

Subject: Dunn's Proposed Task Forces

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Reply-To: STP Extended Executive Committee <TOPEC@LIST.KENNESAW.EDU>

Date: Mon, 14 Sep 2009 14:42:04 -0400

This message contains (a) the theme of my Presidential year in brief and (b) a list of the Task Forces I would like to convene during 2010. Following procedure, I am submitting them to the STP Executive Committee for review and discussion. I apologize for the length of this message, but I felt some detail was important.

The theme of my Presidential year is continuity, change, and challenge. By continuity, I am referring to the fact that we have a strong and active organization with many engaged members. Second, change: We have a new set of bylaws that govern how STP operates, as well as a new executive structure that begins on January 1st, 2010. During the implementation phase, we will be in a periods of discovery-new procedures, new roles, new ways of doing things. Some adjustment for all of us will be necessary, but I am confident that the hard work of our colleagues who created the new bylaws will prove to be prescient and that things will go smoothly. The third part of the vision theme is challenge: What should the Society for the Teaching of Psychology be doing next and in the long run? We are not facing any threats but we do have some opportunities to consider. I like to think these opportunities (challenges), as well as the issues of continuity and change, are well reflected in the eight task forces I want to empanel over the next several months.

Task Force 1: Identifying Best Practices for Employing Part Time

Teachers of Psychology - Charged to identify and to recommend standards that psychology programs adhere to when hiring part time colleagues. This Task Force will build on the work of a previous Task Force (Skip Pollack, at the behest of the President Bill Buskist, led a TF on adjunct faculty-the Pollack report will help inform the work of the present Task Force) in order to create a working list of best practices that will serve as a resource for departments, deans, and adjuncts themselves.

Task Force 2: Identifying Best Practices for Employing Undergraduate Teaching Assistants

Charged to explore the ethical issues, teaching opportunities, reasonable responsibilities, and possibly touch on compensation matters (e.g., credit and grade, pay), as well as reasonable expectations for undergraduate students' time commitment, duties, and obligations as TAs. This Task Force will generate a list of recommended best practices that will serve as a resource for departments and students.

Task Force 3: Integration of New STP Bylaws into Procedures Manual

Charged with the responsibility of updating and, where necessary, expanding or revising the existing Procedures Manual to reflect the organizational structure that commences on January 1, 2010 as reflected in the bylaws passed in September 2008. As part of this effort, the five new VPs will be asked to keep logs of their duties and responsibilities for the first year or two of their positions. Their logs will be used to draft and/or revise relevant portions of the Procedures Manual. Note: I would also like to have this group discuss the midwinter STP meeting format/structure (i.e., the new incarnation of LRPC).

Task Force 4: High School Teachers and the Blueprint Book/Project

Charged to consider how the recommendations and observations in the Halpern (2010) book can serve as a beneficial resource for high school teachers of psychology and AP psychology. A list of observations and recommendations will result.

Task Force 5: STP Media

Charged to survey STP products, from published materials to web presence. This group will look at what we do, what we could do, and what we might want to consider doing in the near future. A report of observations and recommendations will result.

Task Force 6: Emerging Scientific Advances and the Teaching of Psychology

Currently, there is no clear statement regarding what or how emerging knowledge, tools, and techniques in neuroscience and related areas should be taught in high school, community college, or four-year college classrooms. Many teachers don't know what to do; they rely on textbooks to do it for them. Others simply skip the material. Charge: This Task Force will develop recommendations suggesting how teachers should learn about neuroscience developments and subsequently teach them in different classroom contexts and courses. The resulting report will not focus on content per se, but ideally on guidelines for teaching and learning that can serve as a resource for teachers and departments,

Task Force 7: Exploring Interdivisional Connections with Divisions

Charged with exploring cooperative ventures, including joint programming, with other APA Divisions (notably Divisions 1 – General Psychology; 10 - Aesthetics, Creativity, & the Arts; 24 -Theoretical & Philosophical Psychology; 26 - History of Psychology) who expressed sincere interest in forming closer ties with STP.

Task Force 8: STP Members as APS Fellows

Charged with assessing how many STP members are APS fellows and exploring nominating some STP members for fellow-status in APS in the future.

Dissemination. After being reviewed and vetted by the STP ExCom, Task Force materials, especially lists of "best practices" and sets of guidelines, will be made available to STP members via the web site or other relevant outlets.

Many thanks for your consideration.

Best,

Dana
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And what rough beast, its hour come round at last,
Slouches towards Bethlehem to be born? -- W. B. Yeats

SOCIETY FOR THE TEACHING OF PSYCHOLOGY
Extended Executive Committee Discussion List

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This list is hosted by Kennesaw State University, Kennesaw GA

STP Task Force on “Emerging Scientific Advances and the Teaching of Psychology”

Final Report, June 2010

Task Force:

Jeffrey Dyche, US Air Force Academy
 Jean Johnson, Governors State University
 Natalie Lawrence, James Madison University
 Julie Penley, El Paso Community College
 Julio Ramirez, Davidson College
 George Spilich, Washington College
 Kristen Whitlock, Viewmont High School
 Mark Zrull, Appalachian State University

Chair:

Suzanne Baker, James Madison University

The members of the Task Force come from a variety of backgrounds and experience in terms of teaching biopsychology-related material. However, we all agreed that teaching this material can be challenging, and that there are several possible ways that STP could provide much-needed support to teachers. We particularly focused on the needs of teachers who are not specialists in biopsychology, but may teach biopsychology content in a general or introductory psychology course, or in other courses where biopsychology content is relevant.

We identified two major issues:

- Rapid developments in the field make staying current a challenge, even for teachers who have some background in this area.
- Some teachers may not have had training or coursework on biopsychology at all. Lack of familiarity with the topic may lead them to skip biopsychology as a content area all together when teaching Introductory/General psychology.

We have recommendations in three major areas:

RESOURCES.

Task Force members were in agreement that a centralized location for information on teaching biopsychology-related topics would be extremely useful for teachers, particularly those who do not have specialized training in biological psychology. Although there are many resources available for teachers, they are scattered across many different sites, and teachers who do not have a background in biopsychology may not be aware of where to find good resources.

We have recommendations for two potential STP resources, which would be complementary to one another and would serve different needs for teachers. Both of these could potentially be housed on the STP website, perhaps under the auspices of OTRP:

Continuously-updated biopsychology teaching resource area: This could be a clearinghouse of resources to be used in teaching biopsychology-related content. ToPIX might potentially be the ideal place for this. Sue Frantz, ToPIX administrator, has indicated to us that she sees ToPIX as being designed specifically for what we have in mind. Any registered user can contribute resources and materials, giving ToPIX the potential for housing a broad array of materials that would be useful to teachers. Providing some organization to the materials (for example, designating resources as “Introductory level” or “Advanced level”) could help teachers find appropriate tools for their needs. Suggestions, exercises, or demonstrations for incorporating biopsychology-related material into other content areas in psychology (e.g. Developmental, Cognitive, or Social Psychology) might also be specially identified to make it easy to use the resources. ToPIX already contains some biopsychology-related materials; however, a special biopsychology editor (or a small group of editors) who would actively seek out and post good biopsychology-related materials would be able to rapidly add to the site and help keep it updated with useful teaching materials in this area.

“Ask a Neuroscientist:” Another component of STP’s resources could be an interactive “Ask a Neuroscientist” (or “Ask a Biopsychologist”) feature. Teachers could ask questions about specific material, how best to teach certain concepts, and get recommendations for exercises or demonstrations, and receive suggestions from teachers experienced in this area. Implementation of this recommendation would require a volunteer or small committee of biopsychologists/neuroscientists who would agree monitor the site and to respond to questions as they came in.

TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES.

We recommend that STP explore the possibility of developing biopsychology-focused online training opportunities targeted toward teachers of high school and introductory-level courses. One possibility is to partner with PT@CC and/or TOPSS to implement this. Such an initiative might fit well with the revised HS Standards, maybe as part of the development of a set of focused training modules that are linked to the Standards. Implementation of this recommendation might require a committee who would reach out to TOPSS and PT@CC, and work with the STP Director of Programming to explore the feasibility of this idea and help make it happen.

GUIDELINES FOR TEACHING.

The Task Force felt teachers are in need of targeted, helpful materials for teaching biopsychology topics; however, creating a list of Best Practices or Guidelines would probably not be useful because of the variety of topics that teachers would be covering, and because of the demands and needs of different student audiences.

STP might explore the possibility of providing a small grant for a project aimed at creating a manual for “How to Teach Biopsychology Topics in General Psyc,” or similar teaching resources along these lines. Such a teaching manual might include things like class outlines for covering specific topics, examples of exercises and class demonstrations for topics, and the like.



AGENDA

Saturday, **August 14, 2010**

8:00am – 9:50am

**Manchester Grand Hyatt Hotel
Madeleine Room A & B**

In Attendance: Diane Finley, Pam Ansborg, Linda M. Woolf, Jennifer J. Stiegler, Ann Ewing, James Freeman, Ruth Ault, Elizabeth Yost Hammer, Ted Bosack, Dana Dunn, Regan A. R. Gurung, Janet Carlson, Eric Landrum

Welcome and Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 8:06am by President Dana Dunn.

Elizabeth Hammer distributed handouts of the annotated 2009 budget report including line-by-line accounts. There are also smaller accounts located with Regan Gurung at the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay, and with Janie Wilson at Georgia Southern University. The Best Practices earnings deposit is included in the distributed handout. Janet Carlson asked about the Handbook royalties from 2009 that are given to the Fund For Excellence. Liz Hammer reported that the monies were deposited appropriately for 2009, with a new procedure to be implemented for 2010 deposits of Best Practices monies.

Task Force Report: Emerging Scientific Advances

Dana Dunn reported on the increasing concern about teachers keeping up with the neuroscience advances that continuously emerge, suggesting that an infrastructure be established to help teachers keep up with this information. Regan Gurung reported that ToPIX may be the vehicle to express some information, but not all information. Diane Finley reported that perhaps specific content experts could be encouraged to submit to ToPIX to keep the information updated for psychology teachers. Eric Landrum suggested that this information could be communicated as a newsletter feature as well. Linda Woolf reported that it is difficult to keep up to date in the neuroscience field, and she suggested an annotated bibliography feature be created topically (for example, sleep). Dana Dunn suggested that with the new information emerging from neuroscience, the new information available may be ignored in the course or covered in a cursory fashion. Janet Carlson asked about the Instructional Resource Awards and presidential themes; that would be one place for additional focus on neuroscience issues. Regan Gurung suggested two resources that may help: (1) TOPSS summer workshops to upgrade lesson plans may be one avenue to help teachers keep updated, and (2) touch base with key divisions to have a teaching liaison from different divisions to update teachers of psychology about key ideas related to divisional expertise. Dana Dunn suggested that we start small in this regard to foster success. Ruth Ault mentioned the Society for Neuroscience and that a teaching branch of that organization exists which might be helpful to STP efforts. Diane Finley suggested that for community college faculty, these resources would be welcome additions to available teaching resources.

Task Force Report: Best Practices for Undergraduate Teaching Assistants

Jessica Irons chaired the committee, and Dana Dunn reported that the committee is still working. There is a symposium on today's program about the training of undergraduate teaching assistants.

Task Force Report: Exploring Interdivisional Connections

This task force was chaired by Vinny Hevern at Le Moyne College, with the purpose of examining and strengthening interdivisional connections. Dana Dunn expressed interest in continuing to explore these connections. Diane Finley suggested that current efforts could be piggy-backed with Regan Gurung's current vision during his presidential year. Janet Carlson reported on prior progress regarding interdivisional relations regarding becoming a Fellow of Division Two when already a Fellow of another APA division. We may be losing the opportunity to attract other fellows with our current policies. Dana Dunn reported that APA distributed a 90-page document about Fellows process. Linda Woolf reported about other divisions' processes to become a Fellow. Diane Finley also reported on other divisions' processes as well.

Task Force Report: STP/APS Relations

Dana Dunn asked Bill Buskist to address relations between STP and APS, especially cross-appointed fellows, and to identify individuals for APS fellow status. Ruth Ault asked about the reverse process; asking APS fellows to consider STP fellow status. Dana Dunn announced that a bylaw amendment will be offered at this afternoon's business meeting to increase the Fellows Committee membership from 3 to 4. Ted Bosack inquired about if STP members (but non-APA members) could be nominated for APS fellows. Regan Gurung replied that that process may not be possible. An APS Fellows list is available online.

Regan returned to the interdivisional topics discussion. Regarding programming for 2011, perhaps Ann Ewing and Janie Wilson could look at interdivisional efforts that are ongoing now, coordinating with new APA Program Chair Kris Vespia. Diane Finley reported about the co-listing of APA programming and the process for doing so; there is an APA program chair listserv, with divisional programming submitted in January.

Discussion: Whether to form working group to explore social-political matters

Dana Dunn asked for discussion about socio-political matters as related to previous TOPEC discussions. There have been examples where policy issues interplay with teaching concerns, for example, the Manchester Hyatt decisions and Arizona and immigration law. STP has a large organizational umbrella with multiple social, political, and intellectual outlooks held by its members. Should we have a set of procedures in place to address social-political issues? Linda Woolf commented about these issues and how they impact our teaching, as well as the political topic itself, for example, gay marriage and marriage equality. Issues may have strong international and diversity components. As a division, we sometimes sidestep these issues, such as torture issues in the past. Our members may feel some of these issues personally; perhaps some sort of group within the Society should be set up to address these issues. Janet Carlson reported that a number of similar issues have been dealt with by STP in the past, using the presidential trio and/or the cabinet, with information distributed widely. Diane Finley reported that there will be other sides of the issue that affects other members. Liz Hammer liked the idea of having a process in place, such as a committee or task force.