Passion, Dedication, Brilliance: Diverse Voices and Perspectives at the 2023 APS Annual Convention

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Photo above: A highlight of the 2023 APS Annual Convention was the inclusivity spotlight, “Upending Racism in Our Science: Where the Rubber Meets the Road,” featuring Idia Binitie Thurston (Texas A&M University) and moderated by John T. Jost (New York University).

If the 2023 APS Annual Convention were categorized alphabetically, it might break down something like this: Australia to Yemen, for attendees’ home countries; artificial intelligence to trauma, for topics explored; and awards to symposia, for types of presentations. Plus hundreds of other A–to–Z highlights—adversity, biometrics, climate, emotion, forgiveness …. redemption, stress, theory of mind, violence, well-being—that collectively demonstrated psychological science’s interdisciplinarity and urgent relevance in society today.

The convention, May 25–28 in Washington, D.C., attracted more than 2,250 psychological scientists from at least 40 countries and featured dozens of symposia, flash talks, and workshops, along with more than 1,200 poster presentations. Attendees ranged from undergraduate students attending their first-ever professional conference to world-renowned practitioners from academia and industry.
“Meeting so many passionate, dedicated, & brilliant researchers and clinicians has re-fueled the motivation that academia all too often drains from us,” tweeted attendee Christopher Kleva, a PhD student in clinical psychology at Virginia Commonwealth University.

**Below: slideshow of tweets from the 2023 APS Annual Convention.** Follow #aps23dc to see hundreds more.
Surreal to present with people whose work inspired me to do research in the first place! Thanks David Sherman for inviting me to present on collective climate action in the symposium, social psychological approaches to contemporary problems #aps23dc with @GeoffCohen @Jbrooksfluid
Three days later, I am still energized from attending APS23DC @APSscience.
Meeting so many passionate, dedicated, & brilliant researchers and clinicians has re-fueled the motivation that academia all too often drains from us.
Had a wonderful time in APS 2023 at DC #aps23dc I presented two symposium talks and one flash talk about my research to understand early material hardship and children’s self-regulation by using the Futures of Families & Child wellbeing Study!

#aps23dc
Discussions of artificial intelligence and drug legalization may have packed the rooms most tightly. In back-to-back sessions on Chat GPT and computational cognitive science, for example, attendees jockeyed for seats to hear experts from industry and academia discuss advances in machine learning research and the next generation of astonishingly—even alarmingly—powerful AI chatbots.

But by many accounts, including robust conversations exploring diverse disciplines and topics such as methodology and career development, it was psychological science more broadly that made the 35th annual convention the premier event within the field.

**Slideshows of images from the workshops, plenaries, and symposia:**
A highlight of the 2023 APS Annual Convention was the inclusivity spotlight, "Upending Racism in Our Science: Where the Rubber Meets the Road," featuring Idia Binitie Thurston (Texas A&M University) and moderated by John T. Jost (New York University).
Panelists in a plenary discussion on the effects of early adversity on the mind and brain included Allyson P. Mackey (University of Pennsylvania), who explored environmental influences on brain plasticity, or the ability to rewire in response to new experiences.
Brenda Jones Harden, a professor of social work at the Columbia University School of Social Work and the president of Zero to Three, delivered the final keynote address at APS 2023 on the role of caregiving—internal as well as external to the family—in children's experience of early adversity.
Keynote speaker Catherine Alexandra Hartley (New York University) kicked off APS 2023 with a presentation on the causes and consequences of exploration across lifespan development. “Exploration is critical for exploring our environment,” she said.
Flash talks are 5-minute research presentations exploring new findings in a variety of fields. The clinical science flash talks (pictured here) featured presentations by Jesse Tse, Nathalie Dieujuste, Jennifer Hahn-Holbrook, Annalise Perricone, Catherine E. Rast, Melissa L. Micka, and Przemysław Bębel.

A session on psychological science and entrepreneurship, part of an APS initiative sponsored by the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation, featured (left to right) researchers and entrepreneurs Constance Dierickx, Nicole Blacksmith, and Kelly Shaver.

How to navigate academia as a BIPOC scholar? How to get published? How to land a good career as a psychological scientist outside of academia? How to write successful grant applications? Students studying psychological science have questions, and the 2023 APS Annual Convention had answers—along with plenty of opportunities for networking and socializing.

The APS Student Caucus organized and sponsored a variety of symposia and events with students’ needs in mind. These included seven symposia and a roundtable networking event in which young scholars, many of whom also presented their own research through poster sessions, got to interact with established researchers who work in academia, industry, and private practice.

Slideshow of images from student programs:
In a session on the early-career grant process, presenters Ryan T. Hodge, Olivia Pollack, Emorie Beck, Nathalie Dieujuste, and Sonja Sudimac provided tips and advice on successful grant writing.
The National Endowment of the Arts (NEA) funds research projects on the arts, health, and social-emotional well-being. This session featured presenters from the NEA as well as NEA-funded research on topics including music-induced healing in intensive-care units.

In the diversity forum, students and early-career researchers learned from each other as well as the panelists—diversity researchers and applied practitioners of diversity science.

The diversity forum, "Navigating Academia as a Young BIPOC Scholar," featured presentations from Kunalan Manokara, Xijuan Zhang, Siwar Hasan-Aslih, Tamar Kushnir, and Eranda R. Jayawickreme.
As it is every year, the 2023 APS Awards Ceremony was a celebration of excellence—this year, that of 18 individuals whose contributions to psychological science have pioneered new areas of research and yielded important breakthroughs in investigations of human behavior. Attendees, many of whom had worked with and/or learned from the awardees for years, enjoyed breakfast while celebrating researchers for their lifetime of significant contributions to the field.

The awards ceremony also honored APS members for their invaluable mentoring of others and, in the case of the Spence Awards, for the tremendous promise they show as early-career contributions.

Slideshow of images from the Awards Ceremony:
Janet E. Helms (Boston College) received the James S. Jackson Award for Transformative Scholarship for her pioneering work on racial identity, multiculturalism, and social justice. Sandra Graham (UCLA) also received the award for 2023.
Left to right: Robert Sellers, Nora Newcombe, Mahzarin Banaji, and Stephen Hinshaw received the 2023 APS Mentor Award for their career-shaping support of hundreds of students and early-career researchers. Recipient Ellen Markman was unable to attend.

Left to right: Hengchen Dai, Riana Elyse Anderson, Emily Fyfe, Ed O'Brien, and Julian Jara-Ettinger received the 2023 APS Spence Award for Transformative Early Career Contributions. Recipient Calvin Lai was unable to attend.

Other highlights of the 2023 APS Annual Convention included the poster presentations, nearly 1,300 in all, that represented many young researchers’ first-ever opportunities to share their work with a broad audience. Posters explored the science through a kaleidoscope of perspectives, from identifying ideological sources of anti-elderly attitudes to using computer text analysis to better address trauma to demonstrating how social norms can influence behavior more broadly.

Awards were provided for posters in several categories, and the award-winning researchers were on hand to present their work during the opening reception.

Slideshow of images from the poster presentations and receptions:
Jonah Koetke (University of Pittsburgh) received the Student Research Award and the Scott O. Lilienfeld APS Travel Award for his research exploring how seeing someone as intellectually humble impacts the viewer’s perceptions of them.

Chen Ji (Indiana University) received a Psychological Science and Entrepreneurship Poster Award for her research on the financial stability and resilience of social enterprises.

La'Toya Broughton (second from right), Fielding Graduate University, received an honorable mention for a RISE Award. Her team’s research explored how ethnoracial identity predicts the identification of microaggressions.
During evening receptions in the Exhibit Hall, APS 2023 attendees mingled with researchers who discussed the findings presented in their posters.

Stay tuned for more coverage of the 2023 APS Annual Convention, or catch up on coverage from APS’s previous two conventions: the 2023 International Convention of Psychological Science (in Brussels), and the 2022 APS Annual Convention (in Chicago). APS’s 36th Annual Convention will be in San Francisco May 23–26, 2024.

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