A Challenge for the New Year

Welcome to another edition of the SPSSI student newsletter and to the start of a new semester. The next couple of months will surely be exciting as we readjust to the semester schedule, plan for the year ahead and keep our eyes and ears on the up-coming election.

I always enjoy the start of fall semesters because the summer leaves me feeling refreshed and ready to take on new tasks. Even though nature is beginning to go into hibernation, in academia the fall is like a new beginning.

But getting wrapped up in the start of a new academic cycle and new routines tends to lead us to become too self-involved and focused on our academic lives, forgetting about the real world. Our other activities we may have had time for during the summer take a back seat to writing proposals and beginning data collection. This semester I made a commitment to myself to stay grounded and remain active in the community, even throughout the chaos of the semester.

I challenge you to do the same this academic year. In addition to classes, research projects, grant writing, teaching, etc., take a little time (a couple hours a week, even) to get out in the real world and give back to the community. Volunteer at a local organization, such as a rape crisis center or soup kitchen. (Try www.volunteermatch.org.) Mentor a child, such as through the Big Brothers/Big Sisters Program (www.bbbsa.org). Write a letter to the editor of a well-circulated newspaper (see guidelines for The New York Times at: www.nytimes.com/ref/membercenter/helplettertoeditor.html or The Washington Post at: www.washingtonpost.com/wpdyn/opinionletterstotheeditor/). Organize a political demonstration on a local, state, or national issue. Whatever you chose, I encourage you to break out of the bubble that can become academia and get out in the real world.

Sure, you learn a great deal in classes and by reading articles and attending colloquium. But the real experiences are not found in a journal or on a PowerPoint slide. As socially conscious psychologists, we are all aware of this. But the hustle and bustle of graduate life can often make us forget it.

I recently became a Big Sister to a nine-year-old girl who has been living a rough home life because of the unavailability of both her parents. A couple hours a week, she and I do things such as rent movies, eat ice cream, go for walks, or visit the library. We spent a lot of time together during the summer, but as soon as the semester started, I noticed spending time with her was no longer one of my top priorities.

I took her out to dinner one night last week, and it was a great time for both of us. She received the one-on-one attention that she misses in her own home, and I had fun seeing her laugh at my stupid jokes. After dropping her off at the end of our evening, not only was she in a happy mood, but I went back to my work much more relaxed.

So consider this your reminder that the real life, the real data, the real experiences are outside the office. Give something back to the community this semester. Not only will it benefit someone else, but you are bound to come back to your own work with a clearer perspective.

Michelle R. Kaufman
Newsletter Editor
SPSSI Student Activities
2005 APA Convention

The Graduate Student Committee has been creating a program for the 2005 APA convention in Washington, D.C. We plan to offer a series of roundtable discussions throughout the convention. Details will be made available in the next newsletter. Here are the highlights:

**Changing the World through Social Science**
*Hosted by Lori A.J. Scott-Sheldon, Chair*
*University of Connecticut*

Wondering how you can use your research to affect social change and public policy? Curious about opportunities awaiting you at non-academic institutions once you receive your PhD? Social scientists inside and outside of the academic world will discuss ways you can make a difference, including opportunities offered by SPSSI.

**The Bridge between Community and Academic Work**
*Hosted by Jamie L. Franco, Chair-Elect*
*University of California, Santa Cruz*

Are you currently involved in both community and academic work? Or, are you interested in becoming more involved in the communities and populations you study but are not sure how to go about connecting with community agencies? This discussion will include the ways in which graduate students have been able to connect their community activism and academic research.

**Benefits and Challenges to Conducting International Research**
*Hosted by Demis E. Glasford, Member-at-Large and Michelle R. Kaufman, Newsletter Editor*
*University of Connecticut*

Researchers conducting international and cross-cultural research face many unique questions and obstacles. Where do I begin? How do I establish contacts? How do I tailor measures so that they are culturally appropriate? This discussion will address all of these issues and more.

**What Next? Options and Alternatives after Graduation**
*Hosted by Teresa R. Robbins, Member-at-Large*
*Claremont Graduate University*

Are you nearing graduation or currently on the job market? Are you a new graduate student wondering what your career options will be? This panel will be on a variety of options available after graduate school. Special attention will be paid to the experiences of members of marginalized groups.

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**Integrating Psychology and Public Policy**

*Taniesha Woods*
*Dalmas A. Taylor Memorial Minority Summer Fellow*

This summer I had the opportunity to affect positive social change by working on Capitol Hill as the SPSSI Dalmas A. Taylor Memorial Minority Summer Fellow.

I am a fourth year graduate student in the developmental psychology program at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. My research interests focus on the educational outcomes of African American children and adolescents. More specifically, I am interested in how stereotypes, race identity development, and race socialization may influence academic achievement. I became interested in the academic achievement of African Americans because I believe high quality education is a way in which disenfranchised groups can gain economic independence and social mobility. I believe economic independence and social mobility in the African American community could set the stage for numerous positive outcomes.

My career goal is to work to ensure that all people, regardless of race or ethnicity, have the opportunity to be productive members of society and to have a voice. Working as a developmental psychologist in public policy would give me this opportunity while positively impacting the lives of African Americans and other disenfranchised groups.

As the Dalmas A. Taylor Policy Fellow, much of my work took place in the APA Public Policy Office in the Public Interest Directorate. This was a phenomenal educational experience because I was able to participate in the legislative process.

One of the most interesting and empowering experiences I had as a fellow was lobbying on Capitol Hill. Specifically, I helped lobby senators on the same-sex marriage amendment, a very controversial issue. Upon arriving in Washington, D.C., I was not sure how I, a graduate student with no training in lobbying, would be able to contribute to the work of senior legislative and federal affairs officers at APA.

Despite my hesitations, I was able to learn about the issues and help lobby members of Congress, which turned out to be one of the most exciting experiences of my graduate career. Working on Capitol Hill as a lobbyist, I came to realize it is important to work with other professionals, such as social workers, and it is also crucial to present research findings in a clear and concise way that can be utilized by non-researchers (i.e., legislators and their staff).

In addition to lobbying, one of the highlights of the summer was attending Congressional hearings and briefings on a variety of issues. One hearing was especially striking; it was about young children with mental health issues who are housed in juvenile detention centers because of the lack of beds at mental health facilities. This hearing highlighted the importance of
Integrating Psychology and Public Policy, Continued

coordinated advocacy that needs to take place among the juvenile justice system, mental health providers, and community-based mental health programs.

Attending hearings and briefings on various issues gave me the opportunity to see how legislators are educated about issues. This put me in a better position to devise research questions that would be most useful to policy-makers. Attending Congressional hearings and briefings demystified the legislative process, and I am now better prepared to participate in this process.

Working as a Dalmas A. Taylor Memorial Minority Summer Policy Fellow gave me the opportunity to learn about affecting positive social change through the legislative process. It also gave me the opportunity to learn more about myself. The experience helped solidify my career goals. I now plan to pursue a career in public policy, which will allow me to have a positive impact on society, especially with the population I am currently studying, African American children. Because children are our nation’s most valuable natural resource, it is of utmost importance that they have advocates, especially those children who may otherwise be overlooked.

I do not expect to change the world, but I do plan to work on issues that are important to disenfranchised groups and do my best to be a part of the solution. My experience in public policy as a Dalmas A. Taylor Fellow gives me confidence that I will achieve those goals.

APAGS-DSRN bridges APA divisions and graduate students

The American Psychological Association of Graduate Students (APAGS) has created a new program to facilitate the connection between the many APA divisions and APAGS. Each division appointed a graduate student to serve within the Division Student Representative Network (DSRN). Jamie Franco (SPSSI Graduate Student Chair-Elect) attended the first annual APAGS-DSRN meeting during the 2004 APA conference. She reported back the “twin” goals of the APAGS-DSRN: “to increase student membership and leadership within divisions and APAGS, and to develop and provide quality services for students through professional development opportunities, networking, collaborations, and mentoring.”

During the meeting, the student representatives shared ways in which their division currently provides information, opportunities and resources to its student members. Based on this information, APAGS will be compiling a list of best possible practices (e.g., student listserv, student awards), with the hope that each division will adopt practices or provide services that they are not currently offering. If you are interested in learning more about the APAGS-DSRN program, please contact Jamie at jfranco@ucsc.edu.

How to Become More Involved in SPSSI

* Run for office
Run for Chair, Newsletter/Web Editor or a Member-at-Large position on the Graduate Student Committee. Each year elections are held via the student listserv. For more information, contact Member-at-Large Demis Glasford at demis.glasford@uconn.edu.

* Become a committee member
Graduate students are involved in numerous SPSSI committees, including the travel award, recruiting and conference organization committees. For more information, contact Chair Lori Scott-Sheldon at lori.scottsheldon@uconn.edu.

* Contribute to the newsletter
Three times per year there are opportunities to write articles for the student newsletter. If you are interested in being featured in the newsletter for your research or policy-oriented activities, or if you are interested in writing a policy brief or an article on a pertinent social issue, contact Newsletter Editor Michelle Kaufman at Michelle.Kaufman@uconn.edu.

* Assist in updating the website
(www.spssi.org/network.html) The SPSSI student website is being updated to include student research papers, commonly used scales or measures, and other valuable information. If you would like to offer suggestions for the content or are interested in assisting in editing the website, contact Chair-Elect Jamie Franco at jfranco@ucsc.edu.

* Share information via the student listserv
If you would like to share references, measures, current issues, job listings, or any other information of interest, post the information on the student listserv at spssigsc@yahoogroups.com. See Join the SPSSI Student Listserv to learn how to join.

* Expand the SPSSI network by recruiting new members
Spread the word, recruit new colleagues. If you would like an email template to forward to your colleagues, contact Jamie France (jfranco@ucsc.edu). You can also assist in recruiting new members by posting flyers in your department or placing flyers in your fellow graduate students mailboxes (flyers are available upon request).

We want you to contribute! If you would like to submit a brief report, comment, or have your research featured in our spotlight section, please e-mail Michelle Kaufman, Newsletter Editor at: Michelle.Kaufman@uconn.edu
Join the SPSSI Student Listserv!
As a SPSSI graduate student member, we encourage you to join our electronic discussion list. Participants, both SPSSI members and non-members, generate discussion and debate about social issues, use the list as a resource for making connections, and post announcements of opportunities and events.

* To subscribe, send a blank email to: spssigsc-subscribe@yahoogroups.com. You will receive a confirmation message. Reply to this message to complete your subscription. This group is moderated so you will not receive any SPAM.

* To submit a posting to the listserv, send a message to spssigsc@yahoogroups.com and it will be distributed via e-mail to everyone on the list.

* For full access to all Yahoo! Group features (messages, chat, links, polls, calendar) go to http://groups.yahoo.com. In the search for groups box, type in spssi. Click on the Join this Group button. You will need to create a Yahoo! Account if you do not have one (see Sign up now).

SPSSI Student Funding Opportunities
In support of student research, SPSSI offers several funding opportunities for graduate students:

- **Clara Mayo Grants** are given in support of master’s theses and pre-dissertation research on sexism, racism, and prejudice. For more information, see: http://www.spssi.org/Mayoflyer.pdf

- Graduate students are eligible for the **Grant-In-Aid Program** in support of research on social problems related to the goals of SPSSI. For more information, see: http://www.spssi.org/GIAflyer.pdf

- **Applied Social Issues Internship Program** funding research conducted in cooperation with private and public organizations. For more information, see: http://www.spssi.org/ASIflyer.pdf

- **Social Issues Dissertation Award**. For more information, see: http://www.spssi.org/Dissertationflyer.pdf

- **Dalmas A. Taylor Memorial Summer Minority Policy Fellowship**. For more information see: http://www.spssi.org/Taylor_flyer.pdf

- **James Marshall Public Policy Scholar**. For more information, see: http://www.spssi.org/jms.html

Contact Information
2004-2005
SPSSI Graduate Student Committee

- **CHAIR:**
  Lori A. J. Scott-Sheldon
  Center for Health/HIV Intervention and Prevention, University of Connecticut
  2006 Hillside Road, Unit 1248
  Storrs, CT 06269-1248
  Lori.Scott-Sheldon@uconn.edu

- **CHAIR-ELECT:**
  Jamie L. Franco
  Department of Psychology
  Social Sciences II
  University of California
  Santa Cruz, CA 95064
  jfranco@ucsc.edu

- **MEMBERS-AT-LARGE:**
  Demis E. Glasford
  University of Connecticut
  Department of Psychology
  406 Babbidge Road, Unit 1020
  Storrs CT, 06269-1248
  demisg@hotmail.com

  Betsy Levy Paluck
  Department of Psychology
  Yale University
  P.O. Box 208205
  New Haven, CT 06520
  Elizabeth.Paluck@yale.edu

  Teresa Robbins
  Claremont Graduate University
  School of Behavioral and Organizational Sciences
  123 E. Eighth Street
  Claremont, CA 91711
  Teresa.Robbins@cgu.edu

- **NEWSLETTER/WEB EDITOR:**
  Michelle Kaufman
  Center for Health/HIV Intervention and Prevention, University of Connecticut
  2006 Hillside Road, Unit 1248
  Storrs, CT 06269-1248
  Michelle.Kaufman@uconn.edu

SPSSI Central Office
208 I Street, NE
Washington, DC 20002-4340
Phone: 202/675-6956      Fax: 202/675-6902
E-mail: spssi@spssi.org
Web: www.spssi.org