APA Committee of Teachers of Psychology in Secondary Schools (TOPSS)
2016 Annual Report

TOPSS Committee Members: Scott Reed, MEd, Chair; Michael Hamilton, MA, Past Chair; Kristen Whitlock, MEd, Chair-Elect; Isabel Morales, EdD; Jennifer Schlicht, MS; Allison Shaver, MA; Steven Turner, MEd; Sue Frantz, MA; William Wozniak, PhD

Staff Liaisons: Emily Leary Chesnes, MBA; Robin Hailstorks, PhD; Yvonne Hill, MS

In 2016, the APA Committee of Teachers of Psychology in Secondary Schools (TOPSS) worked on several initiatives that were aligned to the APA strategic plan. Many TOPSS programs and initiatives align with the goals to *Maximize Organizational Effectiveness* (Goal 1) and *Increase Recognition of Psychology as a Science* (Goal 3).

APA/Clark University Workshop for High School Teachers

The 12th annual APA/Clark University Workshop for High School Teachers, was held July 20-22, 2016 at Clark University in Worcester, MA. Twenty-five high school teachers from around the country participated in the workshop. The 2016 workshop presenters were Alan Feldman of Glen Rock High School, Glen Rock, New Jersey, and Virginia Welle of Chippewa Falls High School, Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin. Drew Appleby, PhD, professor emeritus of psychology of Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis, delivered a keynote address, "Helping Your Students Prepare to Succeed in College: A Noble — But Potentially Risky — Endeavor." Two of the workshop sessions were live-streamed over the TOPSS Facebook page for teachers around the world to watch. This workshop has been made possible through generous gifts from Lee Gurel, PhD, a Clark University alumnus, APA member, and longtime American Psychological Foundation (APF) donor, to both Clark and APF.

Regional Networks for High School Psychology Teachers

The APF High School Psychology Outreach Grants supported twelve regional teaching networks in 2016, thanks to funding provided by APF. Networks were supported in Alabama, Arizona, Indiana, Kansas, Massachusetts, Missouri, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Texas, Wisconsin, and Wyoming. In 2016, the Outreach grants also supported innovative events for students; three additional student-based opportunities were supported in Maryland, Utah, and Wisconsin. The development of regional teaching networks has been a priority of the TOPSS Committee in recent years, as a way of promoting local professional development opportunities for teachers.

Unit Lesson Plans

The TOPSS unit lesson plans are a signature product of the TOPSS Committee. Revisions of several unit lesson plans continued this year, and a revised lesson plan on *Consciousness,* was published in May. APF funding supported the unit lesson plan revisions from 2011 - 2015.

Conducting Psychological Research for Science Fairs: A Teacher's Guide and Resource Manual

In 2016, a revised edition of *Conducting Psychological Research for Science Fairs: A Teacher's Guide and Resource Manual*, was published. Originally published in 2004, the resource manual provides high school psychology teachers with guidance on planning, designing, conducting, and determining results of psychological research projects with students, as well as on presenting project results. The manual also includes information on research competitions for psychology students, research with animals, a science fair planning schedule, sample templates and review forms, and information on data analysis. The

manual is available through the TOPSS website.

Recognizing High School Teachers and Students of Psychology

The APA Education Directorate and the APA TOPSS Committee were pleased to recognize three teachers with the 2016 APA TOPSS Charles T. Blair-Broeker Excellence in Teaching Award. The 2016 recipients were: Amy Ramponi, of Kimberly High School, Kimberly, WI; Virginia Welle, MS, of Chippewa Falls Sr. High School in Chippewa Falls, WI, and Steve Jones, MA, of City of Medicine Academy in Durham, NC. The annual Excellence in Teaching Awards recognize outstanding psychology teachers.

The APA Education Directorate and the TOPSS Committee also recognized four high school students as winners of the 2016 APA TOPSS Essay Competition for High School Psychology Students. Shi Jia Liu, Guangdong Country Garden School (Guangdong, China), Anan Quan, Cape Coral High School (Cape Coral, Florida), Jane Sensibaugh, Solon High School (Solon, OH), and Alan Zheng, Pioneer High School (Ann Arbor, MI), each received a $250 scholarship for their winning essays. Funding was provided by the APA Education Directorate. The 2016 competition asked students to submit an essay on racial bias, including the cognitive and social factors that contribute to the problem. Students addressed how implicit bias has informed our understanding of racial prejudice. In addition, each essay was required to use psychological research to examine how this problem specifically affects the criminal justice system.

TOPSS offered Academic Achievement in Psychology Certificates to all TOPSS affiliates in 2016 so that teachers could recognize outstanding student achievement in their classrooms. Student award recipient names were posted to the TOPSS website.

APA Convention Programming

The TOPSS Committee sponsored three invited addresses at the APA Convention, held August 4-7, 2016, in Denver, CO:

- Mitchell Handelsman, Ph.D., University of Colorado Denver
  Positive Frameworks for Ethics and Excellence in Teaching

- Pilyoung Kim, Ph.D., University of Denver
  How Poverty Gets into the Developing Brain

- Scott Lilienfeld, Ph.D., Emory University
  The Lee Gurel Lecture: Public Misunderstandings of Psychological Science and Their Implications for Teaching

A full-day Pre-Convention Workshop for Introductory Psychology Teachers was held on August 3, 2016. Presenters were Charlie Blair-Broeker, MAT, of Hawkeye Community College and Maureen McCarthy, PhD, of Kennesaw State University. The workshop was supported by a grant from APF. Several of the workshop sessions were live streamed through the TOPSS Facebook page.

TOPSS also sponsored a reception for psychology teachers during the Convention.

Membership Outreach and Services

Membership outreach and retention remained a high priority for TOPSS. In 2016, the TOPSS Committee, through the APA Education Directorate, continued to support a Facebook page, to enhance member engagement and communication. The TOPSS Committee also planned and held a “TOPSS night” at the

Advanced Placement Reading in June, in Louisville, KY, to share information about TOPSS with participating teachers. TOPSS continued to send regular email correspondence to the membership to inform members of resources and opportunities from APA and TOPSS. An e-blast in early fall encouraged members to forward a message about membership to local teachers who might not be current members.

In 2016, the APA Education Directorate participated as an exhibitor at the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) Conference in Washington, DC. NCSS is the largest association for social studies educators in the country. The NCSS booth provided APA and TOPSS with good visibility at NCSS. TOPSS and the Education Directorate co-sponsored a reception with Worth Publishers and the NCSS Psychology Community for high school psychology teachers at the conference.

TOPSS also communicated with its members through the distribution of a spring mass mailing, which shared news from APA and TOPSS and provided members with academic achievement in psychology certificates to present to their students, and through postings on the TOPSS website and the TOPSS listserv.

The APA Education Directorate, in collaboration with TOPSS members and members of the APA Committee of Associate and Baccalaureate Education, distributed four issues of the *Psychology Teacher Network* (PTN) newsletter. The *PTN* provides teachers with articles, activities, and book reviews to enhance psychology classroom teaching. In 2016, *PTN* featured a series of articles related to human rights and ethics, in response to a recommendation from the APA Board of Directors that the Education Directorate "promote a focus on human rights and ethics as a core element of psychology education and training from high school through continuing education offerings."

<u>Amendment to Association Rule 120-5.1</u>

In August 2016, upon recommendation from the TOPSS Committee and the APA Board of Educational Affairs, the APA Council of Representatives approved amending the Association Rule 120-5.1 to extend Member-at-Large terms from two- to three-year terms. At its September 2016 meeting, the TOPSS Committee discussed how the three-year terms would be phased into committee member rotation.

<u>American Psychological Foundation Lee Gurel Funds for High School Psychology Teachers</u>

The TOPSS Committee greatly appreciated American Psychological Foundation (APF) funding to the Education Directorate in 2016 through the following two funds:

- The American Psychological Foundation/Education Directorate Lee Gurel Fund for Professional Development of High School Teachers of Psychology, which supported (1) *APF Professional Development Awards for High School Psychology Teachers* to help high school psychology teachers travel to and attend the APA Convention in August 2016, (2) support for the Pre-Convention Workshop for High School Psychology Teachers, and (3) additional travel support for participants for the 2016 APA/Clark University Workshop.

- The APF Lee Gurel Fund for High School Psychology, which supported *APF High School Psychology Teacher Outreach Grants* to support local or regional networks of psychology teachers.

Other Collaborations and Discussions

Kristin Whitlock, MEd, the 2016 TOPSS Chair-Elect, represented the TOPSS Committee on the Steering Committee for the APA Summit on High School Psychology Education. The nine person Steering Committee met in July 2016 to continue planning for the first ever summit on high school psychology. The summit will be held in July 2017 at Weber State University in Ogden, Utah, and will address topics such as the teaching of high school psychology as science, skills that promote well-being and flourishing, the *National Standards for High School Psychology Curricula*, assessing student knowledge and skills in psychology, credentialing and identifying high school psychology teachers, on-going professional development, diversity and access, and technology and online learning. As part of the summit planning process, the TOPSS Committee reviewed and provided feedback on a national survey of high school psychology teachers conducted in late 2016. The TOPSS Committee also discussed the summit at its spring and fall meetings.

The TOPSS Committee worked with members of the APA Committee on Aging (CONA) to develop the question for the 2017 APA TOPSS Competition for High School Psychology Students. The 2017 essay theme is "An Aging World." CONA members offered to help review and score essays in 2017.

Two TOPSS Committee members participated in a phone call with representatives from Psi Beta, the community college national honor society in psychology, about the possibility of starting an honor society for high school psychology students. The idea of a high school national honor society has been discussed for years. Following the call, the TOPSS Committee agreed that it did not recommend moving forward with starting an honor society.

A TOPSS liaison attended two meetings in 2016 of the Coalition for Psychology in Schools and Education.