

# Student Notebook: APS Student Caucus, Advancing Our Community of Students

December 28, 2018

Each fall, the APS Student Caucus (APSSC) Executive Board meets at APS headquarters in Washington, DC to discuss student engagement and convention programming. This annual meeting gives us a chance to reflect as a group on the progress we have made as an organization and the path forward during the upcoming year. In this article, I want to highlight some talking points from this meeting, particularly the existing opportunities and future directions for student members of APS.

The APSSC works to fund and recognize excellence in student research. Year after year, we are surprised at the number of students who do not know about these funding and award opportunities. We try to keep members up to date on deadlines and submission details through our Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/apssc/>) and Twitter (find us @APSSStudent) but are always trying to find creative ways to bolster awareness — we are even venturing into Instagram (search aps.student to follow)! As the deadline for convention approaches, student members can consider applying for the:

- Student Grant Competition – This competition provides \$500 to eight recipients to support costs associated with a research project. Many winners of this award use funds for participant compensation or acquisition of materials (<https://www.psychologicalscience.org/members/grants-awards-and-symposia/student-grant-competition>).
- Student Research Award – This award recognizes exceptional student research in all areas of psychological science. In addition to a generous monetary award, recipients present their research at the APS Annual Convention (<https://www.psychologicalscience.org/members/apssc/about/student-research-award>).
- RISE Research Award – The goal of this award is to cultivate psychological science in fields related to underrepresented groups. The RISE Research Award was recently expanded to also acknowledge research from students who belong to underrepresented groups. (<https://www.psychologicalscience.org/members/rise/research-award>).

While these opportunities have allowed APSSC to promote and support the research of many exceptional student members, we are always looking for ways to further empower our members to make progress in their research careers. At our annual meeting, we discussed expanding existing grants and awards in a few ways. First, the APSSC is attempting to expand the scope of the RISE award to align with our commitment to the diverse range of researchers in our field. Second, we are actively discussing ways to engage later stage graduate students and support them in transitioning to life after graduation.

Next, the Executive Board members talked about what we are doing to build a connected and engaged student community. We have a few existing programs that are in line with this aim, including our:

- Mentorship Program – This program is designed to connect undergraduate students seeking peer

mentorship with graduate students. Our [Undergraduate Advocate](#) matches pairs of students based on their shared goals and interests. I can personally vouch for this program: I was a graduate mentor and found it very rewarding to support my incredibly talented mentee through the graduate school application process

([https://www.psychologicalscience.org/members/apssc/mentorship\\_program](https://www.psychologicalscience.org/members/apssc/mentorship_program)).

- Campus Representative Program – This program is critical for fostering engagement at the local level. Campus Reps play an important role in connecting the APSSC Executive Board and our many student members. Our [Membership and Volunteers Officer](#) works tirelessly to ensure the success of this program. Interested parties can contact the MVO for more details about the position.
- Peer review – Student members can volunteer to review grant and award applications. This CV building experience provides an introduction to the ever-present peer review process. As a former RISE Research Award coordinator, I can tell you that this service is hugely appreciated.

It is important to the Executive Board that there be a range of ways to feel connected to APSSC – whether through something as small as liking our Facebook page or as big as stepping into a Campus Representative role. But we want to make sure your involvement is worth the time you invest. At our annual meeting we talked about providing more structure and recognition for mentors/mentees, Campus Reps, and peer reviewers.

Finally, the big-ticket discussion point at our meeting was the APS Annual Convention. Our student member survey revealed what we already knew to be the case: travel to and registration for Convention are expensive and can feel burdensome for students. We want students to know that there are ways to reduce costs, such as volunteering at convention and applying for travel assistance. We also understand that even with financial support, it is not always possible to make the trip to Convention. That is why we are trying to expand our web-based resources and social media presence.

For those who are able to attend Convention, our programming is specifically geared to meet the needs of students at different career development stages. Our Naked Truth panel series promotes discussion of how to navigate graduate school from admission to the post-doc search, and provides information about venturing into the job market as well. Champions of Psychological Science is a roundtable event where students can meet in small groups with luminaries in the field. Where else can you have a casual conversation with your science heroes?

At the 2019 Annual Convention in Washington, D.C., student attendees can expect some updates and tweaks to existing programming. Make sure to attend our student social to network and socialize with other members, meet the Executive Board, and learn in greater detail how students can maximize their time at Convention.

As I reviewed my notes from our fall meeting, a few messages became clear to me. First, we want to **empower students through recognizing excellence in research**. By being an active member of the APSSC, you are contributing to the future of psychological science, no small feat. This is why we want to provide opportunities for our members to have their research recognized and disseminated. Next, **connection is key**. We understand that with our diverse community of students, it is not always possible to connect in person. Online resources and forums, as well as local campus representatives, are critical to cohesion and communication among our members. Lastly, **we hear you**. Our student members have

provided crucial insights into how we can expand and improve, and we are responsive to that. Please keep the lines of communication open and contact our Executive Board members with your concerns and ideas. Even better – [apply to be an Executive Board member yourself](#).