



The FORUM

Newsletter of the SPSP Graduate Student Committee Pre-Conference Edition

Hot stuff in Austin, TX!

If you are going to Austin, read this edition of the Forum very carefully - it's packed with information about all the programs that have been created just to serve YOU!

It also has information about how you can be involved in the creation of these programs and give the committee feedback about what we've been up to this year...so read on!

Roundtable Discussion Saturday, January 31 1:00-1:45pm

The SPSP Graduate Student Committee will host a roundtable discussion to provide you with the opportunity to voice your ideas, concerns, and needs with other SPSP student members, and hear about past and future committee activities. Finally, you'll have a place to eat your lunch without having to sit on the floor! Check your SPSP conference program for location.

**Thursday -
Preconference!
SISP Reunion!**

**Friday -
Mentoring Luncheon!**

**Saturday -
Roundtable Discussion!**

**All 3 days -
Graduate Poster Award!**

Graduate Poster Award All poster sessions

The popular Graduate Poster Award (GPA) is returning at SPSP Austin, this year sponsored by Emprisoft. The award showcases graduate student research, features undercover judges, and winners get recognition, a monetary prize and a free license for Media Lab/Direct RT.

The criteria for the award are simple. Judges evaluate applicants based on a written abstract, the quality and clarity of the actual poster, and how well authors respond to questions about their research. What makes this award unique is that the judges will remain secret until the winners are named. There are different judges at each session, representing different levels of career development. All candidates for the award will have indicating signs posted by their awards - so be sure ask them a few questions, they are ready for them!

Mentoring luncheon Friday, January 30 1:30-2:45pm

We are pleased to sponsor, in conjunction with the Training Committee, the first annual mentoring luncheon. The luncheon features 10 mentoring tables, each organized around a particular topic. Each mentoring table will have a Ph.D.-level member of SPSP on hand to dine with and serve as mentors for 5 students.

A diverse range of topics will be covered, including both research and professional development concerns. This year's topics are: (1) balancing work and family, (2) balancing research and teaching, (3) grant-writing, (4) integrating personality and social psychology, (5) narrative and qualitative research, (6) online data collection, (7) preparing for an academic job, (8) psychology and law, (9) social cognition, and (10) social neuroscience in social psychology.

Box lunches will be served, followed by dessert and coffee. Registration for this event was posted on the Graduate Student Listerv and all 50 spots have been filled. However, if you are still interested, we welcome ALL students to attend the OPEN dessert and coffee social from 2:15-2:45 pm to meet and talk with the mentors and other graduate students.

Professional Development Pre-conference Thursday, January 29

The SPSP Graduate Student Committee (GSC) and the American Psychological Association (APA) are hosting a FREE pre-conference, featuring 3 exciting presentations related to your professional career!

Continental Breakfast

9:00 - 9:30 am

Five Burning Questions of the Professoriate

Sponsored by the American Psychological Association

Facilitated by Brett Pelham, PhD
9:30 - 11:30 am

Designed for aspiring academics who are currently graduate students or post-docs, this first session will feature expert panelists will share their insights, with plenty of opportunity for discussion.

Alternatives to Academia

Sponsored by the G SC

Facilitated by Jennifer J. Harman and Arlen Moller

1:00 - 2:30 pm

The second session will be a panel discussion of nonacademic career opportunities and advice on how to prepare for a career in nonacademic settings. This year's invited speakers are:

"Doing Social Psychology at Educational Testing Service"

Alyssa Walters
Associate Research Scientist
Center for New Constructs
Educational Testing Service

"Conducting Research for Policy-Makers: Career Opportunities at RAND"

Terry Schell
Associate Behavioral Scientist
RAND

"If You Like Research...: The Research Institute as an Alternative to Academic Employment"

Gina Bellavia, Ph. D.
Postdoctoral Research Associate
Research Institute on Addictions

"Personality and Social Psychology at the Defense Intelligence Agency"

Dr. xxxxxxxx
Intelligence Officer
Department of Defense

In addition to time for Q & A, information on where to locate nonacademic employment opportunities other than what is discussed in the presentations will be available.

Moving from 'Student' to 'Professional':

Tips for Navigating the Transition

Sponsored by the Graduate Student Committee

Facilitated by Michele Schlehofer-Sutton and Jacek Jonca-Jasinski
2:45 - 4:30 pm

This last session will be a roundtable consisting of speakers from a variety of occupations, both academic and nonacademic, who have made the transition from graduate student to employee in the last 3 years. The focus of this roundtable will be to provide insight into unexpected challenges, and present general tactics to aid you during the transition phase. Invited speakers so far include:

- Chris Buchholz: Visiting Assistant Professor, St. Lawrence University
- Bobbi Carothers: 2-year position, Centenary College of LA
- Azenett Garza, Assistant

Professor, Weber State University

- Rosana Guadagno, Postdoctoral Fellow, UC—Santa Barbara
- Blair Jarvis, Empirisoft Corporation
- Jay Linn, Assistant Professor, Widener University
- Jill Sundie, Assistant Professor of Business, University of Houston

Unfortunately, due to the high interest in this pre-conference, there will be no further pre-registration. If you have any questions please email spspgsc@yahoo.com.

2003 - 2004 GSC Members

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Spotlight on...

Kimberly Swinth

University of California,
Santa Barbara

This ongoing series features graduate students randomly selected from the subscriber list of the Graduate Student Listserv.

Now in her fifth year at University of California, Santa Barbara, Kimberly Swinth tells us that her path to UCSB was an unpredictable one. While working in the tourism industry in Palm Springs, Kimberly decided to go back to school at CSU-Chico, where she developed an interest in psychology. Initially, her goal was simply to finish her bachelor's degree, but after several faculty members at Chico encouraged her to continue, she decided to remain at Chico to earn her master's degree in general psychology with an emphasis in personality and social psychology. Kimberly ended pursuing her Ph.D at UCSB because it offered her the opportunity to get involved in a new, cutting-edge program of research. Besides the wonderful location and weather, her adviser, Dr. Jim Blascovich, had received funding to start the Research Center for Virtual Environments and Behavior.

Kimberly studies social interaction in immersive virtual environments (virtual reality). For example, she looked at the social influence processes in virtual reality.

She created a virtual blackjack casino to examine conformity to emergent group norms. Through that research, she became very interested in how people perceive and respond to virtually-represented others and whether people's perceptions and responses vary depending on whether they think they are interacting with a computer versus real person. For her dissertation, Kimberly will examine the extent to which people can feel socially supported in these mediated interactions.

When asked what she sees herself doing 10 years from now, Kimberly answered, "Hmmm... there's life after graduate school?" She enjoys teaching statistics and methods as well as research. Kimberly can see herself in either a non-academic or an academic position and is keeping her options open to look for a good fit with her background, skills, and preferences.

Aside from being a graduate student, Kimberly recently learned to scuba dive and will be spending winter break diving in Thailand and Myanmar (Burma). She also enjoys gardening – "I find it really relaxing to get out and dig in the dirt and then nurture my plants" and feels that she is lucky to live near Santa Barbara's beautiful beaches, given her love of the ocean.

Kimberly's advises incoming graduate students to, "Find a program that is compatible with your personality and how you like to work. I think a lot of people pick graduate programs based on the reputation...but I think it's most important to find a program that

'fits the person.' Graduate training takes a long time and it consumes your life, so it's important to pick a school and/or location that is going to make you happy." Kimberly also emphasizes the importance of balancing work and play, "I think the people who are happiest and most successful...are those who have a rewarding and enjoyable outside life. As self-complexity theory would suggest, this helps buffer you against the inevitable frustrations and set-backs one experiences as a graduate student."

Informal SISP Reunion Cocktail Hour!

Where?

Thursday, Jan 29th from 8:00 to 9:30pm (just after the first poster session) at a to-be-announced bar around the corner from the conference hotel.

Why?

So, people can touch base with other SISP-ers at the beginning of the conference (Thursday) and roll into their late-night plans (or stick around) after 9:30.

Anything else?

We assume that people will be able to grab bar food wherever we go (we'll plan ahead for that), if they haven't already gorged themselves on hors d'oeuvres at the welcome reception.

Questions? contact Sara Algae, [salgae@virginia.edu](mailto:salgoe@virginia.edu)

Graduate Student Committee (GSC): Get involved!

We have happily received many emails from graduate students regarding increased involvement in GSC activities! As you can tell from this and past newsletters, we have been quite active in our representation of graduate students, and we strive to continue serving everyone better. From answering requests over the student listserv, to offering suggestions and feedback on projects for graduate students at the SPSP conference, you all have helped us in this mission and your help is greatly appreciated!

So what more can you do to be involved with GSC activities? Vote! That's right, it is election time again...you will shortly receive your ballot for the GSC elections over the student listserv. Voting is important (you should all know

that!), as it determines not only who will represent you, but the types of projects and activities that will be promoted within SPSP! If you missed the opportunity to nominate yourself for a position on the committee this year, remember, there is always next year! Please take a moment over the next few weeks to cast your vote.

Another way to get your voice heard directly, in the company of your peers, is to come to the graduate student roundtable at the SPSP conference. It will take place from 1:00-1:45 pm on Saturday, January 31st. Bring your box lunches, and join us as we introduce the newly elected committee members, discuss concerns, and brainstorm about future projects. We bring these proposals directly to the SPSP executive committee,

and often bring many of these exciting ideas to fruition. Take, for example, this year's graduate student survey, the mentoring luncheon, and the career pre-conference. Your feedback and suggestions at last year's roundtable helped us implement these exciting activities this year! The location of the roundtable has not yet been determined, so look for information when you arrive at the conference. And if you can't make it to the conference, don't worry! You can email any of the GSC members directly with questions, suggestions, or concerns. We welcome them!

Thanks for all your help so far, and we appreciate your continued involvement!

The GSC would like to extend a special thank you to former member at large, Amanda Scott for her assistance this year. Although no longer on the committee, she continues to serve as the listserv moderator.

Look in the SPSP Program for the following events sponsored by the SPSP Training Committee:

Advocacy and Policy Programming

There will be a special symposium on public policy featuring Faye Crosby, Susan Fiske, Stephen Drigotas, Cathy Cozzarelli, and Heather O'Beirne Kelly of APA's Public Policy Office. The symposium, scheduled for Saturday, will be useful to researchers interested in learning how to increase the policy impact of their work, as well as to individuals who would like to know more about policy-related careers.

Graduate Training Network Open Discussion

The Training Committee will host an open discussion on graduate training Friday morning at the SPSP conference. Please plan to attend or contact Yuichi Shoda (yshoda@u.washington.edu) with your suggestions for issues and concerns that should be discussed or addressed.

GASP Coffee Hour

On Saturday at SPSP, plan to stop by the GASP (GLBT Alliance in Personality and Social Psychology) coffee hour, an informal event open to all.