Snapshots From Chicago: APS's 2022 Convention Marks the Return of In-Person Science

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Exceptional researchers from all over the world—Chile and China, Israel and India, Poland and Portugal, South Korea and the United Arab Emirates, and beyond—cast their vote for in-person psychological science in Chicago in May at the 2022 APS Annual Convention. “An exhausting (but awesome) five days at #apschi22,” as one of the 2,500 attendees tweeted, the event featured a diverse variety of presentations across the major fields of psychological science, including biological/neuroscience, clinical, developmental, and industrial/organizational.

The opening keynote featured Bryan Stevenson, a public-interest lawyer who founded the Equal Justice Initiative (EJI), a human rights organization in Montgomery, Alabama, that has won major legal challenges overturning excessive and unfair sentences, exonerating innocent death row prisoners, confronting abuse of the incarcerated and the mentally ill, and helping children who have been prosecuted as adults. In a moving and deeply personal talk, “American Injustice, Mercy, Humanity, and Making a Difference,” he called upon psychological scientists and APS to “change the narrative” of science denial, fear, and anger that threaten justice and equality.

Stevenson was introduced by APS President Jennifer L. Eberhardt. When she stepped into the role of APS’s leader, she anticipated significant challenges. “We were navigating through a pandemic, polarization was on the rise, we were in a moment of political upheaval. That much was true, and it still is true,” she said. “But instead of stepping back during a global pandemic, APS came to the fore. Our organization has served as a catalyst for advancing the field and in providing leadership to policymakers, researchers, educators, and institutions across disciplines and across borders. We should all be very proud of these achievements.”
Robert Gropp, the CEO of APS, welcomed attendees before the opening keynote on Thursday evening.
In her final days serving as APS President, Stanford University's Jennifer Eberhardt welcomed speakers and attendees at several sessions, including the opening keynote featuring Bryan Stevenson.

"Hope is your superpower," said Bryan Stevenson, founder and executive director of the Equal Justice Initiative, in his moving opening keynote presentation titled "American Injustice, Mercy, Humanity, and Making a Difference."

In 12 sessions held over several days, poster presentations enabled researchers and attendees to discuss findings on a wide range of topics.
Deploying technology resourcefully, these poster presenters took a hybrid approach to sharing their research findings. Hundreds of posters demonstrated creative approaches to exploring an enormous range of topics, from problem-solving strategies to bilingualism to loneliness and social anxiety. The Biological/Neuroscience Early Career Spotlight featured Benjamin Suarez-Jimenez of Rochester University and Angela Fang, University of Washington. Sheri J. Mizumori, University of Washington, is shown at right and served as discussant.
Suparna Rajaram of Stony Brook University, The State University of New York, delivered the APS-David Myers Distinguished Lecture on the Science and Craft of Teaching Psychological Science on "Do Study Groups Help? Learning From the Sciences of Learning and Memory."
APS’s Charles Blue hosted two virtual news briefings that enabled the researchers behind 11 particularly compelling talks to briefly share their findings with journalists tuning in from around the world.
“I'm going to call it out,” tweeted Christy Rogers, an assistant professor at Texas Tech University. “Undergraduate students and recent post-bacs BROUGHT IT to the poster sessions at #apschi22! I found their posters the most impressive.”

Prior to the opening keynote, APS 2022 sessions included a panel exploration of how COVID-19 has dramatically reframed the workplace, hands-on workshops on research methods, several sessions on teaching psychology (cosponsored by the Society for the Teaching of Psychology), and sessions featuring both the research of “rising stars” within clinical science and leading clinical scientists’ visions of the grand challenges facing the field.

Sessions also brought together leading researchers from across subdisciplines and outstanding keynote speakers on topics such as curbing police violence, restoring trust in institutions, boosting vaccine acceptance. Special media briefings featured 11 short presentations selected as particularly compelling and relevant, including one on the impact of school violence on children, families, and communities. Other topics explored in the news briefings included fake news and misinformation, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on education, tools to support ethnic and gender minorities, stress in the operating room, and romance and relationships.

For some attendees, the convention marked a welcome return to the camaraderie, networking, and collegiality that have always made APS conferences rewarding. For hundreds of first-time attendees, including many students ranging from undergraduates to doctoral candidates, the experience was exciting, inspiring, and in at least one case, “everything I could’ve hoped for.”

Review details of the complete convention agenda in the online planner.

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