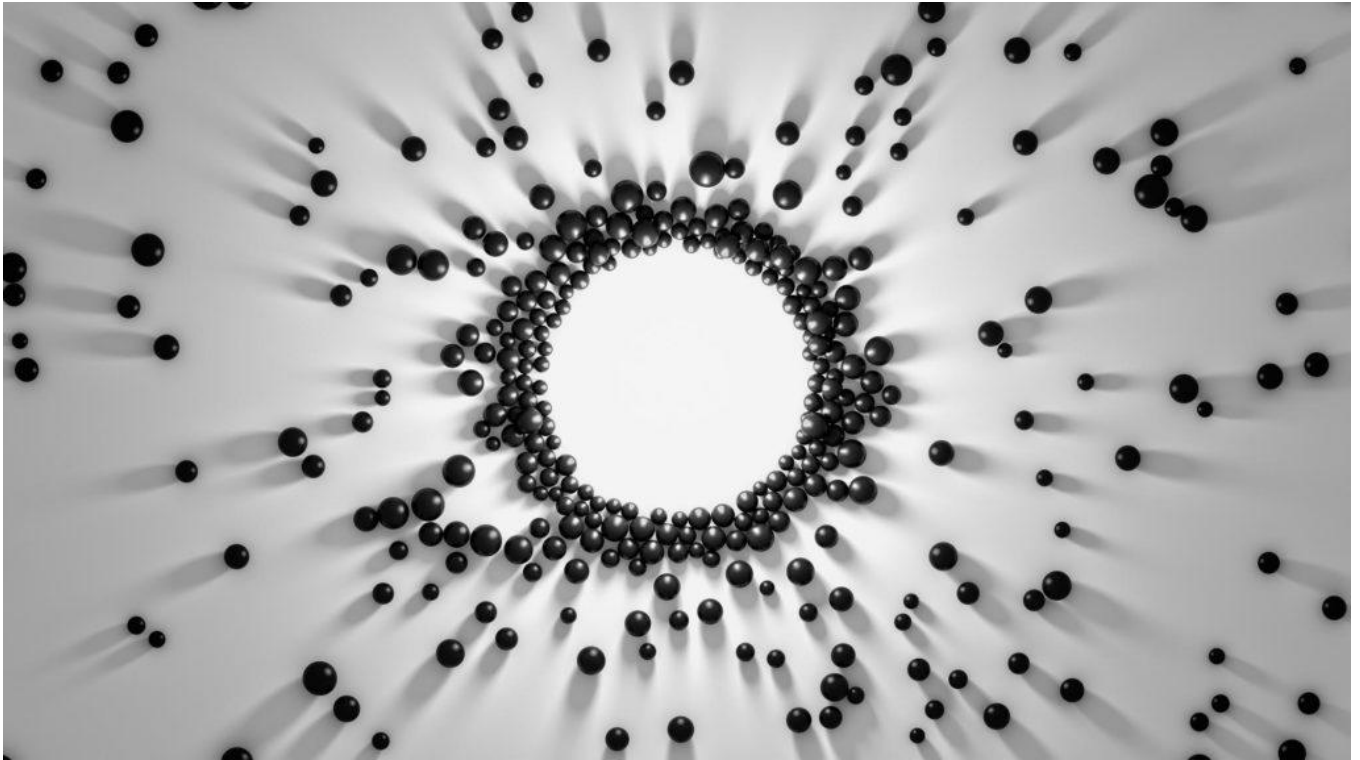


Society Needs Science—and Science Needs Society

October 26, 2021



Additional research frequently improves our understanding of a phenomenon. Importantly, it is also frequently the case that many past research findings are unused by decision-makers who are working—often rapidly—to make decisions that will inform personal or community health, safety, and well-being. To better ensure that accurate and modern insights into human behavior are used to inform these decisions, scientists must strengthen our connections with the public.

The Association for Psychological Science works daily to foster conversations and build relationships between the psychological science community and the public. In fact, as part of our current strategic planning work, we are considering how we can better facilitate the engagement of psychological scientists in public policy decision-making processes around the world and how we can ensure that findings from psychological science are available to and used by decision-makers—whether they are in industry, in government, or around a kitchen table.

APS recognizes that a strong and robust psychological science that enjoys the public trust must reflect human and cultural diversity. Psychological science is unique among disciplines as it includes scholars working to understand the psychological dimensions of equity, diversity, and inclusion.

Earlier this year, in response to increased anti-Asian racism, APS partnered with Newswise, a news-distribution service, to convene an expert panel that provided journalists with an opportunity to discuss the issue directly with psychological scientists who could explain relevant research. We organized this discussion to help journalists improve their reporting and to introduce them to scientific experts for future consultation. Our podcast, [Under the Cortex](#), along with the *Current Directions in Psychological Science* podcast and various [webinar programs](#) are other channels APS uses to share psychological science with the public and to provide insights that help scientists understand the priorities of research funding organizations.

Recently, APS launched the [Global Collaboration on COVID](#)—an initiative for which hundreds of APS members from around the world have volunteered their time, expertise, and talent to help us collectively understand how psychological science has (or has not) contributed to responses to the COVID-19 pandemic. The initiative will also identify knowledge gaps discovered because of the pandemic. This work will be the foundation upon which we will frame recommendations for members of the psychological science profession, the broader scientific community, research funding organizations, educators, and other decision-makers. Also in 2021, APS expressed concerns to the U.S. Congress about the U.S. government’s lack of engagement with behavioral scientists in its response to the pandemic. As a result of our advocacy, the House of Representatives included language in funding legislation it is considering (awaiting final passage at the time of this writing) that urges the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) to ensure that psychological scientists are involved at all levels of the department’s response to COVID-19 and future public health crises. Of significance, DHHS is home to the National Institutes of Health, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Public Health Service, and Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, among other important agencies and offices.

APS recognizes that a strong and robust psychological science that enjoys the public trust must reflect human and cultural diversity. Psychological science is unique among disciplines as it includes scholars working to understand the psychological dimensions of equity, diversity, and inclusion. APS can do more than share these research findings with other fields or the public. As a community, we must also address barriers, biases, and injustices within the profession. One of the ways in which APS will help tackle these issues is by doing what we do best—highlighting, recognizing, and celebrating outstanding scientific research. Recently, in honor of pioneering researcher and APS James McKeen Cattell Fellow [James S. Jackson](#), APS established the [James S. Jackson Lifetime Achievement Award for Transformative Scholarship](#) to recognize other outstanding researchers who are advancing our understanding of historically disadvantaged racial and ethnic groups and/or the psychological and societal benefits of racial and ethnic diversity.

Other ways in which APS is tackling enduring and systemic problems is by highlighting issues and stimulating conversations with the goal of finding solutions. This issue of the *Observer*, for example, includes the [second article in a three-part series: “Psychological Science Needs the Entire Globe.”](#) We are pleased that the *Observer* provides a forum for our members to discuss these important issues, but it is not our only venue for these important conversations. Our [annual convention](#) and various [online programs and platforms](#) will continue to provide spaces for the scientific community to raise concerns and explore strategies for resolving these issues. APS’s strategic plan will provide a framework for how we can most impactfully contribute solutions to these long-standing problems.

Addressing bias and promoting equity are priorities for APS journals as well. APS Fellow David Sbarra, the new editor-in-chief of *Advances in Methods and Practices in Psychological Science*, discussed [his commitment in an interview in this issue of the *Observer*](#). APS's journal editors and the APS Publications Committee are constantly considering how they can improve journal operations to advance the frontiers of psychological science in a more inclusive and unbiased fashion.

We are excited that in 2022 we will again be able to meet in person at our [annual convention in Chicago, Illinois](#). We are also exploring novel ways to strengthen engagement with community-based groups and other organizations located in the cities we visit. Many of these organizations can benefit from the scientific insights and opportunities associated with our annual convention. Equally important, our science can be strengthened by learning how it is (or could be) used to solve real-world problems.

The past 20 months have been stressful for everyone around the world, and COVID-related challenges will remain for some time. APS's leadership and staff look forward to working with our members as we collectively contribute to efforts to “reopen” our communities, define new “normals,” and promote the advancement of psychological science—for the benefit of science and society. I welcome your suggestions and thoughts on these or other topics.

— Robert E. Gropp, PhD

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Editor's note: This article has been updated to reflect the decision to make the [2022 APS Annual Convention](#) an in-person scientific conference.