

CANDIDATES FOR PRESIDENT-ELECT

Justin D. Smith

University of Tennessee

Hello fellow SPAGS members. My name is Justin (J.D.) Smith. I am a fourth-year trainee in the clinical psychology program at the University of Tennessee Knoxville. Let me tell you a little about myself: I lead a very active lifestyle and I am an outdoor enthusiast. I grew up in northwest Montana near Glacier National Park, which provided ample opportunity to enjoy some of the most beautiful landscapes anywhere. My family went camping, hiking and fishing often. From these early experiences I have grown to love the outdoors and routinely hike, trail run, mountain bike and rock climb. Even though graduate work dominates most of my life, I try to maintain balance between work, play and my friends and family. I like art, particularly ceramics and sculpture, but it's difficult to incorporate my love of the arts into graduate school life. Writing seems to have become my creative outlet for now, and that works well in terms of productivity.

My research and clinical work is primarily focused on psychological assessment. Even though my chief interest has been Therapeutic Assessment (TA), I also study and enjoy the use of performance based/projective measures and other forms of assessment. Most of my research has involved the use of the TA model with children and families. In addition to a number of clinical and empirical case studies, I recently completed my dissertation project, which examined the therapeutic effectiveness of TA as a treatment method. I found that TA is a potentially efficacious treatment for preadolescent boys with oppositional defiant disorder. This project is an example of my goal to conduct research that demonstrates how assessment procedures directly benefit clients. I was awarded the SPA Dissertation Grant in 2008 for this project.

If I am elected President-Elect of SPAGS I hope to continue to promote the utility of psychological assessment in its varied forms. Through TA I believe assessment can be an intervention in and of itself, but I also believe psychological assessment informs treatment and research directly and indirectly. I also see the value and necessity of forensic assessment in the current role of psychology in the legal system. My goal in the coming years is to continue to draw attention to evidenced-based assessment practices, particularly as they relate to the training of psychologists. As a student, it is somewhat alarming that assessment has taken on something of a "ceremonial role" in many training programs. SPA has proven to be the primary national venue for students to learn, share research findings, and interact with the experts in our field. One of my goals is to continue to welcome and promote student involvement at the conference. This means ensuring there are presentations, training workshops and other opportunities that benefit trainees. SPA members have been very generous in their contributions to the SPAGS conference travel grant fund. It is my goal to increase this source of student support even in the current economic climate. Secondly, there are currently few awards and honors for SPAGS members. My goal is to create a new award (best student poster or paper presentation) to recognize the efforts of students at the conference.

I believe I am qualified and prepared for this position. I have learned a great deal from my advisor, Dr. Leonard Handler, whose mentorship has provided the necessary training for me to eventually become a leader in the field as well. Secondly, I am currently the Clinic Coordinator at the UT Psychological Clinic, which is a student administrative appointment that also carries with it the responsibility of student representative to the clinical training faculty. Through this experience I have developed leadership skills and the ability to represent the best interests of my colleagues. I hope to have this opportunity to represent you all as well. Thank you for your vote!

Aidan G. C. Wright, M.A
The Pennsylvania State University

My view is that personality is the keystone of psychology. In its broadest sense it encompasses emotional, behavioral, cognitive, motivational, neurobehavioral, and dynamic-unconscious levels of human functioning. Personality offers the needed context for understanding individual behavior, psychiatric symptoms, and healthy and pathological psychological functioning. Therefore, the assessment of personality should be at the heart of applied psychological practice and research that informs this practice is of highest importance.

As the premier organization devoted to the science and practice of personality assessment, the Society of Personality Assessment stands at the forefront of applied psychology. Fortunately, SPA provides a welcome and rich environment for young assessment psychologists in training. At annual meetings students play an active role in poster, paper, and symposium presentations in addition to providing the much needed (and appreciated) volunteer work that helps the annual meeting run smoothly. SPAGS provides the framework for this participation, and strives to provide a more inclusive and welcoming environment for student members of SPA. Personally, I have benefitted greatly from the warm and open attitude of SPA and the efforts of SPAGS. I welcome the opportunity to give back to the society, and am honored by the nomination to serve SPAGS as its president-elect.

Currently, I am a doctoral candidate at The Pennsylvania State University enrolled in the adult-clinical psychology track. Dr. Aaron Pincus is my mentor. I am in my fourth year as a doctoral student, and will be applying for clinical internship next fall. Clinically, I have received training in both personality and neuropsychological assessment in addition to contemporary psychodynamic and cognitive-behavioral therapies. My working definition of personality assessment strives to be broad and integrative—at its heart it is fundamentally an interpersonal diagnostic process. I believe that self-report and performance based measures each provides incrementally valid and rich information, and that practice is best served by the integrated use of each along with solid interviewing and observation.

In my research, I broadly apply Interpersonal Theory to the study of personality, psychopathology, and the assessment of each. I believe that interpersonal functioning offers an integrative nexus for the study of all levels of personality and psychopathology. More specifically, my research has focused on applying quantitative techniques to the study of the relationship between personality and psychopathology, articulating methods for the comparison of groups using circumplex measures, and advancing the assessment of pathological narcissism.

My goal as president of SPAGS would be to continue to foster an environment for students to engage with each other in pursuit of their professional goals. I recognize that no graduate program in clinical psychology provides all desired opportunities to all students. Invariably, students will need to seek external sources for training in specific interventions or research methodology in order to achieve comprehensive competence as clinical psychologists. Thus, associations such as SPA and SPAGS best serve their membership by providing access to these opportunities. For example, it may be that an individual graduate program does not provide adequate training to achieve proficiency in performance-based measures (e.g., Rorschach or T.A.T.), limits their coverage of self-report measures (e.g., MMPI-II and NEO-PI-R but no PAI, SNAP, DAPP, etc.), or does not offer instruction in advanced statistical methodology (e.g., SEM, HLM, etc.). Although these limitations are an unfortunate reality of graduate training, I believe that motivated students should have access to resources in the form of other psychologists who are able to provide the desired guidance. Another area in which I see an artificial limitation is the infrequent collaboration between graduate students. As students we are the future assessment

researchers, and will some day be each other's professional colleagues and collaborators. I see no reason to wait for our diplomas to begin these rich collaborations. I have begun collaborations with students at other universities and have found that it can serve as a direct, but accessible, route to collaboration with their mentors as well. Encouraging this type of relationship between SPAGS members would be a priority of my presidency.

Finally, I believe that much of the work I discussed above is already underway, implemented by the current or recent SPAGS leadership. I would hope to continue their current endeavors, allowing for them to take root and blossom. Should I be voted in as president-elect of SPAGS, I would work hard to make SPA a place where graduate students can round out their training, while developing relationships and collaborations that will be the foundation of their careers.

CANDIDATES FOR REPRESENTATIVE-AT-LARGE

Danielle L. Burchett, M.A.
Kent State University

Hello SPAGS members! My name is Danielle Burchett, and I am currently a SPAGS Representative-at-Large. I am interested in continuing to serve in this position because it has given me a chance to meet and work with wonderful graduate students who share my professional interest in personality assessment. It has also provided an opportunity for me to give back to my peers. As a board member, I have been involved with important decisions regarding the SPAGS bylaws, website, listserv, Exchange articles, and membership requirements. I am also organizing the 2009 SPAGS Student Social to be held at the Annual Meeting in San Jose, California (which I hope you can attend!).

I enjoy working with the SPAGS board because it has given me the chance to have an impact on the development of this relatively new student organization. SPAGS has provided useful information to students and has served as a connection between graduate students and the SPA board. However, I believe that SPAGS has many yet-to-be explored opportunities to provide information and services to students, and I am excited to be a part of the development of these resources.

While I know that these are difficult economic times for individuals and organizations alike, I am interested in pursuing funding for the development of *SPAGS-funded* travel and merit awards for students who present at the Annual Meeting. I would also like to pursue more possibilities for discounted workshop costs for students interested in developing specific skills within personality assessment. Additionally, I am interested in taking action to strengthen connections between the SPAGS board and the student membership at large. We have many student members who may be wondering how they can become more involved (without necessarily being on the executive board); I think it is important to provide opportunities for those students to become more active participants in their organization.

So that you may know more about me, I'd like to mention that I am a 4th-year student at Kent State University, and that my research interests are in the psychometric properties of the MMPI-2 and MMPI-2-RF as well as in forensic assessment. Specifically, I am interested in validity scale utility and in over-reporting as a construct. I am thoroughly enjoying my clinical placement at the

Psycho-Diagnostic Clinic in Akron, Ohio where I am involved in forensic testing for competency, sanity, and other legal evaluations. In my free time, I enjoy traveling to California to see loved ones, backpacking, and failing miserably at golf.

SPAGS has given a great deal to me, having provided me the chance to see the broader picture about how personality assessment has developed and where it is headed. I am excited to give back to the organization and to be a part of the future of personality assessment. Being a SPAGS board member has allowed me to be more aware of what is happening in the world of personality assessment. I would greatly appreciate your support in my effort to continue my service to SPAGS and to you as a Representative-at-Large.

Jacob A. Finn
University of Tulsa

Hello fellow SPAGS members! My name is Jacob Finn, and it is an honor to be considered for a SPAGS Member-at-Large position. Allow me to tell you a little about myself. I am currently a fourth-year Clinical Psychology doctoral student at the University of Tulsa, studying under Dr. Allan Harkness and Dr. John McNulty. My research focuses on two broad areas: the utility of personality assessment to treatment planning and individual differences in reality orientation and schizotypal-like traits. I am also a research assistant for the University of Tulsa's Institute for the Biochemical and Psychological Study of Individual Differences (IBPID), where I coordinate a grant examining the relationship between genetic and biological variables and personality traits. I am also working as a psychological assessment intern at the L.E. Rader Center, an Oklahoma Office of Juvenile Affairs facility, and as a counselor at the University of Tulsa's Psychological Service Center.

As a nominee, I want to assure each of you that I have a great deal of experience as a leader in student groups and advocacy agencies. I am finishing my term as the TU campus representative to APAGS and APSSC, and I am also the outgoing President to our campus organization, Graduate Students in Psychology (GRASP). In my positions as campus representative, I have learned about how to effectively convey important information to large groups, and as the president of GRASP, I have advocated for greater acknowledgment of graduate students in the policies on the TU campus. I am also proud to co-chair the Veterans Diagnostic, Assessment, and Treatment Workgroup of the Veterans' Initiative Advisory Board for the city of Tulsa. In this multi-disciplinary team, we strategize and implement ways of improving the dissemination and utilization of mental health services for veterans and of training experiences for mental health professionals working with veterans in Tulsa and the surrounding area. Also, the last three years I have organized the TU Clinical Psychology program's Interview Day and its social activities, so I am no stranger to planning and to coordinating events.

If elected to the Member-at-Large position, I look forward to working with the other officers and the members of SPAGS to improve our organization and advocate for desired changes. I am particularly interested in addressing limitations in funding opportunities for research focused on personality and personality assessment. Also, I would like to see more training opportunities in assessment at the practicum and internship levels and a greater recognition and appreciation for assessment activities in the internship application process. I understand that none of these

things are possible without increased SPAGS membership and participation, and I am prepared to make this issue a top priority.

I want to thank you for considering me for the Member-at-Large position. I hope I have provided you with enough information to make an informed choice. It would be an honor to serve you as an officer in SPAGS. Thank you.

Sandra Horn
University of Toledo

I am very pleased to have been nominated for a Member at Large position for the upcoming year. I would like to provide some information about myself as well as my ideas for the future of SPAGS. I completed my B.A. at Grand Valley State University and am currently in my 4th year of the clinical Ph.D. program at the University of Toledo.

Through my training and clinical hours I have experience working with the Rorschach, MMPI-2, the Personality Assessment Inventory (PAI), TAT, the Clinical Outcomes in Routine Evaluations – Outcome Measure (CORE-OM), Wechsler tests, and others. My professional development has included serving as the JPA editorial assistant, working as a TA for graduate-level classes in cognitive assessment and statistics, working in the UT Counseling Center and the Psychology Clinic, working in a local Community Mental Health Center, serving as Campus Representative for APAGS, and volunteering over the past year as a SPAGS Member at Large. For the upcoming year I will also be volunteering as the student member for APA's Division 5 Fellowship Committee.

I joined SPA in 2006 and have attended, volunteered, and presented at the 2007, 2008, and 2009 conferences. As a product of my work with APAGS and various other volunteer positions I have gained experience in setting goals, organizing people and motivating them to become active contributors, and making progress as a group. Over the past year I have been serving as an SPAGS Representative at Large, as chair of the Education Committee. I have been compiling a list of internship and post-doctoral training sites with a focus on assessment, my goal being to have this list made available to students on the SPA website before the annual meeting in March of 2010.

For the upcoming year I would like to continue my work as a SPAGS Representative at Large, possibly as chair of the Education Committee or Research Enhancement Committee. The goals I currently envision for SPAGS for the upcoming year include continued focus on building membership and encouraging networking between members, seeking feedback from SPAGS members about ways the organization can improve and be more beneficial to them, as well as continuation of last year's goals of compiling training and funding resources for students.

Theresa Magelky, M.A.
University of North Dakota

Hello! My name is Theresa Magelky and I am a fourth year Ph.D. Student in the Department of Counseling Psychology at the University of North Dakota (UND), an APA-accredited program.

I would like to be a Member-at-Large of SPAGS for numerous reasons. I would like the opportunity to interact with other graduate students and professionals interested in personality assessment and to foster this interaction among other graduate students. Further, I would like to encourage interest and excitement in personality assessment among other students, to promote the value of assessment in treatment planning and as a therapeutic intervention, and to encourage others to join SPA. On a more personal level, I hope to further my knowledge and skills related to personality assessment in order to assist with my clinical work, teaching, and research.

I am fascinated with psychological assessment, particularly the clinical applications of assessment. Thus, in addition to completing my required assessment courses, I have sought out additional training opportunities. For example, I have completed the Rorschach Exner Comprehensive System training program conducted by Rorschach Training Programs, Inc., MMPI training, and am a member of the International Rorschach Society.

I teach Personality Assessment labs for doctoral students in the Department of Counseling Psychology at UND, in which I conduct training for a wide range of assessments, including the MMPI, Millon Inventories, Rorschach, NEO, PAI, and others.

I have also gained a significant amount of experience in personality assessment with both children and adults through various clinical and practica experiences. My current practicum placement is at an inpatient psychiatric hospital where, in addition to therapy, I conduct numerous personality assessments such as the MMPI and Rorschach. Further, I conduct neuropsychological evaluations at the UND Family Medical Residency, which includes administering and interpreting various personality and cognitive assessments.

In my free time (free time?!), I enjoy reading, movies, music, traveling, spending time with friends and family, especially my niece, Emily, and my feisty Miniature Dachshund, Sophie, and, of course, scoring and interpreting Rorschach protocols and working on my dissertation!

I would be honored to serve as a Member-at-Large for SPAGS and, due to my training and clinical experience in assessment, as well as my enthusiasm, believe I am qualified to do so. I would greatly appreciate your vote.

Patrick McElfresh

No Statement

Pilar Sumalpong, M.A.
University of California, Santa Barbara

It has been a wonderful experience serving as Representative-at-Large for SPAGS over the last year. I believe that it has kept me more engaged and more focused on personality assessment research and practice, particularly as it related to issues of diversity. In Chicago last year, our board reviewed committees that had been created. I volunteered to chair the committee to increase diversity within SPAGS. I believe that this is of utmost importance because our world is becoming more diverse by the moment and old norms simply do not apply. We need to be prepared to serve a wider scope of ethnically and culturally diverse populations and we need to be able to accurately understand and assess personality as part of that service.

I received my Masters degree in Clinical Psychology with an emphasis in Marriage and Family Therapy from Pepperdine University's Graduate School of Education and Psychology. After working in a community clinic, probation camps, juvenile halls, and California State juvenile detention centers I went on to focus on personality and neuropsychological assessment with Dr. Steve Smith at University of California, Santa Barbara. I am pursuing a Ph. D. in Clinical Psychology with an interdisciplinary emphasis in Cognitive Science. Last year I participated in two quarters of Cognitive Science seminars and a seminar in Law and Neuroscience with Michael Gazzaniga. My participation in these courses culminated in a short presentation of the utility of the Rorschach Test in forensic assessment and expert witness testimony. I have a continuing interest in neuroimaging and hope to gain fMRI research experience during my time at UCSB.

I am currently a clinician for the Psychological Assessment Center and a therapist at the Ray E. Hosford Clinic at UCSB. I am completing an externship at an in-patient adolescent and adult psychiatric hospital. I am also employed as a teaching associate at UCSB teaching introduction to applied psychology courses and as an adjunct lecturer at California Lutheran University, teaching courses in substance abuse and dependence, psychopharmacology, and personality assessment for their graduate program for Marriage and Family Therapists.

On a more personal note, I was also a returning student who started out at community college. I have a 12-year old daughter who is very involved in dance and music. My family runs an organic produce and flower farm in Southern California. I see myself as a person dedicated to my family, my community, and to the education of future practitioners of psychology and assessment. It would be a great joy for me to continue my involvement as a representative-at-large for SPAGS.

You may have recently received an email invitation to participate in an online diversity survey of SPA/SPAGS members. Please attend my presentation on *The Culture of SPA/SPAGS* this coming March in San Jose. See you there!

Aidan G. C. Wright, M.S.
The Pennsylvania State University

The Society for Personality Assessment has allowed me to join a community of similarly minded scholars and students. In particular, I find this beneficial because this community holds the potential for placing me in contact with others who, although similarly minded, collectively have a vastly different set of skills, experiences, and knowledge that can be shared with others

and me. Indeed, I believe that this wealth of collective, as opposed to individual knowledge, and the willingness to share it collaboratively, is the hallmark of a great scholarly society. Having personally benefitted from this atmosphere, I would be delighted to have the opportunity to contribute and give back to SPA by serving on the SPAGS executive committee in some capacity. As a Representative-at-Large, I would bring this enthusiasm along with what knowledge I have gained through my graduate experience to work in the interests of the broader SPAGS community.

In my opinion, what is most relevant in a selection process like this one is what my beliefs are about what the role is for SPAGS, and how it can best serve the student members of SPA. However, I also understand that the student members might be interested in my qualifications and experience. To start with the latter, I am a fourth year graduate student in a clinical psychology doctoral program at The Pennsylvania State University. Dr. Aaron Pincus is my mentor. My interests lie broadly in personality, psychopathology, and the assessment of each. The theoretical orientation that guides both my clinical and research work is the interpersonal paradigm. Most often I use the lens of the interpersonal circumplex and related models (e.g., SASB) to contextualize psychological science and practice. I strive to be integrative as opposed to myopic, and inclusive as opposed to exclusive in each. My enthusiasm for the interpersonal paradigm is due primarily to the fundamental and basic nature of the interpersonal in human functioning.

I do not know if I could say whether I am temperamentally more disposed towards clinical practice or research, so I hedge my bets by spending a considerable amount of time on each. I certainly believe that both are challenging but rewarding endeavors, and strive for competence in each. Clinically, I have received training in both personality and neuropsychological assessment in addition to contemporary psychodynamic and cognitive-behavioral therapies. The majority of my formal training has been in outpatient settings working with individuals. I find value in heterogeneous methods of assessment including both self-report and performance based assessment techniques.

My research endeavors have consistently involved interpersonal circumplex based measures applied to the study of personality, motivation, and psychopathology. Other research to date has generally involved structural models of measures and measurement invariance studies. Topics that most interest me are personality disorders (pathological narcissism in particular) and the relationship between personality and psychopathology (quantitative vs. qualitative models in particular). I try my best to inform and guide my research directions with my practical experience in the consulting room.

I believe that SPA is so important because clinical psychology can trace its largest roots back to assessment generally, but personality assessment more specifically. I believe that SPAGS is so important because it serves to promote and support the future of personality assessment and its continued place as a main pillar of clinical psychology. Should I be selected to serve on the executive committee of SPAGS, I would work hard to make SPA a place where graduate students can round out their training, while developing relationships and collaborations that will be the foundation of their careers. My hope would be that I could offer my efforts and support to ensure that SPAGS continues to grow and provide a welcoming environment for graduate students to meet and work together to move the field forwards collaboratively.