

SWPA



southwestern psychological association

SWPA Newsletter

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2015 Convention Updates

By Dr. Jenn Bonds-Raacke **President**

Greetings! I hope everyone had a wonderful summer and your fall semester is off to a great start.

I am excited to share information with you regarding the spring 2015 convention. The theme will be Myths Meet Science and invited speakers from various disciplines are on the agenda.

For example, Dr. Scott Lilienfeld (co-author of 50 Great Myths of Popular Psychology: Shattering Widespread Misconceptions about Human Behavior), Dr. Regan Gurung (Society for the Teaching of Psychology Master Teacher), and Dr. Travis Langley (author of the book Batman and Psychology: A Dark and Stormy Knight) will all share information on how their research has dispelled psychological myths. We will continue this theme with programming designed especially for students by featuring dual-career couple Dr. Heather Berlin and Mr. Baba Brinkman. Dr. Berlin will present on legal implications for individuals with prefrontal brain damage and Mr. Brinkman will provide an educational rap on myths in evolutionary psychology.

Additionally, we are fortunate to offer an APA Distinguished Scientist Lecturer at the conference. Dr. Norbert Schwarz will be presenting, "The challenge of debunking myths: When weird ideas feel true."

Submissions will be accepted from October 1st through December 2nd. The convention will be April 10-12 (please note these dates have been corrected from previous notifications) at the Hyatt Regency in Wichita, KS. Room rates start at \$119 and include internet. Additional information is available at: http://www.swpsych.org/conv_dates.php.

If you have any questions, please let me know and we hope to see you in Wichita!

~Jenn Bonds-Raacke

Balancing the Rigors of Graduate School

By John Schumacher
Graduate Representative

Graduate-school can be quite the juggling act at times. Success means balancing research, teaching, class, one's personal life, and many more obligations. While daunting and often incredibly stressful this juggling act can be accomplished, and if done successfully it will lead to a very fulfilling experience. In order to flourish in graduate school I find applying three strategies, while not a cure all, to be extremely useful. These three strategies include prioritizing work and setting goals, collaborating, and taking time for oneself.

The first strategy is to prioritize your responsibilities. In prioritizing responsibilities it is important to keep both short-term and long-term responsibilities in mind. For example while a manuscript write-up may be your biggest priority for the next couple weeks, finishing the next morning's lecture will most likely take precedence for the night. Once you have a list of your responsibilities it is best to make a schedule with goals. Creating a schedule with set goals helps in staying focused and also in not getting caught up too much in one activity. It is best for the schedule and goals be specific and attainable. Schedules and goals that are too extravagant and broad can become overwhelming, and are often disregarded. For example, if one of your responsibilities is to finish a research project in the next couple of months a reasonable schedule and goal would be to set specific times throughout the next few days to analyze the data and write a first draft of the results section. It is also necessary to balance more difficult or cognitively demanding tasks with simpler tasks when planning out your time,



so as to not get too overtaxed or bored. One final useful tip is to inform a peer or a group of peers of your goals, and have them ask if you completed said goals at a later time. Doing so will help ensure that you stay motivated and will also give you a sense of obligation in completing your goals.

The second strategy to successfully navigating graduate school is to collaborate with others. Collaborating lessens the burden of work, and will make one more productive. This is the case because each person has strengths and weaknesses, and by dispersing responsibility across individuals according to their strengths when possible you ensure higher efficiency and quality. Additionally, if someone is more adept at a skill than you are, by collaborating you can learn from the other person so that you too can become proficient at that skill. Another benefit of collaborating is you are less likely to recreate the wheel. For example, when prepping for a lab, by sharing materials with other lab instructors of the same course and adapting that material to your needs you can drastically cut down on the prep time. Lastly, due to the reasons explained above, the biggest benefit of collaborating may lie in the fact that it can lead to far greater publications.

The last piece of advice is to make free time to do something fun and or relaxing from time to time. Most of people choose graduate school because they have a real passion for what they study. That being said graduate school can often be cognitively demanding, and individuals can only handle so many hours of cognitively demanding tasks in a day. By rewarding yourself, such as by taking a small break after finishing a minor goal or taking a camping trip after finishing a project, you help ensure that you won't lose this passion for what you study.

Some Thoughts on Undergraduate Retention

By **Dr. Po Sen (Mark) Chu** **New Mexico Representative**



I was assigned to serve in the Academic Suspension Committee of the university two years ago. Since then, several faculty/students and I have listened to quite a few students appealing for a second chance. Every one of them has asserted that they have learned from their mistakes, vowed to commit 100%, and would definitely succeed this time. “Do you understand if you fail again, you’ll be dismissed and for one full year can’t apply to any college anywhere?” We would ask. They all claimed they understood.

Yet many eventually failed again. In the beginning of last semester (Spring 2014) we rejected two and re-admitted ten. Last week I followed up those ten students, five of them did not come back to school. Among those five, some of them took only two classes and failed both.

Though I am disappointed by students’ failing, I am not surprised. New Mexico is among the states with the lowest college graduation rate (Liu, 2011), and our school is trying to concoct strategies to improve the dire situation—according to the new formula, it is directly linked to our funding. Not unexpectedly, it is an uphill fight. While we suspect some appeal simply to get cash from financial aid, I believe the majority of students do not plan to fail when they are in the seat right across a table from us. They have managed to convince us, and seemed to themselves as well, that they will make it.

What are the factors that help a student’s success in college? Though every school knows the importance of retention and graduation rates, Tinto (2007) suggests that we should take it more seriously. He summarizes five conditions for successful student retention: 1) expecting students to succeed, 2) ef-

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Membership Report (September 16, 2014)

By **Dr. Amy Bohmann** **Membership Registrar**



The current membership report:

- **20** Life Members
- **40** Past Presidents
- **5** Professional Members
- **2** Graduate Student Members
- **5** Undergraduate Student Members

Although it appears membership is low, it is important to note that most individuals renew their membership during abstract submission for the annual SWPA convention. So, the number of dues-paid members will dramatically increase in the coming months.

History of SAMR, and Plans for SWPA 2015

By Daniel Faso **SAMR President**

Greetings from SAMR,

As one of the affiliate organizations of SWPA, some of you may be unfamiliar with the Society for Applied Multivariate Research. Before diving into updates from the society, I wanted to provide a brief history of our organization. SAMR started in 1973 as an organization of those advancing, practicing, or just interested in multivariate analysis. SAMR is also one of the oldest affiliate organizations of SWPA, and over the years, SAMR has presented a variety of multivariate topics. These include advanced (i.e., scary) topics such as factor analyses, meta-analyses, and structural equation modeling. But, SAMR is more than just multi-scary-ate analysis – in recent years SAMR has run workshops and hosted talks on critically important and practical topics such as reporting multivariate analyses, managing data efficiently, and using R (the free stats software). While SAMR has a particular fondness of multivariate approaches, our broader goal is outreach -- SAMR aims to provide a platform for teaching and learning both simple and advanced statistical topics, as applied to psychological research.

Thus, we are excited to announce our upcoming program plans for the 2015 SWPA conference. This year, we will have a workshop on Alternatives to Null Hypothesis and Parametric Testing. This workshop will cover how to interpret results beyond just a p-value; topics will include (but are not limited to): effect sizes, confidence intervals, and resampling methods (e.g., Bootstrap). We encourage all those interested to attend, learn, and even present! Also, keep an eye on the SWPA and SAMR websites for information regarding our invited speaker as well as more details about this year's conference.

If you have any questions, comments, or suggestions – please let us know. See you in Wichita!



A Season of Change

By Dr. Trey Hill **Newsletter Coordinator**



Greetings SWPA members,

Writing this column is somewhat unique for me. I am used to being the person behind the curtain. Sadly, my first contribution in this newsletter will also signify my last issue as Newsletter Coordinator; this will officially be my last newsletter to coordinate as I take on other roles within the organization. Most important in this forum, I want to sincerely thank all of you for your contributions over the past year. Your help has made the work associated with this position much easier, allowing me to more fully enjoy reading the contributions

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Is SWPA in Your Legacy?

By Dr. Arn Froese Treasurer

Our finances do not change much during the summer months. We close our fiscal year, reset the membership files to the new year, and wait until dues begin to trickle in. That is now happening, and we will experience a rush of payments as the paper submission deadline approaches. So this is a time to consider other issues related to SWPA's finances.

At some point, you may consider how you want your estate handled. I recently retired from teaching and experienced the uncertainties of aging. But some years ago, my spouse and I established trusts for our estate and designated beneficiaries of those trusts. Here is why I will include SWPA as a beneficiary.

I first began attending SWPA in the early 1980s. Steve Davis learned that I studied animal behavior and invited me to participate in a comparative psychology symposium. Before that, I had failed miserably at a presentation to the Animal Behavior Society because I didn't take the presentation seriously. I was embarrassed, and swore that never again would I put myself in such a situation. I accepted Steve's invitation and worked diligently on the presentation. I talked about my research on turtles in the context of whether my identity more closely aligned with psychology or biology. I concluded with a story about a job interview at which the department chair asked me if I was a psychologist or a biologist. I was flustered then, but told the audience that afterwards I thought I should have quoted Rhett Butler from "Gone With the Wind," "Frankly, my dear, I don't give a damn!" The audience broke into spontaneous laughter and applause and I sat down, satisfied. That was the hook that connected me for a career-spanning connection with SWPA.

I attended that first convention without any students. I soon learned that SWPA was an effective gateway to teach students about the professional world. Over the next decades, I brought hundreds of students to the convention. Their reaction was that attending,



and presenting for some of them, prepared them both for graduate school and for a professional life.

SWPA also provided the major face-to-face professional outlet for me. I have developed many close colleagues through my participation in SWPA. Eventually, I became involved in the Executive Council, and as a culmination of my activities, Lauren Scharff and Scott Bailey recruited me to run for President.

These deep connections for my teaching and professional careers established SWPA as a principle non-profit organization which I was willing to support. I have provided that support with my time and with financial gifts.

As you consider what legacy you will leave, keep SWPA's needs in mind. The first legacy gift to SWPA was from Saul Sells. That gift has provided beneficial returns to SWPA members for almost 20 years and continues to have its effects on the organization.

Carol and I have considered our estate gifts. Of course, our family comes first. Then we want to support charitable organizations which redistribute wealth to those in great need. We also must consider the connections we have with the organizations that provided the resources for our education and continuing professional development. That's where SWPA comes in.

Estate gifts can support many ongoing and new initiatives for SWPA. We currently have minimal endowment funding for the Lauren Scharff State Representative Symposium, and we could use more for the Forensic Psychology Lecture Series. In addition, endowments for student awards, for Presidentially-selected speakers, and many other program options are possible.

When you consider your legacy, ask what story you have with SWPA. Consider our organization's contributions to your specific work. Then consider how a legacy gift would help maintain the traditions and programs you value in SWPA. The organization will work diligently to handle any gifts with integrity, and generations in the future will benefit from your generosity.

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fective advising in regard to the programs of study and career goals, 3) social support, 4) student involvement as valued members of the institution, and 5) settings that foster learning, which is the most important factor in his opinion.

These factors, I believe, are not new knowledge. Yet many students are still left behind. Indeed, some of them made poor choices and thus reap the natural consequences. Still, I wonder if we can do some research to identify the problems (Why do they fail: Is it students themselves? Is it the school? Is it money?), so we can improve in helping those who are failing but still have some motivation left in them. Maybe it is time for us to work together for retention and graduation improvement.

References

Liu, M. (2011). Trends in Latino college access and success. National Conference of State Legislatures. Retrieved August 22, 2014 <http://www.ncsl.org/documents/educ/trendsinlatinosuccess.pdf>

Tinto, V. (2007). Taking student retention seriously. Syracuse University: Syracuse, NY.

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of colleagues, and understand the diversity of experiences from psychologists throughout the Southwest. It has been fun. As I transition to a new role, I will also be helping with the transition of our organization's next Newsletter Coordinator, Dr. Drew Curtis (see picture below). I am supremely confident he will continue providing a quality newsletter, a tradition started by our very own Dr. Arn Froese, and humbly continued by myself. Acknowledging your busy schedules, please take a moment to welcome Dr. Curtis to the SWPA team, and be sure to offer your help by writing columns in future newsletters. I look forward to the future directions of SWPA and of the newsletter, and I hope to see you all on the plains of Kansas next semester as we celebrate the 2015 SWPA Convention. See y'all around!

-Trey Hill



Dr. Drew Curtis

Incoming Newsletter Coordinator

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