Greetings SPSSI Graduate Student Members!

We are delighted to bring you another edition of our student newsletter. We have just returned from the 2004 SPSSI Biennial Convention in Washington, DC, and are excited by the energy generated by graduate students during our many activities. We encourage you to continue your involvement in SPSSI by taking advantage of the funding opportunities available to graduate students and utilizing our new listserv to share thoughts and/or concerns about social issues.

SPSSI GSC Elections

With a very close race, the final results of the GSC elections are available. We thank those who participated in the election. Your new GSC members are as follows:

Chair-Elect: Jamie L. Franco
Jamie is a third year graduate student in social psychology at the University of California, Santa Cruz. She has worked as an advocate for survivors of domestic violence and a GLBTI youth educator.

Member-at-Large: Betsy Levy Paluck
Betsy is a fourth year doctoral candidate in social psychology at Yale University. She has worked on implementing anti-bias programs in the media, school, and at the community-level.

Member-at-Large: Teresa Robbins
Teresa is a fifth year doctoral candidate in the applied social psychology program at Claremont Graduate University. She has worked on research that examines the influence of ethnic identity development on coping and academic success.

Newsletter/Web Editor: Michelle R. Kaufman
Michelle is a second year graduate student in social psychology at the University of Connecticut. She has worked on research that examines the interaction of gender and power and the increased risk of HIV for women in South Africa and Nepal.
SPSSI Graduate Student Preconference. This year’s student preconference took place on June 24th and consisted of three panels.

The first panel Balancing acts: How to be successful as a young academic consisted of Valerie Purdie, Department of Psychology, Yale University; Linda Tropp, Department of Psychology, Boston College; Rodolfo Mendoza-Denton, Department of Psychology, University of California, Berkeley; and Jack Glaser, Department of Public Policy, University of California, Berkeley. All of the faculty are Assistant Professors, and they discussed the variety of balancing acts they engage in involving their work, mentoring students, and their social lives and family.

Three individuals working in D.C. made up the second panel Social science as a means of social activism: Public policy and applied research. Dr. Diane Elmore, the SPSSI James Marshall Public Policy Scholar in the office of Public Policy at the American Psychological Association, spoke about translating social science research into forms that policy makers can use to back public policy initiatives. Dr. Jonathan C. Miles, an Executive Branch Research Policy Fellow for the Society for Research in Child Development, spoke about how working on Head Start research at the Administration for Children and Families in the Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation capitalizes on his research training. Finally, Margery Austin Turner, Director of the Metropolitan Housing and Communities Center at the Urban Institute, discussed how research conducted by social scientists at think tanks can help to change the terms of political debates.

The third panel, Working with(in) your community: Conducting Lewin full-cycle research as a graduate student, was composed of four PhD graduate students who discussed how and why they got involved doing research in their communities. Ann Rivera, a 4th year student in Community Psychology at NYU, discussed her research with community-based organizations and advocacy groups promoting youth development in New York City. Jamie L. Franco, a 3rd year student in Social Psychology at the University of California, Santa Cruz spoke about her ethnographic research as an advocate for women experiencing domestic violence. Yasser A. Payne, a 5th year student in the Social-Personality Psychology program at the City University of New York Graduate Center discussed his research on examining street life-oriented Black men’s attitudes toward their economic and educational opportunities using a participatory action research methodological frame. Wendy R. Williams, a 5th year student in Social Psychology at the University of California, Santa Cruz, discussed her consulting work with a community group of mental health consumers who are attempting to build a peer-supported low-income housing facility for adults with psychiatric disabilities. The student committee would like to thank all of the panelists for their great insights and for taking the time to be a part of the SPSSI student preconference. We would also like to thank all of the students who attended the preconference and to encourage them to continue to be involved in SPSSI and the planning of the next student preconference at the SPSSI convention in 2006 in Long Beach, California.

We thank Wendy R. Williams, 2003-2004 GSC Chair, for organizing, recruiting speakers, and managing the student preconference.

Convention Volunteers (By Jamie L. Franco). For the 2004 convention, the GSC recruited twelve graduate students to volunteer their time in lieu of registration. What did we do? Volunteers were responsible for registering conference attendees, setting up sites, and running errands. While I must admit it was time consuming (8 hours), the benefits outweighed the costs. I feel fortunate to have met graduate students and professionals I might not have had the opportunity to meet throughout the conference, making the volunteer experience very worthwhile. So, my recommendation: sign up for the graduate student listserv and answer the call to volunteer during the next SPSSI conference!

Many thanks to the volunteers: Rebecca Anderson, Jamie Franco, Jeffrey Goodman, Wendy Limbert, Sarah Lust, Allecia Reid, Ann Rivera, Patricia Ruiz-Navarro, Michelle Tichy-Reese, Maggie Thomas and Katie Van Allen.

Congressional Hill Training. On June 24, approximately fifty SPSSI members took part in SPSSI’s Congressional Hill Training program. Graduate students and psychologists learned about the importance and practice of influencing the legislative process from enthusiastic and knowledgeable SPSSI/APA Washington staff and ended the day with a lobbying visit to their state senator.

Diane Elmore, SPSSI’s James Marshall Public Policy Scholar, opened the training with a presentation discussing why and how researchers should bring their policy-relevant knowledge and empirical findings to the attention of lawmakers. Elmore described a multi-level grassroots approach, in which researchers can advocate for issues such as diversity policies and education reforms at the community, state, and federal level. Participants then prepared for advocacy at the federal level by discussing one of two issues that are currently on the SPSSI policy agenda: including behavioral sciences, in addition to medical sciences, in the allocation of monies in the Daschle-Kennedy bill to study the reduction of health disparities and the politics of the peer review of science.

To prepare for this visit, experienced lobbyist and APA staff member Lori Valencia-Greene reviewed the two topics, which are of current interest because of bills recently proposed in the Senate. Valencia-Greene recounted past instances in which individual researchers were able to make a difference by visiting their representatives with their concerns. These stories underlined the fact

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that researchers have power not only as topic experts but also as constitutents. For this reason, trainees broke out into small groups according to their home state, in which they chose and prepared to discuss one issue with their own State representative.

Following these excellent preparations, the small groups made their way to the Senate offices, including the offices of Hillary Rodham Clinton, Dianne Feinstein, and Christopher Dodd. For an electronic copy of the advocacy training materials, please contact SPSSI’s central office at spssi@spssi.org. We would like to thank Shari Miles, Diane Elmore, Lori Valencia-Greene, and associated SPSSI staff for a rewarding and educational experience.

**Mentor Lunch.** Continuing the tradition of previous conferences, the 2004 SPSSI convention included a mentor lunch. The mentor lunch provided an opportunity for students and SPSSI scholars to discuss research and social issues. Students and faculty alike enjoyed the lunch, and it was a huge success. Special thanks to our mentors: Faye Crosby, Geoff Maruyama, Stacey Sinclair, Jack Glaser, Beth Shinn, Bernice Lott, Julie Christian, Marcus Kemmelmeier, Louis Penner, Lisa Brown, Sabrina Zirkel, Linda Tropp, Shana Levin, Ann Anderson, Pete Walker and Roger Anderson.

**Conference Reporters.** Four graduate students and four junior faculty were selected to serve as conference reporters. They were responsible for attending one of the conference threads (Peace, Poverty, Prejudice, International, Health, and Diversity). The reporters for each thread met with incoming SPSSI President Kay Deaux to collectively summarize the findings presented at the conference and presented those findings in the Synthesis Session on June 27.

Many thanks to the reporters: Marcella Boynton, Roberta Downing, Michael Giang, Jack Glaser, Sheri Levy, Rudy Mendoza-Denton, Betsy Paluck, and Tiffany Yip.

**Travel Awards**

We are pleased to announce the winners of the student travel awards for the 2004 SPSSI Biennial Convention in Washington, DC. Posters/symposia abstracts were blind reviewed by three graduate students then ranked. All winners received a $150 award. Congratulations!

- Germine Awad  
  Southern Illinois University
- Karen Chen  
  University of Michigan
- Omar Contreras  
  Claremont Graduate University
- Chris Coryn  
  Western Michigan University
- Shelagh Dunn  
  University of Alberta
- I-Ching Lee  
  University of Connecticut
- Diana Milillo  
  University of Connecticut
- Lori Scott-Sheldon  
  University of Connecticut
- Wendy Stevenson  
  University of Maryland
- Wendy Williams  
  University of CA Santa Cruz

We thank Antoinette Semenya, Demis Glasford, and Michael Peng for reviewing the applications.

**Spotlight on Student Research: Roberta A. Downing**

Roberta Downing graduated in June with her Ph.D. in social psychology from the University of California, Santa Cruz. As a recipient of the APA Congressional Fellowship, next year Roberta will be working on Capitol Hill.

**Could you briefly describe your current line of research?**

My research investigates racist and classist discrimination against poor women in health care. In particular, I’m interested in documenting how the stigma associated with poor women’s childbearing impacts the reproductive care they receive. I’m also interested in how attitudes towards the poor and perceptions of health disparities impact support for universal health care.

**How did you become interested in this topic?**

My interest in this topic stems from the four years I spent working in the AIDS community in Los Angeles County. Working in poor neighborhoods, I continually witnessed and heard about the negative treatment various coworkers, clients, and others experienced in the health care system and how this treatment impacted their health outcomes (especially when dealing with a deadly disease like HIV). Many of these negative experiences were rooted in the sexist, racist, classist, and homophobic attitudes of health professionals, as well as institutional inequality in the health care system. These experiences continue to drive my motivation to address inequality and make visible the lives of poor people.

**Any advice you would give to other graduate students interested in getting involved with this line of research or applied research in general?**

I would recommend that graduate students work at nonprofit organizations or volunteer. That’s one of the best ways to learn about social issues, by spending time in poor neighborhoods and learning about the lives of those who live there. If someone’s particularly interested in health disparities, I would suggest volunteering at a health-related organization (e.g., a free clinic or an AIDS organization).

**What implications do you see your research having for psychology, policies, and social issues more generally?**

I think my research can have important implications for psychology, policy, and for social issues. Firstly, poverty is understudied in psychology. More of us need to dedicate ourselves to studying issues of poverty and social class. I think this research also has important implications for policy. Much research on health disparities these days focuses on ethnic disparities in health care. This is very important. However, we need to expand our analysis to address how intersections of gender, ethnicity, and social class differentially impact the care people receive. It’s also important to address the lives of poor women in particular, as they are subject to so many restrictive, punitive policies (e.g., welfare policy) that make their already difficult lives harder.

Hopefully, the more we make poverty visible by documenting the lives of the poor, the more our policies might address their needs more fully. I also think this research has important implications for the training of health care professionals.
SPSSI Diversity Task Force

During this year’s conference, the Diversity Task Force held an impromptu meeting with SPSSI members. While the meeting was structured more as a ‘meet and greet’ event, task force committee members requested that attendees formally share their ideas. The task force chairs, Allen Omoto and Pam Reid, gathered the names and contact information of attendees and requested that attendees submit their ideas to recruit diverse members and to enhance diversity within SPSSI. Please contact Allen Omoto (allen.omoto@cguf.edu) or Pamela Reid (pamreid@umich.edu) for more information.

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 or finding resources, and post announcements of opportunities and events.

To subscribe to the list, send a blank email to: spssigsc-subscribe@yahoogroups.com. You will receive a confirmation message. Just reply to this message and your subscription will be complete. This group is moderated so you will not receive any SPAM!

To post, participants send a message to spssigsc@yahoogroups.com and the message 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 and in the search for groups box, type in spssi. Click on the Join this Group button. If you do not have a Yahoo! account, you will need to create 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 predissertation 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.

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

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

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