



Steven J. Breckler to Join American Psychological Association as Executive Director for Science

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Steven J. Breckler, PhD, currently a program director at the National Science Foundation, will join the American Psychological Association (APA) as its Executive Director for Science in mid-April.

Breckler, a social psychologist by training, has over 20 years experience as a psychology professor and science administrator including directing the NSF social psychology and Science of Learning Centers programs. He is the author or co-author of over 60 published or conference papers on topics ranging from attitude development to jury functioning.

"I am thrilled to be joining APA," Breckler stated. "This is a great opportunity for me to use everything I've learned as a researcher, teacher, and Federal grants administrator to promote the science of psychology. APA is unique in its ability to represent all of contemporary psychology. My goal is to advance psychological science in partnership with the Practice, Education and Public Interest Directorates."

In announcing Breckler's hiring, APA CEO Norman Anderson, PhD, said, "We are fortunate to have someone with the scientific and administrative credentials of Dr. Breckler to lead our Science Directorate. His broad research expertise and his many achievements in academia, coupled with his understanding of the intricacies of Federal research

funding and policy, provide the perfect combination of experience for the job. We all look forward to working with him as he crafts a new agenda for psychological science at APA."

Current Acting Executive Director of the Science Directorate, Merry Bullock, also commented concerning Breckler's appointment. "The entire Science Directorate staff is absolutely delighted that Steve will be joining us as Executive Director. His experience in funding, policy and science venues make him a great match for the position, and we look forward to good team work and exciting new directions."

"Dr. Breckler is an outstanding social psychologist with an impressive array of experiences both in academia and at the National Science Foundation," stated Suzanne Bennett Johnson, Chair of the Board of Scientific Affairs. "He has proved to be a leader in many arenas and the Board of Scientific Affairs is delighted that he has agreed to serve psychological science and APA as the new head of the Science Directorate."

Breckler assumes the leadership of the APA Science Directorate, a 24 person and \$4 million dollar program, with activities in support of psychological science such as Advanced Training Institutes for mid-career scientists, a science advocacy program and task forces on behavioral genetics, testing on the Internet and research regulations. ■

Scientific Discoveries that Can Change Lives in the 21st Century: Behavioral and Social Scientists Like You Can Help

by Jessica Bryant, Special Projects Associate

The Decade of Behavior (2000-2010) is a multidisciplinary initiative designed to promote the behavioral and social sciences and encourage the examination of research in providing solutions to societal challenges. Each year a National Advisory Committee composed of a variety of distinguished scientists from the behavioral and social sciences discuss ideas for upcoming activities and programs that further the goals of the Decade of Behavior. We believe that the programs and activities chosen by the committee will be valuable and worthwhile to the scientific community, policy makers and the public.

Top 10 Initiative

The goal of the Decade of Behavior Top 10 Initiative is to publish an annual list of significant breakthroughs, discoveries, or applications in the behavioral and social sciences that are likely to have an impact on lives in the 21st century. We need the suggestions of behavioral and social scientists just like you to make this initiative a success! Please contribute your thoughts and ideas to this endeavor by visiting www.decadeofbehavior.org or by submitting your ideas directly to dob@apa.org. When you submit your ideas please be sure to include the discipline with which you are affiliated, your idea with any citations if possible, how the idea/research will change people's lives and your email address in case we have any additional questions.

Exploring Behavior Week

Exploring Behavior Week is an ongoing Decade of Behavior activity and is designed to inform secondary school students about the importance of behavioral and social science research. More importantly, students are made aware of the fact that answers to questions are usually reached through scientific inquiry and research. As part of the program, department chairs are contacted and asked to

nominate appropriate graduate students to visit local high school classes in order to present information on psychological science. The nominated graduate students are provided with a list of local teachers of psychology in secondary schools (TOPSS) and are given a manual that outlines a step-by-step presentation on questions that have been answered through psychological research.

Exploring Behavior Week is a fun program that simultaneously teaches students about research and encourages them to consider the behavioral and social sciences when considering career choices.

Capitol Hill Briefings

The Decade of Behavior provides financial support for briefings that highlight multidisciplinary research or that include speakers from a variety of the behavioral and social sciences. There are several briefings scheduled for March and detailed descriptions of each can be found on our website.

Lost in Translation: Public Health Implications of Sexual Health Research
March 5, 2004
2168 Rayburn House Office Building
10 am-12 pm

Social Work Research: Building Knowledge for a Strong and Healthy Nation
562 Dirkson Senate Office Building
March 11, 2004

Taking Control of Our Health-Applying Research on the Self-Management of Chronic Illness
March 12, 2004
2168 Rayburn House Office Building
10 am-12 pm ■

Attend an Academic Career Workshop

As part of its outreach to graduate and postdoctoral students, APA's Science Directorate is proud to sponsor "Academic Career Workshops" that are held throughout the country. The Science Directorate hosts these workshops, which are designed to introduce graduate and postdoctoral students to the fundamentals of pursuing an academic career. Topics range from a description of variations in the academic culture across institutions to the pragmatics of the recruiting and hiring process. Accomplished panelists share their insights, with plenty of opportunity for discussion. Here is a list of upcoming APA Science Directorate Academic Career Workshops:

Southwestern Psychological Association (SWPA)

San Antonio, TX
Thursday, April 8, 2004
2:00 pm - 4:00 pm

Eastern Psychological Association

(EPA) Washington, DC
Friday, April 16, 2004
3:30 pm - 5:00 pm

Midwestern Psychological Association (MPA)

Friday, April 30, 2004
8:00 am - Noon

Human Factors and Ergonomics Society

New Orleans, LA
Date and Time to be Announced

Asian American Psychological Association

Honolulu, HI
Date and Time to be Announced

These workshops are free, but an email stating your interest in attending is required. Please send an email to Deborah McCall at: dmccall@apa.org.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S COLUMN

MERRY BULLOCK, Acting Executive Director for Science

What is Evidence and What is the Problem?

These days, you can hear the terms “good science”, “evidence”, and “data” a lot in Washington. One of the catch phrases around policy-making circles is “evidence-based”, applied to a host of contents including education, policy, practice, medicine, even architecture. You would think that this would make us all quite happy – at least those who advocate that decisions about policy, social interventions, and future directions be based on data. But, ironically, the new emphasis on evidence-based this and that has been simultaneously welcomed and greeted with raised anxiety levels and red flags of concern.

Why might this be?

One reason is that at times the definition of the “good” science that is to inform policy seems tinged with political overtones. So, for example, some scientists have complained that although Congress and the Administration regularly call for reliance on the best science, they manipulate that science – they choose the science they like, represent it in a way that no scientist would understand, or set the bar so high that no scientific study can meet it. Probably the best examples are climate change, evolution, and environmental issues – although sound science (one definition of “good science”) has reached consensus on data and policy implications, the existence of a few who argue otherwise give rise to policies that seem to say the facts are still in doubt.

Let me turn now to the behavioral and social sciences. Although there are certainly political overtones to some of the issues dealt with by the behavioral and social sciences (witness the recent slate of queries into the science of sexual be-



havior, or health disparities), there are other concerns with the “evidence-based” movement outside the political arena. The issues range from concerns about the ways in which evidence is defined to concerns that experimental designs are inappropriately reified as the methodology that automatically yields the “best” evidence.

Some uneasiness with the current evidence-based movement may arise from an understandable resettling as changes in the funding and policy landscape become more clear (one good example is the new research portfolio of the Institute of Education Sciences). But much of the uneasiness appears based on more fundamental issues that address what we understand research to be, the world to be, and science to be.

Let me address just a couple of these basic issues.

In some discussions of what it means to be “evidence based”, random assignment and experimental control (a.k.a. random controlled trials) are held as the gold standard. This raises red flags for many who do research that is not of this ilk. Card carrying scientists who do qualitative, quasi-experimental, or historical research are understandably troubled by the suggestion that only ex-

periments qualify as real science. One common argument against the reification of experiments is that much of the evidence we take as incontrovertible is not experimental – evidence from disciplines such as epidemiology or astronomy, for example. And much sound policy is based on correlational, not experimental data, such as data on the relation between tobacco use and cancer. Although the science to which these arguments against the reification of random control refer is sound, I believe that these arguments nonetheless miss the point. My understanding has always been that when experimental design (including random assignment) is held as a gold standard, it is not for all science, but for intervention studies – when the goal, in the simplest case, is to “hold everything constant” except one variable, to enable clear causal inferences. In the case of much behavioral-social science questions, the variable might be a lot more complex – a program, a social intervention, and so on. That this gold standard can allow clear causal inference (and is the only standard for unequivocal causal inference) does not mean that other methods cannot also provide important knowledge, especially systematic description, categorization or correlation.

Another area of concern is that, even if one wanted to apply such a standard, experimental designs may be inappropriate or impossible in many of the complex, multidimensional contexts in which one needs answers, because such methods would be impossible, impractical, or unethical to fulfill. In many settings, for example, random assignment of individuals to programs, classrooms, neighborhoods, families, or treatment is often not possible and random assignment of programs to groups such as schools or teams or treatment settings may not be feasible. Is this a reason for concern? It is, of course, an instance of the classic

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...Executive Director's Column,
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4 difference between efficacy and efficiency – between finding out whether something works in the laboratory or well-controlled conditions and whether it works in practice in the messy, everyday world. In healthcare, one arena in which the evidence-base issues have been most thoroughly discussed, the conclusions are that both are necessary, and that one must be diligent in matching conclusion to design. And in medicine, as in psychology, applying knowledge to practice must always be a dance of best available information and expert judgment.

If one moves outside of psychology, there are broader concerns – the standard methods of sister social science disciplines are not usually experimental. Take anthropology or economics or survey research. The data gathered by economists or anthropologists or sociologists often inform policy decisions. Yet these data are rarely experimental. The lesson from looking across disciplines, questions and contexts, is that different designs may be appropriate for different questions, behaviors, or situations. What is, of course, important is that we aspire to using the most rigorous design appropriate and possible for the issues at hand, and that we convey the importance of that rigor to policy makers.

Because the evidence-based issues are so hot and so important for all psychologists to address, from researchers to practitioners, it is especially gratifying to see that the National Academy of Sciences is beginning an initiative to help define evidentiary standards across behavioral and social sciences, to help ask how to match evidence to question and context, and to help improve the translation of research into policy. This initiative will begin this month with a "Workshop on Policy Making: How Behavioral and Cognitive Scientists can Contribute..." and will continue with questions that look at the evidentiary bases of the behavioral and social sciences and the degree to which discussions of evidence in other disciplines (e.g., medicine,

physics and so on) provide informative models.

It is clear that discussions of definitions of evidence, distinctions among kinds of evidence (including scientific data, expert judgment, observation, and theory), and consensus on when to use what, will occupy us for some time. Psychology needs to be an active participant in the discussion. It needs to contribute its unique insights as a discipline that has built its basic science on solid experimental methods, that continually grapples with the transition from basic laboratory science to applied science, that attempts the translation from science to application and to practice, and that promotes the importance of a basic science base that is relevant to application. ■

APF Issues 2004 Request Programs on Violence Prevention

The American Psychological Foundation (APF) requests proposals for research-based programs on violence prevention and intervention. The APF Trustees hope to:

Encourage the transfer of psychological science with regard to violence, its prevention, and intervention strategies to programmatic applications within the community.

Support the implementation of innovative community programs aimed at preventing violence within any number of social settings (e.g., young adult populations, elder abuse, domestic abuse, hate crimes, sexual assault, and others).

Provide seed money to establish promising interventions proposed by community-based organizations or provide funding for established community programs that have been deemed successful.

Principal Investigator/Applicants must be psychologists holding doctoral de-

grees (PhD, EdD, MD, JD) engaged in research-based program implementation related to violence prevention. Special consideration will be given to programs with a strong foundation in violence prevention and intervention research and those that have, or show promise for, broad-based community support. Applicants may request up to \$20,000. The recipient must submit a final report no later than 18 months after the completion of funding.

The deadline for application submission is August 12, 2004. Eligibility criteria and submission requirements are detailed in full at the APF website: www.apa.org/apf. Submissions must be in electronic format. Awards will be announced on or after December 1.

Questions by e-mail should be directed to the American Psychological Foundation at foundation@apa.org. ■

Identifying Risk in Research Involving Children: Call for Examples

The Social and Behavioral Sciences Working Group on Human Research Protections is preparing a report to assist IRBs in their review of social and behavioral sciences research involving children.

The Working Group seeks examples of research in three categories identified in the federal regulations: (1) minimal risk; (2) minor increment over minimal risk with the prospect of direct benefit to individual children; and (3) minor increment over minimal risk with no direct benefit to individual children but likely to yield generalizable knowledge about the child's disorder or condition. For more information on how you can help, please visit the Working Group's web site at: <http://www.aera.net/humansubjects/Posting-Children.pdf>.

SCIENCE BRIEFS

The Perceptual Expertise Network: Innovation on Collaboration

by Isabel Gauthier and Danielle D. Brown



Isabel Gauthier (far left) received her B.S. in Psychology from Université du Québec à Montréal and her PhD in cognitive psychology from Yale University in 1998. She is currently an Assistant Professor in the Department of Psychology and the Vanderbilt Vision Research Center at Vanderbilt University. She heads the Object Perception Laboratory at Vanderbilt University and chairs the Perceptual Expertise Network.

Danielle D. Brown received her B.S. in Biology from Cornell University. She is currently a research assistant in the Object Perception Laboratory at Vanderbilt University and is moving on to start a graduate degree in Behavioral Ecology in the fall of 2004.



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A Discipline that Requires a New Collaborative Model

A cognitive neuroscientist explaining to her grandmother the nature of her field could describe how it relies on different techniques, such as measuring response times and accuracy from undergraduate students, recording brain activity from children, human adults and from animals or building computer models of how humans solve complex problems like recognizing objects or faces. It is hoped that evidence from these different techniques will converge and help us understand the nature of the relationship between the mind and the brain. In reality, very few researchers or laboratories can master all of these techniques, and progress in cognitive neuroscience has relied heavily on collaborations. Most scientists today utilize long distance collaborations that typically depend on phone calls and email. A few years ago, a group of cognitive neuroscientists took this collaborative approach to a new level when they established the Perceptual Expertise Network (PEN).

In 2000, Isabel Gauthier learned about a new program from the James S.

McDonnell Foundation called “Bridging Brain, Mind and Behavior”. The Foundation targeted inter-disciplinary efforts and recognized the difficulties of conducting highly collaborative and innovative research using traditional funding sources. Gauthier and Michael Tarr, her PhD mentor, had been looking for a way to bring together a diverse group of colleagues working on issues relevant to those explored in Gauthier’s dissertation, completed in 1998. Her thesis focused on a simple question: why does face recognition appear to be special?

There is good evidence that faces are processed in a more “holistic” manner than other objects and that there are specialized neural substrates in the brain for their processing. When those are damaged, individuals can become selectively impaired in face recognition. Gauthier and Tarr tested the hypothesis that it is in fact our expertise with faces that accounts for these effects, and they found evidence that expert observers for non-face objects exhibited similar behavior and neural patterns to those found for faces (Gauthier & Tarr, 1997). This was not a completely new idea. But their work was unique in demonstrating that

expertise can be achieved within a few days of training, which makes it possible to study its development experimentally in the laboratory. At the time PEN was created, Gauthier and Tarr had already teamed up with many of the current PEN members (see Table 1) to work on specific projects: however, within PEN several of these individuals who had not met before have now moved on to develop their own collaborations (see Figure 1).

PEN was founded on two principles: First, to do science in a question-motivated framework rather than one motivated by techniques. PEN members do not ask themselves what should be the next fMRI or ERP experiment, just because those happen to be the techniques with which they are most familiar or in which they have invested their lab resources. Instead, they brainstorm, free from such technical constraints, and later capitalize on the diversity of their group and choose the tool that best suits the question. Second, PEN members believe that students can distinguish themselves by grounding their education in a highly collaborative experience. Because

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...**Science Briefs, continued**
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good cognitive neuroscience requires collaboration, individuals who master its challenges early in their training should be better equipped to succeed.

Developing a New Collaborative Model

PEN consists of approximately 30 people, including principle investigators, post-doctoral fellows, graduate students and undergraduate research assistants at 7 institutions around the US and Canada. An administrative assistant based at Vanderbilt coordinates the activities of the meeting. The entire group meets in person twice a year, generally with two outside researchers invited to present their work to the group. PEN workshops are unlike most scientific meetings, in fact they all begin with a warning to invited guests: expect to be interrupted--a lot. New results are presented, studies are proposed and concepts are debated – and much of it occurs over dinners and extended lunchtimes where members are encouraged to form smaller groups to discuss specific projects.

In the first workshops, PEN members discussed definitions of perceptual expertise, reviewed empirical markers of expertise (i.e. those effects, behavioral or neural, that reveal expert performance), identified some empirical holes in the expertise literature, and discussed the importance of computational modeling in the group's common efforts. As the group matured, the discussion has progressed to encompass new research questions. What is the role of semantic knowledge in the acquisition of visual expertise? How can expertise with letters be compared to expertise with faces or other objects like cars and birds? Does the issue of the overlap (or non-overlap) of the neural substrates or face and object processing really address the question of whether faces are processed by a modular system? The success of the enterprise depends on the participation of students and post docs, because they are best positioned to turn a new question into an entire research program.

The group also holds regular joint lab meetings using speakerphones and shared PowerPoint files, to keep everybody in touch between face-to-face meetings. These teleconferences allow a more informal discussion and spark follow-up discussions in individual labs and on the PEN website's Bulletin Board.

Other PEN activities have included a workshop on modeling organized by graduate students from different labs and a course on fMRI methods prepared by a PEN post doc. Recently, PEN members introduced this new collaborative model at the 2003 Cognitive Neuroscience Meeting. Four PEN faculty presented a symposium on the research conducted in the network. The symposium was unique in many ways: first, each speaker presented not only research from their own lab but discussed many findings from other PEN members; second, the four talks were conceived as parts of a whole. They were practiced together at a PEN workshop to get feedback from the entire group, and again in a conference call before the meeting. It is rare for a scientific audience to hear speakers who have made a concerted effort to deliver a coherent message that covers many aspects of the same field, but feedback at the conference indicated that it was very well received.

Examples of Collaborative Projects

Dozens of new research projects are currently underway within PEN, several of which would have not been possible without the network, and many spearheaded by our students. For example, Kim Curby, a graduate student in the Gauthier lab, had been working on a new paradigm to test interference between car and face expertise in subjects who are experts in both domains. The idea was to gather evidence that face and expert object recognition may not function independently. The paradigm is a dual-task in which holistic processing (HP) for both cars and faces is measured, while observers are required to process both categories at once. Results showed that the level of interference between HP for each category was a function of a subject's car expertise. As HP for cars in-

creased, HP for faces was reduced in this dual task, demonstrating that they are not functionally independent. When presented to the group, a new question arose: when during processing does this interference occur, was it perceptual or did it occur later, maybe in the working memory stages necessary to perform the task? Gauthier and Curby had access to fMRI but this technique does not have the temporal resolution to resolve this question. A collaboration with Tim Curran (U.C. Boulder) developed as it became clear that ERPs would be better suited for this question. The ERPs results provided clear evidence for interference between car and face processing at the perceptual level: there was a significant correlation between the interference produced by car expertise and the amplitude of the earliest face-sensitive potential called the N170 (Gauthier, Curran, Curby, & Collins, 2003).

Along similar lines, Bruno Rossion and colleagues in the Tarr lab at Brown University designed a different interference paradigm using face flankers shown around novel objects called Greebles. Following expertise training with Greebles, the N170 potential in response to faces was substantially decreased when it was preceded by a central Greeble, but not when preceded by a control object. This further supported the conclusion that face perception relies on processes common to expertise with other categories. In the spirit of PEN, these first studies of interference are spawning other projects: Curran and Rossion recently replicated this flanker interference effect with car experts, and Curby and Gauthier are working on an fMRI study to investigate where in the visual system such interference occurs.

Another example of PEN collaboration is one that has some clinical applications. Years before PEN, Bob Schultz recruited Gauthier to help out on a neuroimaging study of face processing in people with Autism. Autism and a closely related condition, Asperger Syndrome, are characterized by impairments in social functioning and interac-

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tions. People with Autism also have some difficulties with face recognition. The three-year study led to the first report of abnormal specialization for faces in the brain of individuals with this developmental disorder (Schultz et al., 2000).

Subsequently, Schultz developed an interest in the study of expertise, because of the possibility that a lack of face expertise could explain the abnormal specialization for faces in the autistic population. Upon joining PEN, Schultz partnered with Rossion to study the N170 potential in people with autism, simultaneously continuing his earlier collaboration with Gauthier by investigating the behavioral aspect of face perception deficits in autism using a computerized face parts-whole faces assessment battery. Schultz and Jim Tanaka (University of Victoria) have since teamed up to create a computer-based training program, "Let's Face It!", meant to develop and sharpen perceptual skills involved in the recognition of facial identity and expression. In effect, they seek to artificially create expertise for faces in children with Autism who may not have developed this skill naturally.

Looking to the Future

The success of PEN, as measured by increased funding of the labs involved, their publications, and the volume of ongoing collaborative studies, can be mainly attributed to the involvement of students and post docs in all of the network's activities. Thus it is likely that the impact of PEN will be exponential as a new generation of cognitive neuroscientists is trained in a novel tradition of interdisciplinary collaboration. The network looks forward to graduating the first crop of PEN trainees and beginning anew with the next generation of students interested in approaching questions about the mind and brain in a different and innovative manner. ■

Table 1 and Figure 1. can be viewed on <http://www.apa.org/science/psa/sb-gauthier.html>.

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APA Invites Nominations for Distinguished Science Awards

The APA Board of Scientific Affairs (BSA) invites nominations for its ongoing awards program. Awards are given in three categories:

The Distinguished Scientific Contribution Award is presented to individuals who have made distinguished theoretical or empirical contributions to basic research in psychology.

The Distinguished Scientific Award for the Applications of Psychology is given to individuals who have made exceptional theoretical or empirical advances in psychology leading to the understanding or amelioration of important practical problems.

To submit a nomination for the Distinguished Scientific Contribution Award and the Distinguished Scientific Contribution Award for the Applications of Psychology, you should provide a letter of nomination, the nominee's current vita with list of publications, and the names and addresses of several scientists

who are familiar with the nominee's work.

The Distinguished Scientific Award for Early Career Contribution to Psychology is awarded to outstanding young psychologists who are 9 years or less post-PhD (1995 or later). The 2005 Early Career Awards will be given in the five areas:

- behavioral and cognitive neuroscience
- social
- perception, motor performance
- applied research (e.g., treatment and prevention research, industrial/organizational research, educational research)
- individual differences (e.g., personality, psychometrics, mental ability, behavioral genetics)

The categories should be interpreted broadly and are not meant to be exclusive; all areas of psychology are of sufficient merit to be considered for awards.

To submit a nomination for the Distinguished Scientific Award for Early Career Contribution to Psychology, you should provide a letter of nomination, the nominee's current vita with list of publications, and up to five representative reprints.

To obtain nomination forms and more information, you can go to the Science Directorate web page (www.apa.org/science/sciaward.html) or you can contact Suzanne Wandersman, Science Directorate, American Psychological Association, 750 First Street, NE, Washington, DC 20002-4242; by phone, (202) 336-6000; by fax, (202) 336-5953; or by E-mail to swandersman@apa.org.

The deadline for all award nominations is June 1, 2004. ■

Congressional Briefing Highlights

Sexual Behavior Research

by Karen Studwell, Senior Legislative and Federal Affairs Officer

8 Science Policy staff have been working within the broader scientific community for several months on ways to counter the congressional attacks on peer-reviewed research funded by the National Institutes of Health (NIH). As we reported in the Fall PSA, there was an amendment proposed in July 2003 by Rep. Toomey (R-PA) that would have cut off funding for five specific peer-reviewed grants, mostly grants that had to do with sexual behaviors. In response, APA joined with the Consortium of Social Science Associations and 45 other scientific and public health organizations to form the Coalition to Protect Research (CPR), which APA Science Policy staffer Karen Studwell, co-chairs.

CPR member organizations represent scientists, physicians, health care providers, patients, and advocates that support federal investments in basic biomedical and behavioral research in human sexual development, sexual health, HIV/AIDS and sexually-transmitted diseases. One of the goals of CPR is to educate policymakers about the importance of sexual health research, which it does through letters from constituents, visits with members of Congress and sponsoring congressional briefings for congressional staff and others.

On March 5, CPR, along with the Decade of Behavior and 20 other organizations, sponsored its first congressional briefing entitled, "Lost in Translation: Public Health Implications of Sexual Health Research." Speakers included psychologists Tom Coates, UCLA David Geffen School of Medicine; Janet Hyde, University of Wisconsin; Alan Leshner, CEO of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, who served as the moderator; and John Bancroft, director of the Kinsey Institute at Indiana University.

The four speakers addressed a crowd of nearly 100, including congressional staff, NIH officials and members of the

broader scientific community. Leshner began the briefing with a brief explanation of the concerns that the scientific community has had with the Toomey amendment and the continuing congressional inquiries into more than 150 peer-reviewed research projects, and reiterated the importance of behavioral factors to the burden of many public health challenges.

Hyde began her talk with an explanation of the 2001 Surgeon General's Call to Action on Sexual Health and Responsible Sexual Behavior that was published by former Surgeon General David Satcher and explicitly calls for additional federal investments in basic research in human sexual development, sexual health, reproductive health, as well as social and behavioral research on risk and protective factors for sexual health. Hyde later discussed the importance of sexuality in marriage and highlighted research that has shown that report of sexual dissatisfaction in marriage was predictive of divorce three years later.

Bancroft discussed the biological factors and psychophysiology of sexual health research and explained why it is important to understand the mechanisms of sexual arousal and the various methods used to measure sexual arousal. From a public health standpoint, sexual health research is needed to understand and prevent the transmission of sexually transmitted diseases, unplanned pregnancies, child sexual abuse, sexual assault and rape and sexual dysfunction. The goal of much sexual health research is to really help people control their sexual behavior and reduce the likelihood of unacceptable or high-risk sexual behavior.

Coates then discussed several case studies of successful prevention interventions that have addressed the transmission of HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases in the United States and Africa. One especially successful in-

tervention took place in Uganda through the use of the ABC program that encourages individuals to: a) abstain until marriage; b) be faithful; and c) use condoms. While the intervention has produced a dramatic rise in condom usage and reduced the spread of HIV/AIDS, it does not address the particular factors that impact the spread of HIV/AIDS to women. In part, this is because of the dramatic rates of sexual violence against women and for married women, who are likely to be infected by their unfaithful partners.

In response to an audience question about the impact that congressional inquiries have had on scientists themselves, Hyde explained that political pressure often comes in waves and she praised the courageous researchers who continue to work during these times of increased pressure. Coates was concerned that the current chilling effect not only impacts current sexual health researchers, but could also discourage future generations of scientists from pursuing these areas of research at a time when there is a greater need than ever for people in the field.

APA Science Policy staff will continue their leadership on this important issue by co-chairing the Coalition to Protect Research, which is drafting a petition to be signed by scientists themselves to speak out in support of scientific principles and the National Institutes of Health. Please visit the APA website to find out what you can do to let your own member of Congress know that you support the peer review system. APA's Public Policy Office can be found at: <http://www.apa.org/ppo>. Further information about CPR and its activities can be found at: <http://www.cossa.org/CPR/cpr.html>. Please contact Karen Studwell at kstudwell@apa.org if you have any questions about this issue. ■

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PSYCHOLOGICAL SCIENCE AGENDA

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Psychological Science Agenda is distributed free to 23,000 psychologists, members of Congress and their staffs, key officials in federal agencies that fund behavioral research and use its findings, institutional libraries, and science writers in the national media.

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