

COMMITTEE ON AGING 2005 ANNUAL REPORT

MEMBERS

The six members of the Committee on Aging (CONA) for 2005 were Greg Hinrichsen, PhD (Chair), Toni Antonucci, PhD, Rosemary Blieszner, PhD, John Cavanaugh, PhD, Florence Denmark, PhD, and Barry Edelstein, PhD.

MEETINGS

The Committee on Aging held two meetings in 2004, in conjunction with the APA Consolidated Meetings, on March 18 - 20 and September 30 - October 2, 2005

ACTIVITIES

CONA activities in 2005 addressed each of the goals in its Mission Statement: There shall be a Committee on Aging that shall concern itself with furthering the major purpose of APA to advance psychology as a science and profession and as a means of promoting health and human welfare by ensuring that older adults, especially the growing numbers of older women and minorities, receive the attention of the association. Specifically, the Committee will pursue the following goals:

Science: Provide strong and visible advocacy for a scientific agenda on aging to policy makers and private and public funding agencies.

1. "The Science of Successful Aging: The Road Best Traveled" was the focus of the 2005 CONA Conversation Hour. During the program, attendees discussed how best to translate the wealth of research literature into practical steps to assist young, middle-aged and older adults in planning for and addressing the challenges that often arise as people age.
2. CONA met with Steven Breckler, PhD, Executive Director of the Science Director during each of its 2005 meetings to discuss ways the Committee could strengthen its relationship with the Directorate and how it might help advance the APA science agenda.
3. CONA member Rosemary Blieszner, PhD, attended the first Science Leadership Conference held in December.

Practice: Promote the practice of psychology by advocating policies that enhance the availability and reimbursement of health and mental health services to older adults and their families.

1. CONA members Greg Hinrichsen, PhD and Barry Edelstein, PhD continue to work with the APA/ABA Assessment of Capacity in Older Adults Project Working Group. The Working Group was established in 2003 under the auspices of the Interdisciplinary Task Force on Facilitating APA/ABA Relations. The Working group is made up of representatives of APA and the American Bar Association's Commission on Law and Aging. The Project's first product, a document for practicing attorneys, *Assessment of Older Adults with Diminished Capacity: A Handbook for Lawyers* was published in March 2005. At the 2005 APA Convention, a full-day continuing education workshop

for psychologists, *Psychological Assessment of Decision Making-Capacity of Older Adults* was offered and well attended.

Policy: Contribute to the formulation and support of public policies and associated regulations that promote optimal development of older adults, facilitate psychological practice with older persons, and expand scientific understanding of adult development and aging.

1. CONA successfully advocated to ensure consideration of mental health issues by The 2005 White House Conference on Aging (WHCoA). The White House Conference on Aging occurs once a decade to make aging policy recommendations to the President and Congress. The CONA-developed APA Resolution on the 2005 White House Conference on Aging was adopted as APA Policy by Council in August. A Division 20 – CONA sponsored symposium, *Psychology and Public Policy: Contributions to the 2005 WHCoA* received designation as a WHCoA Independent Aging Event. Both the Post-event summary and APA Resolution were received by the WHCoA Policy Committee and posted on the Conference’s website:
http://www.whcoa.gov/about/whcoa_events.asp#Cal

Education: Promote inclusion of knowledge about adult development and aging in all levels of education, including continuing education, training programs, and professional development of psychologists.

1. CONA members, Toni Antonucci, PhD, and John Cavanaugh PhD presented a symposium, *Choosing the older person you would like to be* as part of the Teachers of Psychology in Secondary Schools (TOPSS) convention programming.
2. At its Fall meeting, CONA met with Christopher McLaughlin of Health Resources and Services Administration Bureau of Health Professions to discuss the Graduate Geropsychology Education Program. Grantees use funds to plan, develop, operate or maintain graduate geropsychology education programs to train psychologists to work with underserved older adult populations to foster an integrated approach to health care services.
3. Also at its Fall meeting, CONA developed and submitted a request for Council of Representatives 2006 Discretionary Funding for the National Conference on Training in Professional Geropsychology to be held in June 2006. Its goal is to develop aspirational educational models at the doctoral, internship, postdoctoral, and post-licensure levels for training psychologists with specialized preparation for providing psychological services to older adults. CONA and the larger geropsychology community believe that the continued development of professional geropsychology requires the elaboration and publication of training models that describe the components of and pathways for obtaining professional geropsychology training. Two CONA members are members of the Conference Planning Committee.

Public Interest: Promote the application of psychological knowledge to the well being of older people, with special attention to the influences of gender, ethnicity, culture, sexual orientation, and family in science, practice and policy relating to older adults.

1. CONA cosponsored an APA Convention symposium with the Board for Advancement of Psychology in the Public Interest (BAPPI) titled, “Older Adult Mental Health: Multicultural Infusion into Education, Training, Research, Practice and Policy.” The symposium focused on the consideration and infusion of cultural diversity in geropsychological research, education, training, policy, and service provision.

2. CONA chair Gregory Hinrichsen made a presentation at a BAPPI sponsored symposium at the 2004 annual convention, "Implementation of Multicultural Guidelines." His presentation ("Why multicultural issues matter to practitioners working with older adults") will appear with other symposium participants in a forthcoming special section in Professional Psychology: Research and Practice.

Public Affairs: Develop and disseminate information concerning the scientific findings and practice issues about older adults to psychologists and other professionals, policy makers, and the public.

1. CONA was a frequent contributor and resource to *Monitor on Psychology* articles. In November, "Instilling skills for treating minority elders" was published.
2. The *APA Committee on Aging Award for the Advancement of Psychology and Aging* was established in 2003 to recognize professional leadership and distinguished achievements in research, practice and education in the field of geropsychology, and to promote an awareness and understanding among psychologists of this growing area of psychology. The year's award recipient was Margaret Gatz, PhD. The award was given in recognition of her longstanding dedication to research, training, professional service, and advocacy in geropsychology.

APA: Serve as a visible focus for the coordination of information among groups within the APA that address aging issues and offer consultation to relevant APA boards, committees, divisions, state associations, and directorates; also ensure that older members of APA receive the appropriate attention of the association.

1. Roadmap to Aging Project – CONA was awarded Board of Directors Discretionary Funding to initiate this project. The project resulted from the interest generated by APA past APA President Diane Halpern's Retiring Psychologists Presidential Initiative. The Project's objective is to translate the wealth of research literature into practical steps to assist young, middle-aged, and older psychologists in planning for and addressing the challenges that often arise as people age colleagues. The domains to be addressed are Health and Health Care, Legal and Financial, Psychological Issues, Social Roles, and Worklife and Retirement. The initial product, a web-based brochure for psychologists, *Life Plan for the Life Span* will be printed and placed on the APA webpage by January 2006. The process for developing the brochure included securing input from 20 issue area experts, securing broad input at the CONA Annual Conversation Hour, and convening a smaller group of experts to synthesize the key points into text for the psychologists' brochure.
2. CONA crafted an agenda item for consideration by BAPPI requesting its support of establishing a reduced fee for full registration and/or a one day registration fee for APA members with Life Member status for the APA Annual Convention. CONA believes such a policy would encourage attendance of older members particularly in those years when its venue is close to their homes. The convention provides an opportunity for retired APA members to remain involved in their profession, maintain social and professional networks, and learn of potential employment or volunteer opportunities in the field. Increasing the attendance of older psychologists could result in opportunities for sharing their knowledge and skills across generations. This exchange of knowledge and skills between members of APA who have varying levels of experience in psychology can be beneficial to the Association; in particular as it relates to the retention of early career psychologists.
3. CONA regularly comments on proposed APA new business items to assure that APA policies are informed by geropsychology principles and that the impact of proposed policies upon

older adults is considered. For example, this year comments were submitted related to the: Presidential Initiatives on Promoting Health Care for the Whole Person, Evidence-Based Practice in Psychology, and Enhancing Diversity in APA; APA National Standards for the Teaching of High School Psychology; Strategic Plan for a Workforce Analysis of Psychology as a Discipline; Guidelines for the Undergraduate Psychology Major; Commission on Education and Training Leading to Licensure in Psychology; and Guidelines for Psychological Practice with Girls and Women.

4. CONA submitted nominations of individuals with aging expertise to relevant APA Boards and Committees.

Diversity Training and Representation: CONA neither provided nor received diversity training in 2005. However, as mentioned in this report, CONA is committed to efforts to increase cultural competency in geropsychology. CONA 2005 Convention programming focused on the consideration and infusion of cultural diversity in geropsychological research, education, training, policy, and service provision. In addition, plans are underway for a new project to enhance geropsychology research and teaching in the area of cultural competency by providing exposure, experience, and expertise in working with special populations within the older adult cohort (ethnic minority elders, rural elders, gay/lesbian/transgender elders, & disabled elders). The Committee strives to maintain a diverse membership and currently has three men (including one gay man) and three women (including one older woman).