

# Happy 20th to Us!

September 01, 2007



2008 marks APS's 20th Anniversary. This milestone will be commemorated in various ways over the coming months, including this series of columns, "Then and Now." It's hard to believe, but after two decades, APS is entering a time when today's young researchers don't know a world without APS. Now, it's more important than ever to look back on our 20 years of dedication to psychology and to look forward at the field's bright future.

In celebrating 20 years, APS stands out in its deep commitment to scientific theory, practice, and research. From the original core of over 400 founding members in 1988, to the 5,000 who joined that first year, the over 18,500 today, and the 20,000 we aim to have by the end of our 20th year celebration, members have always guided APS's momentum with extreme talent, hard work, and thoughtful contributions. APS's 20th anniversary presents an opportunity for reflection on our progress and re-dedication to promoting, protecting, and advancing the interests of scientific psychology. In this spirit, we'd like to take this opportunity to remind our members about some of the many ways APS supports scientific psychology. Watch for upcoming installments on various topics pertaining to APS.

## Publications

APS publishes four journals that are ranked among the top in our field: *Psychological Science*, ranked 6th for impact by ISI, publishes authoritative articles of interest across all of scientific psychology's sub-disciplines; *Current Directions in Psychological Science* offers concise invited reviews spanning all of scientific psychology and its applications; *Psychological Science in the Public Interest* provides definitive assessments by panels of distinguished researchers on topics where psychological science has the potential to inform and improve the well-being of society; and *Perspectives on Psychological Science* presents an interesting and intellectually lively mix of theoretical statements, literature reviews, viewpoints or opinions, research presentations, and scholarship. All APS Members receive these journals as part of their membership in APS.

APS also publishes the *Observer*, its monthly magazine featuring news and opinion pieces; a *Current*

*Directions* Readers series in conjunction with Pearson Education; a “Modern Pioneers in Psychological Science” series in conjunction with Psychology Press; and four self-published books on the teaching of psychology (described below).

### **Annual Convention**

APS holds a meeting in late spring each year to showcase the best of scientific psychology. With over 3,000 psychologists in attendance, the program features presentations by the field’s most distinguished researchers and educators in a variety of formats, including invited addresses and symposia, special theme programs, submitted symposia, and posters. The convention also includes workshops on specialized topics. The 2008 convention will be held May 22-25, 2008, in Chicago. Highlights include a Keynote Address by Shelley Taylor, a Bring the Family Address by Laura Carstensen, and an Inside the Psychologist’s Studio with Daniel Kahneman.

### **Teaching of Psychology**

Support for teaching has been a core part of the APS mission from the beginning.

In 2004, the David and Carol Myers Foundation pledged \$1 million to APS for the creation of an endowed fund that aims “to enhance the teaching and public understanding of psychological science for students and the lay public worldwide.” This gift led to the establishment of the APS Fund for Teaching and Public Understanding of Psychological Science. As David Myers has said, this gift was “motivated by the importance of psychological science as a source of great insights, as a strategy for restraining unbridled intuition with empirical scrutiny, and as a vehicle for advancing human understanding and compassion.” Activities that have been supported by the Fund include a **Small Grants Program** that provides seed support of up to \$5,000 for projects aimed at strengthening the teaching enterprise in psychology in the United States and abroad; the annual **David Myers Lecture on the Craft and Science of Teaching Psychological Science**, delivered at the APS convention by a distinguished scientist/educator; and a **Public Affairs Internship** for students of psychological science who are interested in communicating research findings to the general public.

APS publishes four books on the teaching of psychology: *Lessons Learned: Practical Advice on the Teaching of Psychology*, a three-volume series of books adapted from the popular monthly “Teaching Tips” columns in the *Observer*, and *Voices of Experience: Memorable Talks From the National Institute on the Teaching of Psychology*. APS also supports teaching by offering *Current Directions* free to high school teachers and free non-profit, educational use of any of our publications’ content. Other activities include the preconference Teaching Institute at the APS annual convention (organized in conjunction with the Society for the Teaching of Psychology) and support for the annual National Institute on the Teaching of Psychology.

### **Achievement Awards**

APS recognizes exceptional contributions to scientific psychology with two annual awards: the APS William James Fellow Award for significant intellectual contributions to the basic science of psychology and the James McKeen Cattell Fellow Award for outstanding contributions to the area of applied psychological research. William James, referred to as the father of modern psychology, was one of the most influential pioneer theorists in the scientific study of the mind. Cattell was one of the earliest experimental psychologists, developing research techniques that allowed for the study of groups of people and the individual differences among them that formed the basis of modern psychological

studies. Both of these awards emphasize the debt current researchers owe to the pioneers of the past.

The 2007-08 William James Fellow Award winners are David E. Meyer and Morris Moscovitch and the 2007-08 James McKeen Cattell Fellow Award winners are Howard S. Friedman and Frank L. Schmidt.

### **APS Student Caucus**

Students are an important and active component of APS. Established by a group of 14 students at the first APS convention in 1989, the APS Student Caucus (APSSC) is the representative body of the society's student affiliates. With the aid of almost 500 volunteers, the APSSC organizes research competitions, convention programs, publishes the "Student Notebook" feature in this magazine, and a variety of membership activities aimed at professional development and enhanced education in psychological science.

### **Advocacy**

One of the chief reasons for the establishment of APS was to provide a strong independent voice for psychological science in Washington. APS's highly effective government relations team works with Congress and federal research agencies to increase support for behavioral science research and training. Areas of focus include increasing the Congressional budgets for the National Institutes of Health and the National Science Foundation, the dissemination of Institutional Review Board best practices, highlighting the role of psychological science in educational research, and many other science and policy issues.

The list of advocacy accomplishments is a long and impressive collection of milestones in the public policies and programs that support psychological science. Among other things, APS was the driving force behind the establishment of the Social, Behavioral, and Economic Sciences Directorate at the National Science Foundation, the mission of the Office of Behavioral and Social Sciences (OBSSR) at the National Institutes of Health, and the establishment of the B/START (Behavioral Science Track Awards for Rapid Transition) program of grants for new investigators at NIH. The Human Capital Initiative, organized under the auspices of APS, produced a research agenda that continues to help federal policy makers set funding priorities for psychological and related sciences.

### **Public Affairs**

APS's motto — "the giving away of psychology in the public interest" — has been one of the building blocks of the organization. APS has been engaging the public and translating psychological research findings for a more general audience from its early days; a recent expansion of APS's public affairs program has directly increased the visibility of our science through weekly press releases, constant communication with university press offices and the national media, and Wray Herbert's blog "We're Only Human..." In addition to his APS blog, Herbert writes "Mind Matters," a column on health and behavior for Newsweek.com, which continues to be one of the most viewed and most e-mailed columns on the website. The amplified effort from the public affairs program is evident in the ensuing coverage of APS's journals. In the past year, research from APS's journals has appeared in over 4,000 publications with a total circulation upwards of 170 million. This has solidified APS' position as a credible source for the latest research in psychological science.