

APS Calls for Psychological Science Representation on U.S. COVID-19 Advisory Board

November 19, 2020

As global COVID-19 conditions worsen, U.S. President-elect Joe Biden has [established an advisory board](#) to advise his presidential transition on its pandemic response. In an open letter to the co-chairs of this board, APS President Shinobu Kitayama has called for the inclusion of psychological science expertise on that board.

On November 9, 2020, Biden announced a new Transition COVID-19 Advisory Board—a group of 13 public health experts anticipated to assist Biden, Vice President-elect Kamala Harris, and others in the United States’ response to the coronavirus pandemic. While the group is comprised of eminent leaders in public health, medicine, and other relevant fields, psychological science leadership is not represented. In his letter, dated November 17, Kitayama encourages the consideration of a psychological scientist, given the important expertise they would bring to understanding and promoting safe behaviors.

“Until an effective vaccine or treatment is available, mitigating the virus’s spread and impact requires the fullest possible understanding of human psychology and social behavior,” writes Kitayama. “Accordingly, I strongly urge you to consider adding a psychological scientist to the Advisory Board.”

Kitayama mentions several of the ways that psychological science bears on the global understanding of COVID-19, including in areas of persuasion and attitude change, judgment and decision-making, cognitive framing, clinical psychopathology, and health disparities.

“I genuinely believe that psychological scientists possess tools to help the country overcome the current pandemic crisis,” writes Kitayama, whose [September Presidential Column in the *Observer* also discussed the behavioral science of the pandemic](#).

[Click here to read APS President Kitayama’s letter to President-elect Biden’s Transition COVID-19 Advisory Board.](#)

APS is committed to ensuring that psychological science is readily available to policymakers as well as the public on this issue. [Click here to see APS’s regularly updated resources on the science of COVID-19.](#)

Look for APS President Shinobu Kitayama’s December 2020 Observer Presidential Column to read more about his research and views on COVID-19’s intersection with racial disparities.