

# 2003

## Executive Committee of the Teachers of Psychology in Secondary Schools (TOPSS)

### 2003 Annual Report



In 2003, TOPSS developed several initiatives that included the development and production of unit lesson plans, the launching of an initiative on integrating psychology at science fairs, collaborations with the Science Directorate and the Esther Katz Rosen Center for Gifted Education Policy, offering workshops and insightful programs for high school teachers of psychology, recognizing outstanding high school students of psychology, disseminating and revising the APA National Standards for the Teaching of High School Psychology, furthering collaborations with college faculty, and sponsoring invited addresses at the APA Convention.

#### 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. In 2003, TOPSS disseminated the new unit lesson plan on *Positive Psychology* and finalized the development of the unit lesson plan on *Treatment of Psychological Disorders*, copies of which will be distributed to TOPSS members in February 2004.

#### Psychology Awareness in Secondary Schools

- TOPSS continues to implement awareness of psychology in the schools by promoting relevant programs and activities through its web site, a monthly electronic mailing to TOPSS members, and through a network of state coordinators. In March 2003 during the TOPSS workshop at the Southeastern Psychological Association (SEPA) Meeting in New Orleans, LA, TOPSS Executive Committee Chair, Marissa Sarabando, presented on the topic of psychology awareness. Additionally, relevant news and articles are published in the quarterly *Psychology Teacher Network (PTN)* newsletter.

#### Integrating Psychology at Science Fairs Initiative

- Under the direction of and support from the APA Board of Directors and Board of Educational Affairs (BEA), the TOPSS Executive Committee launched a new initiative on integrating psychology at science fairs by implementing the following:
  - a) Sessions on the science fair initiative were conducted at the Taking Off: Best Practices in Teaching Introductory Psychology Conference in Atlanta, GA.
  - b) A manual to assist teachers in guiding their students to submit projects at local, regional, and national science fairs was developed. Dissemination of this manual is scheduled for Spring 2004.



- c) APA and TOPSS collaborated with the Science Service Organization to sponsor awards recognizing outstanding research in psychology at regional fairs affiliated with the Intel International Science and Engineering Fair (ISEF) that will take place in 2004.

**Collaborations  
with APA and APF  
Program Centers**

- Through the Office of Precollege and Undergraduate Education Programs, TOPSS worked with the Science Directorate in disseminating the latest video developed by the APA Committee on Animal Research and Ethics (CARE) titled, *The Importance of Laboratory Animal Research in Psychology-Psychopharmacology*.
- TOPSS collaborated with the Esther Katz Rosen Center for Gifted Education Policy on identifying outstanding high school students to participate in the Young Scholars Social Science Summit and the Pinnacle Scholars Project. These projects encouraged participation of gifted students who have a keen interest in psychology.

**TOPSS  
Workshops  
for High School  
Teachers**

- TOPSS sponsored teaching workshops at six regional and national conferences: Eastern Psychological Association (EPA); Southeastern Psychological Association (SEPA); Rocky Mountain Psychological Association (RMPA); Northeast Conference for Teachers of Psychology (NECTOP); Best Practices for Teaching Introductory Psychology; and National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS). Full-day workshops were offered in Toronto prior to the APA Convention, and at Eastern Kentucky University in Richmond, KY. Participants included high school teachers of psychology and graduate students interested in teaching psychology. Workshop topics covered issues on social psychology, positive psychology, psychology fairs at schools, research methods, teaching psychology as a science, and implementing strategies for psychology instruction based on the APA National Standards for the Teaching of High School Psychology.

**Recognizing High  
School Teachers  
and Students of  
Psychology**

- In 2003 TOPSS recognized two outstanding teachers by presenting them with the Excellence in Teaching Award. The recipients were Audrey Dill, Monmouth Regional High School, Tinton Falls, NJ; and Rob Johns, Westside High School, Omaha, NE.
- Through the generosity of the American Psychological Foundation (APF), TOPSS recognized high school students and awarded scholarships to those who submitted outstanding essays and research papers.

Three students were recognized as the 2003 APF/TOPSS Scholars: Lindsey Hanson, South River High School, Edgewater, MD; Rick Jobski, Glenbrook Academy,

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Glenview, IL; and Jessica McClurg, South River High School, Edgewater, MD. Each winner received a \$1,000 scholarship.

Four students received APF/TOPSS Excellence in High School Student Research Awards: Carly Jane Seidman (1<sup>st</sup> Place), George W. Hewlett High School, Hewlett, NY; Zachary Brett Galin (2<sup>nd</sup> Place), Roslyn High School, Roslyn Heights, NY; Sean Blake Herman (2<sup>nd</sup> Place), Roslyn High School, Roslyn Heights, NY; and Richard Evan Strohmenger (4<sup>th</sup> Place), George W. Hewlett High School, Hewlett, NY. Scholarships in amounts of \$1,500 (1<sup>st</sup> place), \$1,000 (2<sup>nd</sup> place), and \$250 (4<sup>th</sup> place) were awarded. The award for 3<sup>rd</sup> place in the amount of \$500 was not awarded for the 2003 competition due to a tie for second place.

## **APA National Standards for the Teaching of High School Psychology**

- The dissemination of the National Standards garnered successful outcomes in 2003. Two TOPSS members, Dr. Marie Smith and Faye Johnson, led an effort that resulted in the Montgomery County School District in Maryland adopting a new psychology curriculum based on the APA National Standards. In addition, the Alabama Department of Education reviewed a proposed course of study for psychology that is based on the National Standards.

## **Collaborations with College Faculty**

- Through guidance and consultation provided by Drs. Randy Smith, Ouachita Baptist University, Arkadelphia, AR, and Stephen Chew, Samford University, Birmingham, AL, the TOPSS Executive Committee continues to strengthen relations with 2-year and 4-year college faculty. TOPSS collaborated with Division 2 in the areas of developing workshops for teachers, publications, and other resources for teaching psychology in secondary schools.

## **TOPSS Invited Addresses at the APA Convention in Toronto**

- TOPSS sponsored a series of invited addresses focusing on the topic of positive psychology. Talks were presented by Drs. Martin Seligman, Christopher Peterson, Shane Lopez, and C. R. Snyder. Dr. Seligman's session on *Coaching and Teaching Positive Psychology* attracted the largest audience ever for a TOPSS Invited Address