

# News From the Board

January 01, 1996

I report here on the highlights of the recent APS Board of Directors meeting held in Portland, Oregon, on December 1-3.

Twice a year the Board meets, and each year at about this time we hold a retreat with the goal of discussing the larger issues surrounding APS, including long-term goals and mission. Our second meeting of the year is held at the APS Convention and is typically much more concerned with administrative and more routine matters. At either meeting, action items are decided by the vote-eligible members of the Board: the Past-President (Marilynn Brewer), President (Richard Thompson), and President-Elect (Sandra Scarr), plus six elected members at large (currently, Robert Bjork, Lorraine Eyde, Lee Sechrest, Kay Deaux, J. Bruce Overmier, and Richard Weinberg).

Also attending the Portland retreat were APS Treasurer Paul Thayer, APS Secretary Elizabeth Capaldi, Human Capital Initiative Committee Chair Milt Hakel, APS Publications Chair Committee Mark Appelbaum, and APS staff Alan Kraut and Susan Persons. And, while my summary below of this latest Board retreat is by no means exhaustive, it discusses elements deemed of universal interest to the APS audience (i.e. academic, applied, and research psychologists).

Perhaps the most important issue ever discussed is whether APS is meeting the needs and wishes of its members. Is APS what it was originally formed to become?

All members of APS agree that the overriding goal of APS is to support the science of psychology in all its guises. To this end we have a very active and effective presence in Washington, DC, both on the Hill and in the federal research-supporting agencies. Should we take advocacy positions on issues that are of particular concern to one or another constituency within APS?

A current example is the matter of legalizing drug prescription privileges for psychologists. Our view is that APS should not take a position as an organization on such issues. Each of us can, of course, speak as individuals but without the imprimatur of APS. But what we must do, and do much better than we have in the past, is to use our science to spell out the consequences of particular positions on such issues.

## **Psychology's Applications**

More generally, we feel that psychology can do much, much more in the arena of applications of psychological knowledge to problems, issues and practices in our society. A critically important example is education, at all levels from infancy through formal schooling to the increasingly aged in our society.

Cognitive psychology, developmental psychology, educational psychology, and related disciplines have developed a substantial body of knowledge regarding education (see, for example, the National Research

Council's series of reports on enhancing human performance: *In the Mind's Eye* [1991], and *Learning, Remembering, and Believing* [1994] and accompanying stories in the *Observer* [November 1991 and September 1994]). But, as a scientific community, we have not done a very good job of applying this knowledge.

### **APS Roots**

A constituency that played a key role in establishing APS were those psychologists concerned with the applications of psychology (e.g., industrial-organizational psychologists, scientist-practitioners, and others). Have we met the needs of this group? While it is true that APS's ground-breaking Human Capital Initiative (HCI) has provided an incalculably effective vehicle for advancing the visibility and opportunities for applied psychology, the Board recognizes the importance of maintaining the momentum of the HCI effort. Thus, APS soon will convene the original eight planners of the APS Behavioral Science Summit that spawned the HCI to investigate a possible new Summit meeting to keep this highly successful undertaking alive.

Among its efforts to advance clinical science, APS has helped nurture groups such as the nascent Academy of Clinical Psychological Science (see article in this *Observer*), which has become an organizational affiliate of APS. The Academy was actually one of the outgrowths of another APS clinical science activity, our 1992 Behavioral Science Summit on Accreditation. Many of the recommendations from the accreditation summit have made their way into recent changes in the national accreditation process for psychology. APS also worked with the National Science Foundation (NSF) to permit clinical psychology graduate students to apply for NSF fellowships. And, we now have a clinical science track at the APS annual convention.

### **Basic Science**

Another major APS constituency group is, of course, basic psychological scientists. Yet some psychologists in basic science areas such as cognitive psychology and behavioral neuroscience question the relevance of APS to their interests. This is sometimes painfully evident in attendance levels at some sessions at the APS annual meeting.

As the Board contemplates ideas to further meet the needs and interests of basic scientists and other APS members, one immediate decision is to have a much increased number of symposia that tackle broader issues, as well as controversial issues (e.g., research ethics, the nature of intelligence, science and the environment, consciousness, the unconscious, attachments/relationships, feeding/eating, self-esteem/violence, stress, research methodology), from a variety of disciplinary areas of expertise.

In closing, on behalf of the APS Board, I welcome suggestions from members on this and all other issues of concern to them.