Report From the APA Council of Representatives
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In August 2007, SIOP’s five elected representatives attended the summer meeting of the APA Council of Representatives, held during the APA convention in San Francisco. Highlights of information gleaned and actions taken at the August meeting included the following:

Your APA council representatives have continued their active participation in the Coalition for Scientific and Applied Psychology (CASAP). CASAP serves as a valuable forum for exchanging ideas and building alliances among council members who want to further the interests of academic, scientific, and applied-research psychology. SIOP member Kurt Geisinger is the new president-elect of CASAP for 2008, and SIOP Council Rep Bob Dipboye is currently an at-large member of the executive board. In addition, SIOP Council Rep Deirdre Knapp and SIOP member Bill Strickland are on the ballot in the current executive board at-large election. Deirdre Knapp has also been instrumental in launching the Acting for Science discussion list, with hopes that it will provide a forum for discussion of science-oriented issues and proactive development of new science-oriented agenda items.

Alan Kazdin was introduced to Council as the new president-elect of APA. APA’s membership is aging (along with the rest of the world!), and this raises important concerns for maintenance of APA’s membership base. Most members are 55+, and early career psychologists are the most disaffected group.

APA is undergoing many transitions with its staff in the central office. Notably, Jim McHugh (legal staff) and Jack McKay (financial officer) are retiring, and Russ Newman (executive director for Professional Practice) is leaving APA. These staff members (and their replacements) are quite relevant for some SIOP concerns (e.g., providing legal advice regarding licensing and attention to I-O practice concerns). In particular, APA council reps plan to make connections with Newman’s replacement so that the Practice Directorate and Practice Organization are aware of the practice concerns of SIOP and I-O psychologists.

APA is investing substantially in its technology infrastructure. The most visible sign of this is the rebuild/relaunch of the APA.org Web site, which is ongoing. The price tag on this is estimated to be a whopping $7.6M.

A draft 2008 preliminary budget was passed in August. This includes an increase in base member dues of $9, from $270 to $279; and student affiliate dues will increase by $1, from $50 to $51. Journal prices will go up as well, 3.5% for members.

A new taskforce on the allocation of representatives to APA Council is being formed. As boring as this may sound, the APA Council of Representatives is huge, with many competing constituencies. Any changes in the way
representatives are allocated to constituencies has the potential to change the makeup of the council—with possible loss of seats for SIOP and other science-oriented divisions whose concerns do not center on providing healthcare services. We collaborated with several other divisions to nominate members to this taskforce. We have also continued our efforts to place SIOP members on other APA boards and task forces where it would be valuable to have input. Currently Fritz Drasgow and Council Rep Ed Salas are on the ballot for the Board of Scientific Affairs. Both have been endorsed by CASAP; Ed also received an endorsement from the Ethnic Minority Issues Caucus. During the August meetings, we also learned of another way to ensure that SIOP is well informed about matters that affect our members and that our voice is heard on these issues. Several of us attended the APA Science Directorate breakfast, along with President Lois Tetrick. An important learning point for us at the meeting was that divisions can request to have observers/liaisons appointed to any APA boards and committees where they may have an interest but do not have a member on the board/committee. President Tetrick plans to take advantage of this by appointing observers/liaisons to various APA boards and committees.

Several motions that involve APA bylaws changes were passed. These require approval by the APA membership. They include a bylaws change to permit online voting in elections and a bylaws change to provide a seat on Council for each of four national ethnic minority psychological associations (Asian, Black, Indian, Latino/a).

An APA resolution opposing any form of boycott against academic researchers that is based on their institution or nation was adopted.

Undoubtedly the most controversial and visible item on the agenda for August APA council meeting was a resolution prohibiting the participation of psychologists in torture. Questions about the role that psychologists have played or should play during military interrogations have received considerable attention in the news media and have been hotly debated in many venues. Along the way, APA’s position on these matters has been represented and misrepresented, so it was no surprise that the media were at the convention and at the council meeting in full force. There were also organized protests throughout the convention. During council debate on the resolution, there was certainly no disagreement that it is unethical for psychologists to engage in activities that constitute torture. However, two distinct points of view emerged regarding the stance that APA should take in its publicly stated position. Eventually, a collaboratively developed statement of points that many divisions (including Division 14) agreed upon was passed. An amendment, which proposed to forbid psychologists’ participation in any activities other than ameliorative healthcare in settings where detainees are deprived of adequate protection of their human rights, was extensively debated. The proposed amendment was directly relevant to some Division 14 members because it would set a precedent for APA trying to limit the settings in which psychologists are allowed to carry out their
roles, effectively prohibiting some members from practicing their profession in an ethical manner. The amendment was defeated. A clear explanation of the resolution that was adopted and a description of APA’s position on preventing torture and supporting ethical and effective interrogations can be found on the APA Web site at http://www.apa.org/releases/faqinterrogation.html. There continues to be substantial criticism of APA for taking the position it has, so this matter will continue to percolate. Your representatives are pleased, however, that council members have stood firm in their view as a governing body that psychologists must be able to be present in order to have a positive influence in difficult situations.

In other matters of note, the APA Council Reps have been working closely with Judy Blanton to coordinate SIOP comments on the latest version of a proposed revision of the APA Model Licensing Act. This is an issue that continues to require close monitoring on our part because the wording of the Model Licensing Act has implications for state legislation that facilitates or creates barriers for professional practice in our field.