

## APA Committee of Teachers of Psychology in Secondary Schools (TOPSS) 2006 Annual Report

In 2006, TOPSS continued several initiatives that included the development of unit lesson plans, offering workshops and programs for high school psychology teachers, recognizing outstanding high school students of psychology, and sponsoring invited addresses at the APA Convention.

### APA National Standards for High School Psychology Curricula

- In 2006, hard copies of the *National Standards for High School Psychology Curricula* were published and mailed to all APA High School Teacher Affiliates. The standards were also available as a resource to psychology teachers on the TOPSS website, and were disseminated to a wide audience of other interested educational organizations. The purpose of the *National Standards* is to provide guidance for high school psychology teachers and others responsible for development of psychology curriculum at the secondary school level. The Standards, revised in 2005, promote quality instruction of psychology as a scientific discipline.

### APA/Clark University Workshop for High School Teachers

- TOPSS, the APA Education Directorate, and Clark University held the second annual APA/Clark University Workshop for High School Teachers, sponsored by the American Psychological Foundation (APF) Lee Gurel Fund and Clark University. The three-day workshop was held July 10-12, 2006 at Clark University in Worcester, MA and featured sessions on clinical and developmental psychology and the history of psychology, as well as sessions on involving high school students in research and teaching with technology. Clark University psychology professors, TOPSS Past-Chair Amy Fineburg (Spain Park High School, Hoover, AL) and TOPSS member Oliver Bloch (Rye Country Day School, Rye, NY) were presenters. APA President Gerald Koocher, PhD delivered a keynote address on *Questionable Fads and Practices in 20th Century Clinical Psychology*. The workshop was attended by twenty-five high school psychology teachers.

### Unit Lesson Plans

- A signature product of TOPSS, unit lesson plans provide guidance for teachers in developing a curriculum in psychology and enable teachers to teach a specific area within the discipline of psychology. Development of other lesson plans continued throughout the year, including units on *Social Psychology*, *I/O Psychology*, and *Psychoanalysis*. TOPSS continued collaborating with the APA Committee on Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Concerns on a unit plan on the *Psychology of Sexual Orientation*. The unit is scheduled to be published in 2007.
- Another TOPSS priority is updating outdated unit lesson plans. The TOPSS Committee suggested that units be revised on an on-going basis so no units are over 5-7 years old. The original units on *An Introduction to the Field of Psychology* and *The Stats Pack: Statistics Without Fear* were being updated and reorganized into two separate units: one on *Research Methods* and one on *History, Careers, and Perspectives*. A plan for revising other outdated units was developed in 2006.
- TOPSS unit lesson plans are available to all TOPSS members on the TOPSS section of the APA website.

### Review of the *Ethical Guidelines for the Teaching of Psychology in the Secondary Schools*

- In 2006, the TOPSS Committee began the process of reviewing the *Ethical Guidelines for the Teaching of Psychology in the Secondary Schools*, originally approved as APA Policy in 1991. With advice from APA Ethics Director Stephen Behnke, JD, PhD, a subcommittee began to develop a new document to convey the APA Ethics Code for high school teachers.

### Integrating Psychology at Science Fairs Initiative

- The TOPSS Committee continued supporting the integration of psychology at science fairs:
  - a) *Conducting Psychological Research for Science Fairs: A Teacher's Guide and Resource Manual*, a manual designed to assist teachers in guiding their students to conduct psychological research, was available on the TOPSS website.
  - b) TOPSS sponsored several workshops or sessions on research, such as at the National Council for the Social Studies annual conference and at the APA/Clark University Workshop, encouraging teachers to engage in research with high school students.

### Collaborations internal and external to APA

- TOPSS collaborated with the College Board, which oversees AP Psychology, by allowing articles from the *Psychology Teacher Network* to be posted to the College Board website. TOPSS also collaborated with the American Psychological Foundation (APF) on the APA/Clark University Workshop and the APF-sponsored student competitions. A TOPSS liaison participated at an APF Summit on High School Psychology in September.
- TOPSS had a liaison(s) to the following APA groups or Task Forces: the APA Coalition on Psychology in Schools and Education, the 2006 APA Presidential Task Force on Diversity Education Resources, the APA Task Force on Increasing the Numbers of Quantitative Psychologists, and the APA Workgroup on Credentialing of High School Psychology Teachers.

### TOPSS Workshops for High School Teachers

- TOPSS sponsored teaching workshops or sessions at regional and national conferences, including: AP Reading (Teachers Night), Best Practices for Teaching Introductory Psychology, the Eastern Psychological Association conference, the Northeast Conference for Teachers of Psychology conference, held in conjunction with the New England Psychological Association conference, and National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) Annual Conference. Full-day workshops were offered in Birmingham, AL (Alabama Teachers of Psychology at Secondary Schools) and Statesboro, GA (The Many Faces of Psychology, Georgia Southern University). The annual APA/Clark University Workshop for High School Teachers was held in 2006, as described above. Workshop participants were high school teachers of psychology.
- The APA Education Directorate and TOPSS purchased an exhibit booth at the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) conference in Washington, DC. The booth offered APA and TOPSS great visibility to the teachers attending the conference and reinforced the importance of psychology programming at NCSS. TOPSS and the NCSS Psychology Special-Interest Group hosted a reception for psychology teachers during the conference.

### Recognizing High School Teachers and Students of Psychology

- TOPSS recognized three outstanding teachers in 2006 with the Excellence in Teaching Award. Annette Jordan of Woods Cross High School (Woods Cross, UT), Debra Park of West Deptford High School (Westville, NJ), and Lynn Pleiss of Dartmouth High School (Dartmouth, MA) received the 2006 awards.
- In 2006 TOPSS recognized high school students and awarded scholarships to those who submitted outstanding essays and research papers. Funding for these awards was generously provided by the American Psychological Foundation (APF).

Three students were recognized as the 2006 APF/APA TOPSS Essay Scholars: Megan Skinner from Hoover High School (Des Moines, IA), Candice Post from Shawnee High School (Medford, NJ), and Melissa Stoffers from Colonia High School (Colonia, NJ). Each winner received a \$1,000 scholarship.

Four students received APF/APA TOPSS Excellence in High School Student Research Awards: Anjie Zheng (1<sup>st</sup> Place-Tie) of Townsend Harris High School (Flushing, NY), Christina

Chung-May Tu (1st Place-Tie) of Roslyn High School (Roslyn Heights, NY), Emily Lefkowitz (3rd Place) of Suffern High School (Suffern, NY), and Alexis Rosenblum (4th Place) of Jericho Senior High School (Jericho, NY). Scholarships in amounts of \$1,250 (to each first place winner), \$500 (third place) and \$250 (fourth place) were awarded. Honorable mention awards were granted to Andrew Forrest of Roslyn High School (Roslyn Heights, NY) and Amy Lee of Roslyn High School (Roslyn Heights, NY).

- TOPSS offered Outstanding Student in Psychology Certificates to all TOPSS affiliates in the Spring of 2006, so that teachers could recognize outstanding student achievement in their classrooms. Certificates were also placed on the TOPSS website for the convenience of teachers.

#### TOPSS Invited Addresses at the APA Convention in New Orleans, LA

- TOPSS sponsored five invited addresses at convention. Presentations were given by Stephen Chew, PhD, Randy Ernst, Regan A.R. Gurung, PhD, Jane Halonen, PhD, Diane Halpern, PhD.
- TOPSS, the APA Committee on Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Concerns, and Division 2 co-sponsored a session on *Making the Invisible Visible: LGBT Education in High Schools and Universities*. Jeanne Blakeslee, Nathan Grant Smith, PhD, Gary Harper, PhD, Hank Tomlinson, PhD, and Beverly Greene, PhD were presenters.

#### Membership Outreach and Services

- Membership outreach and retention remained a high priority for TOPSS. TOPSS continued its network of Regional Coordinators to strengthen communication with TOPSS members in various regions of the country, including Canada and Latin America. Funding was available to the ten Regional Coordinators to support outreach in various regions. Regional Coordinators were encouraged to locate State Coordinators to facilitate communication on a state-by-state basis.
- TOPSS continued its Minority Recruitment Project, which aims to expose minority high school students to career options in psychology and to encourage and motivate these students to consider pursuing psychology as a career. The project was designed to facilitate meetings with minority high school students and minority two- and four-year college students and faculty, and with local minority psychologists. A webpage detailing the project and pilot projects is linked to the TOPSS website, encouraging teachers to initiate programs at their schools.
- TOPSS continued its mentor program as a means of providing service to new high school psychology teachers. Experienced psychology teachers have volunteered to serve as mentors to new teachers, who often need advice on lessons, textbooks, and so on. The program is maintained through the TOPSS Regional Coordinators network.
- TOPSS continued its Speakers Bureau to enable high school teachers to locate and contact psychologists to speak to their psychology classes. Information about the TOPSS Speakers Bureau listing is available on the TOPSS website.
- TOPSS developed a template to encourage APA Divisions to develop PowerPoint demonstrations for high school psychology teachers to use in the classroom.
- In fall 2006, all TOPSS affiliates were sent a copy of a new poster highlighting the scope and breadth of psychology.

- The *Psychology Teacher Network* quarterly newsletter was distributed to all TOPSS members. The PTN provides teachers with articles, activities, and book reviews to enhance psychology classroom teaching.
- In December 2006, a mass mailing was sent to 5,000 high school psychology teachers in all 50 states. The mailing highlighted membership, the *National Standards for High School Psychology Curricula*, the 2007 TOPSS Essay competition, and TOPSS programs and resources.

#### Report on TOPSS Diversity Action Plan

- The TOPSS Committee, at its April 7-9, 2006 meeting, prepared a Diversity Action Plan, which was submitted to the Council of Representatives in 2006. The committee had several methods currently in place to advance diversity, and discussed ways in which to implement recommendations from its Diversity Action Plan. Being aware of the importance of encouraging a diverse group of candidates to run for office, the TOPSS Committee was diligent in announcing the call for nominations to a wide audience of high school teachers. Additional outreach to promote diversity was considered with the various ethnic minority psychological associations, the College Board, and Historically Black Colleges and Universities. TOPSS has a liaison to the APA Division 2 Task Force on Diversity.
- The TOPSS Committee consists of seven high school teachers and two college faculty representatives. In 2006, the TOPSS Committee demonstrated gender diversity (seven females and two males) and ethnic diversity (two ethnic minority members).