hippocampal Cortactin Levels are Reduced Following Spatial Working Memory Formation, an Effect Blocked by Chronic Calpain Inhibition. *Brain Science*, Jun 19;5(2):241-57.

Olson, M.L. (2011). Practical experience with age-related dementia: Implementation and outcomes of a semester-long service learning project in neuropsychology. *Journal of Undergraduate Neuroscience Education*, 10(1): A58-A64.

Olson, M. L. & Cero, I. J.* (2010). Intrahippocampal norleucine-1-angiotensin IV mitigates scopolamine-induced spatial working memory deficits. *Peptides*, Dec; 31(12) 2209-15.

Olson, M. L., Meighan, P.C., Brown, T.E., Asay, A. L.* , Benoist, C.C., Harding, J. W., Wright, J. W (2008). Hippocampal MMP-3 elevation is associated with passive avoidance conditioning. *Regulatory Peptides*, 146 (1-3):19-25.

Meighan, S.M., Meighan, P. C., Choudhury, P., Olson, M. L., Davis, C. J., Wright, J. W., Harding, J. W. (2006). Effect of extracellular matrix degrading proteases MMP-3 and MMP-9 on spatial learning and synaptic plasticity. *Journal of Neurochemistry* 96(5): 1227-41.

Wright, J.W., Meighan, S.E., Murphy, E.S., Holtfreter, K.L., Davis, C.J., Olson, M.L., Benoist, C.C., Muhunthan, K., Harding, J.W. (2006). Habituation of the head-shake response induces changes in brain matrix metalloproteinases-3 (MMP-3) and -9. *Behavioral Brain Research* 174(1): 78-85.

Olson, M. L., Olson, E. A., Qualls, J. H.* , Stratton, J. J.* , Harding, J. W., Wright, J. W. (2004). Norleucine(1)-Angiotensin IV alleviates mecamylamine-induced spatial memory deficits. *Peptides* 25(2): 233-41.

Wright, J. W., Murphy, E. S., Elijah, I. E., Holtfreter, K. L., Davis, C. J., Olson, M. L., Muhunthan, K., Harding, J. W. (2004). Influence of hippocampectomy on habituation, exploratory behavior, and spatial memory in rats. *Brain Research* 1023(1): 1-14.

Book Chapters

Wright J.W., Olson M.L. and Harding J.W. (2006). The Role of the Brain Angiotensin System in Learning, Memory, and Neural Plasticity. In *Trends in Learning Research*, Editor: Samuel N. Hogan, pp. 1-39.

Selected Conference and Colloquium Presentations (Exhaustive list available upon request)

Geraci, G.*, Gierke, J.* and Olson, M.L. The impact of hippocampal MMP-9 on acetylcholine-mediated memory reactivation and retrieval. Red River Psychology Conference, North Dakota State University (2025).

Badenoch, B.*, Blatti, M.*, & Olson, M.L. Cholinergic receptor blockade impairs spatial memory retrieval and minimizes retrieval-induced alterations in matrix metalloproteinase-9. Red River Psychology Conference, North Dakota State University (April 2022) and International Society for Neuroscience Conference (November 2021).

Buching, C.*, Glewwe, N.*, Olson, M.L., Cholinergic antagonist impacts on MMP-3, MMP-9, and spatial memory retrieval. Red River Psychology Conference, Minnesota State University–Moorhead (2021).

Nsengiyumva, I.*, Olson, M.L. The role of the forebrain cholinergic system in spatial memory reconsolidation. Celebration of Student Scholarship, Concordia College (2020).

Benson, A.*, Buching, C.*, Olson, M.L. Cholinergic Involvement in Spatial Memory Retrieval in the Water Maze. Red River Psychology Conference, Concordia College (2018).

Reff, H.*, Tureson, K.*, & Olson, M.L. Presence of Cortactin in Goldfish Telencephalon. Red River Psychology Conference, Minnesota State University–Moorhead (2015).

Ingebretson, A.I.*, Johnson, K.A.*, and Olson, M.L. Effect of chronic calpain inhibition on spatial working memory and cortactin expression. Midbrains Conference, Carleton College (2012).

Olson, M.L. Conrad, B.J.*, Watson, J.S.* Reduced cortactin phosphorylation in the hippocampus is observed following spatial working memory formation. Society for Neuroscience Conference, Washington, D.C. (2011).

Olson, M.L. Laying a Foundation for Memory: The AT4 Receptor and Structural Regulatory Proteins in the Hippocampus. North Dakota State University Colloquium (2010).

Cero, I.J.*, Conrad, B.J.*, & Olson, M.L. Knowing where you are: Repairing spatial working memory in animals and implications for humans with age-related dementia. Red River Psychology Conference, North Dakota State University (2010).

Randolph, K.M.*, Fom, T.M.*, Olson, M.L. Memory formation is associated with changes in hippocampal cortactin. National Conference on Undergraduate Research, Eau Claire, WI (2009).

Fom, T.M.*, Olson, M.L. Reductions in hippocampal cortactin are observed following spatial working memory formation. Private College Scholars at the Capitol, St. Paul, MN (2009).

Olson, M.L., Fom, T.M.*, Randolph, K.M.* Memory Formation is Associated with Changes in Hippocampal Cortactin. Centennial Research Scholars Lecture (October, 2008).

*Undergraduate Student Researcher