

Adult Development & Aging News

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20
DIVISION

Adult
Development
and Aging

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President's Message

The Gerontological Society of America meetings, along with the APA meetings, are always a high point of the year for me. GSA is a chance to see old friends and colleagues, to make new connections, and to meet the latest generation of junior colleagues who are entering the field of psychology of aging. GSA is also an important time for Division 20. We always hold an Executive Committee meeting at GSA. For many of us, this is our first Executive Committee meeting after we have assumed a new office in the Division and a chance to take a fresh look at the Division and kick off new initiatives.

This past year the Executive Committee meeting at GSA had a very serious tone. We face some major challenges. Division 20, like most APA Divisions, is experiencing a real struggle in retaining and recruiting members for a variety of reasons such as lack of understanding of the benefits of the division, lack of recruitment efforts on our part, and the increased proliferation of specialty areas within our disciplines. Whatever the reason, the decline in membership has some serious ramifications for our Division. Many of our senior members become exempt from paying dues after many years of membership. Cutbacks in university and grant funding,

and concerns about APA's priorities, have made some psychologists hesitant to join or renew membership in APA. We have begun a number of initiatives to recruit and retain members (including offering free memberships for one year to new members), but over the past two years Division 20 has experienced a 25% reduction in dues received from APA, our major source of revenue. Along with a reduction in revenue, we have experienced a substantial increase in the cost of printing and mailing our newsletter. This cost has gone up nearly 50% over the past two years, and the costs associated with the newsletter were equal to about 80% of our revenue during the fiscal year ending in June 2013. The Division experienced about an \$8,000 deficit during the last fiscal year, the second deficit in the past three years.

Because of this budget deficit and of course our desire to keep pace with concerns about the environment and the trends towards "green", the Executive Committee voted unanimously to begin using an electronic version of the newsletter to replace the paper



Bill Haley
Division 20 President

version. None of us wanted to take this step, but we couldn't see an alternative that could put our budget back in the black.

We decided to send out one final paper copy of the newsletter, an abbreviated version (this is it—save it, one day it will be a collector's item). Our newsletter Editor, Grace Caskie, has written a piece in this issue of the newsletter describing the changes involved in transitioning to an electronic newsletter. Grace deserves special thanks for her efforts in moving the newsletter to a new format. She has contributed so much to the Division by editing the newsletter, and the new format will present some special challenges. There will also be some good things to come out of this. With an electronic

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Adult Development & Aging News is edited by Grace Caskie (Lehigh University).

Deadlines for submissions are:
September 1
February 15
June 1

Mail Queries:

Grace Caskie
 Dept. of Education and Human Services
 Lehigh University
 111 Research Drive
 Bethlehem, PA 18015
 Phone: 610.758.6094
 Fax: 610.758.6223

Material Submission:

caskie@lehigh.edu

Address Changes:

Address changes must be made through the APA office:
 Phone: (800) 374-2721
 E-mail: membership@apa.org
 Your Newsletter editor must use the addresses that APA provides.

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newsletter, we can do a better job of providing links to additional web pages and materials that will be useful for the membership. I hope that Division 20 members will be patient as we work out the kinks in transitioning to a new format.

Beyond our challenges with the newsletter and budget, we faced another difficult situation this year as we assembled our slate of nominees for the Division 20 elections. We approached many deserving candidates to run for Division 20 President, and we experienced a complete inability to find candidates willing to run for this office. Our approach, as in previous years, was to approach Division 20 Fellows who had not previously served as President of the Division. Our hard-working Elections Committee Chair, Becky Allen, was turned down by several dozen candidates.

With the deadline to finalize our slate of nominees fast approaching, the Division's leadership decided to take a pragmatic approach and ask a former Division 20 President to run for the office unopposed. Harvey Sterns, who has made many contributions to the Division through the years, including previous service as our President, has agreed to run. I wanted to explain this situation so that members wouldn't think that we were trying to bypass our usual election procedures. I am very pleased at the prospect of Harvey Sterns returning to lead the Division again.

Harvey is very enthusiastic, experienced, and will do an outstanding job. He also has a long-standing commitment to our Division. But the unwillingness of many highly accomplished psychologists to run for this office is troubling. I know that many factors go into the decision to run for office in an organization, but I swear, this is not such a bad job! A healthy Division 20 depends on having senior scholars who are willing to serve the organization. I hope that we will be more successful next year.

Now that I have addressed some topics reflecting problems in the Division, let me switch to some good news. As you will see in the rest of the newsletter, we have planned an outstanding APA Convention Program for 2014. Joann Montepare and Chris Rosnick have done a spectacular job. Beyond our regular Division 20 programming, we have been very active in APA's new approach emphasizing interdivisional programming. Division 20 members are very well represented on these sessions. Sara Czaja (our President Elect) and Wally Boot (our incoming Program Chair for 2015) recently attended the 2014 Division Leadership Conference and also reported some exciting possibilities for interdivisional programming for the 2015 meeting. We are taking on some exciting

efforts to foster mentorship, and we continue to work closely with APA's Office on Aging and Committee on Aging. We have received outstanding applications for Fellow status, and those are proceeding. March 15 is the deadline for the Division's many awards, and this is always a great opportunity to see the accomplishments of many in our Division.

I hope that everyone will make plans to attend the APA meetings this August in Washington, DC. It's a great opportunity to learn, to collaborate, and to connect. Best wishes, and I'll look forward to seeing many of you in August.

APA 2014 Program Report

Submitted by Joann Montepare and Chris Rosnick, 2014 D20 Program Co-Chairs

Mark your calendars! The D20 Program for the 2014 APA convention in Washington, DC, August 7-10, 2014 is in motion, and it looks great. The presidential theme selected this year by Bill Haley is "Translating Aging Theory and Research to Intervention and Practice", and speakers will address this theme from several perspectives. Baltes Award recipient Roger Dixon (University of Alberta) will talk about "Epidemiological Approaches to Cognitive Aging: Trajectories, Transitions, Modifiers, and Mechanisms", and invited speaker David Roth (Johns Hopkins University) will offer his view on "Updating Randomized Trials of Interventions for Older Adults with Needed Methodological Innovations". In his presidential address, Bill Haley will tell us about how "It Takes a Network: The Social Side of Research". This year, APA launched a new collaborative programming format, and D20 had four symposia accepted, in collaboration with Divisions 3, 6, 12, 21 and 22. We will also be hosting eight other symposia and special sessions, including the 4th annual session of "Speed Mentoring: Building Research Careers in Geropsychology and Neuropsychology" - developed through a collaboration with Division 40 and CONA. An invited symposium, "The Coming of Age of APA's Committee on Aging: Influencing Aging Research, Practice, and Policy", will feature past/present CONA members who will discuss milestones in CONA programming and contributions since its establishment in 1998. Sixty posters were accepted, reflecting diverse, contemporary topics ranging from clinical evaluations of dementia to fashion and the aging self. We will also be co-listed on over 15 other divisional programs, reflecting topics such as research with transgender people across the lifespan, discrimination and health among women at midlife, and lifespan traffic and transport psychology. We expect several of our programs to offer Continuing Education credits for attendees, and we invite members to meet new Fellows in their presentation session. This year, the social hour will be on-site, in collaboration with D12-2 Clinical Geropsychology, which we hope will prove to be an accessible and resourceful way to gather together, network, and enjoy the company of colleagues. The APA conference programming office is reviewing our scheduling requests, and we should know more by June about the final program schedule. We look forward to seeing you in DC!

Upcoming APA Convention Dates and Locations

2014	Washington, DC	August 7-10
2015	Toronto, Ontario, Canada	August 6-9
2016	Denver, CO	August 4-7
2017	Washington, DC	August 3-6
2018	San Francisco, CA	August 9-12

APA Council of Representatives Report

Submitted by Susan Krauss Whitbourne and K. Warner Schaie

The APA Council of Representatives met in Washington, D.C. from February 21-23, 2014. In many ways, this was an important meeting. The most significant item on the agenda was voting on motions that would restructure Council, including the Board of Directors. We spent much of the first day discussing the proposals by the Implementation Working Group (IWG) that was formed late in 2013 in accordance with votes held in the August 2013 meeting that would propose changes in the composition of Council, divert fiscal responsibility from Council to the Board for a 3-year trial period, and prepare slates for members to these and other governance bodies.

The underlying purpose of the changes to governance is to make APA, as an organization, more “nimble” and hence, efficient. Much of the impetus for these changes came from evaluations conducted by a consulting group to APA who has worked over the past several years to assess governance’s effectiveness. Some of the input to this process came from Council members who felt that their ability to contribute was not taken advantage of, particularly given the amount of time spent at Council meetings in which members passively listen to reports and vote on agenda items that, in the majority, involve relatively limited discussion. In previous reports, we have provided more detail on this background.

The motions placed before us at this meeting asked us to approve a 3-year trial period in which fiduciary responsibility is transferred from Council to the Board. Instead of voting on annual operating budgets, Council would control a budget intended to fund Council-initiated “policy” types of activities. This motion was approved by an 80-19% majority. The role of the Finance Committee, which now works with the APA Treasurer and the APA CFO, is still left unspecified.

Council’s size would be reduced and each division and each SPTA (State, Provincial and Territorial Association) would send only 1 representative regardless of its number of members. There would, therefore, be no more apportionment ballot. A Council Leadership Team (CLT) would be composed of members of Council and would help manage Council’s workflow. The CLT would consist of 12 members including a chair elected from Council, designated seats for Early Career Psychologists (ECP’s), the American Psychological Association Graduate Student (APAGS) chair, and 3 at-large members elected from the Council. This motion was approved 93 to 5%.

The revamped Board of Directors would include 6 members-at-large elected directly from the membership. A Needs Assessment, Slating, and Campaigns Committee (NASCC) would consist of 7 members who would conduct an annual needs assessment and election slates for public member and general Association membership seats on the Board. NASCC would be designed to be limited to avoid Conflict of Interest or “King/Queen Making.” Thus, they would not include current governance members or even Divisional or SPTA elected officers. Previous elected officers would be eligible after a period of time in which they had not served in an elected position for APA. The maximum term on NASCC is 3 years. This motion was approved 90% to 10%.

As mentioned above, two models for restructuring Council were then compared, both of which involve 1 representative per Division and 1 per (SPTA). The restructuring would also include additional representatives that come either from each of the 4 directorates and ECPs or would include representation from Ethnic and Minority Psychological Associations and the 7 regional psychological associations. We did not vote on the alternatives models presented, because we decided that more time is needed to flesh out the composition of these models.

It might appear that Council is losing its influence over governance and, particularly, the finances of APA. However, we were asked to place our trust in the process and in so doing, sign on to the idea that a revamped governance structure will allow members to have greater input into important policy issues facing APA and psychology in general. President Nadine Kaslow is doing an excellent job of negotiating us through this difficult process, and Past President Melba Vasquez, who is now chairing the IWG, similarly is focused on serving the best interests of psychology and APA members. There have been several virtual Town Halls to discuss these changes, and the IWG members seem very open to our input.

We also approved the principle that sunsets the C-3 responsibilities of Committee for the Advancement of Professional Practice (CAPP) effective 12/31/14. A motion to have the Board of Directors decide to reimburse Council members fully for both the February and August Council meetings beginning in 2015 was approved. This does not guarantee that the reimbursement will be made but that the Board may decide to provide that funding (or not).

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The Council meeting coincided with “match day,” which is when psychology internship applicants are informed about whether or not they were placed in an internship position. The good news is that the number of matches (and internship spots) are increasing, but there is still a significant discrepancy. Some of the improvement may be accounted for by the decision last year to provide \$3 million in support for the development of new internship slots.

Turning to regular agenda items, Council unanimously approved funding the Archives for the History of Psychology for \$60,000 per year for the next three years. Funding was approved for a 3-year period to support a centralized APA application system for graduate education in psychology.

Funding from an agreement reached with the APA Insurance Trust in 2013 provided \$6,250,000 that Council voted to place into a designated fund. Additional funding for the costs of implementing the GGP was authorized, putting the total cost (over 4 years) for the project at roughly \$1.1 million. We approved the 2014 budget of \$110.5 million with an operating margin of \$1.5 million.

The definition of Early Career Psychologist (ECP) has been set at 7 years up until the present. We voted to approve a motion proposed by the Committee on Early Career Psychologists to change the definition to 10 years, which will provide a consistent definition that takes into account the realities of changing career

trajectories. An item was referred to all boards and committees that would have created specific ECP slates on many of the boards and committees.

The proposal for a new division, the Society for Technology and Psychology (Division 57) was not approved due to concerns about overlap with several existing divisions and the fact that it is not consistent with APA's strategic plan.

Regardless of these governance changes, votes for Boards and Committees will still be held this year. We want to urge you, once again, to nominate yourself and others for these slates. Please let us know if you are interested in doing so and, if you are put on a slate, we can help you prepare your caucus support materials. Susan is current Chair of the Coalition of Academic, Scientific, and Applied-research Psychology as well as a newly-elected member of the Board of Educational Affairs. Warner is serving his last year on the Committee for the Structure and Function of Council. Both of us are willing to mentor you if you would like to become involved.

As always, we appreciate your support in allowing us to represent you at these meetings. We are honored to serve you during these times of change for APA's future governance and encourage you provide your input and suggestions.

Division 20 Elections -- Candidate Statements

The following individuals will stand for election for Division 20:

President - Harvey Sterns

Secretary - Joann Montepare

Council Representative - Amy Ai, Carolyn Aldwin, and Patricia Parmelee

Member-at-Large - Sherry Beaudreau, Jane Berry, Shane Bush, and Jennifer Moyer

Statements written by each candidate are available as part of the online content of this newsletter, located on the division's website at: <http://www.apadivisions.org/division-20/publications/newsletters>

Teaching Tips

Connecting Subjects: Facilitating Student Learning and Understanding through Reflective Papers

Katherine Allen, Professor of Human Development
Virginia Tech

An opportunity and a challenge in teaching undergraduate students in the Department of Human Development is the intricate connection between our “subject matter” and our “subjects”. We teach about, and study, individuals and families over the life course. Our topics, including family development, human sexuality, diverse families, family risks and resiliences, and human services delivery, are relevant to our students, both personally and professionally. In teaching courses that challenge students’ beliefs about families, whether those beliefs are unexamined, contradictory, or firmly held, I have learned that it is much more powerful to acknowledge rather than ignore the self of the learner. Living in families; starting families; balancing work and family; surviving and thriving in the midst of the inevitable crises that constitute life in families; and finding meaning, support, and resilience in families are all issues that are very much on the minds of young adults who are forging their own family pathways.

Some of the topics that I teach and study include hidden family ties in older women’s lives; LGBT family relationships; college students and sexuality; adult sibling relationships; and family crises and change. Such subject matter often prompts intense responses from students. While some students have not yet been sensitized to disadvantage in their own or others’ lives, many have lived through experiences that do not reflect the so-called norm of the nuclear family, allegedly untroubled by loss, disruption, or unanticipated events. It is more likely that students have experienced many of the family permutations and challenges that we study in class and to ignore that fact would be counterintuitive and disingenuous. My goal is to present research about how families face challenges and social change while meeting their needs for health and well being over the life course, within a context that acknowledges and honors students’ lived experience. At the same time, teaching in my field requires a delicate balance of helping students to “get out of the way of their own experience” so that they can see a much bigger picture about the social, economic, and political forces impacting family life for others.

The college classroom is an ideal environment for informing students’ most private and deeply held beliefs. Messages they have internalized from parents, peers, media, religious communities, and the like inevitably bump up against the research and theories that

comprise the core of our knowledge base about family systems, identities, roles, and relationships. The space where students’ own ideas, feelings, and behaviors collide with the material in our texts and internships in the field provides an opportunity for change. When students’ core ideas are challenged and knocked off center, new knowledge can enter and help them grow, not only as scholars but also as human beings with the capacity for deeper understanding of themselves and of the clients with whom they will work in the human development profession. A powerful way to develop skills to knock down walls between “us” and “them” is through acknowledging, not denying, students’ subjective responses to what they are studying.

How do we facilitate student learning and practice when we study what we often live? One strategy derived from the practice of engaged pedagogy is to assign reflective papers in which students approach the course material to “get it out of their system” about how they may have experienced the topic in their own lives. Reflective papers on the difficult and sensitive subjects we teach and study in our field provide both a touchstone for reflection and a springboard for action. Making our experience transparent through reflective papers allows us, as human service practitioners, to put ourselves in the shoes of clients, rather than taking a distanced stance. Students especially resonate with the practice of writing about and sharing their subjective experiences with the subject matter, particularly when given the opportunity to share their stories or listen to other students’ stories through classroom exercises. Students learn so much from each other, and finding out about how their peers have experienced the issues we study provides an exciting opportunity for reflection and understanding. In making the reflective work a part of the class, students not only learn to connect the personal to the professional, but they learn a lesson that is essential for getting along well in contemporary work and families: collaboration with and openness to learning from one’s peers.

**American Psychological Association, Division 20 Adult Development and Aging
Executive Committee Mid-Year Meeting
Sheraton Salon 820
New Orleans, LA
Friday, November 22, 2013 8:00-9:30 a.m.**

Minutes submitted by Lisa Miller, Secretary

Present: Bill Haley, Sue Whitbourne, Neil Charness, Warner Schaie, Shevaun Neupert, Julie Boron, Joann Montepare, Michael Marsiske, Joe Gaugler, Pat Parmelee, Becca Levy, Lisa Miller, Dave Chiriboga, Karen Kopera-Frye, Grace Caskie, Kristen Condeelis, Lynn Snow, Elizabeth Handling, Harvey Stern, JoNell Strough, Victor Molinari, Sara Czaja, Deb DiGilio, Pat Kobor

I. Committee Reports

a. Treasurer's Report (Joe Gaugler)

Five-year trend analysis shows decline in revenue and stability or increase in costs which causes us to draw on our short-term investment fund more and more. Various ways to achieve fiscal health are being considered (e.g., electronic newsletter, membership drive, fees paid to APS). Regarding newsletter printing and mailing costs, several ideas were considered. Grace said the newsletter is already on the website so making it available online not an issue. If we were to consider offering mail and digital options, it would be difficult to know who wants which version at this point. Michael suggested we use postcards to prompt members to go to the website and read the newsletter. Although we could lose readers if we cut the mail options, we'd save a good deal of money. An appealing idea is to send out an email with introductions to the articles/sections along with hot links to "read more" might work well. Consensus among committee members was to convert to a paperless process as soon as possible. Grace will work on converting and Michael will help with web-related issues. Over time, we will also need to ramp up membership drive and/or fund raising and identify the most important expenses. The Division should continue to consider how to help the council representatives pay for travel to the convention. Joe will put list of suggested cuts and expenses for all to consider and will redo budget with proposed changes. This will be discussed at our February 2014 conference call.

b. Membership Committee (David Chiriboga, Ann Pearman and Lynn Snow)

Membership appears to be dropping but it's not clear how far it has dropped this year because 2014 numbers are incomplete as of this date. Joe Gaugler, as former Membership Co-Chair, has provided the Committee with materials that he used. We need to be more active at gaining and retaining members. One idea is to work on retaining fellows to be active/paid members, for example inviting them to lunches or social events with speakers, inviting them to be the speaker, or offering webinars that would be of interest to this and other group. Bill will check in with membership committee monthly to see how things are going.

c. Newsletter (Grace Caskie)

As noted above (Treasure's Report), there was discussion surrounding converting to a digital-only format. Bill would like to have a shorter newsletter for the next issue and make it clear to members that this is the last paper version of the newsletter. Next deadline for contributions is Feb 15. It would be good to include more articles highlighting why Division 20 is important. Grace and Bill have worked together to add some pieces to the newsletter where members emphasize these issues.

d. Awards (Karen Roberto and Karen Kopera-Frye)

Student travel award call is posted. Division 45 (Society for the Psychological Study of Ethnic Minority Issues) is co-sponsoring travel award with us. We need to find ways to ensure that students use the fund to attend the conference. We agreed that, in the future, students will not receive payment for their travel awards unless they attend the conference. The Awards Committee will propose a solution, e.g. requiring attendance at the Division 20 Business Meeting, or submitting receipts, before travel funds are disbursed to students, for our February conference call.

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- e. Program Committee (Joann Montepare and Chris Rosnick)
The process has changed for collaborative programming. Eight collaborative symposia were submitted (these are not invited, but division driven); APA reviews them, then they go back to Divisions to see if they want to devote the hours. Ideas for social events are being discussed (e.g., a rooftop event at the Hotel Washington). The division has 19 hours for the next convention.
- f. Education (Tina Savla and Julie Boron)
The committee is updating syllabi and graduate program information. Despite the committee's tenacious attempts to gather all new information, more updates from graduate programs are needed. Bill will send a last call to inform individuals that old information will be purged so members are urged to update now.
- g. Council (Warner Schaie, Sue Whitbourne)
Many are concerned that power is shifting in APA toward centralized authority within a board of directors, away from division and state associations. Streamlining is undisputedly needed but it's unclear how this should be done. The plan is to have one representative per division or state, regardless of size of membership, and then have other elected individuals across divisions/states.
- h. Elections Committee (Becky Allen via Bill)
Recruiting candidates to run for President is challenging. MALs and secretary are also needed for the upcoming year.
- i. ABPP (Becky Allen and/or Victor Molinari)
Twelve individuals were examined, but we still need 21 others to become a fullfledged speciality.
- j. Fellows Committee (JoNell Strough)
JoNell would like us to be more active in recruiting candidate fellows. Some letter writers were having trouble with new online system but these issues seem to be resolved. Dec 1 is deadline. Handbook needs updating in this (and other) areas.
- k. Continuing Education Committee (Shevaun Neupert and Farzin Irani)
Robin West's proposal was submitted (train the trainer on memory improvement). This is not revenue producing, however, webinars can be. Adam Davey may have a webinar idea for the coming year and Shevaun will follow up with him.
- l. Listserv Issues (Lori James, Joann Montepare)
There was discussion surrounding moderator issues, for example, journal editor's requests for reviewers needs to be general and specific to a specific paper or topic. Division 20 policy is to not put through requests for research participants.
- m. Early Career Psychologists (Adam Davey and Kate Flori)
Pat reported that a formal mentoring program is in the works.
- n. Historian (Harvey Sterns)
The Division has a collection of historical materials and we should consider having the materials archived. We might also consider updating the academic lineage project that Liz Stine-Morrow produced with Betty Birren. We'd need volunteers to get this going. This is a great project for individuals who are interested in getting involved with the Division.
- II. APA Liaisons
 - a. Debbie DiGilio (CONA)

Deb is grateful to the Division for donating time to CONA and for volunteering on committees. Several announcements were made; details can be found at the CONA website (APA.org/pi/aging/cona).

- b. Pat Kobor – Science Director—video and online resources for members to communicate with members of congress. Richard Suzman of NIA is looking for ways to collaborate with Division 20.
- c. Becca Levy (Committee on Women in Psychology)
There is an award, nominate self or others.

III. Special Projects

- a. Web Page (Michael Marsiske)
Content updates are ongoing. In response to Harvey's comments about having historical materials archived, Michael said we can consider archiving our own historical materials on the website. We had wanted a members-only section of website, but APA cannot do this as we had wanted so all information is in the public domain. We need to update the EC directory.
- b. Graduate students/Postdocs (Elizabeth Handling, Kristen Condeelis, Elizabeth Hahn)
The students have been brainstorming ideas for the newsletter. The students and postdocs have been appointed to the Education Committee, and Bill asked if they can help with membership issues as well.
- c. Video Project (David Chiriboga)
The Betty Birren video editing is ongoing. We could collect these types of videos for our archive so individuals could use these in teaching and other uses. We could also bring in more senior fellows who could do interviews for the archive. Please send links and ideas for more videos to Dave.
- d. President's initiatives: 2014-15 (Sara Czaja)
Walter Boot is incoming program chair. Sara said that it is important for the division to increase visibility in interdisciplinary contexts. We need to use other associations and boards as spring boards.

IV. Housekeeping

- a. Graduate Student Directory update (Savla)
Bill reiterated that programs need to respond to the update request or their information will be dropped.
- b. Quarterly conference calls (Haley)
Bill would like to aim for a telephone meeting after Feb 22, which is when the next council meeting will be held.

Meeting adjourned at 9:30.

Continuing Education Report Submitted by Shevaun Neupert, Co-Chair

Dr. Robin L. West will conduct a ½ day CE workshop at the APA convention in Washington, D.C. "Train the Trainer: Memory Training for Seniors" will present a critical research overview and prepare psychologists to offer an empirically-validated memory training program for older adults. Memory training can be effective with seniors, but maintenance of training effects has been elusive. Training programs that change beliefs may be key to long-term maintenance. This workshop will provide participants with an overview of past memory training research, and demonstrate a comprehensive and successful memory training program, focusing on strategies, self-efficacy and control, which they can implement in their own communities.

Student News

Advice For Students: Applying, Getting Accepted and Successfully Completing Master's and Doctoral Programs

By Kristen Condeelis, Elizabeth Hahn, Elizabeth Handing

Applying to Graduate Programs

The graduate school application process can be a challenging and taxing endeavor, but it doesn't have to be impossible. Whether it is an application for a Master's or Doctoral program, the two most important things to remember are to prepare well in advance and be organized. If you are applying for a Master's or Doctoral program while you are still an undergraduate, the beginning of junior year is a great semester to begin the preparation process. If you are out of school, working, or currently in a graduate program, a good time to start thinking about the process is two years prior to when you intend to start a program. As you prepare to apply to graduate programs, a seemingly obvious, but sometimes under-recognized, part of the process is to determine which programs you are most interested in pursuing. Determining which programs you should apply to includes knowing what you plan to do upon completion of the program and understanding the types of skills and certifications you will have upon completion of the program (e.g., skills for clinical settings, teaching skills, and/or research skills). Remember that fit is also very important, and as a result, when researching programs, identify ones that have faculty members with similar research interests and provide training that will be beneficial for attaining career goals. For example, a student with both a great resume and test scores may not be accepted to a program if her interests do not align with the faculty in that program. Therefore, doing your homework can pay off if you find programs that best suit your needs and interests. For help with this process, consider reaching out to academic advisors or specific faculty members you are interested in working with and visiting the websites of programs of interest as well as the Graduate School Directory on the APA Division 20 website.

Getting Accepted into Graduate Programs

Once you have determined which programs you will apply to, you will then begin preparing for the Graduate Record Examination (GRE). Consider purchasing or borrowing study guide materials and/or registering for GRE

preparation courses. Moreover, allow ample time to study for the GRE, as many programs use GRE scores as a criterion for admissions decisions and fellowship awards. This is when organization becomes helpful, because you will want to keep track of the different programs you are applying to along with their specific instructions. For example, there may be GPA requirements for programs, which are often available on a program's website or by contacting the program directly. In addition to great test scores and a good GPA, research experience is another fundamental aspect of graduate school applications. Therefore, it is imperative to gain research experience as an undergraduate research assistant by volunteering or working in a research lab that is interesting to you. While volunteering as a research assistant, you will not only acquire research skills, such as working with data management and analysis software programs, data collection, and participant recruitment, but you will also begin to develop an understanding of the types of topics that interest you. Not only will this experience help to diminish the learning curve that often occurs at the beginning of graduate school, but it will also provide the opportunity to set you apart from other applicants. In addition, working in different labs will allow you to gain diverse research experiences via collaborating with multiple researchers and/or gaining experience with multiple populations.

Another major factor that can help you get into graduate school is having good recommendation letters. Most schools require three letters of recommendation, but this can vary by program; consequently, it is important to understand requirements ahead of time. This is yet another important aspect of the graduate school application process that requires both organization and preparation. Remember that when you ask your letter-writers to write you a recommendation, they likely have many other students with similar deadlines for whom they are also writing letters. Therefore, know your deadlines, and request recommendation letters *early!* Choose referees who can speak to your talents and are familiar with your research capabilities and academic performance. Moreover, it is often useful to provide a packet of information for each program that includes due

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dates, a curriculum vitae, personal statement, and information about the program. Furthermore, it may be helpful to generate a spreadsheet that denotes due dates and specific directions concerning how to submit recommendation letters (i.e., online, by mail) and disseminate it to each referee. You want to make this process as easy as possible for your referees, so send them clear and concise instructions for each application. A good referee should know you already, but it is helpful to remind them of some of your specific accomplishments and the reasons you are interested in a particular program.

Before you submit the applications, review the deadlines and requirements for each school again and make sure you have completed all the necessary steps. Schools have different deadlines and application processes (i.e., online versus mail), so reading every detail might be the difference between getting accepted and not getting your application submitted. Therefore, plan ahead and submit your application early so that you have at least one week before the deadline just in case any unexpected delays or changes occur. If you have *any* questions, do not hesitate to contact the program director or departmental staff. Program directors and departmental staff are very helpful and friendly, and remember they are there to help with the process and are more than willing to tell you more about their program.

Once the applications are submitted, it's still not the end of the road. Schools often take a few months before sending out decision letters. Waiting to hear about your plans can be both nerve-wracking and anxiety-provoking. However, try to remain patient, and if you haven't heard back from the school, follow-up and be sure there were no errors with your application. Although you might not want to think about it, have a back-up plan in case you do not get accepted to your desired programs. Investigating back-up plans is also a good use of your time while waiting for responses from the programs to which you have applied. In fact, there are various other options for things you might do for a year or two before re-applying to graduate programs that can only help you down the line. For instance, you could look into volunteer opportunities, related work experience, online classes, or internships in

your field. Even if you do not get accepted into your desired program on your first try, more experience helps build your resume and makes you an even stronger applicant during the next round.

Successfully Completing Graduate Programs

Okay, fast forward a few months and you are accepted to your dream program! Now, how do you succeed? Entire books could be (and have been) written on advice for excelling and successfully completing graduate programs. Below, we have listed some specific book recommendations as well as some general advice for excelling in graduate programs.

Peters, R. (1997). *Getting What you Came For: The Smart Student's Guide to Earning an M.A. or a Ph.D.* New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

Ruben, A. (2010). *Surviving your Stupid, Stupid Decision to go to Grad School.* United States: Random House, Inc.

Karp, J.R. (2009). *How to Survive your PhD: The Insider's Guide to Avoiding Mistakes, Choosing the Right Program, Working with Professors, and Just How a Person Actually Writes a 200-Page Paper.* Naperville, Illinois: Sourcebooks, Inc.

A lot can be said about the expertise and skills that can help you be a great student and succeed in your academic endeavors. However, there are other very important qualities that make great students as well, and these include, among other things, being persistent, being inquisitive, and having self-motivation. Above and beyond raw intelligence, these qualities can help you to complete projects (that sometimes seem daunting), make it through some of the bumps in the road and ultimately learn from them, and stay motivated towards your ultimate goal of completing your degree and starting a career in the field of psychology. This article just scratches the surface to provide some advice on how to apply to, get accepted to, and completed a masters or doctoral program. We hope that it was helpful to you, and wish you the best of luck on your path towards academic success.

Adult Development and Aging News
Division 20, American Psychological Association
Division Services Office
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A Note from the Editor

It has been, and continues to be, an honor to serve as the editor for *Adult Development and Aging News*, our division's newsletter. As division president Bill Haley explains in his column, this issue is the last printed, "hard-copy" issue that you will receive, and we will transition to an electronic-only format by this summer's issue.

Similarly, the content of the newsletter has been, and will continue to be, posted on the division's website. If you haven't looked at it before, take a moment to check out the online version of this issue of *Adult Development and Aging News* at:

<http://www.apadivisions.org/division-20/publications/newsletters>

Other changes you can anticipate with the transition to the electronic-only format include receiving an email through the Division 20 listserv that the newest issue is available on the APA website and links to featured content from that issue. I hope you will continue to read the valuable and informative pieces that our members (and others) contribute to each newsletter.

Sincerely,

Grace I. L. Caskie

Editor