

OSPA TODAY



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Taking A Positive Perspective President's Message

It is hard for me to believe my year as President is coming to an end. By the time you read this, the Spring Conference will be over and the slate of new officers announced. I want to thank the Executive Board for their willingness to serve during my term and all of the members who have supported the organization and continue to work and make a difference in children's lives. In reviewing what I wanted to accomplish during my term, I realize some things have happened while others are still "in the works".

Seven members have taken over positions on the board who had previously not been involved. Although I am pleased with this I would hope in the future there would be even more involvement of new people. I do believe those who have been on the board for several years offer a consistency that needs to be there but I also feel new board members would give the organization a "different perspective". Each year, since I have belonged, when the slate of officers is announced we have never had more than one for each position. I feel the membership does not think they can nominate others or themselves as it is already a "done" deal with the slate that is announced at the spring meeting. I know this to be true as I thought that was the case when I became involved in the leadership of the organization. But I took a chance, stepped up and got involved. I hope you will reconsider your thoughts about involvement and begin by letting your regional representative know or by contacting me. I will continue to be on the board as Past President and would respond to any questions you might have about what kind of a time commitment is involved. There are many behind the scenes things to be done that take very little commitment. Please email me at nancybarton@sbcglobal.net.

The Fall Conference met another of my goals by addressing the most current trend in school psychology "Response to Intervention" (RIT) and the Spring Conference continued with the same strand with a workshop on how to actually implement RIT. The Spring Conference also continued to add to your professional development by training you on the new BASC 2.

On the negative side there has not yet been a provisional certificate implemented for those who are on internship. I hope this is something the next board can help accomplish as I believe that would partially address the retention of school psychologists in the state. I also have not seen much progress toward implementation of NCLB. Although it has passed at the federal level, there are still the interpretations for the state to make to create a new Policy and Procedure manual. I hope there will be involvement of school psychologists in this procedure so the new manual will reflect our expertise of what is best practice with children.

In conclusion, I have really enjoyed being your President. I feel I have grown professionally and made some terrific friendships with others across the state. I hope you will seriously consider being more involved in the leadership of OSPA. You are what makes the organization work and your ideas are needed as

we continue to face the challenges of working effectively with our children through out the state.

Nancy Barton, Ph.D.

2005 Graduate Studies Awards

John Nomura and Rachel Stricklin Awarded Scholarships

The OSPA Paul Warden and Mary Jo Keatley Graduate Studies Awards were established in 1998 to recognize and provide financial support to two students in school psychology training programs in the state of Oklahoma. The awards were named to honor Dr. Warden and Dr. Keatley, two of the pioneers of school psychology in Oklahoma and founding members of OSPA. The awards were developed in response to our professional commitment to encourage promising students to complete a school psychology program. Monetary awards are presented annually. This year, \$1000 scholarships were given to two selected students.

Applications were received from five highly qualified individuals making the selection process difficult. Based on the recommendation of the Awards, Honors and Scholarships Committee, the OSPA executive board awarded scholarships to John Nomura and Rachel Stricklin.

John Nomura has had a lifetime goal of improving the lives of children. He has worked with children and youth through employment and volunteer opportunities in the Tulsa, Norman and Oklahoma City areas. John earned a Bachelor of Arts degree at the University of Oklahoma and a Master of Science degree at Oklahoma State University. John is currently a doctoral student in the school psychology program at OSU. While attending OSU his concerns have included the overrepresentation of minorities in special education. He believes that school psychologists can address this issue by being sensitive to cultural differences, using appropriate assessment tools and advocating for minority students. John also has an interest in research and in being part of a university training program. John has expressed a desire to stay in Oklahoma and advocate for reforms to benefit the profession of school psychology.

Rachel Stricklin grew up in rural Oklahoma and knows the challenges rural communities face in providing services to their citizens. Her goal is to improve school psychological services for children in the smaller communities of Oklahoma. Rachel received her Bachelor of Science and Master of Science degrees from Oklahoma State University and is working on her specialist degree at OSU. She has been a student member of OSPA since 2003 and is currently the OSU student representative on the executive board. In her letter of recommendation, Rachel was described as an excellent student with common sense and judgment and the highest degree of responsibility. She has shown herself to be determined, dedicated, kind and compassionate.

We are fortunate to have both these students as OSPA members and as future leaders in the profession of school psychology. Congratulations to John and Rachel.

Elizabeth Hatcher
Chair, Awards, Honor, and Scholarships

NASP Delegate Report

The Opryland Hotel in Nashville was the site of the NASP Delegate Assembly. As a new delegate, I participated in the New Leader Orientation and Training and attended a half day leadership training on “The Will to Govern Well.” A recommended book was From Good to Great. Throughout our full days of work, I was quite impressed with the high quality of leadership and with NASP governance in general.

NASP’s Strategic Plan includes these key areas of work: professional competency, advocacy, member support, diversity, operational excellence, and external relations and communication, with goals and objectives for each area. More than ever, NASP membership is a great value at less than 50 cents a day. There are more member benefits now, including crisis resources, liability insurance, culturally competent practice resources, legislative updates, free downloadable handouts, the *Communiqué* which is full of the latest news in our field, the scholarly School Psychology Review, and an award-winning website. Other NASP benefits include outstanding professional books and other resources with member discounts, up to twelve Continuing Professional Development units per year, convention discounts, networking opportunities, Career Center job seeker (including internships) and employer services, NASP Position Papers, and more. Their new publication, Helping Children at Home and School II, is worth its weight in gold, with excellent handouts on a vast number of topics.

There are 29 states now accepting NCSP, with only Oklahoma and Louisiana having passed legislation for bonuses for NCSPs, with ours yet to be funded. NASP President Lee Huff recognized Oklahoma’s efforts in this area, at Dr. Andrew Glenn’s request. NASP is working with APA Division 16 on a joint statement regarding respecialization, which may have been approved by now. Division 16 is also working with NASP on legislative issues and prescription privileges for PhDs with extensive training. The NCSP Board is being restructured similar to the Program Approval Model. Reviewers are being trained to be more responsive, so applicants will receive feedback on what areas are deficient. Applicant will have three years to work their Professional Development Plan to meet requirements for NCSP. This year there will be a one-time renewal opportunity for those who let their NCSP lapse. The NCSP Standards are being redeveloped to be more inclusive and have a more outcomes-based approach. The NCSP brochure and application have been revised. Every five years, position papers are revised. Those discussed this year included: Periodic Re-Evaluations for Students with Disabilities, Employing School Psychologists for Comprehensive Service Delivery, Sexual Minority Youth, and Evidence-Based Practices in the Schools.

Futures goals should be part of discussions, committee work, and strategic planning in state associations. A Futures e-community is being created, as well as a CPD module. For the School Psychology Leadership Roundtable, NASP is interested in getting information related to the number of jobs lost, personnel shortages, and jobs that cannot be filled. A Trainer of Trainers model will be piloted at the NASP Anaheim convention, and a toolkit will be available. NASP wants to target cities for minority recruitment. If interested, contact Tamika through the NASP office.

By the way, the Central Region is still giving Oklahoma accolades for our warm hospitality in hosting them last November, and they refer to “the Oklahoma standard” with smiles.

Candis Hogan, Ph.D.

What's the "Future" of School Psychology in Oklahoma?

A Call for Collaboration between State Leaders and Practitioners

*Eric M Mesmer, Ph.D., NCSP
Futures Liaison, State of Oklahoma*

Since the November 2002 Futures Conference sponsored by the National Association of School Psychologists and the American Psychological Association, numerous discussions and events have occurred across the United States in an effort to initially impact the future trajectory of our profession. These discussions have occurred in a number of forums including national, state, and regional conferences. In fact, during 2003, NASP regional conferences allotted a significant portion of planning time to sharing of ideas regarding Futures activities. These discussions amongst state planning leaders have continued throughout 2004 and 2005. Further, insights regarding critical issues likely to impact the profession have been offered by nationally recognized leaders in recent editions of scholarly journals. These discussions and insights are intended to provide a central platform in which individual states can develop plans that will allow school psychological practice to more effectively meet the needs of children in our schools. The purpose of this article is to re-familiarize the members of OSPA with the 5 goals that emanated from the 2002 conference, to articulate some of the challenges that we must face in Oklahoma in addressing these goals, to provide an overview of what has been done in Oklahoma despite these challenges, and to solicit your feedback regarding future activities.

The five goal areas initially identified through the Futures Conference included 1) Improved Academic Competence and School Success for all Children, 2) Improved Social-Emotional Functioning for all Children, 3) Enhanced Family-School Partnerships and Parental Involvement in Schools, 4) More Effective Education and Instruction for all Learners, and 5) Increased Child and Family Services in Schools that Promote Health and Mental Health and are Integrated with Community Services. While these goals are likely to be consistent with intentions of most school psychologists, the purpose of formally articulating these goals was to provide focus at the national and state levels regarding the priorities for our profession. Importantly, these priorities must be understood within the context of a number of factors influencing the profession including difficulties recruiting and retaining individuals in the profession, significant numbers of impending retirements of current practitioners, increased emphasis on accountability in special and general education, recent changes to IDEA that emphasize more sophisticated assessment and evaluation skills, use of technology in training and practice, and implementation of evidence-based practices, to name a few.

Ultimately, the Futures Conference, like other landmark events in our profession (e.g. Boulder, Thayer and Olympia Conferences, and the Spring Hill Symposium), provided an opportunity for national and state leaders to ask two important questions, "*What should be the Future goals of School Psychology*" and "*What are we doing to ensure that school psychologists are engaged in activities that address these identified goals?*" Within the state of Oklahoma, OSPA and other state psychological and educational leaders are just beginning to understand the enormity of the implications of these questions. In order to address these questions, OSPA leaders have begun a series of discussions to better define and understand Futures' priorities within the context of issues that we face in Oklahoma. These issues have been previously discussed, debated, and in some cases documented within leadership papers such as the 2001 OSPA Strategic Plan and the School Psychology Task Force Strategic Plan, which was developed as part of the Oklahoma SIG grant regarding the Recruitment, Retention, and Retraining of support personnel. Some of these issues will be briefly discussed here as they assist in helping to understand the barriers that we face in Oklahoma when attempting to embrace the Futures' Agenda.

The first and possibly most significant issue in Oklahoma actually has two parts. First, there is a problem with supply (i.e. there is a shortage of qualified personnel to provide services). Second, there is a problem with demand (i.e. many districts do not understand the importance of having psychological services and certainly are not willing to pay for them). Thus, before Futures' goals can be addressed, school psychologists have to be available and employed. Contractual services (in any form) do not and never will allow a model of comprehensive services to be delivered to a school district. Contractual services do provide some relief to districts in that IDEA mandates can be partially addressed (i.e. children can be tested by giving them an IQ and Achievement test), however the validity of such practices have always been questioned and the legality of such practices will come under further fire with the new changes to IDEA. Second, misunderstanding amongst educational professional and parents regarding the differences between school psychometrists and school psychologists prevents role expansion. Unfortunately, this misunderstanding (i.e. equating the two professions) does not originate in the minds of other professional groups; instead they originate and are reinforced by the daily actions of school psychologists. In a nutshell, school psychologists test children and school psychometrists test children, and while clear distinctions exist in the sophistication of our service delivery and the types of competencies we possess, little distinction exists in the frequency with which we engage in activities that would move the profession towards the Futures' goals. School psychologists in the state of Oklahoma will not be given the opportunity to engage in activities that address the Futures' goals until we demonstrate that we have the vision and the skills to provide these services. Articulation of this vision and demonstration of these skills will distinguish the profession and subsequently provide greater opportunity for role expansion. Continued "coupling" of our profession with other related groups (i.e. school psychometrists, school counselors, etc...) will result in defaulting on our responsibilities toward more effective service delivery because we can not ethically advocate for inclusion of groups (in our future) that are not trained and credentialed to meet these goals. Finally, there has been a longstanding marginalization of the profession from both educational and psychological stakeholders. As a result, the profession has gained minimal political clout. Because school psychologists have not been considered important players in educational policy decision-making, other professional groups have enacted policies that have not benefited the profession. Some of these decisions include: 1) the requirement that school psychologists take state tests that were developed to assess minimum competencies of pre-service teachers in order to earn initial state certification, 2) the failure to issue internship certificates to school psychology students who are completing internship requirements, and 3) the failure to recognize recommended national training and practice standards. These decisions have created a number of problems including restricting the role of the school psychologist, difficulties recruiting individuals into training programs and retaining them within the state, stifling the development of innovative internship sites, and ambiguity in defining the importance of the profession. Further, because the profession has not been part of the educational mainstream, school psychologists often do not have a voice when policy decisions are made regarding the educational and mental health needs of children.

With these issues as a backdrop, leaders and practitioners in the state of Oklahoma will continue to move ahead with the Futures' agenda. Currently, there are a number of concrete examples of commitment to this agenda. First, shortly after the 2002 Futures Conference, state leaders submitted a "Futures Plan" that is currently posted on the School Psychology Futures' website (<http://www.indiana.edu/~futures/>). Please keep in mind that this plan represents a work in progress and is continually being updated. Second, behind the leadership of Candis Hogan (NASP Delegate to Oklahoma and Former President of OSPA), state legislators passed a resolution recognizing the importance of national certification (NCSP). Once funding is made available all NCSPs working within public schools in Oklahoma will receive a \$5,000 increase to their base salary. Third, the state certification office in conjunction with the Oklahoma Commission on Teacher

Preparation (OCTP) is in the process of reviewing each school psychology program within the state to determine whether the programs are aligned with national training standards. Programs that are not aligned with these standards will have to make efforts to improve or face having their state accreditation revoked. While this policy may seem unduly harsh, the state is attempting to eventually ensure that all practitioners in Oklahoma meet nationally recognized standards. Fourth, OSPA has recently made strides toward addressing important and timely issues at its fall and spring conferences. For example, understanding that changes to IDEA and in particular changes in identification procedures to students suspected of learning disabilities was on the horizon, OSPA invited Dr. David Prasse to speak about "Response to Intervention" at its fall conference and followed this up with a workshop on implementing and evaluating interventions at the spring '05 conference. Further, discussions have occurred around the idea of developing a state data-base of local practitioners with particular expertise. These individuals would be available to provide in-service training and ongoing technical assistance to school districts across the state. Typically, it is this type of support that is necessary to facilitate change at the local level. Fifth, the OSPA executive board has charged the strategic resource committee to work in conjunction with each new president-elect to develop a set of short-term yearly goals that are aligned with the NASP Futures' goals. Importantly, this committee will propose specific strategies and activities that will allow these goals to be met.

Finally, as the Futures' Liaison for the state of Oklahoma and as a trainer of school psychologists, I firmly believe that state level leaders should actively support local practitioners in facilitating role expansion. This means that state leaders should work toward identifying and securing funding, and providing technical assistance and training that will allow school psychologists throughout Oklahoma to whole-heartedly embrace the Future's goals. This requires that state leaders make new efforts to reach out to the OSPA membership and obtain your input as partners in the state-wide change process. In fact, as your Future's Liaison, please regard this as an invitation to contact me personally with your ideas, comments, questions, or concerns. I can be reached via email at mesmere@okstate.edu. In an effort to thoughtfully embark in this dialogue together, I would encourage each of you to become more familiar with the Future's goals and what has been done to this point at the national level. This information can be accessed at the website mentioned above. More in-depth information can be obtained by accessing recent special editions of *School Psychology Review*, *Psychology in the Schools*, *School Psychology Quarterly*, and *the Journal of Educational and Psychological Consultation*. Working together I am confident that we can make strides that will result in meaningful services for children and improved outcomes for all students in our schools.

Sandra Reese-Keck, Jane Sale, and Janice Walker Studying Neuropsychology

Three Oklahoma School Psychologists are studying under Dr. Dan Miller in an effort to become School Neuropsychology Diplomats. Sandra Reese-Keck, Jane Sale, and Janice Walker have been attending class one weekend a month since October. The post-graduate class is offered through Texas Women's University and is open to certified school psychologists from across the country. Eleven school psychologists from Texas are participating in the class with the three Oklahomans.

The group has studied the history of neuropsychology, neuropsychological theories, and neuroanatomy. Legislation surrounding the new LD definition has been debated. Students are required to conduct two complete neuropsychological assessments and present their case studies to the class during the year. A third case study will be defended before two current diplomats and a 200-question exam will be passed before participants will earn certification.

The class has studied and practiced neuropsychological batteries, tests of memory and learning, tests of executive functions, tests of attention, and reading and writing assessments. Report writing has also had its place in the course. Students are learning to integrate the neurological functions of the brain with cognitive strengths and weaknesses. Providing evidence-based interventions specific to the child's profile is the main purpose of the report. Neuropsychological evaluations are appropriate for only a certain segment of the school population. Evaluations done by clinical neuropsychologists, however, are often not very useful in the school environment. This course is an attempt to train school psychologists how to assess neurological conditions in such a way as to provide the student with the most appropriate educational program as possible. Dr. Miller is already planning another course for 2005-2006. For further information, he can be contacted at dcmiller@kidsinc.com.