

MPA NEWSLETTER

WINTER 2024



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APPOINTED POSITIONS & COMMITTEE CHAIRS

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Natalie Gaughf, Ph.D., ABPP

Continuing Education Chair:

Vacant

Business of Practice Chair:

Liz Woodruff, Ph.D.

Public Education Chair:

David Gavel, Ph.D.

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LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT



David Gavel, Ph.D.

There are a number of experiences from graduate school that were seared into my memory banks. For example, I'm convinced that no degree of cognitive impairment could erase intrusive memories of the way I felt when my 8:00 am Counseling Theories instructor locked out a peer before he could enter the room late at 8:01am. Lessons were learned that day. And make no mistake, behaviors were modified! Another one that repeatedly comes to the forefront of my mind occurred on the first day of the first semester. During introductions, a member of our cohort asked our instructor how she manages privacy with her social media accounts. Without skipping a beat, and in a manner that only this wise (and hilarious) mentor could, she delivered these words: "Social media will be the end of humanity. I don't have time for any of that." We chuckled (not laughed. She did hold the fate of our careers in her hands) as she explained her less than optimistic view that social media, virtual "friends," and web-based relational experiences were fundamentally changing humanity by redefining the concept of interpersonal relationships.

While the destruction of humanity might be a bit doomsday-ish, that instructor's words echoed in my mind as the COVID era forced an over-reliance on virtual reality as a substitute for many traditional interpersonal networks and exacerbated some unintended consequences.

For example, there are numerous businesses, organizations, and communities that simply did not survive the disruptions caused by COVID. As an organization, MPA weathered the storms of 2020 & 2021. Under the leadership of Dr. Alston and Dr. Malkin, MPA membership enjoyed the benefit of virtual conferences, access to telehealth trainings, guidance for distance learning/training, and advocacy for expansion of services to underprivileged areas. In 2022 and 2023, Dr. Maack and Dr. McRaney facilitated an organizational rebound that not only resumed normative function but, as you will see in Dr. McRaney's review of 2023 (see below), has positioned MPA for expansion in 2024 that will benefit the discipline of psychology, the populations we serve, and the greater Mississippi community for years to come. I truly believe MPA's survival was made possible by the pre-existing network of real-life relationships that embody the organization.

If you are reading this, it is likely because you are among the 133 current members of MPA and you voluntarily involve yourself by consuming the quarterly newsletter. On behalf of the MPA Executive Council, I want to express appreciation for that involvement and hope you find your membership with MPA to be a worthwhile investment of time and money. We also want to challenge you to consider ways that you can actively participate in the mission and growth of MPA in 2024. There are numerous ways to get involved including the obvious such as conference attendance, membership voting, and CE workshops. There are also some less obvious but equally important ways such as an occasional networking lunch with fellow MPA members, volunteering to join an MPA committee that matches your areas interest, or promoting MPA initiatives on one of the various social media platforms (before humanity ends that is). Most notably, if there is one thing that all members can do to promote the exponential growth of MPA, it is connecting in real-life with non-member colleagues and inviting them to add their professional and personal voices to the MPA collective. You see, our 133 person membership represents just 25% of psychologists in the state of Mississippi and your MPA EC is committed to creating value and implementing exciting initiatives for growth in 2024. To this end, you can expect to hear about ways that you can get involved from various leadership and committee members in the months to come. In the meantime, do not hesitate to reach out with questions, ideas, or even expressions of need. MPA exists for you and your EC is always open to ways in which we can work for and with you. See you soon!

MPA DAY AT THE CAPITOL

Celebrate Valentine's Day with a touch of advocacy! MPA's Day at the Capitol has been rescheduled to February 14, 2024! Your presence and support are vital in championing mental health awareness and shaping policies that positively impact our community.

Join us, and let's make it a day of love and meaningful contributions.



New Date!

MPA DAY AT THE CAPITOL
February 14, 2024
1:00 pm - 4:30 pm



601-608-7677

WWW.MPASSOC.ORG

P.O. BOX 16544
JACKSON MS 39236

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LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear MPA Members,

Happy New Year! As we embark on this journey into 2024, I want to take a moment to acknowledge the dedicated efforts of our Board over the past year. The tireless commitment to serve you better has been reflected in the comprehensive update of our bylaws, policies, and procedures.

The Board has worked diligently to ensure that these updates align with our shared vision for the association, focusing on enhancing the overall experience for our valued members. Your feedback and insights have played a crucial role in shaping these revisions, and we are excited to implement changes that cater to the evolving needs of our dynamic membership.



LaDarion Ammons, J.D.

Our commitment to improvement doesn't stop here. We firmly believe that the strength of our association lies in the collaborative efforts of its members. As we move forward, we encourage each of you to actively engage with us. Your perspectives, suggestions, and constructive criticism are invaluable in helping us continually refine our services.

It is your voice that guides us, and we believe in the power of collective input to drive positive change. Your duty, as members of this vibrant community, is to let us know how we can better serve you. Whether it's identifying areas for improvement, suggesting new initiatives, or providing feedback on existing policies, your input is instrumental in shaping the future of MPA.

We look forward to a year of continued collaboration, growth, and success. Together, let's build an association that truly reflects the needs and aspirations of its diverse membership.

Thank you for your ongoing support, and here's to a fantastic year ahead!

Warm regards,
LaDarion Ammons, J.D.
Executive Director

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MPA LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE UPDATE

The Mississippi Psychological Association (MPA) Legislative Committee is charged with identifying and supporting state legislation that promotes and expands the work of psychologists. The committee includes Dr. Hannah Ford, Dr. Natalie Gaughf (chair), Dr. Emily Thomas Johnson, Dr. Nicholas McAfee, Dr. Cecile Morvan, Dr. Brittany Sapp, and Dr. Courtney Walker. MPA's lobbyist is Chip Reno.

We are preparing for the 2024 Legislative Session, and we have been commissioned to enact PSYPACT legislation in the state of Mississippi. We started working towards this initiative during the 2023 Legislative Session, and we hope to be successful in this session. For more information about PSYPACT, visit www.psypact.org.

How can you get involved in legislative efforts?

Familiarize yourself with the 1) Mississippi Code and 2) Rules and Regulations of the MS Board of Psychology.

To Access the Mississippi Code

Go to the Mississippi Board of Psychology www.psychologyboard.ms.gov/

Go to the Resources tab, and select Psychology Law.

Click on the Link to LexisNexis, and agree to the terms.

Click the + sign beside Title 73. Professions and Vocations.

Click the + sign beside Chapter 31. Psychologists.

Review § 73-31-1 through § 73-31-31.

To Access the Rules and Regulations

Go to the Mississippi Board of Psychology www.psychologyboard.ms.gov/

Go to the Resources tab, select Rules and Regulations, and review.

Attend Mississippi Board of Psychology meetings and review meeting minutes.

Review legislation and reach out to your Region Representative and/or other MPA leader.

To Review Mississippi Legislation

Go to the Mississippi Legislature website. www.legislature.ms.gov/

Click on the Legislation tab at the top of the page. Select Text Search. Click New Text Search.

Build a query, and enter keywords (e.g., psychologist, mental health, behavioral health, telehealth). Click Search Records.

Serve on the Legislative Committee.

Legislative Committee members would be happy to provide more information about this committee.

Natalie W. Gaughf, PhD, ABPP
Chair, Legislative Committee



Natalie W. Gaughf,
PhD, ABPP

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ARTICLES FROM APA

How psychology is shaping the future of technology *Innovators are increasingly using psychological research to ensure new technology will benefit everyone*

By Susan Straight and Zara Abrams -- Date created: January 12, 2024



LAS VEGAS — Technology leaders have turned their attention to psychological research for the science behind how humans can safely engage with innovations changing our world. From artificial intelligence to social media to gaming, psychologists are increasingly being asked to play a central role in developing the research needed to form a sustainable relationship with the technology shaping our lives.

The American Psychological Association, in coordination with the Consumer Technology Association, presented a series of science conversations at the 2024 Consumer Electronics Show, the world's leading technology conference, on January 9. The sessions helped tech experts understand how input from psychologists will support innovation in artificial intelligence while protecting the public, helped to define the future of privacy and related equity issues, showed how behavioral science can help build games for good, and much more.

[Read more...](#)

12 emerging trends for 2024

What's ahead for psychologists in the coming year?



2024 will be a pivotal year for psychology. The U.S. presidential campaign, already infected with misinformation, needs psychological science's debunking and prebunking strategies. Generative artificial intelligence—unleashed upon society with few guardrails—will desperately require social science insights as it progresses along its exciting and uncertain trajectory.

The ongoing crisis in mental health care access, the trauma for women and LGBTQ+ individuals whose bodily autonomy is threatened by ongoing legislation, and the backlash against racial equity work present unprecedented challenges and opportunities over the next year. There is hope though as mental health technology enters a second wave of investment, clinicians continue to innovate to reach more patients, new strategies to end addiction make promising headway, and neuroscience helps us to discover ways to protect brain health and treat brutal afflictions like Alzheimer's.

[Read more...](#)

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LETTER FROM THE IMMEDIATE PAST-PRESIDENT & CONVENTION CHAIR

Hello MPA members. I hope that each of you had a joyful holiday season and new year. As I reflect on the past year, I am so proud of our association's resilience and productivity, I am grateful for the amazing group of psychologists we have in Mississippi and the unwavering dedication of our Executive Committee and Council. To kick off the year, I believe it's fitting to spotlight some of our most notable accomplishments and achievements this year.

- Our association has benefited greatly from the guidance and leadership of our new Executive Director, LaDarion, and his team. LaDarion and his team have been working tirelessly to help MPA improve many areas that we will benefit from for years to come. Much of that work has been behind the scenes, and I think 2024 will be a year where our membership gets to see some of the concrete improvements and gains from those efforts!
- The inaugural year of MPA's Leadership Development Academy was held and we had three amazing fellows complete the program! Let me tell you – this is one of my favorite things I've been a part of. We had an amazing group of fellows and mentors, and it was one of the most rewarding and fulfilling things I've been a part of. We will be kicking off a new LDA year in September, so please contact me if you are interested! Shout out to our amazing fellows Jenniffer Ladner-Graham, Brittany Sapp, & Michael Prazak; mentors, Beverly Smallwood, Natalie Gaughf, & Gus Sison; and my fellow steering committee members, Angela Herzog and Amy Wilson.
- We had an incredible convention in September (I mean, Elvis? Come on!!). We had so much fun, but we also made sure we were TCB with some amazing continuing education. Kudos to Dani Maack on a job well done!
- We made some excellent headway in our efforts to document MPA's history which was displayed at the convention. I hope you all enjoyed looking at photos and documents of years past as much as I did! We also saw the Gavel Club Breakfast making an appearance at convention again, a longstanding tradition of an annual gathering of past MPA presidents! Many thanks to Angela Herzog for her efforts to preserve MPA's history.
- We updated our bylaws for the first time since 2013! Thank you to Ty Stafford for his leadership and service on this. You can review our updated bylaws [here](#).
- MPA secured a \$5,000 APA legislative grant which will help in advocating for PSYPACT during this legislative session! A major high-five and gold star goes out to Natalie Gaughf, LaDarion Ammons, and the Legislative Committee for their work and success with this!
- We established a new award – the C.D. Gaston Spirit of MPA Award, spearheaded by Angela Herzog. The award was created to “...recognize a member of MPA who embodies our professional organization. The Award honors steadfast devotion to active leadership, mentorship, membership enhancement, collegial support, and legislative advocacy to ensure and sustain the high standards of the field. This psychologist has exhibited exceptional dedication to MPA through unrelenting advocacy for the professionalism of psychology in Mississippi” and to honor the service and contribution C.D. Gaston made to our MPA, our State, and the field.
- We had a lot of important, hard work happening to in the background to lay the groundwork for some exciting developments to come soon!



Kristy McRaney, Ph.D.

I hope our membership is as proud of the accomplishments MPA has made this year, as I am. Our association is home to an exceptional group of professionals, and I'm grateful to be surrounded by such brilliant minds and passionate hearts.

In closing, I want to share a reflection. The past few years have shown me how important advocacy and leadership are in our field, areas that I felt were less emphasized in my training and formal professional development. When I shared this experience, I found that many other psychologists expressed a similar experience. With that, it seemed like an obvious choice to select “Adjust your Sails to Leadership” as the theme for our convention this year! I hope each of you will join us September 25-27, where we can connect with colleagues and delve into how psychologists can effectively advocate and lead in our field and communities!

Kristy McRaney
Immediate Past-President & 2024 Convention Chair

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LETTER FROM THE FEDERAL ADVOCACY COORDINATOR



Hi everyone, I wanted to take a minute to update everyone on the most recent Federal Advocacy happenings as well as APA's topics for potential directions of focus for the 2024 legislative year.

On December 3-4th, I participated in APA Services' virtual Advocacy Summit. Following a day of advocacy training and hearing about APA's focus for this summit, I was able to connect with the offices of Senator Cindy Hyde, Senator Roger Wicker, and Representative Trent Kelly to help identify federal programs that are key to psychology and talk about why it is important for them to be well funded. This year, funding has been a major issue, with the potential for a federal shutdown being a major news topic for weeks in the fall. I spoke more specifically about funding for the School and Campus-Based Mental Health Programs as well as the Suicide Prevention Programs that are being brought up in the 2024 legislative cycle. The relevance and benefit of these programs nationally (and especially to constituents in Mississippi) was detailed and discussed. All offices were receptive to the increased need, and I will be following up with the legislative aids in the next few months related to funding of these programs.

Danielle Maack, Ph.D.

The first Grassroots Advocacy standing meeting (APA's monthly meeting with FACs), is scheduled next week (24th) where issues/trends STPAs have been seeing over the last year will be reviewed. Here are the two lists of topics noted that were of most interest to legislators and ones that STPAs shared as of interest to their state associations:

Of interest to lawmakers (no particular order):

- Expanding access to mental and behavioral health services, including telehealth access, and changing licensing requirements.
- Funding for mental and behavioral health services, including Medicaid changes.
- Parity between mental and physical healthcare access.
- LGBTQ+ issues.
- Climate change.
- Disallowing COVID protections.
- Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (including but not limited to academic freedom and parental rights in schools).
- Reproductive rights issues.
- Changes to safety net programs, e.g., unemployment benefits.

Of interest to memberships/networks (no particular order):

- Scope of practice issues, including licensure, good faith estimates, health data, PSYPACT, RxP, integrated care and more.
- Reimbursement issues, including insurance billing, Medicare / Medicaid rates, managed care, funding for telehealth services, parity, and more.
- Access to mental and behavioral health services, including client rights, expansion of telehealth access, access in rural areas, 988 and more.
- Workforce shortage / recruitment, including training, affordability of education and more.
- LGBTQ issues.
- Gun safety issues.
- Reproductive rights issues.
- Juvenile justice issues.
- EPPP 1 and 2 changes.
- Immigration issues.
- Academic freedom.

If there are any areas that you are particularly interested in for our state, please let me know so we can have more discussion and I can relay to the APA Grassroots team what our members are seeing as in need of attention in Mississippi by our federal lawmakers.

The Federal Advocacy Committee will start back with monthly meetings (tentative start in February). If you are interested in being a part of this committee, please don't hesitate to contact me for more information!
djmaack@deltaautumn.com

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FROM THE HISTORIAN



Angela Herzog, Ph.D.

Since last reporting to the membership, there are several updates to provide from the History and Archives Committee. YES, we now have a standing committee charged with attending to the history of our professional association. I have been in touch with 33 Past Presidents of MPA to request their input on issues such as topics or issues that were prioritized during their tenure. Request was made for any documents they could send so that we can initiate a more systematic compilation of MPA records across time.

A resolution was proposed to the Executive Council to create The C.D. Gaston Spirit of MPA Award, to memorialize Dr. Gaston's advocacy of professionalism by honoring members who exemplify steadfast devotion to active leadership, mentorship, membership enhancement, collegial support, synergy and success to ensure and sustain high professional standards of the field.

Other goals which embody the purpose of this committee necessitate acquiring committee members. Assistance is needed with scanning documents into electronic files; monitoring for significant events in the lives of MPA members, including their deaths; memorializing the lives of MPA members following their deaths; and developing a strategy for seasoned, aged and endlessly devoted MPA members to "hear from" active current members of MPA. Last year, just prior to our Convention, I was able to locate Dr. John Alcorn, who many of you remember from USM and for his years' devotion to psychology in Mississippi. I visited with him on the phone and the last thing he mentioned was how very nice it was for him to hear from a MPA colleague from years past. It was not long after that I found out Dr. Alcorn died. I think that as psychologists, we can certainly honor those who've been impactful to our profession - with an occasional, old-fashioned phone call. I'd like to formalize this goal.

Please review your files, whether paper or digital, and send any records that may assist with documenting the history of MPA. This includes Convention programs, committee notes, etc.

Please consider volunteering to be a part of this or any committee or MPA.

Please send any suggestions you have for goals of this committee to aoherzog56@gmail.com.



MPA lost two deeply devoted Psychology leaders in 2023, Dr. C.D. Gaston on the left and Dr. John Alcorn on the right

Valentine's Humor

What did the paper clip say to the magnet?

I find you very attractive!

What did the octopus say to his valentine?

I want to hold your hand, hand, hand, hand, hand, hand,
hand, hand.

What did the light bulb say to his Valentine?

I wuv you watts and watts!

Why are artichokes the most loving vegetable?

Because they've got heart.



BE
MINE

KISS
ME

YOU &
ME

TRUE
LOVE

UPCOMING EVENTS

**Practice Leadership Conference
February 8–11, 2024**

**MPA Day at the Capitol
February 14, 2024
1:00 pm - 4:30 pm**



BILOXI MS.

SEPTEMBER 25-27

2024

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