President’s Message, Stephen Yanchar

Dear Colleagues,

I wish to express my warmest greetings to you as members of the Society for Theoretical and Philosophical Psychology. I have long felt that the Society provides a unique place in which to be engaged as students of the discipline, and particularly, as scholars seeking to explore the field—its past, present, and future—at the deepest levels of intellectual engagement. But it’s you as members that make the Society the wonderful organization that it is. Relations developed within the Society provide a special kind of support and camaraderie for scholars plumbing the depths of ideas in psychology. I have deeply appreciated my relations with many Society members over the years.

I wish also to express special appreciation to those who have served the Society in various capacities. I have seen an extraordinary willingness on the part of many to offer highly-competent—and I might add, time-consuming—service that allows the Society to function smoothly. I was not aware of how much effort is required to run the Society until I began to serve as a member of the executive committee and witnessed for myself the work that many of our colleagues perform on a regular basis.

Much has been accomplished in the past year under the capable leadership of our past-president Mary Beth Morrissey, not the least of which is a revision of our APA divisional by-laws to better guide the work of the division as it strives to offer inspiring conferences and maintain standards of excellence with regard to scholarship, governance, recruitment, and financial stability. Our program committees in 2019 did an outstanding job of organizing the Midwinter Meeting and division programming at the APA Convention. These and other accomplishments have allowed the Society to continue its tradition of excellence—a tradition I hope to continue as we move forward with conference planning in 2020.

Program committees have already begun midwinter meeting and annual convention preparations. The 2020 Midwinter Meeting will be held in San Diego, from February 28th to March 1st. The Midwinter Meeting committee is chaired by Gary Brill, who is accompanied in his labors by Cacky Mellor, Emese Ilyes, and Chris Schuck. I am also pleased to announce that two awards will be presented at the upcoming midwinter meeting. Louis Sass will receive the Distinguished Theoretical and Philosophical Contributions to Psychology award and Brent Slife will receive the Presidential Citation. The APA convention in 2020 will be held in Washington DC, from August 6th to 9th. The convention program committee is chaired by Erin Thrift, in conjunction with Joe Ostenson (co-chair) and Snjezana Huerta.

The presidential theme this year is “Theoretical and Philosophical Psychology in the Service of Practice.” I elaborate on this theme as follows:
Theoretical and philosophical psychology has a long tradition of excellence, especially with regard to the critical examination and development of ideas. While these endeavors are significant in their own right, theoretical and philosophical psychology can also do much to facilitate the practice of various kinds of psychologists. This year’s theme, “Theoretical and Philosophical Psychology in the Service of Practice,” is intended to bring more attention to the ways in which theoretical and philosophical psychology has, in the past, contributed to practice, and may, in the future, offer new horizons of understanding for practitioners in the field.

More particularly, this theme emphasizes the role that theoretical and philosophical psychology can play in improving various forms of practice, especially those associated with the three SIGS of the division: clinical/counseling, critical pedagogy, and social practice. Thus, this theme invites members of the division to consider what their work has done to contribute to the field—and to the common good—and how they might do this with greater effect in traditional areas of emphasis (clinical and counseling, teaching and learning) as well as more recent forms of practice associated with efforts to promote social justice. Particular views of what more effective forms of practice in these subdomains may entail are especially encouraged. Various types of analyses that set the theoretical-philosophical stage for the development of these views are also encouraged.

Finally, this theme points to the issue of theoretical and philosophical psychology itself as a community of practice. How has it distinguished itself in the history of the field? What values and assumptions have given it shape in its past and present forms? And how may it move fruitfully into the future as a practice?

In these ways, this year’s theme emphasizes the capacity of theoretical and philosophical work to facilitate excellence in psychological practices of all types, including theoretical and philosophical psychology itself.

I see this theme as pointing us toward the world of practices in at least two senses: one rather obvious and another perhaps less so. The first concerns professional roles within psychology—clinician, counselor, consultant, teacher, professor, researcher, and so on. Here I ask the question: What invigorating and re-envisioning work have Society members produced, or what can they produce, that may facilitate work in these areas?

The second sense in which this theme points to the world of practices concerns human action (or practice) understood as fundamentally embodied, contextual, agential involvement in the value-laden settings of cultural life. Practice, understood this way, raises a more focused question: How can the work of theoretical and philosophical psychology, informed by versions of this practice-oriented ontology, facilitate professional practice and scholarship?

While criticism of traditional practices in the field (and their underlying assumptions and values) serves an important function, this theme suggests a view of human existence that may yield positive insights regarding better ways of conceptualizing the professional work of psychologists.
In these ways (and surely others), this theme can guide our attention as we consider the kinds of contributions we wish to make in the 2020 Society meetings and beyond.

Related to this theme are the three active special interest groups (SIGs) within the Society:

- Clinical/Counseling
- Critical Pedagogy
- Critical Theory and Social Practice

These SIGs help support scholars wishing to focus their theoretical and philosophical work in directions traditionally associated with these areas of professional practice. As STPP SIG leaders have suggested, involvement in SIGs can also help substantiate the claim that being a part of the Society relates directly to one’s professional work (i.e., is not mere “naval gazing”). I encourage members of the Society to consider being involved in one or more SIGs and receive the benefits they provide, such as SIG-specific programming at meetings and involvement in communities of like-minded scholars within the Society. I suggest that conference sessions focused on SIG-related scholarship, in the meetings of 2020 and beyond, would enrich the scholarly experience of many in attendance.

On a different topic, I wish to briefly note that early in 2020 there will be a call for nominations for three executive committee offices:

- President (3-year commitment, serving as president-elect in 2020-21, president in 2021-22, and past-president in 2022-23)
- Treasurer (3-year term)
- Member-at-large (3-year term)

I invite you to begin thinking now about colleagues you may wish to nominate. Nominations can be sent to me anytime at: stephen_yanchar@byu.edu

In closing, I wish to briefly suggest that through our individual and combined efforts we may continue to strengthen the Society as a community of scholars dedicated to the examination of psychology’s underpinnings and their practical extensions. Please feel free to reach out to me or one of our members-at-large if you have comments regarding this ongoing work. I hope that 2020 will be a productive and satisfying year for all. And, of course, I look forward to seeing as many of you as possible at the 2020 meetings!

Sincerely,

Steve

APA Convention, Chicago 2019

The Annual Convention for the American Psychological Association was held August 8-11, 2019 in Chicago, IL. With its emphasis on Mary Beth Morrissey’s presidential theme, What is Social Justice?, divisional programming featured a number of programs exploring the definition of social justice and the real-life implications of social justice in psychology, particularly as it pertains to immigrants and refugees. Highlights of divisional programming included a keynote symposium, headlined by Dr. Garth Stevens from the University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, who spoke to the presidential theme in his address “Get in or Die Trying: Go Home or Die Here”: Economies of Affect, Embodiment and Morality in the Violence of Contemporary Global Migration. His address was followed by connected addresses by Sunil Bhatia and Barbara Held. This year, programming also spilled over into the hospitality suite, where several symposia and special events were held centered on the presidential theme.

Joe Ostenson
Annual Meeting and Amendments to Division 24 Bylaws

Division 24 held its Annual Meeting at the APA Convention in Chicago on Saturday, August 10, 2019.

After submission to the Members of the reports of the president, treasurer (presented by president in absence of treasurer) and council representative, Mary Beth Morrissey submitted the proposed revisions to the division bylaws for a formal vote of the Members.

For those not in attendance at the meeting and by way of further background, the process of revising the division bylaws was initiated in 2018, and undertaken with the principal goal of bringing the bylaws up to date to reflect changes that had already been implemented in the practices of the division, such as the formation of a functioning Finance Committee and Special Interest Groups. Other proposed changes aimed to clarify the division purposes and the responsibilities of the Executive Committee and officers, as well as expand the committee structure.

We are pleased to report that the Members unanimously approved the proposed amendments at the Annual Meeting, as submitted.

For your ease of reference, the bylaws, as amended August 10, 2019, will be made available on the division web site. Should you have any further questions about the provisions of the amended bylaws and how they may affect your work or conduct of business in the division, please feel free to contact Mary Beth Morrissey.

Division Awards

During the annual Division 24 business meeting in Chicago, we recognized the winners of our divisional awards. These included Suzanne Kirschner and Thomas Teo (Theodore Sarbin Award), Sarah Kamens (Sigmund Koch Award for Early Career Contribution to Psychology), Justin Karter (Outstanding Student Service Award), and Gary Brill (Steve Harrist Distinguished Service Award). Justin Karter also received the Student Paper Award for his paper entitled “An Ecological Model for Conceptual Competence in Psychiatric Diagnosis.” Congratulations to all these recipients!
Division 24 Midwinter Meeting 
2020, San Diego

Calls have gone out for Division 24’s 2020 Midwinter Meeting, to be held in San Diego, from February 28th to March 1st. The Midwinter Meeting creates an inclusive, challenging, and stimulating space for those passionate about theoretical and philosophical psychology. Please join us for interesting presentations and stimulating conversation in glorious San Diego.

We welcome proposals in any area of theoretical and philosophical psychology, especially those related to the presidential theme, "Theoretical and Philosophical Psychology in the Service of Practice." The deadline for submission of proposals is November 1, 2019.

Also take note that the conference hotel is offering reduced rates for attendees. The number of rooms available is currently only 35, so we strongly recommend booking your room early (before the deadline of January 27, 2020) to ensure that you are able to take advantage of this offer. There will also be single-day and onsite registration available for those unable to register early or attend the entire conference. These day rates make it easier for local residents to attend, so by all means alert friends and family in the San Diego area. For further details,
Dear Colleagues,

We hope you have smoothly transitioned into the new school year and have had time to put some thought into your attendance and participation at the APA 2020 convention, to be held in Washington DC (August 6-9, 2020). The APA Convention Call for Proposals is online (https://convention.apa.org/proposals) and proposals can be submitted anytime until Dec 2nd.

Pertinent deadlines are as follows:

- The deadline for submitting proposals for Division programming is December 2nd. [Note, we erroneously communicated a deadline of Dec 6th for individual submissions in a previous message but the deadline this year is Dec 2nd.] The presidential theme for this year's conference is "Theoretical and Philosophical Psychology in the Service of Practice." Members are encouraged to think about how their proposed sessions link to this theme, but as always, proposals on other topics also will be accepted.

- The APA submission portal now requires all submissions to be for symposia, skill-building sessions, discussion sessions, or posters. Proposals for individual papers will no longer be accepted through the APA submission process. We are concerned that this shift will negatively affect new scholars who may not have connections within the division and, thus, are still offering the opportunity for individual paper submissions within this division. Submit individual paper submissions directly to the Program Chairs (thrift.erin@gmail.com) by November 22nd. Papers will be reviewed and those that are accepted will be grouped into symposia.

- As with APA Convention 2019 in Chicago, a concurrent stream of programming will be offered in the Division 24 hospitality suite. Proposals for Hospitality Suite programming should be submitted directly to the Program Chairs by November 22nd (thrift.erin@gmail.com).

Best regards,
Erin Thrift, Joe Ostenson, Snjezana Huerta
APA Convention 2020 Program Committee