

Student Program

August 27, 2004

Competition Recognizes Student Researchers

By Michele Borynski

APSSC President

The four winners of the annual Student Research Competition presented their research in a new symposium format. The competition allows students to submit their scholarly work for review by a panel of their peers. The goal of the SRC is to promote and acknowledge outstanding research conducted by APS Student Affiliates. Historically, winners of the SRC have displayed their work in a poster presentation, with ribbons to denote their award-winning research. Three graduate student winners and one undergraduate student winner were selected from a pool of more than 300 submissions. This year's graduate student winners were Celia M. Gonzalez, New York University; Craig Nathanson, University of British Columbia; and Kristen Longmire, University of North Carolina at Wilmington. The undergraduate student winner was Nathan Butzen, Berry College. The winners of the competition presented on diverse topics, including assessment of violence, psychopathy, procedural fairness, and self-touching behavior. Each winner provided a strong presentation of their research, and they capably answered questions from the audience.

RiSE-UP Symposium Examines Cultural Factors

By Bettina J. Casad

Student Writer

The APS Student Caucus symposium for Research on Socially and Economically Underrepresented Populations, or RiSE-UP, included presentations by Sara Unsworth, Northwestern University; Tara A. Latta, Lewis University; and Gail M. Anderson, Bowling Green State University.

In her presentation "Cultural Influences on Categorization Processes," Unsworth sought to determine whether culture influences the activation and processing of semantic concepts. She found that European Americans tended to preferentially use a categorical approach to processing information and responded more quickly when categorical, rather than relational, concepts were activated. Chinese Americans, regardless of acculturation, used categorical and relational approaches equally and responded similarly when categorical and relational concepts were activated. The findings support the assertion that Westerners often engage in analytic thought and separate objects from their context, whereas Chinese Americans often engage in holistic thought and consider objects within their context.

Latta's presentation "Attitudes Toward Female Same-Sex Erotic Behavior Influenced by Physical-Attractiveness Stereotype" examined the effects of physical attractiveness and perceived sexual orientation on gender differences in attitudes toward female same-sex erotic behavior. She found that regardless of the target's sexual orientation, male and female participants reported more positive

attitudes toward attractive females engaging in same-sex erotic behavior than unattractive females. Results supported the physical-attractiveness stereotype “what is beautiful is good” rather than evolutionary theory.

Anderson’s presentation “Gender Gap in Jamaican High School Students’ Achievement: More Fiction than Fact” revisited the longstanding claim that Jamaican females have higher academic performance than males. Results indicated that male and female students from a middle-class, academically competitive high school performed equally well. Females, however, reported more academic social support and more positive educational attitudes. Furthermore, the data supported a model of achievement whereby students’ past grades influenced current educational attitudes.

Editorial Wisdom

By Julie Hall

Student Writer

The second annual APS Student Caucus Editors Workshop featured three prominent presenters: APS Fellow Susan Mineka, Northwestern University; Wendi Gardner, Northwestern University; and APS Fellow and Charter Member Sam Glucksberg, Princeton University. The panel represented a range of top-ranked psychology journals, including *Psychological Science*, *Journal of Abnormal Psychology*, *Journal of Social and Personality Psychology*, and *Journal of Experimental Psychology*. Editors spoke about important topics related to successful manuscript publication, including the submission process, choosing an appropriate journal, structuring an effective manuscript, tips and pitfalls for first-time submitters, and rejection.

Manuscript Submission Process

Mineka began the workshop by discussing polished writing. Her first tip was to “make sure your writing is simple, direct, and concise.” Mineka noted that this is not easy and will require many revisions. “One mistake that young authors make is that they are so sick of the manuscript by the time they get it written that they just want to send it off without looking it over properly,” she said.

Another important aspect to successful writing is the accuracy of references, numbers, and statistics. Consider other points of view in your paper and alternative interpretations of your results because reviewers undoubtedly will. In your results section, first say in English what you found before launching into complex statistical analyses. Quoting Daryl Bem, “The general rule in reporting your findings is to give the forest first and then the trees.” Have someone else critique your manuscript and incorporate any feedback. Do a final proofreading and make sure to get rid of typos, which can cast doubt on your study’s credibility.

Choosing a Journal

“When choosing a journal, make sure the journal has the appropriate coverage for your type of manuscript,” Mineka said. Some journals have a broad coverage of topics whereas others only accept manuscripts on specific areas. Some journals only publish reviews whereas others focus more on empirical papers. Read the mission statement of the journal and see if your manuscript fits that mission.

See if the journal has papers similar in topic and scope to your own. Finally, consider how novel or important your contribution is when deciding to submit to a top-ranked or lower-tiered journal. If resubmitting your manuscript, incorporate the feedback of the reviewers.

Structuring the Manuscript

Gardner spoke about the best way to structure a manuscript. “The cardinal rule that applies across the entire paper is always take the perspective of your reader,” she said.

But first you must ask yourself why you want to publish your work. Gardner noted that the only correct answer is that “you have something to say about human nature that the reader would really benefit from knowing.” Gardner presented four effective ways of beginning: a quote capturing the construct of interest; a real world anecdote or statistic; a long illustrious and potentially mysterious history of your question; or a surprising statement. “The goal of a first paragraph is to make sure your reader actually moves on to the second,” Gardner said.

In the introduction, provide a brief history of your research question, make the transition from “what is known” to “what is new” extremely clear, and give an overview of the study and your hypotheses. When describing your methods, give enough detail so that the reader can get a good sense of what was done. Try to use more narrative results and frame them in terms of the central questions. For your discussion and conclusions, summarize what you found at the conceptual level. “Look back and then forward with your new lens,” Gardner said. Your ending should close in a way that echoes your opening and the reader should come away feeling like they have a new and valuable perspective on your topic.

Manuscript Rejection

Following the editors’ tips should improve your chances of publication, but in the event that you do receive a rejection letter, Glucksberg gave several suggestions on coping. Before tearing up the reviews, he suggested waiting a few days before reading them. He pointed out there are three levels of rejection: rejection without review, rejection with review and no invitation to resubmit, and a more positive rejection with invitation to resubmit. When revising your manuscript, Glucksberg offered the following cardinal principles: take each review seriously, incorporate every suggestion that seems reasonable to you, and write a detailed cover letter addressing how you dealt with each critical point. In closing, Glucksberg noted that most editors need your work and are on your side. “Both authors and editors have a common goal: to make the journals as good as they can be in the interests of psychological science.”

Psychology Superstars

By Seema L. Clifasefi

Student Writer

The stars were out on the afternoon of May 28, 2004. The cameras were clicking, the avid fans were assembled, and the microphones and lights were all in place. For many, it was a rare opportunity to see such venerable superstars gathered together in one room. There may not have been Versace outfits, or the traditional glitz and glamour of Hollywood, but for students of psychology it was better than being at the Oscars.

Albert Bandura ponders a student question to the amusement of Susan T. Fiske during “Psychology Superstars.”

It was the Student Caucus Superstar event at the APS Annual Convention, and Albert Bandura, Linda M. Bartoshuk, Susan T. Fiske, Michael E. Lamb, Robert Levenson, Scott O. Lilienfeld, and Lee D. Ross gave award-winning performances. These prominent psychologists generously gave their time to share some personal stories from their journeys and impart words of wisdom to the next generation of psychologists.

The hour-long session provided students with insight into the lives of esteemed academics. Although each superstar had a unique story about his or her path toward a career in psychology, a common theme emerged: serendipity. Most did not start off pursuing a career in psychology, but luckily for the field they all ended up doing so. Bandura took a psychology class to fill an early time gap in his schedule. Bartoshuk began as an astronomy major. Lamb was on the path to becoming a politician, but his passion for understanding human beings led him to psychology instead of to the White House.

Among these seven individuals are roughly 35 doctorate degrees, approximately 30 distinguished, significant contribution, or lifetime awards, and well over 1,000 authored works. This session stressed that even though these individuals have achieved what appear to be superhuman feats, they are real people faced with real challenges.

So stay tuned for the collaboration of these seven superstars. I hear a rumor that they may be planning a study looking at the emotional intersection between self-effacing, stereotyping father figures and super-tasting psychopaths with dispute resolution skills.

Linda M. Bartoshuk and Scott O. Lilienfeld field a question during “Psychology Superstars.”

Super Advice

“When things get tough and you don’t know what research avenue to pursue, run a real-world anecdote.” — **Lee D. Ross**

“Follow your heart and you will do great things.” — **Linda M. Bartoshuk**

“A sense of wonder married with a healthy sense of skepticism is the key to being a good researcher.” — **Scott O. Lilienfeld**

“Invent yourself in a unique way. Find the things that you

are passionate about and create them.” — **Robert Levenson**

“People’s values guide their research. Don’t just accept something because someone says so.” — **Susan T. Fiske**

“Louis Pasteur once said, ‘chance favors the prepared mind.’ Take advantage of fortuity by getting involved in a lot of activities.” — **Albert Bandura**

“Ask yourself: What does my research mean? What contribution is it going to make in society?” — **Michael E. Lamb**