

Cynthia Pickett

Candidate Statement

As a long-standing member of SPSP, it is a pleasure to be nominated for the position of SPSP President. I am an experimental social psychologist by training, but my research often lies at the intersection of personality processes and social behavior (e.g., examining the association between the need to belong and social perception). Since 2017, I have held administrative roles in diversity, equity, justice, and inclusion in addition to my role as a psychology professor. As SPSP President my vision would be for SPSP as an organization to fully embrace the ideal of inclusive excellence. In our paper, [The Pandemic as a Portal: Reimagining Psychological Science as Truly Open and Inclusive](#) (Ledgerwood et al., 2022), my co-authors and I call for psychological organizations to question their assumptions regarding “good” science, develop an understanding of their shared values, and align rewards with those values. As SPSP President, I would challenge the leadership to adopt this approach as we further SPSP’s mission to advance the science, teaching, and application of social and personality psychology.

In the paragraphs below, I describe additional priorities that I would pursue as SPSP President.

Increase the Reach and Impact of Our Science: In the 20+ years that I have been an SPSP member, I have seen the organization grow tremendously. I have also seen how SPSP initiatives such as the Op Ed project have magnified the audience for our work. As President, I will continue to expand our reach so that domains such as public health, education, and foreign policy are informed by our research. As we have seen over the last two years as we have weathered a global pandemic, our collective behavior can have very beneficial or very deleterious effects. As the experts on social behavior, we are uniquely positioned to provide critical information to the public and our leadership. Developing more efficient and effective mechanisms for the transmission of this information would be a priority of mine as SPSP President.

Transparent and Open Communication: Professional organizations exist to serve the needs of their membership. To do this successfully, organizations need to listen to and be responsive to all of sectors of its constituency. As President, I would work to develop better communication pathways between the SPSP membership and the SPSP leadership. For example, I would publicize the Executive Board’s meeting agendas and encourage public comment (written, in person, or virtual) at the start of the Board’s meetings. Because decisions to fund or de-fund SPSP programs occur at these meetings, it is important for the membership to have an avenue for weighing in on those decisions.

Enhance SPSP’s Mentorship Activities: Effective mentoring is critical for our success as students, academics, and professionals during both the early and later stages of our careers. Although some SPSP members have access to mentoring at their home institutions and organizations, other members find themselves without the mentorship they need to flourish and thrive. As President, I would explore how SPSP can bridge this gap. Structures such as flash mentoring and group mentoring could be created so that SPSP members receive timely and personalized advice on pressing issues.

Although I have served SPSP in the past through roles such as Convention Committee Chair and Executive Board Member-At-Large, it would truly be an honor to serve as President for an organization that I care so deeply about.